

**The Watchdog of Nationalism: The Romanian Press in Interwar Transylvania
and its Role in the Creation of National Identity**

by

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Abstract

This study focuses on the role of the interwar Romanian press in Transylvania in the creation of national identity following the union of the aforementioned province with the Kingdom of Romania in 1918. It argues that the Romanian press contributed significantly in constructing, circulating and reproducing a national identity buttressed by the discourse of integral nationalism during the first decade of the interwar period. Based on Romanian newspaper articles covering various nation-building policies and practices, this thesis examines the attempted nationalization of Transylvania's multi-ethnic, multi-confessional character through the politics of cultural engineering. This paper also argues that the Transylvanian Romanian elite, rather than being passive receptors of Bucharest's nationalizing projects, actively contributed to the Romanization of their regions. Often, their nationalist views were far more radical and extremist than their Bucharest peers, making their province an ideal place for the emergence of an extreme-right student movement in the early 1920s. Espoused and encouraged by the interwar Romanian press, the development of the radical nationalist discourse, can thus be linked to the rise and widespread support of Romanian fascism as an doctrine and a movement.

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Introduction

The nineteenth century is often referred to as the 'nationalist' century as the idea of national self-determination spread like wildfire among the nationalist elites of various Central and Eastern European ethnic groups. The union of the former Austro-Hungarian province of Transylvania with Romania was a long sought after nationalist dream which became a reality following the First World War and the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919. In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman controlled Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, inhabited primarily by ethnic Romanians, espoused an embryonic form of nationalism rooted in the hope for an independent nation-state and an end to foreign rule.¹ The following century, the two aforementioned principalities united to form the Kingdom of Romania which gained official international recognition as a state in 1881. However, according to the pre-war Romanian political leaders, national aspirations would only be fulfilled with the incorporation of Transylvania, a Habsburg province since the Middle Ages with an ethnic Romanian majority, into the Kingdom of Romania.² Entering the war in 1916 on the Entente side, Romania was the most fortunate among all the victorious Allies, as its territory and populations nearly doubled with the signing of the armistice in the autumn of 1918.³ As the Paris Peace Conference came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, almost all of Romania's far-reaching pre-war territorial and political demands, explicit in the Treaty of Bucharest of 1916, were met.⁴ The territory of Transylvania officially belonged to the Romanian state.

¹ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1995). 4.

² Ibid., 135. The 1910 Habsburg population census identified 3,208,767 ethnic Romanians in Transylvania.

³ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*. (New York: Random House, 2003). 135

⁴ With the exception of Article 6, which stipulated for Romania to be granted "great power" status at all peace negotiations. Glen E. Torrey. "Rumania and the Belligerents 1914-1916, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1, no.3 (July 1966):189

In practice, however, the Romanian military had been occupying the province since the fall of 1918 under the administration of the Central Romanian National Council (CRNC), formed in the city of Arad on October 31st 1918.⁵ The CRNC, consisting of twelve Romanian politicians, six Social Democrats and six National Party members, organized local revolutionary activities among Transylvania's Romanian population and coordinated the Grand National Assembly in the city of Alba Iulia set for December 1, 1918.⁶ Along with the 1,228 official delegates, a crowd of over 100,000 ordinary people also journeyed to Alba Iulia to show their support for the Union.⁷ During the Assembly, the CRNC drafted a resolution which declared the union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania but also asserted the region's provisional autonomy until the next parliamentary elections.⁸ By stating that : "Our distinctive institutions make necessary the provisional preservation of autonomy, but this does not alter the reality of unconditional union," the resolution made it clear to the politicians in Bucharest that Transylvanian politicians wished for a degree of independence, especially during the first years of the union.⁹ The 1,228 delegates proceeded to elect a Grand National Council of two hundred members which in turn named a fifteen member Governing Council on December 2, 1918. The same day, the Council sent a telegram as well as a delegation to Bucharest transmitting the resolutions of the union, which included the territorial and political union of Transylvania with Romania as well as the need for fundamental democratic principles, agrarian reform, the extension of the political right of the working class and "full civil freedoms for all co-habiting

⁵ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 130.

⁶ Ibid. p.132. The invited delegates represented various Romanian cultural organizations, universities, seminaries, political parties and churches, all gathered to support the union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania.

⁷ Stefan Pascu, *Marea Adunare Nationala de la Alba Iulia*. (Cluj: Universitatea Babes-Bolyai, 1968). 380.

⁸ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 132.

⁹ Zoltan Szasz, "The Romanian Assembly at Gyulafehervar," In Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 776.

nationalities."¹⁰ Although soon thereafter the Bucharest government passed the resolution into law, it only recognized the part of the union as being legitimate while the other points were ignored. The Governing Council remained in charge of local administration over which it had nearly unlimited governing, legislative, and enforcement powers.¹¹ Its dissolution on April 2, 1920 by General Alexandru Averescu's government (March 13, 1920-December 16, 1921) ended Transylvania's transitional autonomy and brought the region under Bucharest's firm control. The Romanian government's goal was to centralize and nationalize its new state by any means necessary.

Viewed as the most important political step towards nation building in the newly expanded Romanian state, the union was followed by other similar efforts which all aimed at culturally "Romanizing" the province of Transylvania (or Ardeal).¹² Schools, churches, cultural organizations, the press and various political parties all encouraged and supported a nationalist agenda which aimed at remaking Transylvania decisively Romanian. Such a feat would have been difficult even in an ethnically homogenous state. In a province as ethnically diverse as Transylvania, it spurred a social crisis which in turn exacerbated the already existing tensions between the Romanian majority, the disgruntled Hungarian minority, the economically privileged German community and the largely urban Jewish community.¹³

The search for a national identity and a path for national development spurred heated debates within Ardeal's Romanian intellectual community. These polemics spilled over in the fast-growing pool of Romanian language newspapers which narrated and disseminated them to

¹⁰ Ibid., 776-777.

¹¹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 132.

¹² The province of Transylvania is commonly referred to as the *Ardeal* in the Romanian language, which originated from the Hungarian word *Erdely*. All throughout this proposal, I will use both terms (Transylvania and Ardeal) interchangeably.

¹³ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 129.

an ever-growing literate public. However, the press, far from being just a mirror reflecting the views and opinions of the politicians, also became an important tool in shaping the national consciousness¹⁴ of its readers and thus influencing the national development during the interwar years.

This project focuses on the Romanian press in Transylvania and its influence on the nationalist discourse during the interwar years. It argues that many of the most popular Romanian newspapers actively constructed, circulated and reproduced the rhetoric of integral nationalism, an ideology underlined by principles of ethnic exclusion, xenophobia and militancy. This discourse of "intolerant" nationalism was primarily the result of the political and social crisis arising from the challenges and struggles of the newly reconfigured Romanian state and its desire for rapid national consolidation. This type of ideology took an aggressive and reactionary stance towards the Ardeal's minority groups, targeting especially the Hungarian and Jewish populations. My aim is also to investigate why and how the interwar Romanian newspapers of various Transylvanian cities narrated and reformulated the policies and practices of a "nationalizing state"¹⁵ framed by discourses of integral nationalism. As the social and ethnic tensions deepened throughout the first decade of the interwar period, the press played a significant role in the radicalization of the nationalist discourse as well as in the construction of meaning for various state and local nation building policies. Such nationalist oriented viewpoints and developments were linked to the rise in the 1930s of a native fascist movement in Romania known as the Legionary movement. Although the relationship between nationalism and fascism

¹⁴ By national consciousness, I refer to the definition provided by Peter Alter, as "the sense of belonging to a political and social community which constitutes a nation organized as a state and serves as a fundamental basis of the cultural and/or political nation." Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, (New York: Edward Arnold, 1994), 12.

¹⁵ Defined by Rogers Brubaker as "a state conceived by its political and intellectual elites as a state of and for a particular ethno-cultural nation which is 'unrealized' due to its insufficient nationalization. See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 9.

within Romanian society remains beyond the scope of this study, it serves as a cautionary tale for other nationalizing states using the doctrine of integral nationalism as a ideological and political resolution to the problems posed by the rapid integration of ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse provinces with separate histories and multiple identities.

The history of Eastern Europe during the interwar era presents a rich and complex topic of study for historians interested in the relationship between ethnic groups in an political environment in which their cultural uniqueness was unacceptable. It is also a ideal place for the study of why and how nearly all newly formed or reconfigured states in that region chose the discourse of nationalism as their leading political philosophy. Although the history of the interwar period has generally been overshadowed by the history of the two world wars and that of Communism, it has been making a comeback in the recent years with the brilliant academic works of Irina Livazeanu, Maria Bucur, Ivan T. Berend, Oliver Zimmer and Rogers Brubaker, to name only a few. Aside my personal interest in the area due to my ethnic background (Romanian and Hungarian), Transylvania is an excellent case study of the politics of nation-building in a region of rich ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.¹⁶ However I want my study to examine how such politics were represented and disseminated by the local Romanian newspapers in various Transylvanian cities. Therefore I situate my research in the aforementioned existing literature in the hope of highlighting the particular relationship between the rhetoric of

¹⁶ In his detailed study of Eastern European societies in the interwar period, historian Ivan T. Berend, refers to the area stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea as a "belt of mixed population" in which ethnic groups had coexisted and intermingled for centuries. Some areas were more mixed than others such as Transylvania, Czech-Silesia and Macedonia. Additionally, he states that ethnicity and religion in those areas were not only intermingled but were also vastly interrelated with and amalgamated to class status and social stratification which meant that the existing class tensions of the nineteenth century morphed into ethnic and religious conflicts during the first decades of the twentieth century . This situation is represented and narrated throughout this thesis as this study attempts to fit into the historiography of ethnic relations in the era of nationalizing states, one of the major themes regarding the history of Eastern Europe. See Ivan T. Berend. *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War II*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

nationalism and the newspapers in Transylvania during the first decade of the interwar period. My research also attempts to fill the gap in the cultural history of Transylvania by highlighting the important role of the Romanian print media in the construction of a national identity steeped in the discourse of integral nationalism. For Transylvania's Romanian political and intellectual elite, the appeal of integral nationalism was far stronger than it was for the Bucharest politicians because of the oppressive legacy of political and cultural exclusion of the former ruling Hungarian state. Instead of promoting the principles of tolerance and respect regarding Transylvanian's ethnic minorities, the most widely circulated Romanian newspapers and their editors encouraged dissimilationist and exclusionary policies and practices which succeed only in legitimizing and normalizing the growing radical nationalist movement.

Historian Irina Livezeanu has also contributed to the study of nationalism and nation-building in post World War One Romania with her book about the cultural politics and the development of a national consciousness.¹⁷ Her study addresses the issues of the development of cultural institutions, the national crises produced by ethnic tensions and the process of nation-building implemented by the Romanian state in the inter-war years. She identifies and explains the political, social, demographic and cultural challenges faced by Romania's society after the Union. The greatest challenge, she argues, was the incorporation of large minority, which was more educated and urban which saw their political, civil and cultural rights curbed by the Romanian state.¹⁸ This study will agree with her arguments which challenge the mainstream Romanian historiography on this subject regarding an uninterrupted, unified, seemingly smooth

¹⁷ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1995).

¹⁸ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 8.

national development of the Romanian nation and national consciousness.¹⁹ However my research intends to extend this topic by exploring this deficit of Western democratic processes as expressed by the Romanian press through their interpretation of the union and the nation-building schemes of Romania's political and cultural institutions. To my knowledge such a study has not yet been developed and therefore this project will attempt to fill this academic void.

Rogers Brubaker, the preeminent scholar on the dynamic of nationalism in Eastern Europe, argues that "the nation" should not be perceived as "a substantial enduring collectivity" but rather as "a category of social vision and division."²⁰ Ethnic and cultural heterogeneity had been a part of Ardeal's past for centuries yet it became politically relevant with the rise of nationalism as an ideology among the various peoples of Eastern Europe's multi-national empires during the mid-nineteenth century. Upon the advent of Union, the Romanian government further politicized ethnicity and culture as a way of organizing its society in a divisive way. This meant, as Brubaker explains, that there occurred a sudden and ubiquitous "nationalization" of society in both the public and the private spheres, which "involved the nationalization of narrative and interpretative frames, of perception and evaluation, thinking and feeling."²¹ Interwar Transylvanian society thus provides the ideal case study for expanding Brubaker's argument by exploring the micro-dynamics of this "nationalization" phenomena through the analysis of various national narratives put forth by several popular Romanian newspapers. The use of nationalism as an everyday tool for classifying people, their intensions and their behavior became prevalent in the Romanian media thus negatively characterizing the

¹⁹ Livezeanu refers to the partial bibliography compiled by Paul e. Michelson, "Unity and Continuity in Romanian History," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 8 (1981). Another two examples of such works are the books of Stefan Pascu, *The Making of the Romanian Unitary National State: 1918* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1989) and Stefan Pascu, *The Great Assembly at Alba Iulia* (Cluj: Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, 1968.).

²⁰ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 21.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

national "other" while simultaneously "nullifying the complex identities"²² of ethnic Romanians by ascribing them a simple, immutable ethno-nationality.

My project relies on an abundant concentration of Romanian-language primary sources, and on a wide variety of English-language secondary sources published both before and after the fall of Communism. The majority of my primary sources consist of newspaper articles published in the Romanian press from the time of unification (1918) to its twentieth anniversary in 1938. Peppered among them is the French-language newspaper, *Paix et Droit* (Peace and Justice), printed in Paris by a committee of Jewish-Romanian expatriates whose articles I used to construct a more comprehensive picture of what life was like for Jews in Transylvania after the Union. My paper also employs the use of official documents such as the 1923 Romanian Constitution, state censuses, treaties, reports and official letters. The bulk of my primary research was done at the Central University Library of Lucian Blaga in Cluj, at the State Archives of Cluj as well as at the smaller archive centers in the towns of Alba Iulia and Sfintu Gheorghe. Collecting data for this project meant travelling to several Transylvanian cities throughout the summers of 2012 and 2013, which although rewarding and fascinating, was not always easy. The temporal constraints of my relative short visits, six weeks for each visit, limited the number of archives I was able to consult, while the difficulties of obtaining access to the newspapers themselves also constricted my time for research. Nevertheless, with the helpfulness and knowledge of the people working at the various libraries and archives, I was able to scan, photograph, collect and read over a five hundred articles pertaining to my subject of study. Although my research includes content and discourse analysis of several Romanian newspapers printed in various Transylvanian cities such as Alba Iulia, Arad, Blaj, Oradea, Sibiu and Sfintu

²² Ibid.

Gheorghe, it is mostly centered around popular Romanian newspapers published in the town of Cluj. The reason for that is not only because of their abundance and availability but also because a high percentage of the Romanian intelligentsia chose Cluj as their place of work and residence. Despite its multicultural character, the city was also a place of ethnic tensions between the old Hungarian and the new Romanian elites as well as between the Jewish, Hungarian and Romanian university students. Furthermore, it was primarily in Cluj that the new nationalizing Romanian elites employed the power of the press to promote the language, culture and the newly found political hegemony of the core nation.²³ The aforementioned reasons have thus encouraged me to build my research extensively around periodicals such as *Tara Noastra* (Our Country), *Gazeta Ardeleanului* (The Ardeal Gazette), *Clujul* (Cluj), *Ginderea* (Thoughts) and *Cultura Poporului* (Culture and Nation). The selection process of these newspapers was based both on their claim as center non-partisan press and on their availability, their condition and access. The articles selected for analysis were those which were written as a response to a significant political, economic or cultural event and were usually used as front-page stories to garner as much public attention as possible.

The time frame of this thesis is December 1, 1918 up to February 27, 1938. My research begins in 1918 because that was the year in which Transylvania declared its unification with the Kingdom of Romania. Following this event, the Romanian press quickly multiplied as newspapers from across the political spectrum appeared in almost all Transylvanian towns. The scope of my study ends in 1938, twenty years after the Union and the beginning of King Carol II royal dictatorship. That year, a new political era began in Greater Romania but its narration and analysis will have to be the subject of another study.

²³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), 46.

My thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to the history of Transylvania's historical and cultural legacy and the relationship between the various ethnic groups which shared in that legacy for centuries. By highlighting the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-confessional character of Transylvania, the chapter demonstrates just how different the region in question was from the nearly ethnically homogenous Old Kingdom of Romania. It also examines the significant political role the Austro-Hungarian regime had in shaping the small and fragmented Romanian political elite and their national movement before and after the Union. Therefore the purpose of this chapter is to anchor my thesis in a historical context which provides a framework of understanding the complex relationships between the timid Romanian national movement under the Hungarian rule, its more radicalized successor, the discourse of integral nationalism and its usage by the Romanian press.

The second chapter is dedicated to analysis of the integral nationalist rhetoric and its role and influence on several aspects of regional politics, civil society and intellectual debates on the role and development of Transylvania within the Union, as presented by several Romanian newspapers. I place the term of integral nationalism within a theoretical framework built by other scholars of nationalist studies and examine how it links with my thesis. This chapter also seeks to answer questions pertaining to the role of the newspapers in constructing a new politicized ethnic identity for their Romanian readers. A sense of cultural anxiety permeated the Romanian intellectual sphere in Transylvania, as if the core nation was not flourishing and developing as it should because of its "internal" enemies.²⁴ Consequently, as the first decade of the interwar era progressed, so did the radicalization of the nationalist language employed by the moderate Romanian press. This chapter attempts to deconstruct such feelings of cultural insecurity which

²⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 83.

in turn spurred discourses of "cultural battles" between the Romanian nation and the "foreign" cultures within the pages of Ardeal's Romanian press.

In the third chapter, I analyze the narration and representation by several of the most widely circulated Romanian periodicals in Transylvania of three local and nation-building strategies: the commemorations surrounding December 1st, various assimilation and dissimilation projects regarding the Hungarian and Jewish minorities and the emergence of a regional radically nationalist student movement. Situated within the national polemics concerning the "national reconstruction" the three aforementioned case studies were interpreted by the various publications in different, often contradictory ways yet the theme of an impending national crisis was a common theme found throughout the articles I analyzed for this chapter. The final chapter also further pursues the argument that the Romanian newspapers constructed and promoted a national consciousness anchored in the rhetoric of integral nationalism. By providing three concrete examples illustrating "the nationalist consensus" regarding the Romanian intelligentsia's acceptance of integral nationalism as the ideological framework for Romanian politics and society,²⁵ the last chapter seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding the complex and intertwined relationship between the Romanian press in Transylvania and the emergence and development of the radical, right-wing discourse of integral nationalism during the first decade of the interwar period.

²⁵ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 14.

CHAPTER 1

TRANSYLVANIA AND ITS AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN LEGACY

Following the incorporation of Transylvania into Greater Romania, the Romanian political and intellectual elite took immediate and decisive action to secure Romanian cultural supremacy. Their political aspirations fulfilled, they now sought to create a unitary, ethnically homogenous Romanian state. Among the many obstacles standing in their way was a thousand year old legacy of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. Initially, the national architects initially dismissed such a legacy in favour of creating a "defiant", romantic national past. However, a "cultural offensive"²⁶ tactic was quickly initiated throughout the early interwar years to curb such legacy's continuous influence in Transylvania. The ethnically and religiously heterogeneous region represented a political and social dysfunction which Greater Romania, as a nationalizing state, had to remedy. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the historical and cultural context which framed such intolerant state sponsored nationalist policies. It aims to bring about a better understanding of the historical processes at work during the era of Dualism

²⁶ The term 'cultural offensive' was coined by historian Irina Livezeanu to describe the aggressive cultural policies implemented by the Romanian state during the interwar years. Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 34.

(1867-1918), in order to establish links between Transylvania's Austro-Hungarian past and its interwar Romanian present. My discussion of Transylvania's history before the advent of the Union focuses on its ethnic, religious and social diversity, on the Hungarian state's aggressive assimilation program known as 'Magyarization' and on the development of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania. Intertwined and interrelated, these aforementioned process should be understood as part of the larger development of national consciousness and national "revival" in Eastern Europe during the nineteenth century. Finally, this chapter argues that the social and cultural crises of interwar Transylvania could have been substantially mitigated had the interwar Romanian policy makers acknowledged and understood the complex relationships between the various ethnic groups rather than interpreting them almost exclusively through a nationalist lens. Instead they reproduced and perpetuated an intolerant nationalist ideology which only served to maintain the national privileges of the ruling class and further antagonize the national minorities. During the interwar period, the Romanian nationalists, while unconsciously responding to the Hungarian model of national assimilation known as Magyarization, purposely took a dissimilationist, often exclusionary stance towards Transylvania's minorities.

1.1 A Cultural Mosaic: Transylvania's internal diversity

Transylvania's ethnic diversity and intricate social organization was the result of centuries of conquest, colonization, migrations and wars. As a result, multiple ethnic and linguistic groups have coexisted and cohabited side by side throughout the region's history. However, they only developed a "national consciousness" in the nineteenth century. The Romanian intelligentsia was then influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and by Johann Gottfried Herder's philosophy which argued in favour of a vertically inclusive, politically autonomous cultural

community based on shared language and traditions.²⁷ In the interwar era, at the peak of ethnic nationalism, Romania's intellectual elite abandoned the humanist traditions emphasizing instead the historic struggle for the "national" preservation, insisting that the "Romanian nation" had been oppressed for centuries under the iron fist of Hungarian rule.²⁸ To dispute this theory that only the Romanian masses had suffered at the hands of their Magyar²⁹ rulers for centuries, one has to survey Transylvania's political and social history without a nationalist lens. In 1437, after a peasant rebellion shook the province, the three privileged estates, formed a defensive alliance against the rebellious peasantry, known as the Union of the Three Nations (*Unio Trium Nationum*).³⁰ Interwar Romanian sources often interpreted this affiliation of 'nations' or *nationes* as the union of the Magyar, Saxon and Szekler nobility for the purpose of subduing the Romanian peasantry. However, as historian Laszlo Peter explains, during the Middle Ages, the Latin term *natio* was understood as a set of distinct and recognized customary laws, privileges and immunities, developed in an autonomous territory over a duration of time.³¹ Therefore the so-called "nations" of Transylvania should not be understood as "cross-class ethnocultural or political community but as privileged legal order or estate."³² In fact, until the advent of nationalism and its lexicon, the term "Magyar" was a social-class indicator which designated a

²⁷ Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*. (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), 17-19.

²⁸ Nicolae Iorga, a prominent interwar historian, wrote the first complete history of the Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary. His book had a undeniable national and political character which declared that Transylvania was Romanian not only because the Romanians had a demographic majority but also because its 'soul' was Romanian. For a detailed discussion on Nicolae Iorga and the construction of Romanian history for political and national purposes see Ambrus Miskolczy, "Nicolae Iorga and Romanian History in 1915," in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, ed. Laszlo Peter (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), 159-166.

²⁹ The term 'Magyar' means a Hungarian person in the Hungarian language. Unlike in English, Hungarian lacks the word to differentiate between a Hungarian citizen and one who is a native Magyar speaker. Thus for clarification purposes, I will use the term 'Hungarian' to denote association with the legal entity of Hungary and the term 'Magyar' to designate ethnic solidarity and affiliation by language. For a more detailed discussion see A.J.P. Taylor. *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918*. 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 26.

