

TRANSYLVANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE. DIPLOMATIC OPTIONS AND SOLUTIONS (1944-1947)

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Abstract: After the instauration of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the projects of custom union or Central and South Eastern Europe confederation have disappeared for almost 50 years. Through the Peace Treaty signed with Romania, Transylvania returned entirely to the Romanian state. In an interview given upon his return from the Paris Peace Conference, Şerban Voinea, one of the members of the delegation, confessed: The strategy of the delegation focused entirely on Transylvania's issue¹. On August 23, 1947 it was ratified by the Romanian Parliament.

Keywords: Transylvania, Paris Peace Conference, Romania, Hungary

The relations between Romania and Hungary in the 20th century had as main concern Transylvania's status. The Paris Peace Conference and the Trianon Treaty, by acknowledging the act of December 1, 1918, produced great discontent among the Hungarians². The Vienna Award caused in exchange most painful frustrations among the Romanians, who were forced to cede Northern Transylvania to Hungary, with a surface of 43,492 square kilometers and a population of 2,667,000 inhabitants³. During the Second World War, each of the two countries joined Nazi Germany on the Eastern Front, both having Transylvania in mind: Hungary hoped to get the entire Transylvania, while Romania hoped to regain Northern Transylvania by canceling the Vienna Award of August 30, 1940. The Great Powers did not have a coherent attitude, depending mainly on the evolution of war and postwar interests. Even if not agreeing the idea of official debates on the issue of borders, during the war, in 1943, the American Administration raised the issue of Transylvania in the frame of Advisory Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The interdepartmental commission on the Balkan-Danube issue in the frame of the State Department and Committee on Post-War Program, between 19 April and 26 June 1944, mentioned that the United States give priority to the Hungarian-Romanian border along an ethnical line, meant to give Hungary back a small land strip from North of Arad to Satu Mare⁴. According to the plan proposed by the *Office of Strategic Services* on October 23, 1944, in order to restrain irredentism in Romania and Hungary, a new Romanian-Hungarian border was proposed, which was situated at 30-50 miles east of the border established at Trianon. If such a solution did not correspond entirely to the ethnical borders, another option was the resettlement

¹ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, *Conferința de Pace de la Paris, 1946*, File 8, p. 31.

² For the Romanian-Hungarian relations after the First World War see: Alexandru Ghişa, *România și Ungaria la începutul secolului XX. Stabilirea relațiilor diplomatice (1918-1921)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2002.

³ See Aurica Simion, *Dictatul de la Viena*, Second edition revised and completed, Bucureşti, Editura Albatros, 1996, p. 27.

⁴ Fülöp Mihály, *Pacea neterminată. Consiliul Miniştrilor Afacerilor Externe și tratatul de pace ungar (1947)*, Iaşi, Institutul European, 2007, p. 50.

of the Hungarians and Szeklers on the territory west of Piatra Craiului and the settlement of the Romanians on the territories evacuated by the expatriate Hungarians⁵. After the war, in the frame of the Foreign Ministers' Conference, the position of the USA was officially more reserved in what the modification of the borders was concerned. The Americans supported the idea of the necessity of canceling the Vienna "arbitrage", while the potential revision of the borders had to represent the direct result of the agreement between the governments of Bucharest and Budapest. At the London Conference of the Foreign Ministers, J. F. Byrnes, the State Secretary of the USA, considered that through a minimal rectification of the border with Transylvania, more than half a million of Hungarians would have been relocated to Hungary. If the modification proved impossible, the American delegation gave up insisting on it.⁶ Thus, the USA mentioned every time that the final solution regarding the border between Romania and Hungary should belong to the Peace Conference. England proved to be equally diplomatic in what the subject was concerned. During and in the aftermath of war, London supported firmly the revocation of the Vienna "arbitrage". London favored instead a minimal alteration of the border. In 1942-1943, the British also proposed the creation of *an independent state of Transylvania, according to the model of the Swiss cantons*⁷. After the London Conference of Foreign Ministers, which took place between 11 September and 2 October 1945, England stopped proposing the alteration of the borders established at Trianon⁸. French diplomacy, so active between 1919 and 1920, played a secondary part after the Second World War, being excluded from the preparation of the treaty with Romania⁹. Nonetheless, French diplomacy observed attentively the evolution of the Transylvanian issue. The recommended solution had to take into consideration Transylvania's geographic and economic unity and to permanently solve the minorities' issue by attaching the Transylvanian plateau to Romania and by returning the western region of this plateau to Hungary.