³⁰ Laszlo Peter, "Introduction", in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, ed. Laszlo Peter (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), 7.

³¹ *Ibid.* 8

³² Rogers Brubaker. *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 58.

land owner exempt from paying the land tax or a person who took part in county assemblies and any other legislative bodies such as the Transylvania Diet.³³ Simply put, the Union of Three Nations was the union of three upper classes who had divided the province according to their feudal privileges. Thus "the medieval and early modern 'nation' was defined primarily by legal status, not ethnicity."³⁴ As for the serf population, up until the end of the eighteenth century, there were more Magyar than Romanian serfs under Magyar landlords and their lot was equally wretched.³⁵

At the dawn of nineteenth century, Transylvania, a poly-ethnic polyglot region, also possessed a confessional diversity rarely found in such a small territorial enclave. The four "established religions", Roman Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran and Unitarian, were split among the Magyar, Saxon and Szekeler communities. The majority of Magyars, including the Szeklers, adhered to the Calvinist faith, while a large minority were Roman Catholic.³⁶ The Saxons were almost exclusively Lutheran while the Romanian population was were almost equally divided between the Greek Orthodox and the Uniate (Greek Catholic) Churches.³⁷ Members of the Jewish faith counted fewer than 1% of the total population but their numbers increased steadily throughout the nineteenth century.³⁸ Historian Zoltan Szasz argues that Transylvania's multi-confessional character was not the result of religious tolerance and mutual understanding between the various communities but rather a product of demographic processes, policies of

³³ Peter F. Sugar, "The Principality of Transylvania," in *A History of Hungary*, eds., Peter F. Sugar, Peter Hanak and Tibor Frank (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), 122.

³⁴ Brubaker. *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 57-58.

³⁵ Laszo Peter, "Introduction", in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, 18.

³⁶ Zoltan Szasz, "Religious Denominations and Nationalities," In Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 554.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

settlement and the political exploitation of divisions among religions.³⁹ Religion was thus conveyed for political purposes by the leading members of each confessional community to reinforce it as a crucial factor of identity up until the beginning of the twentieth century. Inter-marriage between religious faiths was rare but not non-existent. At the end of the nineteenth century, only 10% of marriages were of mixed faith, typically involving Catholics and Calvinists, both groups being predominantly Magyar.⁴⁰ Religious denomination almost always coincided with ethnicity. According to the official census of 1900, the Roman Catholics, the Calvinist and the Unitarians were also over 90% native Magyar speakers.⁴¹

The profoundly multiethnic character of Transylvania was evident even without official nationality censuses. At the inception of the Dual Monarchy (1867), the province was populated by Romanians, Hungarians, Szeklers, Saxons, Jews, Ruthenians, Roma, Armenians and Serbs. According to the 1850 census, the three major ethnic groups, the Romanians, the Magyars (including the Szeklers) and the Saxons accounted respectively for 59.1%, 25.9% and 9.4% of the region's population.⁴² Beginning in 1880, the official census measured demographic data by mother tongue instead of ethnicity. The Hungarian speaking population in the Kingdom of Hungary rose from 47% in 1880 to 54% in 1910 due to the influx of Jewish immigrants, Armenian merchants, German burghers and anyone else who wished to assimilate to the Magyar nation.⁴³ This phenomenon led professor Rogers Brubaker, an expert on Transylvania's ethnic and social landscape, to argue that Hungarian nationalizing policies favored an open assimilation

³⁹ Ibid., 554-556.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 556-557.

⁴¹ Zoltan Szasz, "Religious Denominations and Nationalities," 557.

⁴² Transylvanian-Hungarian Yearbook, 1918-1929 (Erdelyi Magyar Evkonyv. 1918-1929). (Cluj Napoca: Juventus Publishing, 1930), 1-5.

⁴³ Brubaker. *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 42-43.

program which allowed "outsiders" to join the "nation" by simply adopting its language.⁴⁴

However, the rhetoric of a unitary, centralized Hungarian nation-state imposing the supremacy of Magyar culture over the "backward people" i.e ethnic minorities, persisted throughout the Dualist era.⁴⁵ Put simply, in order to belong to the dominant "nation", the interested candidate had to accept that Magyar supremacy was Hungary's manifest destiny.

The cities were perceived as Hungarian enclaves in a sea of Romanian peasants. According to the 1900 census, the overwhelming majority of Nagyvarad (91%), Kolozsvár (83%), Arad (73%) and Szatmárnémeti (89 %) inhabitants declared Hungarian as their mother tongue.⁴⁶ As a consequence of modernization and industrialization, the cities of Transylvania experienced a dynamic population growth especially at the end of the nineteenth century. They attracted immigrants and rural populations with their "modern economic activity, public employment and cultural amenities."⁴⁷ The opportunities provided by the urban centers enticed mostly Magyars, which accounted for 86% of the urban growth increase between 1901 and 1910.⁴⁸ Magyar political and cultural hegemony over Transylvania's largest cities remained unchallenged and undisputed until the interwar era.

Although the Romanians formed a majority in Transylvania, they were a predominantly rural community. Throughout the Dualist era, they accounted for less than 20% of Transylvania's urban population.⁴⁹ The abolition of serfdom in 1854 prompted an agricultural transformation

⁴⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁵ Oscar Jaszi. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 318.

⁴⁶ Demographic data retrieved from the University of Pecs digital library http://kt.lib.pte.hu/cgi-bin/kt.cgi?konyvtar/kt06042201/0_0_3_pg_23.html and from the Central Bureau of Statistics in Budapest <http://varga.adatbank.transindex.ro/>

⁴⁷ Robert Bidileux and Ian Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe, Crisis and Change*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 254.

⁴⁸ Arpan Varga. "Hungarians in Transylvania between 1870 and 1995," *Magyar Kisebbség* 3, no. 4 (March 1999): 373.

⁴⁹ Livezeanu. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 135.

during which the former Romanian villeins either became sharecroppers or agricultural labourers. As Katherine Verdery explains, it also produced mass confusion for the peasantry because "only one class of peasants - hereditary serfs - settled on 'urbarial' lands,"⁵⁰ was actually freed of obligations and given ownership rights to the properties they had worked."⁵¹ They represented about 45% of the total Transylvanian population owning on average 5.3 hectares per family.⁵²

For those without land, their choices were either emigration or a life as part of the agricultural proletariat.⁵³ State censuses conducted at the beginning of the twentieth century indicate that over 86% of Transylvanian Romanians earned their livelihoods by primary production (agricultural and wage labour), a mere 6.4% worked in mining, industry, commerce, finances and transport and only 1.4% were professionals.⁵⁴

Transylvania's Hungarian population consisted of two different groups, the Magyars and the Szeklers, the latter settled originally as border frontier guards. Arriving in the early twelfth century as auxiliaries to protect the eastern most border of Western Christianity, the Szeklers assimilated linguistically to the Magyars but developed their own social structures in their seven quasi-autonomous districts (Szekelyfold) with their nobility as part of the privileged *nationes*.⁵⁵ Due to the geographical isolation from the other Magyar communities, they preserved their cultural traditions and administrative institutions into the nineteenth century. However,

⁵⁰ The urbarial lands were small portions of a landlord's estate allocated as serf holdings i.e. subsistence patches of land for the serf, his family and his animals. See Katherine Verdery. *Transylvanian Villagers*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) for an excellent survey on the practices and principles of Transylvania's feudal system.

⁵¹ Katherine Verdery. *Transylvanian Villagers*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 219.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Between 1901-1914, 10% of Transylvania's population of 2.5 million emigrated, the majority choosing either the Romanian Kingdom or the United States. See Katherine Verdery. *Transylvanian Villagers*, 220-223.

⁵⁴ Barna Abraham. "The Idea of Independent Romanian National Economy in Transylvania at the Turn of the 20th Century," in Balazs Trecesenyi, Dragos Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi and Zoltan Kantor eds. *National Building and Contested Identities*. (Budapest: Regio Books, 2001), 209.

⁵⁵ George Cushing, "Hungarian Cultural Traditions in Transylvania", in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, ed. Laszlo Peter (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), 117-118.

demographically they have been incorporated into the Hungarian population by even the earliest state censuses. As for the Magyar population, the earliest records date their arrival in the region around the ninth century but whether they 'occupied' or 'conquered' it remains to the present day a matter of historiographic controversy between the Romanian and Hungarian scholars.⁵⁶

Consolidating their rule over Transylvania over the next two centuries, the Magyar nobles established a permanent political administration in the old Roman town of Apulium, naming it Gyulafehérvár.⁵⁷ The Transylvanian Hungarian nobility received special status from the Hungarian King and they became the territory's first *nation*, absorbing all those with political and legal freedoms.⁵⁸ Historian Peter F. Sugar explains that while Hungarians occupied all social classes, they were the dominant group politically as their upper and lower nobility occupied almost all high-offices, judicial and administrative posts and officer positions.⁵⁹ This situation prevailed until the dismembering of the Kingdom of Hungary by the Trianon Treaty in 1920.

From the mid-nineteenth century on, the Jewish minority played a crucial role of filling the social gaps in the urban landscape, to create a small bourgeois middle-class.⁶⁰ Eloquently explained by Ivan T. Berend, the origins of the Jewish- Hungarian bourgeoisie can be credited to the low or non-existent social mobility of the noble class.⁶¹ If they preferred the urban lifestyle, the sons of the aristocracy could preserve their political and social power by occupying

⁵⁶ The term 'Occupied' is the prevailing Hungarian view, according to which at the end of the ninth century, the Magyars occupied a largely inhabited terrain in the Carpathian Basin. The Romanian view argues that Transylvania and its indigenous Romanian population were 'conquered' by the Magyar tribes, which expropriated and enslaved them. For a detailed debate see Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics*, 57 and Lucian Boia, *History and Myth* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 83-110.

⁵⁷ Sugar, "The Principality of Transylvania," 121.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 122.

⁶⁰ Ivan T. Berend. *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War II*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 34.

⁶¹ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 199.

bureaucratic state and county posts or by entering the officer corps.⁶² Upward mobility for the rural masses was also rare as they did not possess the education, skills or proper manners to develop into an urban middle-class. The social vacuum was thus filled with the Jewish segment of the population. Traditionally banned from landownership, excluded from the army and the bureaucracy, they engaged in commerce, handicrafts and the liberal professions.⁶³ The ensuing pogroms in the Russian Empire following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 prompted large number of Jews from the Pale of Settlement to migrate into Austria-Hungary where they settled into the urban environments. Several separate Jewish communities already lived throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire, with many of its members acquiring a dual identity. By the turn of the century, they accounted for a mere 2.4% of Transylvania's population, choosing instead the cultural allure of Budapest where they were referred to as "Magyars of the Mosaic persuasion".⁶⁴

The Transylvanian Germans i.e. Saxons had settled in the province as colonizers in the twelfth century and as traders in the sixteenth century. Invited by the Hungarian King Geza II (1141-1162) to defend the eastern border against foreign invasions, the first wave of Saxon settlers obtained in exchange a set of particular rights and privileges which lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵ The vast majority colonized Transylvania's southeastern frontier also known as the *Königsboden*⁶⁶, the region between Sibiu, Sighisoara and Brasov, while the minority came to inhabit the northeastern Bistrita region. Their autonomous social

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 201.

⁶⁴ Ezra Mendelsohn. *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*. (Bloomington: IUP, 1983), 87.

⁶⁵ James Koranyi and Ruth Wittlinger. "From Diaspora to Diaspora: The Case of the Transylvanian Saxons in Romania and Germany." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 17, no. 1 (2011): 99.

⁶⁶ *Königsboden* refers to the area inhabited by the Saxons which consisted of Saxon seats and districts. The *Königsboden's* population, Saxon, Hungarian as well as Romanian, were free citizens. See Elemer Illyes, *National Minorities in Romania: Change in Transylvania*. (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 12, 260.

position was cemented in the sixteenth century with their recognition as a distinct group to be included among the three privileged 'nations' (the Hungarian, Saxon and Szekler nobles). Having established their autonomous political and administrative institution (*Universitas Saxonum*) in the fifteenth century, the Saxons developed their economy and society separate from the other ethnic groups. In the aftermath of the Mongol and Ottoman invasions, they fortified their villages and towns with castles and massive stone walls. In German, Transylvania was known as *Siebenburgen*, the province with seven fortified cities.⁶⁷ The vast property owned by their towns amassed large revenues financing their ecclesiastical and education systems as well as the smooth development of a market economy.⁶⁸ The Saxon industrialists of the nineteenth century originated from the ranks of guild craftsmen. They formed cooperative ventures which adapted to market demands by applying modern techniques in both agriculture and industry.⁶⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, they were referred to as the rural upper strata because of their large mechanized prosperous farms, their ownership of the farm tools and animals and the numerous day-laborers they employed on their fields and in their homes.⁷⁰ Yet another characteristic attributed to the Saxons by their contemporaries was their preferred self-imposed isolation from the other ethnic groups. Adolf Meschendorfer, a Saxon novelist from Brasov, described his community as austere and puritanical whose members were highly discouraged from socially mingling with non-Germans for reasons other than to do business.⁷¹ Although interethnic social relations were strained and interethnic mixing rare, particularly during the Dualist era, the

⁶⁷ The seven fortified historical towns are Bistrita (Bistritz), Sibiu (Hermannstadt), Reghin (Sachsisch Regen), Brasov (Kronstadt), Mediasch (Mediasch), Sebes (Muhlbach) and Sighisoara (Schassburg). Today these town are listed under the UNESCO World Heritage sites and are a must-see sight for anyone traveling to Transylvania.

⁶⁸ Szasz, "Religious Denominations and Nationalities," 616-619.

⁶⁹ Szasz, "Religious Denominations and Nationalities," 616.

⁷⁰ Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 241-242.

⁷¹ Szasz, "Religious Denominations and Nationalities," 619.

Saxons often took extra measures to protect their cultural heritage and traditional values by becoming even more a self-sufficient, closed community.

1.2 Magyarization: Its meanings, causes and effects on Transylvania's ethnic communities

In 1847, Lajos Kossuth, a radical nationalistic Hungarian lawyer, was elected to the Hungarian Diet. A year later, amid his nationalist campaign to make Hungary 'their own', Budapest was engulfed in the flames of the 1848-1849 Revolutions.⁷² The Hungarian Diet renounced all Habsburg authority and declared the establishment of a sovereign Magyar nation-state.⁷³ Inspired by the principles of the Enlightenment, this independent state, whose territory would include all the historic lands of the Crown of St-Istvan (Transylvania, Slovakia and Croatia), would allow freedom of the press, proportional taxation, civil rights, jury trials and the complete abolition of feudalism.⁷⁴ However, it would also be a centralized, unitary Hungarian nation-state whose potential leaders would be socially conservative Magyar landowners seeking civil liberties for their own class.⁷⁵ Consequently, around 93% of Hungary's population was excluded from the franchise in the first "democratic" parliamentary elections held in June of 1848.⁷⁶ By the summer of 1848, it became clear that the Kossuth-led lower nobility did not really intend for true radical social reform. Instead, choosing the path of radical national revolution, they raised a revolutionary army against the Habsburg monarchy.⁷⁷ In addition, Kossuth and the nationalist gentry denied the same national freedoms for the non-Magyar population by imposing a Magyarization program which rejected any sort of compromise.⁷⁸

⁷² Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 208, 209, 214.

⁷³ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 215.

⁷⁴ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed*, 109.

⁷⁵ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 216.

⁷⁶ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed*, 110.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 217.

Frightened by Article VII. of the new Hungarian constitution, which sanctioned the incorporation of Transylvania into the Hungarian state, the Romanian nationalist leaders called the Romanian peasants to arms against their Hungarian landlords.⁷⁹ Ethnic-civil war ensued as the Romanian forces joined the Austrian army against the Hungarian revolution.⁸⁰ Apart from the tragic loss of countless lives, the Revolution of 1848-49 in Transylvania polarized the various ethnic groups along nationalist lines. As Rogers Brubaker explains, "the war-within-a-war took on an ethno-national tint, setting - at least in collective memory and nationalist historiography-Romanians against Hungarians and vice-versa."⁸¹ The inter-ethnic violence of the Revolution was subsequently used by Hungarian and Romanian leaders to justify repressive nationalizing policies, such as Magyarization and nation-building schemes in interwar Romania, directed towards other ethnic groups intermittently during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The memory of the aborted national dream and the sacrifice of those who died for the Hungarian national cause was to be one of the motivations and causes behind the policy of Magyarization during the Dualist era. According to Romanian national historiography, it was the Romanian population who suffered the most from the civil war. They gained no concessions from the Habsburg Crown regarding an autonomous nationality status amid a resurgence of political mistrust and social oppression by the Hungarian upper-classes.⁸²

⁷⁹ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed*, 112.

⁸⁰ Atrocities were committed on both sides as nationalist leaders incited murder, arson and rape in the name of national liberation. For a more detailed account of Transylvania's ethnicized civil war of 1848-49 see Istvan Deak, "The Revolution of 1848-49 in Transylvania and the Polarization of National Destinies," in *Transylvania: The Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, edited by John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi and Louis J. Elteto, (Kent: Kent State UP, 1983), 120-128.

⁸¹ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 62.

⁸² For an excellent examples of Romanian nationalist historiography regarding the Romanian cause in the 1848 Revolution in Transylvania see Lehrer Milton G. *Transylvania: History and Reality* (1944; repr., Silver Spring, Maryland: Bartleby Press, 1986.)

The Hungarian Revolution was ultimately defeated by the Russian intervention in the summer of 1849 and for a decade, Hungary was placed under a system of 'neo-absolutism' designed and orchestrated by the Habsburg interior minister, Alexander Bach. In the words of notable historian A. J. P. Taylor, "the Monarchy swept away all historic claims and privileges, as Hungary had forfeited her constitution by deposing its emperor Francis Joseph".⁸³ The Austrian Empire became, for a short period of time, a fully unitary state with a single administration, a single code of laws and a single system of taxation.⁸⁴

Nonetheless, one of the most important reforms of the 1848 Revolution, the abolition of serfdom in Transylvania, was preserved. The end of feudalism fundamentally changed the political, economic and social relationships between the region's various social and ethnic groups. It transformed the legal status of the social classes, altered economic development, spurred industrialization and aided in the formation of a middle-class influenced by romantic nationalist ideals.⁸⁵ Although both the lower and middle strata of Transylvanian society were most affected by the aforementioned transformations, my primary concern for this portion of the chapter is about the declining social status of the gentry, that is the lower-layers of the Magyar nobility and their role in the Magyarization politics of the Dualist era. The protracted decline of the petty-nobility during the last half of the nineteenth century was brought on by two significant and interlocking reasons. The first cause contributing to their overall demise as a social class, involved their inability to adapt to the changing agricultural practices and economic conditions resulting from the emancipation of their indentured farm workers. Professor Zoltan Szasz illustrates this situation by stressing that most middle-owners lacked the financial means to hire

⁸³ A.J.P. Taylor. *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918*, 85.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Zoltan Szasz, "Agrarian Society," In Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002,) 564.

wage-workers or to modernize their farms because of their heavy financial indebtedness.⁸⁶ The second reason pertaining to their demise as a land-owning social class was their archaic and pompous attitude vis-a-vis the reality of their everyday lives. Failing to develop a spirit of economy, diligence and vigilant entrepreneurship, they maintained instead a facade of wealth while spending beyond their means.⁸⁷ As a consequence, the Hungarian petty-nobility of Transylvania gradually lost their estates and became landless.⁸⁸ In the aftermath of the disastrous Habsburg defeat in the Austro-Prussian war (June-August 1866) and its nearly bankrupt financial situation, Emperor Franz Josef and the Magyar aristocracy negotiated a political agreement which instituted the union of two equal semi-independent states: Austria and Hungary.⁸⁹ Referred to as the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the two states shared a common financial and foreign department as well as a common army but left the interior affairs to be independently governed by its own parliament. Transylvania was fully incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary as a simple province governed by Budapest. As Hungary's state apparatus expanded, the Transylvanian Magyar gentry found employment in the new state bureaucracy, the army and most off all in county-level administration. The numbers speak for themselves. Less than a decade after the Compromise, the number of civil servants doubled, reaching 32,000, then in 1890 it increased to more than 60,000, to finally reach 120,000 in 1910, forming around 3.5%% of the Hungarian labor force.⁹⁰ As their medium-size estates were parceled out for individual or collective ownership for the Romanian peasants, this change in land ownership had repercussions in the realm of national politics.⁹¹ Eventually the petty nobility blended into the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 577.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 579.

⁸⁸ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed*, 188.

⁸⁹ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 241.

⁹⁰ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed*, 189.

⁹¹ Zoltan Szasz, "Agrarian Society," 581-582.

urban middle class, yet they did not forget their noble origins and traditional values which became infused with nationalist rhetoric.⁹² A large number played a decisive role in the political arena, especially during the reign of Hungarian prime minister Kalman Tisza (1875-1890), endorsing the policy of Magyarization as a necessary tool for the maintenance of their status quo.⁹³

Initially after the Compromise, the Hungarian state was ruled by a mixture of moderate, progressive 'liberals' and paternalistic aristocrats headed by prime minister Count Gyualla Andrassy.⁹⁴ He and his most pragmatic ministers, Baron Jozsef Eotvos and Ferenc Deak, envisioned a Hungarian nation-state based on civil rights and inclusive nationalism in which all citizens would be equal no matter their ethnic origins. Hungary would be both an indivisible historic territorial unit and a political nation in which the Magyar community, as the most 'civilized' and politically 'advanced' community would ostensibly be considered first among equals.⁹⁵ Although paternalist in scope and vision, this political outlook translated in the enactment of a liberal and progressive piece of legislation known as the 1868 Nationality Act. Along with the Education Act enacted that same year, the legislations assured the cultural rights of the non-Magyar groups, including a Second Jewish Emancipation Act, their rights to schools in their mother tongue and their rights to form cultural and financial associations as long as the various minorities accepted the underlying principle that Hungarian nation was the sole political nation in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁹⁶ Although the Nationality Act failed to satisfy both the national-minorities leaders and the radical nationalist elements within the Hungarian parliament,

⁹² Ibid., 583.

⁹³ Ivan T. Berend. *History Derailed*, 189.

⁹⁴ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 251.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 252.

⁹⁶ Emil Niederhauser, "The National Question in Hungary," in *The National Question in Europe in Historical Context*, ed. Mikulas Teich and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 259.

they represented a conciliatory step towards peaceful co-existence and eventually reconciliation between Transylvania's ethnic groups. Unfortunately, Jozsef Eotvos died in 1871 and Ferenc Deak withdrew from politics leaving a political vacuum soon to be filled in 1875 by a new political party, Kalman Tisza's so-called 'Liberal Party'.⁹⁷ This new governing party was an amalgamation of a discontent Magyar gentry, former followers of Ferenc Deak and embittered veterans from the 1848 Hungarian Revolution.⁹⁸ It ushered in a new program of aggressive Magyarization which ultimately proved to be profoundly counter-productive regarding the national question and its solution. Non-Magyars were heavily excluded from the civil service, the county administration and the upper strata of the army because they represented the danger of national competition.⁹⁹ Thus the Magyar gentry gained and kept a virtual monopoly of state employment in which, by 1900, they represented 95% of state officials, 92% of county officials and 90% of judges.¹⁰⁰ In Transylvania, the non-Magyar minorities as well as the majority of Magyar peasants were grossly underrepresented in parliamentary elections and local government. In 1874, franchise was limited to those who had a land income of 84 forints and paid a land tax of 18 forints which excluded more than 75% of male eligible voters.¹⁰¹ A further impediment to the Transylvanian suffrage was the preservation of an archaic practice which assigned voting rights according to 'chimneys', meaning that "villages with at least a hundred house could nominate two voters (open ballot) and smaller ones a single voter."¹⁰² Significantly, the proportion of voters was higher in towns than in rural areas thereby favoring

⁹⁷ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 252.

⁹⁸ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918*, 191-192.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Zoltan Szasz, "The Dualist System," In Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 646.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 647.

the Magyar and Saxon populations.¹⁰³ Seen as a main pillar of Magyarization, the corrupt and restrictive electoral system served not only class interests (like it did in the majority of the contemporary European states) but also to severely politically marginalized the non-Magyar ethnic groups.¹⁰⁴ Fervent Magyarization policies were also applied in the education system. No national state schools were ever funded by the Hungarian government as promised in the Education Act of 1868. Worse even was the enactment of a law in 1875 forbidding external donations towards non-Magyar schools in Transylvania.¹⁰⁵ Four years later, Magyar was made the compulsory language in all state-run elementary schools, even in counties with almost no native Magyar speakers.¹⁰⁶ The same law was applied to secondary schools in 1883 and in kindergartens by 1891, for the primary purpose, according to Oscar Jaszy, of "not so much the imparting of useful knowledge as a sentimental education according to the ideology of the ruling class."¹⁰⁷ According to Louis Eisenmann, a contemporary observer and historian on Eastern Europe, all teachers were required to demonstrate an in depth knowledge of the Hungarian language, Hungarian history and literature in order to obtain their teaching diplomas as well as being regularly surveyed by the education ministry for any suspicious anti-Magyar behavior.¹⁰⁸ Although in Transylvania, minority churches continued to provide primary education, in 1902 a new amendment dictate that in their new school curriculum 18 to 24 hours of 26-hour units were reserved for Magyar education.¹⁰⁹ The Magyarization education reached its zenith in 1907 with the adoption of Act XVIII also known as the Apponyi Laws. Aimed at "providing faultless

¹⁰³ After the Compromise, Transylvania's urban population, numbering barely 100,000, elected 23 parliamentary deputies, while the 1.2 million residents of the old counties were represented by a mere 20 deputies. See Szasz, "The Dualist System," 649.

¹⁰⁴ Jaszy, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 349.

¹⁰⁵ Szasz, *The Dualist System*, 650.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Jaszy, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 328-329.

¹⁰⁸ Louis Eisenmann, *Le Compromis Austro-Hongrois de 1867*, (Paris: Societe Nouvelle de Librairie et d'Edition, 1904), 556-557.

¹⁰⁹ Berend, *History Derailed*, 271.

education in patriotic citizenship"¹¹⁰, 'Lex Apponyi' obligated all teachers to swear an oath of loyalty to the Hungarian crown, it demanded spoken and written fluency in Magyar after four years of schools, insisted that all schools be adorned with the Hungarian state seal and flag and punished those who failed to adhere to the above criteria with a fine of 500 crowns.¹¹¹ Official reports stated at the time that these measures were meant to "reinforce in the souls of the children attachment to the fatherland and consciousness of belonging to the Hungarian nation"¹¹² but in reality they supported and perpetuated an inefficient and costly education system which kept the Transylvanian peasant masses illiterate. In just one year after the Apponyi School Law, over 600 Romanian villages were left without schools as those deemed "inadequate" in the instruction of Magyar were closed by the county administration.¹¹³ The Magyar peasants also lost out because the state could not afford to finance appropriate Magyar schools for the native Hungarian speakers and at the same time 'indoctrinate' the non-Magyar population.¹¹⁴

Yet another chauvinistic and unnecessary example of aggressive Magyarization was Act IV of 1898 which declared that municipalities could only bear Magyar names. All place-names on official documents, maps and signs were Magyarized by the interior ministry which also suggested the Magyarization of non-Magyar surnames.¹¹⁵ To aid this process from the grassroots level was the Transylvanian Hungarian Cultural Association or EMKE, a voluntary association of lawyers, civil servants and university professors. Founded in Kolozsvar in 1884 as a civic network to promote Magyar language and culture, it sought to 're-Magyarize' Transylvania's rural landscape by linking through common national sentiment the scattered peripheral Magyar

¹¹⁰ Ministerial Justification Parliamentary Documents, 1906-1911, no.421, p. 75.

¹¹¹ Sandor Biro, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania 1867-1940*, (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), 217-218.

¹¹² Biro, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania 1867-1940*, 218.

¹¹³ Vasile Stoica, *The Romanian Question*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Printing Company, 1919), 22.

¹¹⁴ Bidileux and Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe*, 255.

¹¹⁵ Geza Jeszenszky, "Hungary through World War One and the Dual Monarchy," in *A History of Hungary*, eds. Peter F. Sugar, Peter Hanak and Tibor Frank (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), 271.

settlements to the urban Magyar core.¹¹⁶ Although deemed as a cultural society, EMKE was sometimes financed by the public purse depending if its president was well connected to the upper echelons of power. Upon his election as president of EMKE, Count Gabor Bethlen, the lord-lieutenant of a Romanian majority-speaking county by the name of Kis-Kukullo, enacted a legislation which imposed a 2% county surtax to provide a subsidy for the association.¹¹⁷

Despite the nationalizing pressures of the Hungarian state and its associated cultural societies, the spread of Magyar language, especially in rural areas, remained limited. According to the 1880 state census, in Transylvania only 5,7% of the non-Hungarian population possessed a suitable knowledge of Magyar and while that number tripled to reach 15,2% in 1910, the fact remained that assimilation through the Transylvanian primary school system only produced meager results.¹¹⁸ Another crucial fact impeding national homogenization in Transylvania was its rural character.¹¹⁹ While acculturation of German-speakers and Jews occurred at a steady pace in urban areas, especially in Budapest, the overwhelming majority of Romanians were peasants, living their lives in closed communities dictated primarily by the tradition, the Church and the agricultural seasons. Finally, the significant moral strength the Romanian Churches (Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox) limited and resisted the spread of Magyarization throughout the province.¹²⁰ Even though, modern nationalism was rapidly spreading across the Eastern European urban centers, the majority of rural Romanians in Transylvania still held their confessional identity as their primary one, rarely intermixing with people of other faiths. Furthermore, the Romanian Churches and their leaders were often at the forefront of the

¹¹⁶ Szasz, *The Dualist System*, 654.

¹¹⁷ Szasz, *The Dualist System*, 655.

¹¹⁸ Zoltan Szasz, "Internal and Regional Integration," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 563.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 556.

¹²⁰ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 66.

Romanian struggle for political, religious and cultural autonomy within the Austro-Hungarian empire throughout the nineteenth century.¹²¹

Far from only being seen by the non-Magyar minorities as deeply degrading and purposely malevolent, the policies of forcible assimilation stubbornly pursued by the Hungarian administration during the Dualist era also created a climate of fear and tensions along national lines which the Romanian nationalist elite conjured and exploited during the interwar years. The policies of Magyarization provided ample justification for the radical nationalist policies of Transylvania's Romanian national elite in the years following the Union. Contemporary moderate voices such as Oscar Jaszi's warned that "this fear complex of the nationality danger systematically developed by the press and school and parliamentary and social oratory made any serious social or economic reforms impossible."¹²² The political and social attitude towards Hungary's ethnic minorities transformed into a zero-sum game in which either Hungary would assimilate them or they would destroy the Hungarian state.¹²³ This irreconcilable attitude towards Transylvania's "nationality question" persisted in the interwar era when the power structures were reversed and the Hungarian population became a minority group of Great Romania. Simply put, Dualist Hungary, as "nationalizing state"¹²⁴, provided the perfect model for the nationalist politics and its assimilation policies of the interwar Romania.¹²⁵

1.3 The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania: Myth and Reality

¹²¹ On the relationship between religion and national consciousness see Keith Hitchens, *Orthodoxy and Nationality: Andreiu Saguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1977).

¹²² Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 326.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 320.

¹²⁴ As explained in my introduction, the theoretical model proposed by Rogers Brubaker regarding the nationalizing states of the interwar years can also be applied to the Kingdom of Hungary before the First World War.

¹²⁵ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 64.

In 1907, renowned Austrian socialist thinker Otto Bauer famously remarked that during the nineteenth century culture was the creation of the upper-classes for the purpose of "awakening the nations without history."¹²⁶ Recognizing the importance of this statement, it is with this concept in mind that this study will analyze the genesis of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania, its development throughout the Compromise years and its national aspirations and its political goals. Although nationalist studies in the interwar years, during Communism, and some even today, claimed that a "national struggle" waged by the masses for national unification of all Romanians on both side of the Carpathian mountains has primordial roots dating back to the Middle Ages, the many diaries, documents and petitions of the Romanian national heroes suggest otherwise. Up until the involvement of Romania in the World War One, the Romanian national movement was neither secessionist nor irredentist.¹²⁷ Right up until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the small Romanian intelligentsia in Transylvania perceived themselves to be part of a ethno-national collectivity within the multiethnic realm seeking an autonomous status rather than a nation split between two states by historical circumstances.

Up until the 1830s, the Romanian struggle for the equal recognition as a fourth *natio* was led by the Uniate (Greek Catholic) and Orthodox clergy, in part because the Romanian nobility had been gradually Magyarized over the centuries.¹²⁸ Shortly after its own inception in 1692, the Uniate Church¹²⁹ founded the Transylvanian School (*Scoala Ardeleana* in Romanian), a cultural movement loosely based on the principles of the Enlightenment which served as a tool for the

¹²⁶ Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, (1924; repr., Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 157.

¹²⁷ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 67.

¹²⁸ Jean Nouzille, *Transylvania, an Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, trans.Delia Razdolescu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedica, 1996), 211.

¹²⁹ The Uniate faith was a hybrid religious doctrine recognizing the basic elements of the Greek Orthodox faith but accepting papal supremacy. For a on its history and purpose see Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 106-113.

emergence and development of a distinct Romanian culture. The Romania-clergy intellectuals, while studying Latin philology discovered that the Romanian language had Latin foundations, thus making those who spoke it the direct descendants of the Roman legions which had occupied the region fifteen hundred years past.¹³⁰ This concept would later on become one of the basic premises of Romanian nationalism in the form of the Daco-Roman continuity myth.

In 1791, the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians (composed mainly of the Uniate and Orthodox clergy), drafted a document known as the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* (Humble Petition of the Wallachians) which would be regarded as the bible by the Transylvanian Romanian national movement. The petition asked the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold II, to allow Romanians equal rights as a fourth *natio* in Transylvania, grant proportional representation in the Transylvanian Diet and to accept the Romanian Orthodox Church as an official third religion.¹³¹ It justified its demands on the theory that the Romanians, a Latin people with a Latin language, were the original occupants of Transylvania, descendent from Emperor's Trajan Roman legions.¹³² Upon reading it, the monarch passed it on to the Transylvanian Diet for ratification, where it caused a fierce uproar among the nobles of the three privileged 'nations' and was rejected on the spot. As Katherine Verdery writes, one of the main reasons for its dismissal was because Transylvania's constitution was concerned not with 'nationalities' (the common people) but with 'estates' (the nobles), a status to which many of the wealthier Romanians had acquired, thus proving that they already had rights.¹³³ Although it failed to

¹³⁰ Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 119.

¹³¹ Original text of the petition found in Dan Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum: Din Istoria Formarii Natiunii Romane* (On the History of the Formation of the Romanian Nation)m (Bucuresti: Editura Stiintifica si Enciclopedica, 1984), 469-480.

¹³² Original text of the petition found in Dan Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum: Din Istoria Formarii Natiunii Romane* (On the History of the Formation of the Romanian Nation)m (Bucuresti: Editura Stiintifica si Enciclopedica, 1984), 469-470.

¹³³ Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 121.

change the political status of the Transylvanian Romanians, the petition inspired the next generation of romantic Romanian nationalists.

According to professor Miroslav Hroch's theoretical model regarding the three chronological stages in the evolution of Eastern European nationalism, the first one is based around a romantic, folkloric version of a national past "revived" by a handful of intellectuals which took up the task of studying the history of their oppressed ethnic group.¹³⁴ In the thirty years following the defeat of the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* petition, the Romanian intellectual classes of Transylvania took up an intense search for the origins, traditions and language of the Romanian nation. In his 1812 book on the *History of the Origins of Romanians in Dacia*, respected and influential scholar Petru Maior affirmed that the Romanian population in Transylvania were the direct descendants of a noble and ancient Daco-Roman nation and therefore the original occupants of Transylvania.¹³⁵ Thirteen years later, this theory generated a radical reform of the Romanian language, in which the Latin alphabet replaced the Cyrillic one, while Slavic sounding words replaced by newly created words of Latin, Italian and French origin.¹³⁶ The Romanian modern language was thus created by the cultural and linguistic architects of the Transylvanian School in a top-down initiative. The first Romanian newspapers made their appearance at the same time with the publication of the first political weekly, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, published in Brassó by professor Gheorghe Baritiu in 1838.¹³⁷

Despite its 'rediscovery' of a glorious national past, the Romanian national movement was ill-equipped to deal with the *Realpolitik* of the 1848 uprisings. While the Hungarian

¹³⁴ Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*. (1985 repr., New York: Columbia UP, 2000), 22

¹³⁵ Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, 57-58.

¹³⁶ Berend, *History Derailed*, 53.

¹³⁷ Biro, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania, 1867-1940*, 295.

revolutionaries fought for the abolition of the feudal order and the equality and rights of 'the individual', the Romanians fought to acquire citizenship for their 'collectivity' which had been denied political recognition.¹³⁸ Therefore, it seemed logical to the Romanian nationalist leaders to side with the imperial forces which promised them an equal 'national' status within their multiethnic empire. The passing of the April Laws in the spring of 1848 by the Hungarian Diet, changed for the worse the relationship between the two revolutionary movements. The Romanians absolutely refused to accept the last clause of the April Laws which stipulated the incorporation of Transylvania as a province of a centralized and unitary Hungarian state.¹³⁹ The dark clouds of ethnic conflict appeared on the horizon.

In the aftermath of the revolution, both the Hungarian and Romanian national movements lost their initial universalist and inclusionary revolutionary traits.¹⁴⁰ Instead, they developed mutually antagonistic, exclusionary and socially conservative versions of nationalist ideologies which would continue to fester under the surface until the disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy. Despite the initial promises of political recognition made by the Austrian Crown to the Transylvanian Romanians in return for their loyalty during the revolution, the regime clamped down on the Romanian national movement during the following decade. The publication of *Gazeta Transylvaniei* (The Transylvania Gazette) was suspended, certain leaders of the national movement, such as Axente Sever, were imprisoned, the Uniate Bishop of Transylvania, Ioan Lemeni was suspended and freedom of speech and assembly were banned.¹⁴¹ Despite such restrictions, a Transylvanian association for the literature and culture of the Romanian people (ASTRA) was founded in Sibiu in 1861 by Bishop Andrei Şaguna and

¹³⁸ Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 191.

¹³⁹ Ambrus Miskolezi, "Counter-revolution and Civil War," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 277.

¹⁴⁰ Berend, *History Derailed*, 115.

¹⁴¹ Nouzille, *Transylvania, An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 216.

journalist Gheorghe Barițiu.¹⁴² The Romanian national movement gained substantial momentum at the meeting of the Transylvanian Diet in October 1863, which comprised 49 Romanian, 44 Hungarian, 33 Saxon and 11 ("royal") other deputies for each of the three ethnic groups.¹⁴³ At last the Romanians felt included in the political discourse of the region when the Diet legislated the equality of their nation and their faith with the other nationalities and religions.¹⁴⁴ Alas their victory was short lived as a new Diet congregated in the fall of 1865 to review the possible incorporation of Transylvania into the Hungarian polity. The newly elected Diet, overwhelmingly Magyar due to a change in the electoral system, took only a few days to debate the Transylvanian question before a vote was put in to place. On November 19th 1865, the motion passed despite the protests of the Romanian and Saxon deputies, and the union of the two regions seemed unavoidable.¹⁴⁵

The *Ausgleich* inaugurated in 1867 altered Transylvania's political status from a quasi-autonomous region in the Habsburg Empire to a province within the newly formed unitary Kingdom of Hungary. Despite the solemn protests of the Romanian deputies, the Transylvanian Diet voted itself out of existence on June 20th 1867, allowing the Hungarian parliament to abrogate its previous laws concerning the recognition of the Romanians as having fourth 'nation' status.¹⁴⁶ In return, the Romanian national movement refused to accept the new status quo and convened at a national assembly during which the movement split in two camps, the passivists and the activists. The later, led by Alexandru Mocioni from the Banat region, opted for the participation in the Hungarian political arena in order to secure minority rights within the

¹⁴² Ibid., 217

¹⁴³ Nouzille, *Transylvania, An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 217.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid..

¹⁴⁶ Nouzille, *Transylvania, An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 221.

existing political system and proceeded to form in 1869 the National Party of Romanians.¹⁴⁷ However, they were in the minority as the rest of the Romanian intelligentsia formed the National Party of Transylvania that adopted a non-partisan strategy of passivism refusing to acknowledge the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and vowing to protest against its every decree.¹⁴⁸ This passive stance continued for the next decade as fewer and fewer Romanians managed to occupy parliamentary seats in Budapest. The national movement was increasingly plagued by internal divisions, disorganization and financial insecurity.¹⁴⁹ Ironically, it was the passing of the Treford Education Act of 1878, which limited the freedom of private school sponsors, that jolted the Romanian political intelligentsia in putting aside their political differences and uniting to create the Romanian National Party (RNP) in 1881.¹⁵⁰

The new party's nationalist program pushed the Romanian nationalist movement into what Miroslav Hroch calls, the second stage of national 'revival', the period of patriotic agitation.¹⁵¹ Adopting an unprecedentedly critical tone towards the Hungarian government, *Tribuna* (The Tribune), the first daily Romanian newspaper appeared in Sibiu on April 26 1884. The newspaper found its way to the literate public by adopting a new style of partisan journalism.¹⁵² It sought to appeal to the Romanian masses by tugging at their emotions in order to induce a state of permanent political mobilization by denouncing the Magyarization policies and championing the cultural unity of Romanians on both sides of the Carpathian mountains.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Zoltan Szasz, "The Romanians' Road to Passive Resistance," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 672

¹⁴⁸ Zoltan Szasz, "The Romanians' Road to Passive Resistance," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 673.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 676.

¹⁵¹ Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, 23.

¹⁵² Zoltan Szasz, "The 'Memorandum' Movement," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 682.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 683.

A few years later, under the favorable romantic nationalist program of the newly formed Kingdom of Romania, the League for Cultural Unity of All Romanians was formed in Bucharest which vowed to defend the political and cultural struggle of the Romanians in Transylvania.¹⁵⁴ In the spring of 1891, its members drafted a student manifesto entitled the *Memorandum of the Romanian University Students on the Situation of Transylvania and Hungary* in order to endorse the nationalist struggle waged by Transylvania's Romanians to the youth of Europe.¹⁵⁵ The Hungarian students at Kolozsvar (Cluj) University responded with memorandum of their own which declared that the Hungarian state provides ideal living conditions and numerous civil liberties for all nationalities.¹⁵⁶ Not to be surpassed by their peers from Bucharest, a committee of students from Sibiu under the leadership of Aurel C. Popovici, counter-responded with the distribution of 15,000 pamphlets all over Europe presenting the plight of the Romanians in Transylvania.¹⁵⁷ The pamphlet war was in full session when the European media took notice of it. Viewing this as an encouragement towards its nationalist cause, the RNP decided to present its own official petition to the Habsburg Emperor, Francis Joseph upon the twenty fifth anniversary of the Dual Monarchy. The Memorandum document, a statement of national grievances, was solemnly presented to the Viennese court by a delegation of three hundred Romanians from Transylvania, including the leader of the RNP, Ioan Ratiu on May 28th 1892.¹⁵⁸ The list of grievances contained in the petition addressed a number of issues, ranging from denouncing the unfairness of the electoral system to the marginalization of Romanians in the political sphere by

¹⁵⁴ Nouzille, *Transylvania, An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 225.

¹⁵⁵ Nouzille, *Transylvania, An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 225.

¹⁵⁶ Zoltan Szasz, "The 'Memorandum' Movement," 684.

¹⁵⁷ Nouzille, *Transylvania, An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 226.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

the way of challenging the legitimacy of the Dualist Compromise.¹⁵⁹ The delegation never met with his highness Francis Joseph. He refused to receive them on the grounds that this was a domestic problem which had to be settled in Budapest.¹⁶⁰ Initially, the plight of the Romanians failed to cause a stir with the Western media but then the Hungarian government saved it from oblivion by bringing the entire executive committee of the party to trial for agitating against the Hungarian state.¹⁶¹ The highly publicized trial opened on May 7 1894 in Kolozsvar in front of an all Magyar court, including jury and judges. The Romanian defenders regarded the trial as a political war directed not just against them and their party but against the whole Romanian nation.¹⁶² A kind of 'pan-Romanian' movement developed as over five hundred articles dedicated to the Romanian cause were published in the Western European and American press.¹⁶³ The French press were the most sympathetic to their 'Latin' brothers in the East. In a article published on May 8 1894, in the *La Justice* newspaper, George Clemenceau, wrote " This trial is a disgrace for the free Hungarian nation. Dr. Ratiu and his companions may be sentenced, but European opinion has already acquitted them." After seventeen days the trial came to an end with fourteen 'memorandist' leaders receiving prison sentences ranging from two months to five years.¹⁶⁴ Although the condemned men were freed by royal decree in 1895, the Memorandum movement represented a watershed moment between the Romanian elite and the Habsburg Emperor. It was the last time that the RNP would appeal to the imperial center as the myth of the 'good

¹⁵⁹ Keith Hitchins, "Austri-Hungary, Rumania and the Memorandum 1894," in *Romanian Studies. An International Annual of the Humanities and Social Studies*, vol.III, ed. Keith Hitchins (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 108.

¹⁶⁰ Zoltan Szasz, "The 'Memorandum' Movement," 688

¹⁶¹ Keith Hitchins, "Austri-Hungary, Rumania and the Memorandum 1894," 109.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁶³ Nouzille, *Transylvania, A Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 227.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

emperor' ceased to exist in the minds of the Transylvanian Romanian after 1893.¹⁶⁵ More importantly, the Memorandum movement precipitated a new phase in the development of the national movement. The traditional approach of passivism was abandoned by the turn of the century. The Romanian nationalist leaders understood the potential power of public mobilization which could be harnessed through public speeches, partisan journalism, public rallies and nationalism propaganda.