The Soviet power from Moscow was favorable to the solution of the total restitution of Transylvania to Romania, in the frame of the borders established at Trianon in 1920, not acknowledging the Vienna Dictate. The inclusion in the 12 September Armistice Convention of the formula "the largest part of Transylvania" was due to Moscow in order to have a larger space of political and diplomatic maneuver in its relations with Budapest. The Soviet Union's position concerning Transylvania cannot be separated from the establishment of Romania's eastern borders, towards which Moscow was equally consistent: the occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was definitive. Besides, the restitution of Northern Transylvania to the Romanian State was regarded as a compensation granted to Bucharest for having given up Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. In 1944, Stalin decided the establishment of a commission for the analysis of the postwar order issues, headed by Maxim Litvinov¹⁰. The commission elaborated the document *About Transylvania*, submitted to Stalin on June 15, 1944, which recommended "the acknowledgement of Transylvania's independence status beyond any alliance and federation". Initially accepted, Litvinov's proposal was abandoned by Stalin, mostly after

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

⁷ Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *România și Ungaria de la Trianon la Paris (1920-1947). Bătălia diplomatică pentru Transilvania*, București, Editura Viitorul Românesc, 1996, p. 193.

⁸ Vida István, *Chestiunea maghiară la Paris*, in *Transilvania văzută în publicistica istorică maghiară*, Miercurea-Ciuc, Editura Pro-Print, 1999, pp. 389-390.

⁹ Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, Ion Pătroi, Selection and Introduction, *Documente franceze despre Transilvania*, București, Editura Vremea, 2001, p. 29.

¹⁰ Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă, Doamne de prieteni. Războiul clandestin al Blocului sovietic cu România*, București, Editura RAO, p. 147.

having learned that London and Washington support the establishment of a Hungarian-Romanian federation (Danubian). Consequently, Moscow abandoned the idea of Transylvania's independence, which was in fact supported by certain Romanian Comintern members like Valter Roman, who brought in front of the Commission several arguments in favor the acknowledgement of Transylvania's independence, as the most adequate solution¹¹. Constantly, through the diplomatic game in Transylvania's issue, Moscow aimed at the instauration of a procommunist government in Bucharest and the country's subjection to the hegemonic interests of Moscow. After the liberation of northern Transylvania, on October 25, 1944, a Romanian administration was installed in the free counties. But not after long, invoking the nationalist excesses of the Romanian administration, the Soviet military authorities resorted to blackmailing the Bucharest government, by staking on the Transylvanian issue. Under the pretext of protecting the Hungarian population against the measures of "Maniu's guards", the Soviet government prepared the removal of the Romanian administration from northern Transylvania. On November 14, 1944, the Soviets created in the 11 liberated counties an autonomous region, called *in loco* the North-Transylvanian Republic¹². On December 1, 1944, at Cluj, the Advisory Board of Northern Transylvania was created, an appointed managing organism and a provisional coalition government including: the Democratic Union of the Romanians from Transylvania, the Secretariat for Northern Transylvania of the Romanian Communist Party, the Social Democrat Party, the Hungarian Popular Union, trade unions, the Ploughmen's Front, the Patriots' Union, the Jewish Popular Democratic Alliance and the Patriotic Defense¹³. The Advisory Board was able to initiate legislative and executive measures that were applied by specialized committees. Nevertheless, the Soviets avoided speaking about a North Transylvanian government. Transylvania was used as currency for the installation of a pro-communist government. The letter of the People's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, A. I. Lavrentiev, to the People's Commissioner's assistant, A. Y. Vyshinsky, regarding the issue of establishing a provisional administration in Northern Transylvania, stated: *Furthermore, the issue of restoring Northern Transylvania to Romania must be the most important leverage for influencing the Romanian government not only in the field of economic obligations observance according to the Armistice Convention, but also in the field of internal and foreign politics*¹⁴. Thus, at the beginning of February 1945, the installation of a provisional quasi-government was approved. The Cluj session of the "Northern Transylvania Parliament", that took place on 12-15 February appointed an Executive Committee (Central), considered a regional government composed of 11 ministers, out of whom 6 were Hungarians, 4 Romanians and one Jew. The elected President was Teofil Vescan, a physicist's son, married to a Hungarian woman and considered a traitor by the Romanians¹⁵. The elected vice-president was Jordaki