The Memorandum campaign also further antagonized the Hungarian government which, under the leadership of Baron Dezso Banffy (1895-1899), intensified its Magyarization campaign in Transylvania.¹⁶⁶ The Romanian national representatives were denounced as traitors to their country and their party, deemed 'unconstitutional', was dissolved by the authorities in 1894.¹⁶⁷ A campaign of political persecution ensued against all actions deemed as 'instigating anti-Magyar sentiments' spear headed by the newly created department of nationality affairs. Established under the initiative of prime minister Banffy and headed by Sandor Jeszenszky, the onetime prosecutor of the *Replica* case, the department was actually an office for Romanian affairs.¹⁶⁸ It aided the government in seeking out crimes called "instigation to national hatred" punishable by prison terms and/or hefty fines. Between 1886 and 1908, the period labeled as the apex of Magyarization, there were 353 political trials during which the sentences totaled almost 132 years in prison and 93,000 crowns in fines.¹⁶⁹ The accused ranged from politicians, teachers, clerics, students, doctors, lawyers and theatre actors but it was the Romanian press personnel that

¹⁶⁵ Aron Szele, "Nationalism, National Movements and the Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Case Study: The Activity and Discourse of the Romanian National Party of Transylvania 1900-1914" (master's thesis, Central European University, 2008), 62.

¹⁶⁶ Zoltan Szasz, "Changes in Government Policy," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 694.

¹⁶⁷ Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 334.

¹⁶⁸ Zoltan Szasz, "Changes in Government Policy," 696.

¹⁶⁹ Scotus Viator (R.W. Seton-Watson), *Racial Problems in Hungary* (London: Butler & Tanner, the Selwood Printing Press, 1908), 466.

were by far the most indicted for seditious libel.¹⁷⁰ This situation suggests that the national movement had found a way to express and draw attention to its grievances through the organs of the press. To the chagrin of the Hungarian authorities, the spread of national consciousness among the Romanian masses was disseminated by the Transylvanian newspapers paving the way for the third stage of national 'revival'.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, the rise of a mass national movement and union with the Kingdom of Romania was not to be imagined possible by the Romanian leaders until at the very end of World War One when the perfect opportunity presented itself.

On January 23rd 1905, the Romanian National Party convened in Nagyszeben (Sibiu) and decided to resume its activist stance by ending its tactic of political abstention. Fourteen "nationalist" deputies become members of the Hungarian Parliament, after the 1905 legislative elections, and together with seven Slovak deputies and five Serbian deputies, they formed a nationalist parliamentary group that would promote and organize cooperation among the aforementioned ethnic groups of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁷² A year later, Aurel C. Popovici, a Romanian lawyer from Banat, proposed in his book, *Die vereinigten Staaten Gross-Oestereichs* (The United States of Great Austria) to restructure the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a federation.¹⁷³ Based on the same political model favored by the United States of America, the Federation project advocated the federalization of the monarchy into fifteen distinctly new national territories under a federal parliament, with a common army and custom union, in which German would be the official language.¹⁷⁴ Favored by archduke Francis Ferdinand and despised by the Hungarian officials, the Federalist plan would have supplemented Hungarian domination over Transylvania in favor of Austrian supremacy.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 448-453.

¹⁷¹ Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, 23.

¹⁷² Nouzille, *Transylvania; An Area of Contacts and Conflicts*, 231.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Empire*, 245, 399.

The RNP was at first sympathetic of the Danubian Federation plan yet it recognized its unfeasibility and continued their activist nationalist stand. In autumn of 1910, on the eve of parliamentary elections, the RNP submitted yet another list of economic and cultural demands to Hungarian government which included " the extension of franchise, official status of the Romanian language, a minimum number of administrative posts reserved for Romanians and the creation of three Romanian secondary schools."¹⁷⁵ In return, the Romanians conceded to accept the basic terms of Dualist Compromise.¹⁷⁶ The Hungarian government rejected the offer but promised to take the Romanian demands as a starting point in resolving the age-old "nationality question".¹⁷⁷ In response, the Romanian nationalists intensified their political agitations by convening political rallies and public assemblies to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of ASTRA. Subsequently, two more rounds of negotiations (1912, 1913) ensued during which both sides had to consider the opinions of their supporters and critics. The Hungarian government considered acquiescing to the Romanian demands but only if they would agree to a final settlement by signing a formal "declaration of renunciation."¹⁷⁸ Neither the broader Romanian intelligentsia, nor the Bucharest government deemed the Hungarian proposals acceptable and warned the RNP not to seek agreement at any cost.¹⁷⁹ The Romanian national committee broke off negotiations with the Hungarian government ending the last attempts before the calamity of the war struck. Although both sides claimed that they truly sought to find a permanent mutually benefiting resolution, neither considered the implementation of a restructuring process of democratization. The Hungarian-Romanian relations were fraught with a history of mutual distrust which only

¹⁷⁵ Zoltan Szasz, "The Last Dualist Experiment: Istvan Tisza's Negotiations with the Romanians," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 720.

¹⁷⁶ Zoltan Szasz, "The Last Dualist Experiment: Istvan Tisza's Negotiations with the Romanians", 720.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 723.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 726.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 727.

intensified during the era of nationalist aspirations and ambitions. Interestingly enough, the war had some positive effects on the political situation of Transylvania's Romanians because their province became a token of wartime diplomacy used by both the Central Powers and the Entente to vie for Romania's military alliance.¹⁸⁰ However, the Hungarian war-time concessions came too late for the Romanian leaders which recognized the possibility of political union with Romania and a reversal of the established power structures.

This chapter has provided a broad historical examination of Transylvania's internal diversity during its time as a Austro-Hungarian province. Although the Hungarian government went to great lengths to linguistically and culturally assimilate the various Transylvanian minorities, their success was limited. Instead Magyarization only worsened social relations between the various ethnic groups by erecting nationality based barriers between the privileged and the marginalized. As Katherine Verdery explains, "the climate, the mentality, set within which *all* conflict could be fought out in nationalist terms. Social conflicts were so tightly entangled with "national" differences as to be inextricable, displacing onto the national plane all manner "¹⁸¹ The Magyarization politics and policies of the Hungarian state provoked the Romanian intelligentsia to respond in nationalist terms. The Romanian national "revival" pursued by the Romanian elite in Transylvania overshadowed urgent economic and social concerns which continued to remain unresolved throughout the interwar years. Naively, the Romanian politicians believed that all of Transylvania's political, economic and social woes would remedy themselves with the advent of the Union. Instead, the union of Transylvania with Romania precipitated a social crisis which facilitated the adoption of an intolerant, xenophobic,

¹⁸⁰ Zoltan Szasz, "The Early Stages," in Bela Kopeczi, ed., *History of Transylvania, Volume III. From 1830-1919*. Translated by Bennett Kovrig (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 720.

¹⁸¹ Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 122-123.

integral nationalism as a state ideology, used primarily to promote the "core" nation's interests at the expense of all the other minority groups.

Chapter 2

Political Ideology and the Transylvanian Romanian Press

Of all the victors at the Versailles Peace Treaty, the Old Kingdom of Romania or Regat was the most fortunate and made the most notable gains. It more than doubled its territory and population with the annexation of the provinces of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania from the crumbling Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires.¹⁸² This "embarrassment of riches", dubbed so by historian Irina Livezeanu,¹⁸³ created a situation in which the incongruities between the reality and the ambitions of Greater Romania favored a political culture obsessed with projects of nation building, cultural standardisation and government centralization. The added

¹⁸² According to the 1923 census, the first official census to include the newly added provinces, the population of Romania increased from 7,897,311 in 1915 to 16,500,000 in 1923 while its territory in the period of time more than doubled from 137,903 square kilometres to 295,049 square kilometres. See Institutul Central de Statistica (The Central Institute of Statistics), *Anuarul Statistic al Romaniei 1923*, Bucharest Digital Library, (hereafter ICS) p. 10-14. <http://digibuc.ro/colectii/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei-c6804>

¹⁸³ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 7.

territories were significantly more ethnically and culturally diverse than the Old Kingdom, as well as being overwhelmingly rural and agricultural. Whereas fewer than 8 percent of the Regat's population had been members of minority groups, Greater Romania had a non-Romanian population of 30 percent which included Hungarians, Saxons, Russians, Ruthenians, Serbians and Jews.¹⁸⁴ This sudden and dramatic shift in the national demographic balance had state officials particularly concerned because the newly acquired minority groups not only "diluted" the Romanian nation but often tended to be more urban, better educated and more historically privileged than the Romanian population. Thus one can argue that the nationalization of the new provinces was of critical importance to the Romanian policy makers as they sought to "reclaim" "their" towns and "their" cultural institutions by dislodging the "foreign" minorities from their long-held esteemed positions.¹⁸⁵ Transylvania's demographic and cultural situation was particularly alarming for the Romanian nationalists because the overwhelming rural character of the Romanian population had drastically limited their economic position and cultural influence in Transylvania's urban centers during the Dualism era. According to the 1910 census, less than 20 percent of Romanians were city dwellers while Hungarians, Saxons and Jews, totaling less than half the province's population, made up for over 85 percent of Transylvania's urban residents.¹⁸⁶ To remedy this situation, the Romanian government embarked on a national mission to culturally unify and strengthen the economic and social position of the "core nation" in Transylvania, while simultaneously marginalizing the "foreign" communities through what

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 9

¹⁸⁵ I use the term "foreign" to designate national minorities because in the interwar period, Eastern European regimes referred to any ethnic minority groups as "foreigners" even though they had been living on the same territories for centuries. For further discussion see Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), pp.288-90 and Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), pp.135-136.

¹⁸⁶ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 135.

professor Brubakers calls *practices of dissimulation*.¹⁸⁷ Contrary to the policies of the Austro-Hungarian empire which sought by way of Magyarization to assimilate its various ethnic groups, Greater Romania's nationalization tactics towards its minority population dictated that they be treated according to their differences which were perceived as fundamental and immutable.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, while all of Greater Romania's ethnic minorities acquired Romanian *citizenship* under the 1923 constitution, they were denied Romanian *nationality* thus placing them outside the ethno-cultural nation.¹⁸⁹

Heavily influenced by a dominant discourse of integral nationalism, the aforementioned concepts were essential components of Romania's political culture during the interwar years. This ideological framework, accepted widely throughout the newly acquired territories, was promoted and disseminated by the state school system, the army, various cultural institutions and the newspapers. In Transylvania's major urban centers, the Romanian press keenly reflected and espoused the integral nationalist stance of the political atmosphere thus shaping the national self-image of the recently incorporated Romanian population. Aiming at the widest circulation as possible, the newspapers disseminated the theory of integral nationalism among the masses in a sensationalist and chauvinistic fashion, thereby contributing to their nationalist instruction.

Consequently, the primary concern of this chapter is to analyse and deconstruct discourses of integral nationalism and their role within regional politics and civil society as presented by several daily, weekly and monthly publications in various Transylvanian cities. The chapter focuses on answering the questions of why and how did the Romanian press in

¹⁸⁷ The "core nation" or nationality in interwar Romania was understood in ethno-cultural terms which prevented the development of a state-framed "civic" and "territorial" concept of nationhood. See Brubakers, *Nationalism Reframed*, 83-85.

¹⁸⁸ Brubakers, *Nationalism Reframed*, 88.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Transylvania promote, create, circulate and reproduce an integral nationalist political vision during the first decade of the interwar years. Commencing with a brief discussion on the theory of integral nationalism drawing primarily from the scholarly works of Carlton J. H. Hayes, Peter Alter, Irina Livezeanu, and Rogers Brubaker, this chapter seeks to address the aforementioned questions with three separate yet interconnected issues. The first one concerns the status of the Romanian population in Transylvania after the Union as being politically and demographically dominant but economically and culturally weak, especially in the urban areas. Perceived by the state and the regional nationalist elite as a grave and "unnatural" imbalance of the social order attributed to a legacy of ethnic discrimination, its remedy involved the implementation of policies and practices derived from an ideology of "intolerant" nationalism.¹⁹⁰ Thus my argument draws attention to how this "cultural anxiety" was inadvertently displayed throughout the popular Transylvanian press by the numerous articles which sought to elevate the cultural status of the Romanian element by diminishing that of the ethnic minorities.

My second argument focuses on the aspirations of Transylvania's Romanian intellectuals to construct a unified national consciousness with the aid of the printed press in Transylvania's most populous cities. According to the Romanian nationalists, the task of forming a unitary, culturally homogenous nation in a multicultural region like Transylvania was best achieved through an interventionist strategy of cultural mobilizations and activism.¹⁹¹

My final argument centers around the so-called 'Great Debate' between the Europeanists and the Traditionalists regarding Greater Romania's national development during the interwar

¹⁹⁰ One definition for the term 'intolerant' nationalism refers to the aspirations of the Romanian political and cultural leaders to achieve ethnic and cultural exclusiveness in a multi-ethnic society through discriminatory measures towards minority groups. See Laszo Peter, "Introduction", in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, 38-39.

¹⁹¹ Irina Livezeanu, "Fascists and Conservatives in Romania: Two Generations of Nationalists," in *Fascists and Conservatives*, ed. Martin Blinkhorn (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003), 220.

years. The Romanian intellectuals argued vehemently for the pursuit of spiritual revival yet were deeply divided over Transylvania's collective social and economic destiny. Their spirited polemics were frequently reproduced by the Transylvanian press which served as a debating forum for pressing questions concerning national principles, identities, priorities, values and norms. Press articles such as editorials, daily columns, front-page headlines and reader rants from several popular Transylvanian newspapers will serve as primary evidence for my arguments in this and in the other following chapters.

My analysis will also seeks to situate itself within the exiting literature on Romanian cultural history during the interwar years. It takes a cultural historical approach as it seeks to study the creation of nationalist sentiments by the Romanian political and cultural elites of Transylvania as narrated by the local newspapers. Furthermore, central to my analysis and interwoven throughout the chapter is the theory that the process of national consolidation proved to be strenuous, arduous and ironically divisive for the newly enlarged Romanian state and its society. It ultimately contributed in creating the ideal political and social conditions for the rise of the ultra-nationalist movement the Legion of the Archangel Michael and its fascist paramilitary wing, the Iron Guard, which dominated the political scene from the late 1920s until its suppression by another ultra-nationalist leader, general Ion Antonescu.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Greater Romania's post-war nation-building agenda developed in a political climate which rested on the political principles various historians have referred to as either integral,

intolerant, nationalizing or reactionary nationalism.¹⁹² The Romanian government and many influential members of the elite embraced it as official state policy meant to uphold the prosperity and integrity of the Romanian "nation" against the efforts of the various minority groups trying to maintain their identity and culture.¹⁹³ To better understand this ethno-nationalist discourse and its dissemination by the press throughout Romania's civil society, a theoretical framework must be constructed for the analysis of such terms along with their meanings and implications.

Even though nationalism is one of the most important concepts of this chapter, its definitions and interpretations are not the focus of the following analytical discussion. Rather, my interest lies with one specific 'subspecies' of nationalism referred to by historian Carlton J. H. Hayes as "integral nationalism". In his 1931 book, *The Historical Evolution of Nationalism*, Hayes credits French politician Charles Maurras as the first to use the term to describe the nationalist doctrine of his *Action Francaise*, a far-right political movement in the early twentieth century. Hayes used Maurras' own words to define integral nationalism as "the exclusive pursuit of national policies, the absolute maintenance of national integrity and the steady increase of national power."¹⁹⁴ He argues that this type nationalism is not invoked by "oppressed" or "subject" nationalities but rather by those which have already gained their political unity and/or independence.¹⁹⁵ At first glance, the above description seems vague and ambiguous, something that can be applied to any interwar European state, yet it leads to the conclusion that the 'nation' is an end in itself, above the needs of both the individual and of humanity at large. Integral

¹⁹² The numerous terms referring to this type of nationalism indicate that there does not exist a generally accepted terminology or definition in academic writing. Therefore for clarification purposes the glossary of various historians and scholars is explained within this paper.

¹⁹³ Oliver Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 66-67.

¹⁹⁴ Carleton J. Hayes. *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1931), 165.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

nationalist doctrine dictated that national integrity can only be maintained through the 'purity' of the nation by ridding itself of 'foreign' or 'alien' influences.¹⁹⁶ In turn, these teachings formed the blueprints Greater Romania's national development, translating into intolerant state policies towards ethnic minorities, immigrants and organizations which protected them, such as the League of Nations.

In his 1994 book entitled, *Nationalism*, historian Peter Alter resumes Hayes' discussion on the origins and meanings of integral nationalism but takes it a step further by focussing on the consequences it had on the political environment of Europe in the interwar era. Although, Alter does not use Romania as a specific example when referring to integral nationalism, his analysis regarding the rise and crystallization of extreme national sentiments preceding a crisis of national self-confidence can be applied to Greater Romania in the interwar period, especially in the first post-war decade.¹⁹⁷ To better illustrate his point, Alter uses as his examples defeated France after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and Germany post-World War One, but I would argue that in the case of Greater Romania, one of the most fortunate states at the Peace Settlements, the crisis of national self-confidence came about in part because of its abundance of "riches", both in terms of territory and populations. The three new or "restored" provinces of Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transylvania were expected to add valuable agricultural, mineral and industrial resources to the Romanian economy, and they did, but they also contributed to the worsening of social and ethnic tensions between the Romanian population and the substantial and discontented minority groups.¹⁹⁸ The Magyars and the Jews were especially mistrusted and resented by

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 167, 168.

¹⁹⁷ Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Edward Arnold, 1994), 32.

¹⁹⁸ Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 281.

Romanian society, the former because of their past political experience and prowess while the latter because of their economic and intellectual abilities.¹⁹⁹

Irina Livezeanu proposes a similar argument in her book, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, when she suggests that during the interwar period, the political climate was so saturated with discourses of integral nationalism that it became known as the national common language. She explains how the state's cultural, social and economic policies were driven primarily by its desire to "Romanize" the new provinces thus reinforcing a populist, nationalist rhetoric in the political and cultural spheres.²⁰⁰ Consolidating the Romanian provinces proved to be a gruelling task for Greater Romania's government because of the weak economic and cultural positions occupied by the majority of the Romanians in the peripheral regions. The state and local elite responded with a "cultural offensive" which aspired to the formation of a national elite from the ranks of the Romanian peasantry by the imposition of centralized educational and cultural institutions.²⁰¹ Livezeanu's approach regarding the usage and meaning of the term "integral nationalism" differs from that of Hayes and Alter because her emphasis is on Greater Romania's cultural policies and how they were influenced by this nationalist ideology. She does not focus on the militant, often violent aspect of integral nationalism or its role in encouraging expansionist foreign policies but rather how it was used as a cultural and educational tool by the Romanian state in its consolidation of a unitary, homogenous, nationalist state. Nevertheless, she does conclude that by the 1930s, this 'milder' form of integral nationalism had transformed

¹⁹⁹ In Transylvania, the Magyars were feared politically because as a former ruling nation, they were not so easy to dislodge and marginalize from public posts and civil life. As for the Jews, they were perceived both as exploitative capitalists and as Bolshevik agitators disguised as intellectuals. For a more detailed discussion on the subjects see Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, 288-289.

²⁰⁰ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 14.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*48.

into an extreme-right, violent, anti-Semitic, fascist movement, which acquired significant political influence along with widespread public acceptance.²⁰²

To conclude this debate on the various forms of integral nationalism, I must refer to one of my main inspirations for this project, Rogers Brubaker's book *Nationalism Reframed*. In it Brubaker introduces the concept of "nationalizing nationalism" when referring to the prevalent political ideology of the emergent new (Poland) or reconfigured (Greater Romania) East Central European states in the interwar period.²⁰³ Part of a "triadic nexus" of competing nationalisms, nationalizing nationalism is identified as the remedial claims and compensatory policies made by "nationalizing states" in name of a particular ethno-cultural "core nation".²⁰⁴ This implies, as Brubaker explains throughout his book, that the political culture in Romania in the interwar years conceived the "state" as the state *of* and *for* the particular ethno-cultural nation of Romania. A clear line was drawn by the state and the Romanian cultural elite between the Romanian "nation" and the total population of Greater Romania.²⁰⁵ The concept that the "nation" was defined in ethno-cultural terms, steeped in the "blood and soil" and that its needs were to be put above anything else is where Hayes and Alter's integral nationalism and Brubaker's nationalizing nationalism converge. However, Brubaker takes his analysis a step further by arguing that this type of nationalism is attributed to "nationalizing states" in which the "core" nation is strong politically strong yet weak economically or culturally.²⁰⁶ The "nationalizing state" is thus understood as a "dynamic political stance" because it is perceived as an "unrealized" nation-

²⁰² Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 246.

²⁰³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 83.

²⁰⁴ The other two antagonistic nationalisms are labelled as "Homeland nationalism", which asserts a state's obligation to protect and promote the rights and interests of "their" ethno-national members in other states and as nationalism of national minorities which takes a nationalist stance in their demand for recognition of their ethno-cultural identity along with an appeal for collective cultural and political rights. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

state by its elites and government.²⁰⁷ Consequently, an urgent and conscious effort is needed in order to remedy this undesirable socio-political condition through practices, programs and policies of nation-building. Besides the two aforementioned features of a nationalizing state, Brubaker goes on to identify five more characteristics which he attributes to interwar Poland but can also be applied to the political and social development of Greater Romania during the interwar period.²⁰⁸

For the remainder of this thesis, I will use the typology constructed above by the various scholars when referring to the political ideology of the Romanian state and the political rhetoric espoused and encouraged by the Romanian press in Transylvania. However, it is Brubaker's conceptual framework which I will primarily refer to and make use of in my analysis of the nationalizing state of Greater Romania and its repercussions in the Transylvanian press. More specifically, the first three characteristics of a nationalizing state are of particular interest for my thesis as they explain the rise and development of an integral nationalist discourse in the Romanian newspapers.

2.2 Cultural Insecurities, Political Remedies

After the advent of the Grand National Assembly at Alba Iulia on December 1st 1918 and its symbolic success in generating feelings of national pride and unity for the 100,000

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 63.

²⁰⁸ In total, Brubaker seven process and policies which characterizes *nationalizing* states are : "1.The understood existence of an ethno-cultural "core" nation separate from the total citizenry. 2.The belief that this core nation "owns" the state. 3.The idea that the core nation is "unrealized" socially, culturally and economically. 4.The need for specific and efficient action to promote the culture, language, economic well-being and social welfare of the core nation. 5.The justification for these actions as being remedial in order to compensate for a difficult historical experience. 6.Mobilization on basis of these ideas in a variety of settings-legislatures, the press, associations-universities - in an effort to shape the policies or practices of the state, agencies, officials within the state or particular organizations. 7.The adoption of these aforementioned formal and informal practices and policies by the state, by particular state agencies and officials as well by non-state organizations." Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 83-84.

Transylvanian Romanians, the Romanian government officially recognized the union by decree eleven days later. On the ground, Romanian troops continued to advance deeper into Transylvania, despite the demarcation line issued by the Allied forces on January 25th 1919 along the Mures River just south-east of the city of Koloshvar, soon to be renamed Cluj by the Romanians. Eight months later, the Romanian army occupied the Hungarian capital imposing harsh armistice terms on the Hungarian government including the establishment of a Romanian-Hungarian frontier deep into historical Hungary which lasted until March 1920.²⁰⁹ However under the pressure of the Allies, the Romanian army retreated back into Transylvania and the Hungarian-Romanian political border was settled by the Treaty of Trianon on June 4th 1920.

Overwhelmingly in favour of Romania, the peace treaty declared that all of historic Transylvania and parts of eastern Hungary including Crisana, Satu-Mare, Maramures and part of the Banat, be officially incorporated into the political territory of Greater Romania.²¹⁰ For the Transylvanian Romanian elite which had sought the union, the national dream had come true as they were now the political masters of the province. Nevertheless, their task of "nationalizing" the urban centers was to be especially challenging given the historical legacy of Magyar cultural hegemony.²¹¹ According to the 1920 official census, Romanians accounted for less than one third of Transylvania's three most populous cities, Cluj, Timisoara and Oradea,²¹² even after the post-war mass exodus of the Hungarian bureaucracy.²¹³ In addition, this relatively new Romanian

²⁰⁹ Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 286-289.

²¹⁰ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 130

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 135-136.

²¹² Cluj (total pop. 83,542) was composed of 33% Romanians, 49% Magyars and 12% Jews. Timisoara (total pop. 82,689) was composed of 19% Romanians, 31% Magyars and 35% Swabians (German speaking population). Oradea (total pop. 68,081) was composed of 12% Romanians, 60% Magyars and 26% Jews. See Institutul Central de Statistica (The Central Institute of Statistics), *Anuarul Statistic al Romaniei 1923*, Bucharest Digital Library, p. 30-31. <http://digibuc.ro/colectii/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei-c6804>

²¹³ About one fifth of Transylvanian Magyars (197,000 people) "repatriated" to Hungary between 1918 and 1930. Cited in Livezeau, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania.*, 137.

political elite had to bargain with the historically established cultural hegemony of "foreign" social, cultural and economic elites in the arena of the urban landscape. Encouraged and aided by Bucharest, the provincial and municipal administration embarked on a "national mission" to "conquer" the cities in the name of the Romanian nation.²¹⁴ This included, but not limited to, the building of patriotic cultural, religious and educational centers, the erection of monuments dedicated to Romanian historical figures, the education and training of a new generation of patriots in universities, the creation of dozens of national clubs and associations and the financial funding of nationalist newspapers.²¹⁵

Nourished by this atmosphere of cultural anxiety, the Romanian press in Transylvania began a steady campaign promoting an exclusionary vision of Greater Romania in which Romanians were urged to "take back" their land and culture from the "foreign oppressors".²¹⁶ This nationalist crusade intensified considerably in 1923, the year in which the state inaugurated the new and controversial Constitution. Passed by the Liberal government, its first Article stated that Greater Romania was unitary and indivisible yet it also stipulated the protection of the civil rights of minority groups.²¹⁷ Failing to satisfy the influential nationalist camp of the Romanian elite, the intensely debated Constitution generated much newspaper coverage, especially in multi-ethnic place such as Transylvania. Of course, not every Transylvanian newspaper was influenced by an integral nationalist discourse. However, the most widely circulated newspapers such *Tara Noastra* (Our Country), *Clujul* (Cluj), *Ginderea* (Thoughts) and *Gazeta Ardeleanului*

²¹⁴ Livezeanu, *Fascist and Conservatives in Romania: Two Generations of Nationalists*, 222.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 224.

²¹⁶ "Controlul Strain in Romania (Foreign Control in Romania)," *Clujul*, August 5, 1923.

²¹⁷ The Romanian Constitution of 1923, in article 1, declares that "the Romanian Kingdom is a unitary and indivisible national state". Yet Article 5, states that "the Romanians, irrespective of ethnic origin, language or religion enjoy the freedom of conscience, the freedom of the press, the freedom of meeting, the freedom of association and all freedoms and rights established by law." The Romanian Constitution of 1923 can be accessed on the official website of the Romanian Parliament http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?id=1517

(The Ardeal Gazette) were also published and edited under the watchful eyes of notable Romanian intellectuals who were often ardent nationalists. Though the rhetoric of nationalizing nationalism varied widely in form and in intensity from publication to publication yet the urgent message for the Romanization of Ardeal's cities and their cultural and educational institutions was nevertheless ubiquitously present throughout their pages.

As prominent historian Keith Hitchins explains in his landmark book, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, the crucial issue in Romanian political culture during the inter-war era was the debate between democracy and authoritarianism.²¹⁸ Although a parliamentary system based on Western European practice was adopted by the Romanian state after the war, it proved to be highly unstable with frequent changes in government, widespread political corruption, factionalism of political parties and electoral fraud.²¹⁹ The public's post-Union general feeling of euphoria quickly faded as self-serving politicians, disguised by a thin veil of democratic rhetoric, failed to find viable solutions to for the country's social and economic problems. Thus some of the more right-leaning Transylvanian newspapers, capitalized on the state's political inadequacies by suggesting a more radical political path. Writing in the March 11th issue of the popular Cluj weekly *Tara Noastra* (Our Country), economist Ion Constatin deplored the unfinished state nationalization projects regarding the biggest tannery in Cluj, the Renner factory, owned by a Magyar-Jewish family. Lamenting the lack of Romanian state leadership in appropriating the Renner factory, Constantin reminds his readers that a more "radical political solution is necessary if the Romanians are to win the economic battle with the Magyar race in Ardeal."²²⁰ Although the author does not specify what sort of radical solution he has in mind, he drew a clear

²¹⁸ Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, 377.

²¹⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 21.

²²⁰ Ion Constatin, "Farsa Nationalizarilor (The National Hoax)," *Tara Noastra*, March 11, 1923

line between the two Transylvanian "races" which are locked in a battle for economic supremacy. His pugnacious tone inadvertently reveals the deep-seated cultural insecurities espoused by the Romanian intellectual elite vis-a-vis their Magyar neighbours in urban settings.

Writing for the same publication three weeks later, university professor Octavian Prie, fervently agreed for the enactment of stricter state policies curbing the funding rights of Hungarian minority schools for the "establishment of a cultural equilibrium".²²¹ According to him, the educational system in Transylvania was part of the national question which had not been completely resolved in the primary and secondary schools as Magyar students still received "an irredentist cultural education which only increased their scorn for the Romanian land".²²² Prie's statements espoused the integral nationalist rhetoric regarding the political importance of the school system in the cultural "battle" between the Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania. The nationalization of the schools system had started in May 1919 with the seizing of the Royal University of Kolozsvar by Romanian authorities after the Magyar faculty refused to take an oath of loyalty to the Romanian flag.²²³ According to the University's 1919-1920 yearbook, Transylvania's Directing Council (a provisional government with nearly unlimited governing powers in existence from Dec. 2nd 1918-April 2nd 1920) "Romanization" of the Cluj University was a five month process during which 70 new Romanian professors from the Old Kingdom were hired to replace the departed Hungarians, the language of instruction and administration became exclusively Romanian and new "national" courses were introduced.²²⁴ The University of Cluj reopened its doors to all Transylvanian students regardless of their ethnicity, in the fall of 1919 as a Romanian state institution but few Magyar students dared to

²²¹ Octavian Prie, "Drumul Politiceii Nationale (The Way of National Politics)", *Tara Noastra*, April 15, 1923.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Sextil Puscariu, "Istoricul Infintarii Universitatii din Cluj (The Founding History of Cluj University)", 10 October 1920, Yearbook of Cluj University, 2.

²²⁴ Ibid., 3,4.

enroll for fear of harassment. During the first decade of the interwar period, Hungarian students, on average, made up only 10 percent of the total student body even though they represented almost half the young adult population of the city.²²⁵ Cluj's Hungarian community decided to set up a Hungarian University known as the Interdenominational University which opened its doors on October 20, 1920.²²⁶ Almost immediately a torrent of articles flooded the Romanian newspapers in Cluj denouncing it as a "Magyar provocation by an anti-Romanian institution."²²⁷ The Romanian state had no choice but to close down the university for good at the end of the 1920-1921 academic year even though it was a legal institution sanctioned by the Minority Treaty which Romania had signed in Paris in the winter of 1919. Again, the volatile reaction displayed by the Romanian intellectuals to the establishment of a Hungarian university can be understood as a cultural insecurity vis-a-vis the perceived superiority of the Magyar educational institution. The legacy of the Hungarian period had left the Romanian community in Transylvania without a substantial professional class, with few academics, lawyers and doctors who could fill the university posts. Those who were qualified to do so were not prepared to face Hungarian competition in the realm of higher education, preferring instead to denounce it against the "interests of the Romanian nation" which, in an atmosphere of nationalizing nationalism, were raised above anything else.²²⁸ The idea that the core nation was not thriving as it was intended because of "Magyar sabotage" was a prevailing view among the Romanian intelligentsia of Transylvania which looked to their local and federal government for increasingly radical political remedies. Their deep-seated cultural anxiety was masked by a thin veneer of national entitlement which manifested itself daily on the front pages of Transylvania's most

²²⁵ Biro, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania 1867-1940*, 581.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 579.

²²⁷ Front Page Headline, "Universitatile Noastre (Our Universities)", *Gazeta Ardeleanului (The Ardeal Gazette)*, November 6, 1920.

²²⁸ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 83.

popular newspapers throughout the interwar years, reinforcing the discourse of integral nationalism by indorsing it as a national consensus.

2.3 Politically United, Spiritually Divided

On the eve of the Great War, a large part of the Romanian elite in Transylvania considered themselves part of the Romanian national community even though they were Hungarian citizens. Although politically separated between the various empires of Eastern Europe, they self-identified themselves as being culturally and spiritually united with the Romanian population across the Carpathian mountains. Four years later their national wish had become a political reality in the form of Greater Romania, which now encompassed virtually every territory inhabited by a Romanian speaking population. However, once the political dream of the Union had been achieved, there remained the issue of constructing a unified national consciousness.²²⁹ Therefore as a second argument for this chapter, I propose to analyse the creation of a unified national consciousness as an explanation of how and why the Romanian press in Transylvania created and promoted an intolerant nationalist political vision. The Romanian political and cultural elite tried to instill a cultural self-awareness in the Romanian masses primarily through the "Romanization" of the urban geography and via the constant promotion of the Daco-Roman continuity theory. Both of these nation-building schemes were documented in detail by the press which was just as much part of these cultural processes as the events and ideas they presented to their readers.

After the acquisition of Transylvania from the Hungarian Crown, the display of Romanian political power through the implementation of grandiose nation-building projects

²²⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 19.

became the norm throughout the province's towns. The largest ones, especially Cluj and Oradea, had a distinct architectural appearance with their buildings, public squares, monuments and parks, all designed to reflect the power and prestige of Magyar culture. The Romanian state and local elite thus made it their mission to redefine the symbolic geography of the town in order to reflect its current political reality.²³⁰ The Romanian intelligentsia looked upon the nationalization of urban space as a practice in the development and unification of the national consciousness. According to Corneliu Codarcea, a well-known journalist of the popular *Tara Noastra* (Our Country) weekly publication, after his return from the war he took part in "the cultural battle between the Hungarian Kolozsvár and the Romanian Cluj" because he felt that "there was a disunity between the soul of the city and the soul of the Romanian nation."²³¹ The "Romanization" of Cluj began in earnest as streets and squares were renamed after important Romanian personalities along with numerous plans to erect statues and monuments to Romanian heroes.²³² The newly founded state Commission on Historic Monuments attributed the municipalities with the right to change, "correct" and destroy if necessary monuments erected by the former Magyar administration if they were deemed insulting to the national pride or character of the Romanian nation.²³³ The three main public squares of Cluj were renamed after the three stages of the national unification process. The former *Matyas Kiraly* (King Mathias) Square was renamed *Piata Unirii* (Union Square) to commemorate the unification of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania.²³⁴ In addition, a statue of the Roman twins, Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf erected opposite the King Mathias statue in an effort to "neutralize" the

²³⁰ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 101.

²³¹ Octavian Goga, "Kolozsvár-Cluj: Problema Romanizării Oraşelor din Ardeal (The Problem with the Romanization Ardeal's Cities)," *Tara Noastra*, June 27, 1926.

²³² Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 99.

²³³ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 100.

²³⁴ "Miscarea Culturală (The Cultural Movement)," *Gazeta Ardealului* (The Ardeal Gazette), September 6, 1921.

square's Magyar nationalist iconography and to legitimize the current Romanian rule of the basis of the "Latin legacy".²³⁵ The Stephen Bocskai Square was re-baptized Alexandru Ioan Cuza Square after the Romanian Prince which unified the two Romanian principalities, Walachia and Moldavia, in 1859.²³⁶ Finally, the Istvan Szechenyi Square became Mihai Viteazu (Michael the Brave) Square as an homage to the Romanian warlord which in 1600 briefly controlled or "unified under his great national presence"²³⁷ the three Romanian inhabited provinces of Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania.

Cultural historian George Mosse explains that, "national monuments formed one of the most essential aspects of the self-representation of the nation."²³⁸ Consequently, the construction of the Orthodox Cathedral in Cluj across from the former Hungarian National Theater emphasized the association between being Romanian and the Orthodox faith.²³⁹ The colossal Orthodox Cathedral was presented as a "national edifice" with a symbolic meaning of national unity and grandeur. This nationalizing of space carried strong political connotations in interwar Romania as Orthodox Cathedrals were perceived as mausoleums, religious places and commemorative monuments which simultaneously nationalized the urban geography and united the masses under Romanian Orthodoxy.²⁴⁰ According to Cluj's new Orthodox Bishop since 1919, Nicolae Ivan, the urban topography of Cluj was illustrative of the existing power relations between the various ethnic and confessional groups and therefore he thought it humiliating that

²³⁵ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 99.

²³⁶ "Cronica Culturala (Cultural News), *Transylvania*, July, 1920.

²³⁷ "Luminatorii Neamului (Those who light the way for the Nation)", *Unirea Poporului* (The Union of the Nation), July 24, 1919.

²³⁸ George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 46.

²³⁹ Although Article 22 of the 1923 Constitution recognizes both the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches as "Romanian Churches," it stipulates that the Orthodox Church has a slight precedence over the Greek Catholic Church because it is the religion of the majority of Romanians.

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htm_act_text?id=1517

²⁴⁰ Ioan Augustin, *Power, Play and National Identity: Politics of Modernization in Central and East European Architecture*, (Bucharest: Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, 1999), 23-25.

the existing Romanian Orthodox Church stood small and hidden on the periphery of the city.²⁴¹ Consequently, he requested financial support from both Transylvania's Directing Council, the federal government and the local municipal administration. Finally, after much negotiation between the municipality, which initially did not want to surrender the park in front of the Hungarian National Theater to the construction of a massive building, and the central state, the building of the Cathedral commenced in 1923 and lasted a little over a decade.²⁴² During its construction, numerous inauguration and commemoration ceremonies took place around and inside the Cathedral, showcasing the growing Romanian presence in the city and its power over the public space. The local Romanian press in Cluj attached the construction of the Orthodox Cathedral to a integral nationalist discourse asserting that such a "prestigious Romanian religious symbol is a first step toward correcting past national injustices and solidifying the superior status of the Romanian nation."²⁴³

Introduced by the eminent British historian Eric Hobsbawm, the phrase "invention of tradition" can be accurately applied to the creation of public commemorative ceremonies and the mass production of national monuments in Transylvania during the interwar period. Hobsbawm defines invented traditions as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms, which automatically implies continuity with a suitable historic past."²⁴⁴ Cluj's Orthodox Cathedral participated in the "mass producing of traditions" by hosting important yearly national ceremonies such as Heroes Day on May 20, during which the war dead were

²⁴¹ Liliana Iuga, "Nationalizing the City: Monuments of Romanianness and Public Space in Interwar Cluj" (master's thesis, Central European University, 2010), 71.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁴³ "Catedrala Ortodoxa a Clujului (Cluj's Orthodox Cathedral)", *Clujul*, May 20, 1923.

²⁴⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds., Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

remembered. This participatory, mobilizing national ritual can be regarded as one of the first attempts "to turn all subjects of Romania into patriotic enthusiastic active Romanian citizens."²⁴⁵

The impact of the national ideology on the ethnic history of the Romanian people can clearly be attributed to the enduring Daco-Roman continuity myth which is still widely believed by contemporary Romanians. Regarded by historian Lucian Boia as "a great mythological configuration around which national consciousness has crystallized and evolved,"²⁴⁶ the Daco-Roman continuity theory emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century when the glorious origins of the Romanian people were "rediscovered" by Bishop Samuil Klain-Micu and philosopher Petru Maior. Combining the concepts of nationalism and romanticism, Maior's book on the *History of the Origins of the Romanians in Dacia* affirms that the Romanian people were the direct descendants of the native Dacian tribes and the Roman conquerors and therefore the historically rightful "owners" of Dacia (modern day Transylvania).

This active glorification of the national past also inspired a vigorous new movement in nation-building because as, historian Ivan T. Berend explains, ironically, "the most irrational national myths served the most rational modernization goals."²⁴⁷ During the Dualist era, the Romanian national movement for cultural recognition and political autonomy was aided and strengthened by the Daco-Roman myth which legitimized the national claims and provided the Romanian community with a national continuity between past and present. This *foundation myth* also acted as a category of inclusion because it argued that all Romanians belonged to the same "cultural family" despite being separated by the various empires across history. It also

²⁴⁵ Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth Century Romania*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 109.

²⁴⁶ Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, (Budapest: Central European Press, 2001), 83.

²⁴⁷ Berend, *History Derailed*, 74.

incorporated the Romanian nation in the family of "Latin nations" and affirmed its position as "the last outpost of Latin culture, surrounded by Slavic and Hungarian barbarism."²⁴⁸

After the Union, this national gospel was displayed and disseminated through books, pamphlets, calendars, theater plays, magazines and most of all cheap, accessible, daily newspapers. The publication of the weekly xenophobic and anti-Semitic yet popular journal *Dacia Noua* (The New Dacia) evolved around the Daco-Roman theory and legitimized it to exclude and marginalize the "foreign non-Dacian" people of Cluj. In its January 13 1923 issue, the newspaper declared that "the peasant and the worker have to be educated to recognize the danger posed by the Magyar and Jewish minorities who for centuries have stolen the Dacian lands and made their people into slaves."²⁴⁹ Nicolae Iorga, one of the most prolific Romanian historians of the interwar years, popularized the Daco-Roman theory to the point of turning it into a national dogma.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, it became the official state myth of Greater Romania, a political philosophy that legitimized the cultural and later on the political exclusion of minority groups. Historian Elemer Illyes argues that the less a nation is politically mature, the more likely it is that their nationalist assertion is a cover for a sense of political and cultural insecurity.²⁵¹ This rang especially true in Transylvania where, with a few exceptions, most Romanians had been far removed from the Hungarian center of political and cultural power. However, through this founding myth, they easily justified their origins as Transylvania's "native" population and therefore its rightful "owners" and settlers whose lands had been conquered by the invading

²⁴⁸ Berend, *History Derailed*, 76.

²⁴⁹ "Ce Trebuie sa Facem (What We Must Do)", *Dacia Noua (The New Dacia)*, January 13, 1923.

²⁵⁰ Andrew Ludanyi, "Ideology and Political Culture in Rumania: The Daco-Roman Theory and the "Place of Minorities," in *Transylvania: The Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, edited by John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi and Louis J. Elteto, (Kent: Kent State UP, 1983), 233.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 231.

Magyar tribes.²⁵² It thus provided the Romanian intellectuals with a powerful argument for the creation of a unified national consciousness which had always linked the Romanian people throughout time and space, helping them overcome oppression at the hands of the "Others" throughout the ages. In *Tara Noastra(Our Country)*, an article entitled "Colonizarile in Ardeal" (The Colonization of Ardeal) laments that, despite the Land Reforms of 1923 which mainly benefited the Romanian peasants, the "colonizers" of Transylvania (i.e. the Magyar and Saxon farmers) continued to be more prosperous than the "autochthonous" population which have cultivated these lands for two millennia.²⁵³ However, the author proudly concludes the article by proclaiming that "even though the Romanian nation in Transylvania had been under enemy control for a millennia, it had remained unscathed."²⁵⁴ Continuity of the Romanian nation in spite of all historical odds was the ever-present theme throughout the aforementioned article which encouraged its Romanian readers to not only take pride in their origins but also to have a sense of entitlement regarding their "ancestral homeland". For the "cohabiting minorities" as they were referred to, they were considered "latecomers" or labelled "colonists" who had exploited the Romanian nation for centuries and therefore deserved to be historically excluded from Transylvania's past.²⁵⁵ Thus the ethnic battle lines between "us" and "them" were strengthened within the context of the Daco-Roman theory becoming an integral part of the exclusivist national rhetoric cultivated and propagated by the Romanian press in Transylvania.

2.4 The "Great Debate" over National Destiny

²⁵² Andrew Ludanyi, "Ideology and Political Culture in Rumania: The Daco-Roman Theory and the "Place of Minorities," in *Transylvania: The Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, edited by John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi and Louis J. Elteto, (Kent: Kent State UP, 1983), 232-233.

²⁵³ Ioan Iacob, "Colonizarile in Ardeal (The Colonization in Ardeal)", *Tara Noastra*, December 7, 1924.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Andrew Ludanyi, "Ideology and Political Culture in Rumania: The Daco-Roman Theory and the "Place of Minorities," in *Transylvania: The Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, edited by John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi and Louis J. Elteto, (Kent: Kent State UP, 1983), 240.

In the fall of 1919 at the University of Cluj, reputed Romanian historian and archeologist Vasile Parvan delivered a lecture concerning the need for the nation's spiritual revival. He maintained that "the supreme purpose of our struggle is the spiritualization of the great socio-political and culturally creative organism that is the nation in which we are the harsh priests of a religion of purification."²⁵⁶ Following the war, Romanian intellectuals agreed that a change was needed in order to put their country on the right path of political, economic and cultural development. Yet it was the search for the redefinition of the national character which characterized the cultural dispute raging in the inter war period. Referred to by historian Keith Hitchins as the "Great Debate", it polarized the Romanian intellectual community into two camps: the "Europeanist" or modernist standpoint and the traditionalist/organicist position.²⁵⁷ Headed by literary critic Eugen Lovinescu and the economist and sociologist Stefan Zeletin, the Europeanists argued that Romania had been part of Europe since its inception in 1866, influenced and aided along in its economic and political development by the current of "Westernization".²⁵⁸ Although Lovinescu and Zeletin recognized that Romania was an agrarian country, they nevertheless argued that it was the Western path towards modernization via industrialization and urbanization that best suited the "Latin" character of the Romanians. Cultural institutions and values should reflect that of Western Europe so that Romania could reach the final step of her social development guided by the Romanian urban classes of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals.²⁵⁹ For the Europeanists, the notion that Romania was destined to remain an agrarian country meant a future filled with perpetual economic and social backwardness as well as a status of cultural inferiority especially when comparing to the more

²⁵⁶ Quoted in Erwin Kessler, "Ideas and Ideology in Interwar Romania," *Plural Magazine*, no.29 (2007): 2.