¹¹ Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

¹² Ildikó Lipcsey, *Administrația militară sovietică în Transilvania de Nord (14 nov. 1944-23 mart.1945)*, in vol. *Transilvania văzută în publicistica istorică maghiară*, Miercurea-Ciuc, Editura Pro-Print, 1999, p. 374; See for details Marcela Sălăgean, *Administrația sovietică în Nordul Transilvaniei (noiembrie 1944-martie 1945)*, Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane/Fundația Culturală Română, 2002; Idem, *Transilvania în jocul de interese al marilor puteri (1940-1947)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2013; Cornel Sigmirean, "Încheierea celui de-al doilea război mondial și incertitudinile politice asupra statutului Transilvaniei", in vol. *Destin de istoric. In Honorem Dinu C. Giurescu*, Târgoviște, Ed. Cetatea de Scaun, 2012, p. 591-602.

¹³ *Minoritățile etnoculturale. Mărturii documentare. Maghiarii din România (1945-1955)*, eds. Andreea Andreescu, Lucian Nastasă, Andrea Varga, coordinator Lucian Nastasă, Cluj, Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, 2002, p. 55.

¹⁴ *Problema transilvană. Disputa teritorială româno-maghiară și URSS 1940-1946. Documente din arhivele rusești*, Eds. Onufrei Vințel and Diana Tetea, comments O. Vințel, Cluj-Napoca, Eikon, 2014, p.319.

¹⁵ Stefano Bottoni, *Transilvania roșie. Comunismul român și problema națională 1944-1965*, Cluj, Editura Institutului pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale/Kriterion, 2010, p. 51.

Lajos. The appointment on March 6, 1945, under Moscow's pressure, of the pro-communist government headed by Petru Groza, put an end to the "Northern Transylvania Republic" experiment. It happened similarly with the other Soviet experiment, the Maramureș Republic, at Sighetul Marmăției, on February 4, 1945, when a local government was created under the leadership of the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) separatists¹⁶.

Many of the dilemmas concerning Transylvania's status started from the equivocal manner in which article 19 from the Armistice Convention, signed by Romania with the Allied Powers on 12 September at Moscow, was formulated: *The allied governments consider the decision of the Vienna Arbitrage regarding Transylvania as null and void and agree upon restoring Transylvania (or its largest part) to Romania under the condition to be confirmed through the Peace Treaty...*¹⁷. Consequently, until the conclusion of the post-war border configuration at the Peace Conference, numerous solutions were formulated and re-formulated concerning the border between Romania and Hungary and Transylvania's political-administrative status, the division of the province, the full restitution toward the states that were disputing over it, autonomy or independence in the frame of a larger confederation, etc.¹⁸.

Through a series of memoirs addressed to the USA, England, the Soviet Union and France the Budapest government requested the restoration of Romania's western region, known as Partium, to Hungary. Gradually, the claims of the political circles and of the Budapest government calmed down. At the Peace Conference, the Hungarian delegation led by Gyöngyösi János had in mind the acquisition of a surface of 22,000 square kilometers. The reserve with which the claim was perceived determined the Hungarian delegation to come down to 5,000 square kilometers. Finally 4,000 square kilometers were proposed together with the granting of a large local autonomy to the Szekler region, which was guaranteed by the UN¹⁹. Numerous documents, memoirs, articles in the press requested the creation of a separate state, Transylvania. For example, Drotos István, a personality of the Hungarian emigration who lived in Munich, in a memoir addressed to the French political circles, after showing that the *issue of Transylvania was a very difficult problem to solve*, stated that the solution *acceptable for both parties was the reconciliation, while the unilateral solution brings about the victory for the one and the grief of defeat for the other*. After having outlined several possible solutions, he concluded that the only way to reach a compromise would be an "autonomous Transylvania". According to the memoir, *it would be independent from an administrative point of view and in custom union with Hungary (...). The independent Transylvania and in custom union with Hungary and Romania would be a place, a bridge between Hungary and Romania. The possibility of hatred would be eliminated. Both countries would profit economically from this situation. Peace would be restored at the limit of Central Europe*²⁰. Generally, the same solutions were proposed by the political man from Budapest, Pál Auer, responsible of the Foreign Policy Commission of the Small Owners' Party, which was the ruling party in 1945. In an interview published in the paper *Uj Magyarország*, subtitled *Weekly paper of international politics and Hungarian spiritual life*, on July 1, 1945, Pál

¹⁶ Cornel Sigmirean, Gheorghe Cojocaru, "Republica Maramureș și strategia politicii de sovietizare a României în viziunea diplomației americane", in *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane „Gheorghe Șincai”*, nr. XVIII, Tîrgu Mureș, 2015, pp. 161-183.