²⁵⁷ Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, 292.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 293.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 294.

civilized, more culturally refined Western states. They grouped around newspapers such as *Viata Romaneasca (Romanian Life)*, *Romania Literara (Literary Romania)* and *Idea Europeana (The European Idea)* and published numerous books and pamphlets especially in the early years of the 1920s.

Unfortunately, mass public opinion favored the "traditionalist/organicist" position refereed by its adepts as "the Organic Truth" because it linked the idea of organic unity to the idea of national community. This type of "organicism" relied upon racial and religious categories, rather than upon an understanding of a political-constitutional contract, for eligibility in the Romanian cultural nation.²⁶⁰ Center-right thinkers such as philosopher Nae Ionescu, Pamfil Seicaru and theologian Nichifor Crainic envisioned the Romanian nation as a "living organic" being, therefore suggesting a collective unity, which is composed of members that are not seen as self-sufficient individuals but rather as co-dependent cells.²⁶¹ Accordingly, Organicism considered the bonds among members of the "biological" or "blood community" to be as natural and strong as if they would be cells of a living body.²⁶² This is where the concept of a unified national consciousness links with the theory of organicism because although the national "body" is considered to be inevitably unified through blood ties, it needs to be aligned with the "mind" or national consciousness of the people to function properly. Consequently, this biological vision of "Romanianess" also became an exclusive form of nationalization which can be considered dissimilationist rather than assimilationist towards ethnic minorities.²⁶³ Central to the traditionalist theory was the belief that the Romanian society had been spiritually and morally

²⁶⁰ Mihaly Szilagyi-Gal, "The Nationality of Reasoning: Autochthonist Understandings of Philosophy in Interwar Romania," in *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies*, eds. Balazs Trencsenyi, Dragos Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi and Zoltan Kandor (Budapest: Regio Books, 2001), 85-86.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 88.

decaying since the nineteenth century due to the malicious influence of industrialization, capitalism and secular values.²⁶⁴ According to Crainic, curing this social malaise involved the reintroduction of Eastern Christianity teachings fused with the traditional values of the agrarian society which became known as the theory of Orthodoxism.

As the editor of the very popular publication *Gindrea* (Thoughts), his articles urged his readers to incorporate Orthodoxism into their newly found post-union Romanian identity. His followers, and fellow journalists known as "Gindirists", were anxious to preserve specific Romanian values in literature and art, which according to them, were being lost by the predominance of the "cosmopolitan spirit" of the times.²⁶⁵ Numerous poems and short stories such as *Povestea din Sat* (Village Story)²⁶⁶, *Cintec sau Rugaciune* (Song or Prayer)²⁶⁷ and *Alta Dictatura* (Another Dictatorship)²⁶⁸ used peasant themes to promote a romantic nationalist vision of the Romanian culture which if not protected by all means necessary would fail to flourish. Crainic's cultural and religious production had a major influence on Romanian integral nationalism with which most right-wing groups could identify with in the later years of the 1920s.²⁶⁹ He also embodied the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and Romanian nationalism as he was both a member of the clergy and an influential nationalist political figure. He equated religious and political offices and proclaimed that the Church and state should

²⁶⁴ Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947*, 300.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Adrian Maniu, "Povestea din Sat (Village Story), *Gindirea (Thought)*, 1 August, 1921.

²⁶⁷ Adrian Maniu, "Cintec sau Rugaciune (Song or Prayer), *Gindirea (Thought)*, 5 February 1923.

²⁶⁸ G.M. Ivanov, "Alta Dictatura (Another Dictatorship), *Gindirea (Thought)*, 12 April 1924.

²⁶⁹ Besides the notorious Legion of Archangel Michael and the National Christian Party, numerous other integral nationalist movements and parties, such as the Romanian Front, Archers, Group H, Swastika on Fire, National Guard and Crusade of Romanianism, used Crainic's vision of Romanianess as part of their programs. For an excellent discussion on Crainic and the extreme right in Romania see: Roland Clark, "Nationalism and Orthodoxy: Nichifor Crainic and the political culture of the extreme right in 1930s Romania," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 1 (January 2012), 107-126.

collaborate in harmony in fostering a national identity for the masses.²⁷⁰ Thus the Orthodox Church and its leaders assumed a political role alongside their spiritual one and reinforced the idea of Romania as an ethnic nation held together by biological ties of "blood and soil." Political and religious discourses were combined in the search for a national identity which characterized the inter war period. As Orthodoxy became increasingly fundamental to political culture during the 1920s, radical right-wing organizations and newspapers such as the Iron Guard used the nationalist discourse to promote and disseminate their ideas to the general public.²⁷¹ Credited as a public intellectual and an influential publicist, Crainic's patronage provided work for many ultra-nationalist journalists which used his newspapers and magazines as forums to circulate their integral nationalist ideas to a general public.²⁷² Although not the first or most radical of extreme-right figures in Romania during the interwar years, he was one most influential publicists, editing and writing in half a dozen newspapers and magazines across the country.²⁷³ His alignment with the current of integral nationalism became official upon his acquaintance with the French nationalist writer Charles Maurras at a literary celebration in Paris in 1930. Several years later, Crainic cited Maurras program of integral nationalism as a source of inspiration for his ethnotheology theory which he published in 1938 as *Programul Statului Etnocratic (Program of the Ethnocratic State)* in which he stated that Romania should be an "ethnocratic state" in which

²⁷⁰ Lucian N. Leustean, "For the Glory of Romanians": Orthodoxy and Nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1945" *Nationalities Papers*, 35, no.4 (Sept. 2007), 717.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 735

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁷³ Besides editing the literary magazine *Gindirea*, Crainic founded the daily *Calendarul (The Calendar 1932-1934)* which in June of 1932 became a legionary newspaper alongside the *Sfarma Piatra (The Rock Crusher 1935-1941)*. He also contributed to the anti-Semitic daily *13 Jilava (13 Jilava)* as well as other ultra-nationalist newspapers such as *Buna Vestire (The Good News)* and *Porunca Vremii (The Command of the Times)*.

the state would be subordinate to the needs of one ethnic groups and in which the "law of Christ will be the law of the state."²⁷⁴

As more and more young Romanian intellectuals subscribed to the Organicist theory of national development, a second debate arose during the years 1928-1936, which, in the words of Erwin Kessler, was a no-exit one, uncritical and unchallengeable, with the Orthodoxist camp in the dominant position.²⁷⁵ Already anti-modernist, anti-progressive and anti-democratic, the traditionalist theory emerged in the 1930s as virulently anti-Semitic, xenophobic and militant, promoted by the young Romanian generation composed mainly of university students and intellectuals. Influenced by the writings of historian Mircea Eliade, theologian Dumitru Staniloae and thinker Nicolae Iorga, this new generation of "Romanian patriots" searched for "the purity of the highest values and that of mystery by going back to faith in the state's organization, in schools, in social life, and leaving aside the models of the Western states, unfaithful and rational."²⁷⁶ This return to traditional, pre-modern forms of social cohesion fused with ethnic chauvinism and anti-Semitism proved to be the foundation of the emergence of Romania's native fascist movements especially the of the Legion of Archangel Michael and its paramilitary wing the Iron Guard. Against the background of a struggling, flawed democracy and the economic depression of the 1930, the traditionalist/modernist debate transformed into a one-sided monologue on national identity, consciousness and destiny, circulated and reproduced by the center-right Romanian press of Transylvania and adopted as a political ideology by the authoritarian regimes of King Carol II and General Ion Antonescu.

²⁷⁴ Roland Clark, "Nationalism and Orthodoxy", 116.

²⁷⁵ Kessler, "Ideas and Ideology in Interwar Romania," 5.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 6

The achievement of the Union, a seemingly impossible political dream up until the very end of the war, was supposed to enhance Greater Romania's political and economic status as a democratic state reconfigured according to the principle of national self-determination. However, problems arose with the way Romanian state chose to interpret and apply that very principle. By choosing to adhere to a centralized nationalism which had very little tolerance for minorities and their demands for cultural autonomy, the Romanian state reinterpreted the principle of national self-determination in such a way that it led to political instability and ethnic tensions.²⁷⁷ Fuelled by various internal pressures, the doctrine of integral nationalism became the dominant political discourse of Greater Romania during the interwar war period. In the newly incorporated province of Transylvania, the political current of integral nationalism was enthusiastically circulated and reproduced by the Romanian press as some sort of political remedy for the past injustices done to the Romanian people by the former Hungarian government. Although the state apparatus "belonged" to the Romanian nation, its culture was perceived to be threatened by the powerful Hungarian legacy especially in the urban environment. This type of cultural insecurity further encouraged the support and implementation of "nationalizing" policies anchored in an ideology of integral nationalism. Consequently, the need for a unified national consciousness required the creation of a bond with all Romanians to both the past and the future. By nationalizing Transylvania's predominantly Magyar cities, the visibility of Romanian culture was increased thus creating a link to the future. The bond with the past was forged through the "invention" and dissemination of the Daco-Roman continuity theory which also legitimized the actions of Greater Romanian's political and intellectual elite. Finally, Romania's interwar philosophical debate which pitted modernist against traditionalist in a polemic about Romania's national character and national development also contributed to the promotion of integral

²⁷⁷ Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe 1890-1940*, 60-61.

nationalism because ultimately, it was the latter which had the most political and cultural impact over Romanian society. Distrustful of Western values and institutions, Nichifor Crainic, the movement's most outspoken ideologue, established his own brand of religious nationalism known as Romanian Orthodoxy. Through his numerous articles, pamphlets and lectures, he argued that his ideology should become the basis for conducting politics and running the state.²⁷⁸ Discerning ethnic and religious minorities as unwanted guests which had overstayed their welcome on Romanian soil, he advocated for massive population transfers with Romania's neighbours, repatriating Romanians living outside the Romania's borders as well as the expulsion of Jews.²⁷⁹ The above cited arguments provide a partial answer to the complex question regarding the role of the Romanian press in Transylvania in creating, reproducing and circulating the discourse of integral nationalism during the decades between the world wars. Another path worth exploring would be to analyse the role of irredentist movements both inside and outside of Romania's borders and whether they also contributed to the rise of ultra-nationalism in Transylvania. As historian Oliver Zimmer wrote, "the nationalism of the new states and the revisionist ambitions of the defeated and territorially reduced state provided a vicious cycle of geopolitical turmoil, a foretaste of the barely controlled enmities of the interwar period."²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Clark, "Nationalism and Orthodoxy", 110.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 116.

²⁸⁰ Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940*, 61.

Chapter 3

Nationalizing the Nation: Past, Present and Future

During the interwar years, Greater Romania was a paradox. While territorial unification was largely achieved, political, economic and social integration remained elusive, accounting for the ever growing appeal of integral nationalism.²⁸¹ State and local politicians, along with academics, journalists, writers and religious personalities sought to rally the Romanian people, who up until recently had been separated for centuries by geography, politics, history and class, around an ideology which would reinforce the idea of belonging to a united nation legitimized by the theory of national self-determination. During the first decade of the 1920s, Romania's most notable politicians had devised two rival political strategies, one centralist and one populist, to combat the rising anxiety about the territorial revisionism of Hungary and the Soviet Union as well as the perceived internal threat of irredentism from the large Hungarian national minority.²⁸² However, it is crucial to understand that underlining both these opposing strategies were a multitude of national-building processes designed to achieve an "authentic" feeling of unity among the Romanian populations of the newly "reconstituted" provinces by reifying the nation in the form of a unitary state.

Therefore this chapter is dedicated to the various nation-building strategies derived from state and local initiatives, translated from a nationalist political ideology and represented and

²⁸¹James P. Niessen, "Romanian Nationalism: An Ideology of Integration and Mobilization," in *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Washington: The American University Press, 1995), 279.

²⁸² The centralist or Liberals were the oldest and strongest political party in Romania and stood for state centralizations, trade protectionism, state-led industrialization and a conservative form of nationalism. The populists, composed of members of the National and People's parties, denounced the corruption and "colonialism" of the Liberal party, advocating instead decentralization, free trade and fair elections along with a more radical view on nationalism. For an excellent study of the two parties and their links to a nationalist ideology see James P. Niessen, "Romanian Nationalism: An Ideology of Integration and Mobilization," in *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Washington: The American University Press, 1995) and Keith Hitchins, *Romania 1866-1947*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

narrated by the Romanian press in Transylvania. My research questions for this chapter are as follows: why did some of the most popular Transylvanian newspapers use nation-building processes to shape a national identity based on integral nationalism ? Followed by: how were important national events, state and local policies and social and ethnic tensions depicted by the press in the 1920s and how can we assess the press role in producing a public and varied discussion regarding the importance of nationalism as the cornerstone of a modern state ? As Benedict Anderson noted, in order to understand the 'political' power of nationalism and why the nation was conceived as a 'deep, horizontal comradeship', we must look at its 'populist' character in the first decades of the twentieth century.²⁸³ The common people of the newly reconfigured modern state of Romania, now more literate than ever before, were 'invited' into history by the 'missionaries' of nationalism i.e the political and intellectual elite, through an affordable means that spoke their own language, the print media.²⁸⁴

In line with my arguments from the previous chapter, this part of my study analyzes and deconstructs the narrative produced by the Transylvanian press regarding three important state and local nation-building initiatives : the commemorations of the national day of union on December 1st, the assimilation and dissimilation of ethnic minorities in Transylvania and the emergence of an xenophobic, anti-Semitic, radically nationalist student movement. Regarded as highly controversial and emotionally-charged topics, the three aforementioned nation-building policies provoked passionate debates and discussions, both locally and nationally, surrounding issues of social and ethnic relations, national identity and political ideology. To illustrate how many of the interwar Transylvanian officials and intellectuals utilized the so-called 'national reconstruction' to promote and further a integral nationalist vision for the creation of a Romanian

²⁸³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5, 82.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

Volk, my research follows several popular newspapers from various Transylvanian cities which reflected their aforementioned ideals. These publications, while depicting various and often contradictory ideological and political viewpoints, all share a sense a concern over an impending national crisis regarding the social unity and territorial integrity of the state. Divided into three temporal parts, my analysis examines several nation-building process which linked together Greater Romania's past, present and future in the realm of national reconstruction.

3.1 "Remembering Who We Are": Public Memory and National Identity

Presiding over a fairly new state, Greater Romania's politicians and its monarchy sought to generate social meaning around specific dates, places, events and people in order to perpetuate their vision of the *Volk* and its cultural practices.²⁸⁵ Immediately following the union, the commemorative calendar of the state was packed full of official anniversaries commemorating either World War One, the Union and other such national dates. Due to its focussed narrative scope, the first part of this chapter explores only the commemorations dedicated to the Union as they were narrated by Transylvania's newspapers.²⁸⁶ It examines how the collective historical memory of important events and personalities was produced, reinforced and institutionalized by the state and how local communities in Transylvania reacted to such centralization. Thus, my primary sources are local newspapers of the interwar period which framed commemorative practices within the context of nationalist politics. My study discusses the development of an integral nationalist rhetoric from the perspective of the Romanian press concerning collective

²⁸⁵ Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, eds., *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe 1848 to the Present*. (Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), xvii.

²⁸⁶ For an excellent survey regarding the commemoration of the war in Romania in the last century see: Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009). For further reading about public memory and national identity see Duncan Light and Craig Young, "Political Identity, Public Memory and Urban Space: A Case Study *Parcul Carol I*, Bucharest from 1906 to Present," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62, no. 9, (2010), 1453-1478.

memory and cultural practices, in particular those relating to December 1st, the date on which Transylvania was ceded to the Romanian Kingdom. Embodying a variety of issues such as power relations between the political center and the periphery, the tension between high and popular culture, the political economy of symbols and the construction of a national identity, national commemorations are key to understanding the history and possible future of whole societies.²⁸⁷

As historian Rogers Brubaker suggests, water-shed events such the First World War and the political union of Transylvania with Romania do not contain their own meaning. Powerful cultural objects, may they be dates, events or people, are always ambiguous, generating an interactive production of meaning.²⁸⁸ As they become part of public memory, they are constructed and reconstructed by the producers of culture in the "search of a usable past" to suit the needs and purposes of each subsequent generation.²⁸⁹ Using Maria Bucur's definition, I refer to the terms "public memory" and "collective memory" as "the cultural representation of the past through artifacts created for a wide section of the population."²⁹⁰ Thus one can make the argument that collective memory heavily influences national identity because the meaning ascribed to such cultural objects was never meant to be politically neutral. Consequently, the commemorative practices and celebrations associated with the anniversary of the Union were perceived as a social act of public recollection meant to unify the Romanian population around a shared national bond.

²⁸⁷ Bucur and Wingfield, *Staging the Past*, xvii-xviii.

²⁸⁸ Rogers Brubaker and Margit Feischmidt, "1848 in 1998: The Politics of Commemoration in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no.4 (October 2002): 700.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Bucur Maria, "Birth of a Nation: Commemorations of December 1, 1918, and National Identity in Twentieth Century Romania," in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, 279.

As Brubaker and Feischmidt argue, those practices and celebrations are structured around two related oppositions which define alternative cultural models for representing and commemorating important national events.²⁹¹ The first one centers around the *manner and mood* in which the past is depicted while the second one concerns the *narrative framing*, i.e. the manner in which themes are selected and organized in commemorative celebrations.²⁹² Therefore it is important to situate the commemorations of the Union, held after the war in various Transylvanian cities, within the analytical space of these two cultural models. In the first model, public commemorations are carried on in an elevated, sacred tone, transformed into "moments of collective effervescence."²⁹³ Subsequently, the narrative framing in this model defines historical memory in spatially, temporally and culturally particularizing terms.²⁹⁴ In the matter at hand, the anniversary of December 1st had first and foremost a national meaning which placed emphasis on national setbacks, struggles and finally, national independence. Contrary to the first model, is the second model in which the mood and manner of national anniversaries are understood as holidays involving spectacle and entertainment, much like the contemporary celebrations of St. Patrick Day. The narrative framework is thus one involving generalizing terms which situates local events in a wider, long-term context generating meaning not only for the local commemorators themselves, but for others as well.²⁹⁵ To better illustrate this concept, one can situate the political reconfiguration of Greater Romania as an event in the larger geo-political context involving the apparition of new nationalizing states following the dissolution of multinational empires in the aftermath of the World War One.

²⁹¹ Rogers Brubaker and Margit Feischmidt, "1848 in 1998: The Politics of Commemoration in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia," 707.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 708.

Out of the four combinations possible according to the aforementioned analytical framework, my analysis situates the commemorations of the union portrayed by Transylvania's Romanian press in a sacralized tone, framed by a particularizing national narrative. As John R. Gillis explains, the idea of memory depends on the concept of identity and vice-versa.²⁹⁶ Consequently, what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity while the core meaning of any group identity is sustained by remembering.²⁹⁷ For Transylvania's Romanian elite, their national identity had been shaped by the history of their prolonged struggle to obtain political recognition and social rights under the Hungarian regime. After 1918, commemorations of various national struggles such as the revolutions of 1848 and the subsequent civil war took on an even more passionate and mystical tone especially when combined with the memory of the December 1st, the day of the union. Numerous newspapers wrote about that day as the end of Romanian irredentist national movement and the beginning of "a new national chapter to be celebrated and revered as a holy day of national celebration."²⁹⁸

For the purpose of better illustrating how the Transylvania Romanian press used the commemorations of the Union to construct a political group identity based on the principles of integral nationalism, I choose to investigate how three popular Transylvanian newspapers depicted the remembrance ceremonies of the Union on its fifth anniversary. I will employ Rogers Brubaker's aforementioned cultural model in which a particularizing strategy is used to frame the public ceremonies surrounding December 1st. Before proceeding with my analysis, it is important to note that the newspapers were mostly covering local commemoration of the Union due to its mostly regional significance. In the first decade after the Union, the press and

²⁹⁶ John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), 3

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ A. Barseanu, *Transylvania*, December 2nd, 1918.

politicians in Bucharest largely underrated the meanings of December 1st, preferring instead to focus on May 10 as the date with the most political-nationalist significance.²⁹⁹ This demonstrated the tensions between Bucharest and Transylvania as the latter questioned the hierarchy of the symbolic significance relating to the commemoration of the Union by preserving a measure of regional autonomy relating to the politics of public memory.³⁰⁰ On the front page of *Cultura Poporului* (Culture and Nation), a weekly center-right newspaper published in Cluj, the anniversary of the Union was depicted in a militant language centered around the attainment of national aims by whatever means necessary. The article declared that "the unification of Transylvania with the motherland was but the first step in the resurrection of the Romanian nation out of the ashes of its enemies, which are still hiding among our people, waiting for the day to destroy this sacred union of souls."³⁰¹ The implicit meaning regarding the commemoration of this date was as much about national inclusion as it was about ethnic exclusion. It served to separate the population of Transylvania along ethnic lines as it attempted to unite all Romanians through a mystical, national bond.³⁰²

Although a relatively small town, Blaj had always held a special, sacred national status to the Romanians in Transylvania. A center for Romanian culture since the eighteenth century and home of the *Scoala Ardeleana*, one of the oldest Romanian societies in Transylvania, it was also regarded as the cradle of the nineteenth century national movement. It was where the historical

²⁹⁹ May 10 was the date on which in 1866, Charles I, was sworn in as Romania's first crowned prince and on which in 1877 the Old Kingdom of Romania (the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia) gained full independence from the Ottoman Empire. See Bucur, "Birth of a Nation: Commemorations of December 1st, 1918 and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Romania," 283.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 281.

³⁰¹ Constantin Cehan Racovita, "Unirea Ardelului" (The Union in Transylvania), *Cultura Poporului (Culture and Nation)*, December 2nd 1923.

³⁰² Bucur, "Birth of a Nation: Commemorations of December 1st, 1918 and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Romania," 282.

meetings of 1848 and 1868 regarding the resistance to Hungarian rule had conveyed.³⁰³ Since 1919, the town had commemorated the Union with a lavish church service in the famous Greek-Orthodox Holy Trinity Cathedral, school ceremonies, public festive gatherings and other such cultural celebrations. For the Union's fifth anniversary, all of the town's newspapers dedicated almost their entire contents to the public remembrance of that day and the national issues surrounding it. Writing in the weekly newspaper *Unirea* (The Union) an anonymous journalist reminded his readers of the need to remember that the Union was proclaimed by and for Romanians *only*, following centuries of struggle against the "foreigners".³⁰⁴ The article continued with an attack on the newly adopted Constitution of 1923 and its proclamation of equal civil and religious rights. The anonymous writer accused the Liberal government of "sweeping aside the principles of the Union by allowing equal rights to those who had denied the Transylvanian Romanian the same rights... A monstrous document, it shames the Romanian nation and the sacred memory of those that paid the ultimate price for the Union of all Romanian brothers."³⁰⁵ By accusing the Bucharest government of tainting the venerable memory of December 1 with the "unpatriotic and unpopular" democratic Constitution, the article was reinforcing a discourse of xenophobia, ethnic chauvinism and radical nationalism. This type of national insecurity continued to manifest itself throughout the articles dedicated to remembrance of the Union, almost as a fear-mongering technique, reminding the readers to remain vigilant and protective of their nation

The immense resonance of this date with the local Romanian population was due to the fact that many people had either attended the gathering at Alba Iulia or knew someone that did,

³⁰³ Peter F. Sugar, *Nationality and Society in Habsburg and Ottoman Europe*, (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997), V.695.

³⁰⁴ Anonymous, "Dupa Cinci Ani (After Five Years), *Unirea (The Union)*, December 1, 1923.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

making its anniversary a day of remembering and sharing very emotionally-charged personal memories.³⁰⁶ On the fifth anniversary of the Union, *Clujul* (Cluj), a popular weekly newspaper in Cluj, ran a special story dedicated to the personal memories of those who attended the Alba Iulia assembly. The article reported that most of those interviewed remember that day with "hearts full of patriotic pride, solemnly devoted to the protection of their land and the Romanian nation against all those who wish to harm it."³⁰⁷ Although it is unclear whether or not the article used the exact words of the people it surveyed, its language was infused with a solemn nationalist tone. It also imparted to its readers that in order to be a "true" Romanian, it was not enough to be proud of it but also be willing to fight for the Romanian nation. A link was thus formed between the memory of the event and the need for an overtly aggressive nationalist identity. The three aforementioned articles provide but a small example of how newspapers used the memory of such an important event for the purpose of radicalizing the national identity of its readers. According to these newspapers, the spirit of the union had to be kept alive through nationalist commemorations which served to remind all Romanians that only they belonged within the Romanian cultural and ethnic nation. If Greater Romania's present was fraught with numerous economic and social problems and its future seemed at times uncertain, then the past offered a foundational moment of mythic national proportions which served to inspire future generations.³⁰⁸ Consequently, in the era that followed, an age of mass politics and culture, many of the Romanian newspapers in Transylvania were able to reframe the meaning of commemorative anniversaries to suit a nationalist discourse which became increasingly radicalized throughout the 1920s.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 281.

³⁰⁷ V. I Moldovan, "Ziua de 1 Decembrie" (December 1st), *Clujul*, December 2nd, 1923.

³⁰⁸ Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, 9.

3.2 Assimilation, Accommodation and Exclusion: State Policies towards Ethnic Minorities

At the close of the First World War, defeated Hungary was obliged to cede the province of Transylvania and its population to neighbouring Romania. The Romanian government had inherited a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional province very few of its politicians were equipped to govern and understand, especially in regard to minority issues. A drastic reversal of the existing ethnic balance of power occurred almost overnight transforming the ruling Magyar elite into a very disgruntled, ethnic minority with a politically salient social identity. The Hungarians, including the Magyar and Szekler population, numbering approximately one-third of Transylvania's population, were either Catholic or Protestant and constituted most of the noblemen, landholders, and urban bourgeoisie but also a sizeable portion of the peasant population.³⁰⁹ The Saxons (10.7 % of the total population) and the Jews (officially 3.5% of the population, not including the Magyarized Jews) formed Transylvania's other most important minorities, both of which were more urbanized and more educated than the Romanians.³¹⁰ As a nationalizing state, Greater Romania was driven by a homogenizing imperative but in the first decade of the interwar period was obliged by the Western Powers to sign a "Minorities Protection Treaty" which would provide equal civil, religious and cultural right to all its ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, these "Minority Treaties" proved to be unsatisfactory to both sides, as the Bucharest government perceived them as a limitation of its state sovereignty while the minorities complained that they were quite ineffectual at protecting their rights.³¹¹ Therefore the "minority problem" remained an unresolved, uncomfortable issue on the political agenda of central and local authorities.

³⁰⁹ Janusz Bugajski, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties*. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 199.

³¹⁰ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 135-136.

³¹¹ Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the Wars, 1918-1941*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 269.

Many of Transylvania's Romanian newspapers, notorious for their sensationalism and often xenophobic points of views, only exacerbated the already strained Romanian-Hungarian relations.³¹² By portraying Hungarians and Jews in a negative light, the popular Romanian press only served to entrench and propagate a malevolent and caricatural image of these two aforementioned ethnic groups. It used an integral nationalist discourse to advocate the dissimilation and exclusion of these two national minorities, mimicking in a way the nationalization policies of the central and local governments. Although there were other ethnic minorities in Transylvania (Saxons, Ruthenians and Serbs), they were less feared and resented and therefore suffered less discrimination during the first decade of the interwar period.³¹³ Therefore, this part of my study investigates and analyzes solely the perceptions and images of the Hungarian and Jewish minorities created by some of the most popular Romanian publications in Transylvania. The newspapers surveyed originate from cities, such as Cluj, Oradea, Sfintu Gheorghe and Arad, in which these two ethnic groups constituted either a demographic majority or/and cultural/economic hegemony. The nationalist backlash against them was therefore more acutely pronounced in these urban centers as was the implementation of various nation-building policies. My arguments will thus be framed within the context of the nation-building process in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ethnic relations in various Transylvania cities presented by the mass media. Rogers Brubaker and Harris Mylonas' theories

³¹² It is important to note the existence of inter-class tensions which had been present in Transylvania for centuries and which had often been transformed into ethnic tensions by both Hungarian and Romanian nationalists. Although the vast majority of landowners were ethnically Hungarian, the peasantry was almost equally divided between Magyar, Szrklers and Romanian peasants and their exploitation had always been a social phenomenon prevalent throughout the history of Eastern Europe. See S.B Vardy "National Oppression or Social Oppression ? The Nature of Hungarian-Romanian Relations in Transylvania," in *Transylvania: The Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, eds., John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi and Louis J. Elteto (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 148-156.

³¹³ In fact, the Saxons community was considered an important "ethnic ally" because during the Alba Iulia assembly, they had voted in favour of the union with Romania. Historically, the Saxons were perceived as the bringers of the German culture, perceived as a "true noble civilized culture" by the Romanian elites of Transylvania prior to the First World War. See C.A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), 244-245.

on the politics of nation-building in Eastern Europe following the First World War provide the theoretical and applicable building blocks for my analysis in regard to the relationship between the "core nation"³¹⁴ and "non-core groups"³¹⁵ concerning issues of ethnicity, citizenship and belonging.

Although nation-building policies can simply and easily be classified by a dichotomy of inclusion versus exclusion, the reality on the ground encourages historians to seek diversity within those to categories. Historian Harris Mylonas' conceptualization of the politics of nation-building is constructed by a categorical variable which takes the following possible values: assimilation, accommodation, and exclusion.³¹⁶ "Assimilationist policies" are described as state policies, either educational, cultural and political, aimed at the adoption of the core nation's culture and way of life by a specifically targeted non-group.³¹⁷ Often presented under the guise of an impartial law, these policies can target either an ethnic minority group or members of the core group which are considered not assimilated enough.³¹⁸ Its ultimate goal is national integration, cultural uniformity and the creation of co-nationals. Policies of accommodation refer to situations where the ethno-cultural differences of a minority are more or less respected by the host state and institutions and laws that regulate and reinforce these differences are established.³¹⁹ Official minority status is granted and the minority groups are allowed to have their own cultural and educational institutions. However, political loyalty and obedience to

³¹⁴ For the purpose of this essay, the term "core group" refers to the members of the ruling political organization that has the military and administrative capacity to enforce its decisions within the borders of the state. The core groups is always represented by the ruling political elites of the state. See Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 23, 24.

³¹⁵ Again, for this study, a "non-core group" is a population that is perceived as an unassimilated ethnic group the ruling political elites of a country at the beginning of the period analyzed. See *Ibid.*, 26

³¹⁶ Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*, 21.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

national law is required in return.³²⁰ Harris Mylonas concludes his list of nation-building policies with the ones which often produce segregation, interior displacement, refugees, pogroms and even mass killings, referred to as exclusionary policies.³²¹ They are also the most violent out of all the aforementioned nation-building approaches. Finally, one can add dissimilation policies to the list of nationalizing practices but in this case, they are "directed at spheres of practice rather than groups of people".³²² Indicating that this type of nationalization does not seek to alter identity in a minority groups but rather acknowledges their difference and treat them differently in spite of their common citizenship.³²³ Brubaker uses the German minority in interwar Poland as an example for this type of nation-building policy but it also applies to the situation of the urban Magyar minority in Transylvania between the two world wars. There were no calculated attempts to transform urban Magyars into Romanians but rather to relegate them to the status of second-class citizens in the hope that they would depart for Hungary. The Romanization of Transylvania sought to nationalize the borderlands, the civil service, the professional classes, the school system and the economy by dislodging and excluding Hungarians from key posts, thereby weakening the Hungarian minority so as to minimize their influence over the cultural, economic or political dimensions of the newly formed state.³²⁴

For politicians in Bucharest, the ethnoculturally heterogeneous population of Transylvania was a major political obstacle in the quest for a unitary, homogenous, centralized state. They also recognized there was a political, economic and even cultural disunity within the ethnic Romanian community itself, a legacy of regionally differentiated traditions, cultures, and

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid, 22-23.

³²² Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 88.

³²³ Ibid., 89.

³²⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 90.

allegiances.³²⁵ Consequently, the processes of nation building and national reforms were to be more radical and more widespread in the newly incorporated territories. In Transylvania, one of the most urgent issues was the dislodgement of "foreign" minorities (mainly Magyars and Magyarized Jews) from their long-held civil service positions. Although, one-fifth of Transylvanian Magyars left for Hungary after the *Anschluss*, many remained and continued to occupy their posts because the Romanian government simply did not have enough educated professionals to fill the empty positions, especially in the first decade after the war. The Hungarians which managed to keep their jobs had to swear allegiance to the Romanian state, a policy many newspapers criticized with vehemence. In 1921, *Gazeta Ardealului* (*The Transylvanian Gazette*) a center-right publication from Cluj wrote an article entitled *Ungaria isi face de cap* (*Hungary does whatever it wants*), which accuses the Hungarian state of encouraging the Magyar population in Transylvania to disobey all Romanian laws including the oath of allegiance.³²⁶ Its rant continued about the fact that the Hungarians that do take the oath, do so only superficially "because in their hearts, they never want to be part of the Romanian state or nation, nor should they be. Their best option is to leave this land once and for all."³²⁷ These lines call to attention two important issues which perpetuated the negative image of Hungarians as irredentist enemies of the Romanian state and people. The first one refers to the so-called assimilationist policy of oath taking to prove one's loyalty to the state. Swearing an oath of allegiance to the Romanian state along with forcefully learning Romanian in exchange for their posts was a coercive assimilation policy which had a very low success rate in "conquering" the belief system of the Magyar minority. It only served to humiliate those who had to swear it and it

³²⁵ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 8.

³²⁶ Anonymous, "Ungaria isi face de cap (Hungary does what it wants)," *Gazeta Ardealului* (*The Transylvanian Gazette*), September 2, 1921.

³²⁷ Ibid.

provoked the anger of the Romanian public. The second issue refers to the fact that the Magyars were deemed impossible to assimilate into the Romanian nation and should therefore "repatriate" to their native land. All of the sudden, they were "foreigners" living on "stolen" land without a place in Transylvania's history, unless they assumed the role of the Romanian oppressors.

The assimilation of the Magyars, especially in the cities, was generally viewed as unlikely and some ethnic accommodation, albeit grudgingly, was made by the Liberal government with the enactment of the 1923 constitution. Although equal rights was pledged to all ethnic minorities, including the right to practice their own religion, organize their own cultural associations and run their own schools, the document's ultimate objective was to reinforce the already highly centralized governmental structure by leaving little or no voice to the minorities in Transylvania to run their local and regional political affairs.³²⁸ At the local level, accommodationist policies were even more condemned by the Romanian press. When on February 15 1926, the mayor of Cluj, Octavian Utalea, passed a motion which allowed Magyar speakers to petition the city hall in their native language, the Romanian press reacted with an outpouring of outraged commentaries and reviews. An article from the popular right-wing newspaper *Infratirea Romaneasca (The Romanian Brotherhood)* entitled *Nerusinarea Ungurilor (The Impunity of the Hungarians)*, the anonymous author accuses the mayor of "remagyarization" of Cluj and then goes on to provide a "list of shame" of all the Hungarians and Hungarian Jews which had run for some sort of local election in several Transylvanian towns.³²⁹ It reminded all the "good patriotic Romanians of Transylvania" that "if they are not careful, the Magyars and their accomplices, the Jews, will grab hold of our cities and land yet again, creating

³²⁸ E. Garrison Walters, *The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1988), 231.

³²⁹ Anonymous, "Nerusinarea Ungurilor (The Impunity of the Hungarians), *Infratirea Romaneasca (The Romanian Brotherhood)*, March 1, 1926.

the worst possible national tragedy."³³⁰ Legally, members of any ethnic group were allowed to run for public office and belong to any political party yet publicly shaming them for doing so, prevented many from participating in the public life of their municipality thereby transforming an accommodation policy into a dissimilationist strategy.

Another issue taken up by the newspapers in a jingoistic manner was the re-nationalization of the "hidden" Romanians in the Szekler zone in eastern Transylvania. Considered by the Romanian political elite as less politically and economically threatening than the "true" Magyars of northwestern Transylvania, the Szeklers were to be peacefully assimilated into the Romanian nation. To further legitimize this approach, interwar historian Gheorghe Popa-Lisseanu argued that the Szeklers were not ethnically Hungarian but rather denationalized Romanians which had abandoned and forgotten their ethnic roots due to centuries of Magyar domination.³³¹ According to this theory, the "denationalization" of the Szeklers was relentlessly carried out by the Magyar church, army, bureaucracy, justice and economy.³³² According to the *Oituzul (Oituzul)*, a Romanian newspaper from Sfantu-Gheorghe, the most populous town in the Szekler district, Romanization of the Szeklers had to be accomplished by any means necessary.³³³ In its opening paragraph, the article asks "Who really are the Szeklers if not Romanian peasants with racial amnesia? They are really our long-lost brothers who need our national salvation now more than ever!"³³⁴ This statement thus perfectly parallels how the Romanian administration simply refused to accept the Szeklers as a separate population possessing a separate ethnic identity and culture. By encouraging the reassessment of a "hidden" Romanian identity to the Szeklers without their consent or approval, the newspapers

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 139.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Valeriu V. Bidu, "Secui si Scoala Nationala (The Szeklers and the National School)", *Oituzul*, June 12, 1924.

³³⁴ Ibid.

disseminated the implicit idea that Romanian culture was superior to that of the Szekler's, thereby reinforcing the idea of ethnic/cultural hierarchy promoted by the discourse of integral nationalism. The Romanian eugenicists took the matter even further by framing the Szekler question within what historian Marian Bucur, refers to as "the parameters of a scientific, biologizing discourse"³³⁵ By arguing that the Szeklers, although culturally Hungarian, were biologically Romanian, the Romanian eugenicists aspired to once and for all settle the debate over "who arrived first" in Transylvania by proving to the Magyar revisionists that their province had always been inhabited by an overwhelming Romanian majority.³³⁶ Thus this law of biological hereditary fused with the notion of cultural hierarchy to become a key pillar in the integral nationalist discourse and state policies of the 1930s. As Irina Livezeanu explains, the "denationalization of the Szeklers" theory became the basis of education policy when the Szekler question was taken up by the Ministry of Education, which established one hundred and twenty-four Romanian schools in the most populous Szekler districts of Mures, Ciuc, Odorhei and Treiscaune between 1919 and 1935.³³⁷ Furthermore, Hungarian was replaced by Romanian as language of instruction in all state school in the Szekler region after 1919.³³⁸ The Romanian Churches also played a part in the Romanization of the Szeklers by founding fourteen Orthodox and eleven Uniate parishes between 1919 and 1935.³³⁹ Despite the best efforts of the Romanian administration, Churches and cultural societies, the Szeklers not only stubbornly clung to their language and culture but were openly averse towards the state schools and Orthodox and Uniate churches. To add insult to injury, the Romanian administration forced them to financially contribute towards the cost of the state schools, which the Szeklers firmly refused on material

³³⁵ Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 2002), 69.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 68,69.

³³⁷ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 140.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 140.

and moral grounds.³⁴⁰ By 1936, the aforementioned publication, *Oituzul*, remarked in an article entitled "Probleme Romanesti in regiunea Secuizata (Romanian problems in the Szekler region)" that "the Szekler region seems beyond national help. Yet it rests on our national conscience to resolve the problems of this region because if not it will remain a graveyard filled with lost souls, abandoned by their brothers, forever doomed to know only the Szekler ways."³⁴¹ By employing a dramatic tone and vocabulary, the newspaper tried to appeal to the emotions rather than the reason of its readers, equating Szekler traditions to a dead culture in which its members could never feel spiritually satisfied unless they become part of the dominant culture. The newspapers along with the Romanian schools, churches and cultural institutions were part of this "cultural offensive" developed by the Romanian political and intellectual elite as part of their nation-building policies.³⁴²

3.3 Building the Romania of Tomorrow: Education, Exclusion and Terror

Nationalizing practices and institutions of Greater Romania did differentiate between the various minority groups, classifying them either as destabilizing and dangerous for the Romanian nation or as inoffensive yet still a nuisance that had to be contained and regulated. The Hungarian minority, organized and politically active, was perceived as first and foremost irredentist and culturally threatening especially with the formation of the non-partisan Hungarian Federation (*Magyar Szovetseg*) in January 1921 whose motto was "*Kialto Szol*" ("Warning Cry") along with the formation of the Hungarian People's Party in the summer of the same year.³⁴³

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 141.

³⁴¹ Aurel Gogiman-Oituz, "Probleme Romanesti in regiunea Secuizata (Romanian problems in the Szekler region)", *Oituzul*, April 12, 1936.

³⁴² Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 143.

³⁴³ Illyes, *National Minorities in Romania: Change in Transylvania*, 72.

The German minority, a group already used to having minority status, voted in favour of the Union but on condition that their ethnic rights would be guaranteed and protected by the Romanian government. Although the Saxons of Transylvania and Swabians of the Banat were also politically active under the German-Saxon People's Council, their highest political organ, they were perceived more as an economic rather than a cultural/political threat during the first decade of the interwar period.³⁴⁴ Generally admired for their "civilized and hard-working nature", the Saxons still saw their minority rights curtailed by Bucharest's ever increasing centralization, which by the end of the 1920s introduced restrictions on the use of non-Romanian language and further decreased state assistance to religious schools.³⁴⁵

Historian Ezra Mendelsohn explains that after the Union, opposition to "foreign" domination of Romanian life, real or imagined, played a large role in the growth of Romanian nationalism, transforming it into an anti-foreigner, anti-Semitic movement.³⁴⁶ Even prior to the Union, Romania, along with Imperial Russia, was known as the most anti-Semitic country on the continent, refusing on several occasions to emancipate its Jewish population.³⁴⁷ As with the Jews of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Latvia, Romanian Jewry was divided into five very different communities.³⁴⁸ The Jews were Transylvania's third largest ethnic minority but many of them had been assimilated into the Hungarian culture, identifying themselves as Hungarians of the Mosaic faith. As the minority most defended by Western governments and by the League of

³⁴⁴Ibid., 73.

³⁴⁵ Vladimir Ortakovski, *Minorities in the Balkans*, (New York: Transnational Publishers, 2000), 85.

³⁴⁶ Mendelsohn. *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, 172.

³⁴⁷ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 12.

³⁴⁸ The Jews of the Old Kingdom were split into two groups, the larger more Eastern community resided in Moldavia while the smaller Western type groups lived primarily in Bucharest. In the newly acquired eastern provinces Bukovina and Bessarabia, the Jewish communities were both Eastern type but they had lived under two very different regimes. The Jews of Transylvania were also split into two communities, those of historic Transylvania and the Banat which were mostly urban and either magyarized or germanized and those of the northern region of Crisa-Maramures which consisted of the Eastern type, very much like the Jews from Bukovina. Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, 173.

Nations, the Jews were the most urban, the most educated and the lived throughout all of Greater Romania's provinces.³⁴⁹ They were also perceived as the most "foreign" element within the Romanian state even prior to its enlargement in 1918. By being a predominantly urban cosmopolitan class, whose members were overwhelmingly involved in either commerce, industry or the professions, Transylvania's Jewry provided the anti-thesis of what the "traditionalists" defined as Romanian national identity. Adding to the growing Judophobia was the fact that the vast majority of Jews had assimilated into Hungarian culture, thus prompting the Transylvanian Romanians to perceive them as the willing servants of the Magyars.³⁵⁰ Published by the Cluj newspaper *Dacia Noua (The New Dacia)*, an article entitled "Ardealul sub calcai jidovesc (Transylvania under the kikes' heel)" viciously accused the Jewish entrepreneurs of oppressing "the hard-working Christian Romanians" through their unwillingness to pay them a fair wage and by dismissing them from their post without a warning or a just reason.³⁵¹ The article then reiterates the theme of "Jews control the Romanian economy" by providing a list of examples of companies in and around Cluj which chose to apparently hire Jewish workers exclusively.³⁵² It concludes on the note that "although the Great War has ended the fight against our internal aliens (the Jews) has just begun", imploring all Romanians "to pick up the fight in the name of our national heroes."³⁵³ Although shocking to the contemporary reader, the Romanian press in Transylvania was peppered with articles such as the one above even when the newspapers publishing them was not considered generally right-wing. This kind of diatribe against the Jewish community only increased when, under the pressure of the Western Allies,

³⁴⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 13.

³⁵⁰ Mendelsohn, *The Jews of Eastern Europe between the World Wars*, 177.

³⁵¹ Rex, "Ardealul sub calcai Jidovesc (Transylvania under the Jewish heel)," *Dacia Noua (The New Dacia)*, January 20, 1923.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

Romania signed a treaty in December of 1919 granting citizenship to all Jews inhabiting any Romanian territory who did not possess another nationality.³⁵⁴ This meant that Jews from the newly annexed territories underwent a complicated and inefficient process of providing proof of uninterrupted residence since before the war in order to obtain their Romanian citizenship. This type of discrimination speaks volumes about the dissimilationist stance projected by the nation-building policies regarding "the Jewish question." A similar situation was present in interwar Poland, where the state's nationalizing policies and practices regarding the Jewish minority reflected a dissimilationist position which clearly stated that Jews should not be assimilated into the core nation.³⁵⁵

This view was also prevalent among the general Romanian public as interwar Transylvania adopted the anti-Semitic traditions of the Old Kingdom. In 1922, a society was formed in Cluj by the name of Actiunea Romaneasca (Romanian Action) whose goal was to prevent Transylvanian Jews from obtaining their citizenship. Comprised of university students, professors and army officers, this Anti-Semitic club had open access to the state's list of applicants for citizenship, formulating a vehement protest whenever a Jewish name was found.³⁵⁶ Those same university students, identifying themselves as radical nationalists, were also involved in the anti-Jewish agitation which erupted across Romania but was most pronounced in the cities of Cluj and Iasi. In both cities Jewish students formed the largest ethnic minority of the total university population. The students' situation was dire as they were crammed in overcrowded campuses where the competition for academic resources was scarce along with the

³⁵⁴ Mendelsohn, *The Jews of Eastern Europe between the World Wars*, 185.

³⁵⁵ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 93.

³⁵⁶ Mendelsohn, *The Jews of Eastern Europe between the World Wars*, 185-186.

prospect of securing a well-paying job in the civil service and the urban professions.³⁵⁷ This economic insecurity led many Romanian university students to adopt a militant integral nationalist ideology which combined xenophobia, anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism "with an idealistic campaign directed against the venal and corrupt political and economic establishment."³⁵⁸ The incident that began the nationwide anti-Jewish student protests happened in 1922 at the Cluj Medical Academy where Romanian students demanded that their Jewish peers provide Jewish cadavers for dissection.³⁵⁹ On December 10 1922, students from four Romanian universities convened in the capital with a list of unified demands regarding the "Jewish question" such as the enactment of a *numerus clausus*³⁶⁰ for university admissions, the censorship and sanction of the Jewish press and even the expulsion of Jews who had migrated to Romania after the start of the Great War.³⁶¹ Irina Livezeanu's chapter "The Generation of 1922" thoroughly captures the details of this event along its implications and meanings therefore I will abstain from repeating its narrative in order to focus on the newspaper coverage of this incident, its legacy and its impact on Romanian nationalist discourse in the following years. Two years after the event, the newspaper *Actiunea Romaneasca (Romanian Action)* published a story urging the young generation to fulfill its duty to the Romanian nation by following the principles invoked at the December 10 gathering. In his article entitled "Datoria tinerei generati (The Duty of the younger generation," the author, I.C. Catuneanu, a professor at Cluj university claims that: "If we and you (the younger generation) do not fight against the Jewish influence, we will perish as a nation ! " but advises his readers to employ non-

³⁵⁷ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 246.

³⁵⁸ Mendelsohn, *The Jews of Eastern Europe between the World Wars*, 188.

³⁵⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 269.

³⁶⁰ A policy which demanded a racial quota, in this case it demanded to limit the admission of Jewish students in accord with their proportion in the total population.

³⁶¹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 270.

violent measures as they are not as effective as economic measures are to "rid this nation of its 2 million unwelcomed Jews".³⁶² Although the article repeatedly calls on the young elite to defeat the Jewish menace in Transylvania using economic means, it never offers a concrete explanation of what those economic means entailed. This type of empty rhetoric on the "economic menace" of the Jews was disseminated by many other newspapers and given as an excuse for the wave of anti-Semitic agitation which shook Greater Romania in the years of 1922-1923. In January of 1923, the weekly Cluj journal, *Tara Noastra (Our Country)* defended the Romanian students protest regarding the ethnicity of the medical cadavers by publishing an article with the sarcastic title of "Antisemitismul Romanilor (The so-called Romanian anti-Semitism). It asked its readers why is one branded as anti-Jewish for requesting that the Jews use their own Jewish cadavers instead of Christian ones.³⁶³ The article continued by inquiring why the Jews want to be doctors at all if their "culture and traditions" prevents them from dissecting Jewish bodies and concluded by accusing the Jewish students of "anti-Goism," which meant that it was them that were anti-Christian and anti-Romanian for not following the university rules.³⁶⁴ Although this article displays a more toned down example of anti-Semitic discourse, it nonetheless cast the image of the Jews as "foreigners who refuse to play by our regional rules."³⁶⁵ The "Jew" symbolized the Other for the Romanian Transylvanian press thus echoing the predominant viewpoint of "the Generation of 1922," a generation which sought to find its national identity through the persecution and exclusion of the nation's internal enemies, be they Magyar, Bolshevik or Jew. Sadly for the Jewish university students of Cluj University, they were often branded as

³⁶² I.C. Catuneanu, "Datoria tinerei generati (The duty of the younger generation)," *Actiunea Romaneasca (The Romanian Action)*, December 15, 1924.

³⁶³ Ion Gorun, "Antisemitismul Romanilor (The so-called Romanian anti-Semitism)," *Tara Noastra (Our Country)*, December 17, 1922.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

embodying all three, the "perfect" national villain in the doctrine of integral nationalism. As for the Romanian students, they were hailed by the mainstream nationalist press as national heroes who not only fought for the propagation of "authentic" Romanian values but also condemned the "soft" corrupt politicians in Bucharest for enacting the 1923 Liberal constitution which allegedly "sold out" the nation to the Great Powers by complying with the Minorities Protection Treaty of 1919.³⁶⁶ The Parisian newspaper *Paix et Droit (Peace and Justice)* reported that by November of 1922, the government had to suspend all classes at the universities of Cluj, Iasi and Bucharest due to the extreme anti-Jewish agitation which continued to grow and spread like wildfire.³⁶⁷ In the winter of 1922-1923, anti-Semitic incidents not only resumed but also intensified due to the enactment of the new constitution in the spring of 1923. Voted in by the two houses of the Romanian parliament on March 26 and 27, the constitution granted Romanian citizenship to all Jewish residents as well as equal civil and political rights.³⁶⁸ Initially, the Jewish community in Transylvania was relieved that justice and democracy was upheld by the Romanian state and hoped for a reconciliation with their Romanian co-nationals. By emancipating its Jewish minority, albeit grudgingly, the Romanian state displayed a lessening of its exclusionary nation building policies. However, anti-Jewish agitation continued almost unabated across the Romanian universities throughout the 1920s, encouraged by the various right-wing organizations while much of the general Romanian public tacitly approved. The situation was especially dire in Transylvania, where the Romanian students identified their Jewish peers with the Magyar oppressors of Romanian freedom and development, thus creating a situation in which a minority paid a heavy price for its past assimilation into the dominant

³⁶⁶ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 247.

³⁶⁷ Anonymous, "Les Desordres antijuifs en Roumanie (The anti-Jewish agitation in Romania)," *Paix et Droit (Peace and Justice)*, February 1923

³⁶⁸ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 272.

Magyar culture.³⁶⁹ Although no pogroms were recorded by the Romanian authorities in Transylvania during the 1920s, anti-Jewish riots occurred frequently especially after nationalist rallies organized by Romanian students and their professors. One of the most violent of such incidents, which the Jewish press denounced as an planned pogrom, took place in December of 1927 in the Oradea-Mare, a city inhabited mostly by non-Romanians.³⁷⁰ On December 2nd 1927, with the authorization of the government, five thousand Romanian students from around the country, gathered in Oradea-Mare to discuss "the Jewish problem" in the universities, to reiterate their demand of *numerus clausus* and to "claim" the city for the Romanian nation.³⁷¹ The foreign press reported that anti-Jewish violence had commenced even before the rally as students had mocked and harassed train passengers of the Jewish faith on the way to Oradea.³⁷² After the congress, the students took to the streets, causing fights, vandalizing and looting numerous Jewish and Hungarian shops, desecrating six synagogues and injuring fifty people in the process.³⁷³ The local authorities did not intervene or make any arrests and neither did the few hundred soldiers stationed in the city center, thereby sanctioning the perpetration of anti-Jewish violence as permitted and even deserved. Some of the Romanian press, mainly the nationalist right-wing newspapers, recounted the event in a very different manner, by affirming that the students were provoked by the Jewish population who verbally insulted them while pelting them with rotten vegetables.³⁷⁴ Blaj's moderate nationalist newspaper *Unirea (The Union)* conveys a different story about the same student congress by accusing the students, their professors and the

³⁶⁹ Mendelsohn, *Jews of East Central Europe*, 187.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

³⁷¹ Alfred Berl, "Le pogrome Roumain (The Romanian pogrom)," *Paix et Droit (Peace and Justice)*, December 1927.

³⁷² Alfred Berl, "Le pogrome Roumain (The Romanian pogrom)," *Paix et Droit (Peace and Justice)*, December 1927.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Ion DP, "Congresul Studentesc (The Student Congress)," *Infratirea Romaneasca (The Romanian Brotherhood)*, December 15, 1927.

local authorities of shaming the Romanian nation on the international stage with their violent actions.³⁷⁵ Its front page article condemned not only the students, their parents, their teachers and universities but also the politicians in Bucharest and the Romanian state in general for sanctioning such violent behaviour and letting it go unpunished.³⁷⁶ Although the newspaper's description and opinion of that terrible day can be interpreted as commendable, it nevertheless falls short of the truth, especially because it does not mention the anti-Jewish agitation and its victims. According to this article, the Jew does not even feature as part of the story, just as he does not exist as part of the Romanian nation. Although they differ greatly in their narration and perception of the events in Oradea, both the aforementioned newspapers created and disseminated a type of exclusionary, intolerant nationalism, which either blamed the Jews for the violence they suffered or simply negated their suffering at the hands of the Romanian students. Furthermore, both publications mentioned that the state had authorized the student congress for the first time since the beginning of the anti-Jewish student agitation more than five years back. This implies an implicit acceptance from the part of the state which validates the principles of the student movement such as xenophobia, anti-Semitism and militant nationalism as legitimate and mainstream. Along with political acceptance, the students also received praise and encouragement through the newspapers from the Romanian intellectual community in Transylvania. Sextil Puscariu, famous linguist and former rector of Cluj University heralded the student movement as "a healthy and spontaneous reaction of the national preservation instinct."³⁷⁷ In his popular weekly periodical, *Tara Noastra (Our Country)*, renowned Transylvanian poet and politician Octavia Goga, expressed his dissatisfaction with the violence

³⁷⁵ Augustin Popa, "Criza Sufletului (Crisis of the Soul)," *Unirea (The Union)*, December 10, 1927.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ Sextil Puscariu, *Constiinta Romaneasca (Romanian Consciousness)*, March 1923, quoted from Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 275.

and vandalism of the students in Oradea but praised the moral principles upholding the movement.³⁷⁸ He compared the Jewish students to a "parasitic invasion on Romanian soil that has been vandalizing the morals of the Romanian nation without impunity for decades" which, according to Goga, had to be stopped by a braver, younger, Romanian generation.³⁷⁹ Present throughout his article are not only the themes of national preservation, national pride and national honour but also a clear moral legitimization of the student movement, its xenophobic demands and its integral nationalist position. As the 1920s progressed, radical and regressive ideas attained a level of public acceptance within Transylvania's Romanian community. Spearheaded by the young intellectuals and guided by right-wing organizations and leaders, a native fascism formed in the universities of Cluj, Iasi and Bucharest which subsequently created the Legion of Archangel Michael in 1927 and its paramilitary political branch, the Iron Guard in 1931.³⁸⁰ Though relatively new on the political scene, the Guard's ideology and politics, paralleled to those of the "new generation", which had been legitimated by the mobilization of the state and by the discourse of many of the mainstream Romanian newspapers regarding the politics of nation-building.³⁸¹ The genesis of Romania's native fascist movement can thus be traced to the anti-Jewish student agitation of 1922, leading Horia Sima, leader of the Iron Guard in the late 1930s, to declare that Romanian fascism in the 1930s and 1940s was a movement of the new generation: its cadres being intellectuals and students who had recently left the universities.³⁸²

³⁷⁸ Octavian Goga, "Devastari Morale (Moral Devastation)," *Tara Noastra (Our Country)*, January 1st, 1928.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Among many scholarly studies on the Iron Guard and the League of the Archangel Michael see Radu Ioanid, *The Sword of the Archangel: Fascist Ideology in Romania* (Boulder, Col.: East European Monographs, 1990), Eugen Weber, "The Men of the Archangel," *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, 1, no. 1 (1996):101-126, Peter F. Sugar, ed., *Native Fascism in the Successor States, 1918-1945* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1971).

³⁸¹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 25.

³⁸² Quoted from Ibid., 245.

In this chapter, my focus was to examine the politics of nation-building from the perspective of various Romanian publications from Transylvania. By dividing my chapter into three temporal themes - past, present and future- my analysis situated various federal and local nation-building policies within them for the purpose of representing the function they performed towards the goal of nationalizing Romanian society. The politics surrounding the commemorations of the union and their representation by the newspapers speak volumes about the connection between the past, public memory and national identity in Transylvania. As historian John R. Gillis so aptly observed, new nations require ancient pasts in order to balance their fragile present.³⁸³ Greater Romania was no different but its politics of remembrance regarding the national assembly at Alba Iulia on December 1st 1918 differed between the Old Kingdom and Transylvania. The event, framed by a particularizing national narrative, was remembered in a special and sacred tone by the Transylvanian Romanian intelligentsia because it symbolized their arduous national struggle and their continuous sense of their national mission. It was also a national holiday which divided the Romanian community along regional lines.³⁸⁴ The Transylvanian newspapers, reflecting the views of its Romanian intellectuals and contributors, heralded December 1st as the only unification which mattered, dismissing completely the previous two territorial annexations which enlarged Greater Romania.³⁸⁵ Although for the most part the Bucharest government initiated nation-building policies for the purpose of centralizing and unifying the state, the provinces were by no means the passive receptors of those policies. Following the union of their region to the Old Kingdom, the small yet politically active Romanian intelligentsia, questioned the policies of the regime and were often

³⁸³ Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, 9

³⁸⁴ Bucur, *Heroes and Victims*, 113.

³⁸⁵ The province of Bessarabia officially became part of the Romanian Kingdom on November 27, 1918. A day later, on November 28, at Bukovina's General Congress, the delegates voted unanimously for the union of their province with Romania.

repelled by its centralizing yet moderate stance towards the national minorities. Many believed that the national revolutionary project that had begun decades before the union was not only not over, but that it was just beginning and that they, endowed with their revolutionary righteousness, were its natural leaders.³⁸⁶ Thus state policies of assimilation and accommodation towards the Magyar minority seemed unacceptable in the eyes of the Romanian political and intellectual elite. They felt betrayed by the politicians in Bucharest, whom they felt knew nothing of the oppression they had endured at the hands of the Hungarian regime. Less than two years after the union, the National Party of Transylvania was calling for a new assembly at Alba Iulia as its politicians were already disillusioned with Bucharest's "seemingly timid" nationalizing policies in their province.³⁸⁷ Whispers of secession filled the air as Transylvania's politicians referred to the union as "unification by pitchfork" because of its centralization, bureaucratization and "cultural inflation".³⁸⁸ Yet the union endured and Transylvania's disgruntled elite refocused on the nationalization of their province through local policies of dissimilation directed towards the Magyar minority such as the Romanization of Magyar schools. In an article published in *Tara Noastra (Our Country)*, Octavian Prie, a prominent Transylvanian politician and member of the Ministry of Education, suggests the closing of several Magyar confessional schools in eastern Transylvania in order to regain a "cultural balance" based on the principle of *suum cuique* (to each what he deserves).³⁸⁹ The Romanian newspapers also took up an anti-Jewish crusade following the anti-Semitic student demonstrations at the University of Cluj in the winter of 1922. Hundreds of articles were published by various newspapers defending the student's radical nationalist demands. The newspaper ensured national attention for the student movement as well

³⁸⁶ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 186-187.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁸⁹ Octavia Prie, "Problema scolilor confesionale si minoritare din Transilvania (Problems of confessional and minority schools in Transylvania)," *Tara Noastra (Our Country)*, November 19, 1922.

as its gradual acceptance of the mainstream Romanian public. It was also in the newspapers that moderate and extreme nationalism discourse converged and diverged in tandem with the regional and state nation-building strategies regarding the "Jewish question". The nationalist youth had clearly defined their position regarding this issue and thus were deeply outraged when in spring of 1923 the new Liberal constitution emancipated the Jewish minority. The anti-Jewish agitation continued unabated in Greater Romania's universities during the 1920s culminating in the formation of the Legion of Archangel Michael in 1927.³⁹⁰ This ideological transition from mainstream anti-Semitism towards fascism was also reflected in the Transylvanian newspapers as their language and tone gradually radicalized. By narrating local nation-building policies through an integral nationalist discourse, many of the Romanian newspapers ultimately shaped and influenced the national self-image of their readers to reflect that of the growing extreme nationalism on the ground.

³⁹⁰ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 247.

Conclusion

In the first decade of the interwar years, Transylvania remained a predominate agricultural province where over 80 percent of its inhabitants, whether Romanian, Hungarian or Saxon, worked the land and cared little for the politics of the state. Yet at the same time, younger generation left for the cities in search of more profitable opportunities. For the Romanian nationalist elite, the influx of these literate, more educated peasants was perceived as the crucial element in displacing and replacing the "foreign" urban middle-class and thus strengthening the Romanian nation.³⁹¹ Its nationalist views, radicalized in response to the demographic, cultural and social changes brought on by the Union, were fervently expressed in the numerous Romanian language newspapers, journals, pamphlets and periodicals. Acquiring cultural power through its popularity, the Romanian press was thus able to construct, reformulate and disseminate a new type of national identity based on the principles of integral nationalism. By infusing their daily articles with the discourses of this type of intolerant nationalism, the Romanian press only exacerbated the mounting ethnic tensions already present in Transylvania before the Union.

My goal has been to analyse and deconstruct the dynamic relationship between the discourse of integral nationalism and various Romanian periodicals in Transylvania. My thesis also examined how many of the most popular Romanian newspapers contributed in constructing, circulating and reproducing the policies of a nationalizing state. In order to better situate my narrative in the historical context of Transylvania, the first chapter provided a comprehensive account of the historical circumstances which widely influenced the political views of the Romanian intellectual elite. One of the major arguments of this chapter was that the

³⁹¹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 303.

Romanian nationalists, upon gaining power, failed to learn from the mistakes of the former ruling Hungarian elite regarding the treatment of ethnic minorities. On the contrary, the Romanian nationalists exacted their revenge on the Hungarian and Jewish minorities despite their promises of fair and equal political and cultural rights for all of Transylvania's inhabitants no matter their ethnicity or religion. What followed was, what historian Oliver Zimmer labeled as a "nationalist struggle," which led to a self-fulfilling prophecy insofar as both Romanians and Hungarians saw their cultural prejudices confirmed by the actions of the other side.³⁹²

The first part of chapter two provided a theoretical framework for the main concept of my research, the ideology of integral nationalism. By constructing a typology for the various types of integral nationalisms from influential scholarly works, I was able to situate my thesis within some of the existing literature on Transylvanian society during the interwar period. The second part of the chapter was dedicated to the analysis of the role of the rhetoric of integral nationalism within the Romanian national consciousness as presented by several Transylvanian Romanian weeklies. It argued that the newspapers keenly reflected and espoused the radical nationalist stance of the political and cultural atmosphere during the first decade of the interwar era. Although politically and demographically dominant, the Romanian elites expressed a cultural anxiety vis-a-vis the other more educated, more urban ethnic minorities. This cultural insecurity manifested itself in the drive to "Romanize" the major Transylvanian cities and in the institutionalization of the Daco-Roman continuity myth as an official national theory. Both of these were narrated by the Romanian press with overtones of integral nationalism and linked to the process of nationalizing the province of Transylvania. Finally, the last part of the chapter explored the Great Debate on Romania's national development between the Europeanists and the

³⁹² Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940*, 68.

traditionalists as it was deliberated within the pages of several Romanian publications. It concluded that that the traditionalist view dominated the aforementioned debate on the character and development of the Romanian nation in Transylvania. Their anti-Western, anti-rationalism doctrine known as Orthodoxism, a mixture of "authentic" rural Romanian values fused with Eastern Christian spirituality, fitted perfectly with the rising right-wing movements within Romanian society.

The final chapter of this research addressed the portrayal by several Romanian newspapers of three concrete examples in what Romanian nationalists referred to as the national reconstruction. Although numerous state and local nation-building policies were initiated in the years following the Union, three stood out as particularly interesting to the Romanian media in Transylvania: the commemorations of December 1st, the various assimilation and dissimilation state policies regarding the Hungarian and Jewish minorities and the local, grass-roots anti-Semitic, xenophobic, nationalist student movement at the Romanian University of Cluj. As the aforementioned events unfolded, the Romanian newspapers framed them in a discourse of integral nationalism. Far from condemning the growing xenophobic harassment and violence experienced by Ardeal's minority groups, the newspapers encouraged those responsible by portraying them as courageous patriots. The articles surveyed by my research all depicted the politics of nation-building in a positive light because were perceived as key processes in the Romanization of Transylvania. Therefore the aggressive nationalistic tone of the Romanian newspapers regarding the aforementioned nation-building policies can be interpreted as a contrast to the actual process of Romanization, which was far more arduous and gradual than previously expected by the Romanian nationalists.

For nearly two hundred years and up to the present day, Hungarian and Romanian nationalists have argued that Transylvania represents the cultural heart of their respective nations. Thus a process of political, social and cultural appropriation developed within both Hungarian and Romanian historiographies. The "Transylvania Question" transformed in an oversimplified argument regarding the "ownership" of the region based on the "who was here first" question. Consequently, Transylvania's history became 'shackled', becoming subservient to national and political requirements whose ultimate goal has been to prove "historical ownership rights."³⁹³ This paper sought to distance itself from such nationalistic attitudes by shedding light on the role of the Romanian newspapers in the construction of a national identity based on the principles of integral nationalism following the years after the Union. To my knowledge such this study is the first of kind but it is by no means exhaustive and complete thus the need for more such studies analyzing the micro-dynamics of the development of a national identity from a historical perspective, remains only partly fulfilled. Although the distinguished works of Rogers Brubaker, Irina Livezeanu, Maria Bucur, Holly Case, Katherine Verdery, Lucian Boia and Balazs Trencsenyi provide such necessary insight, there remains a lack of English-language studies concerning the cultural history of Transylvania during the first decade the interwar period published after the fall of Communism.³⁹⁴

³⁹³ Domokos Kosary, "Historians and Transylvania," in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, ed. Peter Laszlo (Boulder, Colorado: Columbia University Press, 1992), 57-58.

³⁹⁴ See Balazs Trencsenyi, Dragos Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi and Zoltan Kantor eds. *National Building and Contested Identities*. (Budapest: Regio Books, 2001), Lucian Boia, *History and Myth* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth Century Romania*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 2002), Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvania Question and the European Idea during World War II*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) and Katherine Verdery. *Transylvanian Villagers*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

Since the collapse of Communism, the states of Central and Eastern Europe have been slowly integrated into the folds of the Western European community with their admission into North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Although inclusion in these supranational organizations was intended to curb the rise of radical nationalist sentiments in the newly admitted members, the reality on the ground has not always produced the desired results. Nationalism is still a recurrent and powerful phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe which should not be disregarded as a topic of study for Western scholars. Its convoluted and complex history regarding the disputed region of Transylvania can aid in the study of other such geographically ambiguous and nationally contested regions such as Crimea, Transnistria and Kosovo, just to name a few.

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