¹⁷ Ion Enescu, *Politica externă a României în perioada 1944-1947*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1979, p.349.

¹⁸ See for details Cornel Sigmirean, Corneliu Cezar Sigmirean, *România și Ungaria în fața Conferinței de Pace de la Paris (1945-1947)*, Tîrgu Mureș, Editura Universității „Petru Maior”, 2010.

¹⁹ István Vida, *Chestiunea maghiară la Paris*, in vol. *Transilvania văzută în publicistica istorică maghiară*, Miercurea Ciuc, Editura Pro-Print, 1999, pp. 382-394.

²⁰ Antonio Faur, *Documente diplomatice franceze cu privire la Transilvania (1946-1948)*, Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2007, pp. 113-114.

Auer expressed his hope for a peace favorable to Hungary, pointing out that: *The Hungarian patriots are looking for useful arguments in order to obtain the impartiality of those who decide upon Hungary's destiny, arguments that refer to the Trianon Treaty, unjust and unacceptable ...*²¹ Additionally, he shows that “the outbreak of the world war was also caused by the numerous mistakes of the First World War’s Peace Treaties”. *The natural solution – according to the Hungarian political man – would be to apply the principle of self-determination in the regions close to the borders, where Hungarian compact majorities live.* The second solution would be Transylvania’s independence, which he saw achievable in a Danube federation, agreed by the Great Powers. In the hope that the proposed solutions would be agreed by the Great Powers, Paul Auer reminded of the confidential talks with Winston Churchill on July 6, 1939, when he declared “in secret”: *I know that the Hungarian people were ready to fight for their independence. We also know the part played by Kossuth in the history of Hungary and in England. I know and I regret that that the Peace Treaty enforces very unjust provisions on them. I was shaken by Count Apponyi’s earlier speech held in Genoa. Rest assure that if you fight for independence and you face German pressure, and in case of war you try hard together with Poland and the small Nations that surrender you, to prevent the Germans from invading Central and Eastern Europe, - Hungary’s revisionist claims will be generously satisfied. If needed, please remind me my declaration*²².

The projects of the Hungarian political men could not be taken into consideration by the Bucharest government.

In those years even the projects related to the creation of a Danube Confederation or of a custom union between the countries in the Central European space were resumed. Petru Groza, Prime-Minister of Romania between 1945 and 1952, was among those who supported the foundation of a custom union between Romania and Hungary, as a solution to overcome the Romanian-Hungarian contentious concerning Transylvania’s status. Honestly or for political reasons, in several public interventions, he referred to the relations between the Romanians and the Hungarians, between Romania and Hungary, proposing the creation of a custom union.

At the festivities in Cluj, occasioned by the reintroduction of the Romanian administration in Northern Transylvania, Petru Groza declared: *We do not want anymore that these two peoples, the Romanian and the Hungarian ones, whom the destiny of their nations placed close by, to live in permanent hatred.* In his opinion, Romania had to become *the homeland of all these cohabiting peoples, to become a protective mother for all.* Consequently, in two public declarations, in the speeches held in Târgu-Mureş and Cluj, on 20 and respectively 27 October 1946, Groza proposed a Romanian-Hungarian custom union and the renunciation to passport visas for the two countries²³.

The idea of a custom union, as a foundation of friendship and peace in the region, is developed by Groza in an interview to the *Szabadság* newspaper in Budapest, on March 22, 1946. *We want to achieve friendship (Romanian-Hungarian) on a practical ground as well. First, through the establishment of a custom union and the liquidation of the hardships caused by passports. In the accomplishment of this plan, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria show special interest as well. The borders are Chinese walls in the new European democracy, which we have to demolish*

²¹ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe [the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Conferința de Pace de la Paris, 1946*, File 105, pp. 65-66.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 66.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 97.

and if only these four states do it, a spiritual union is already achieved²⁴. Petru Groza proposed in fact the creation of a unitary block stretching from the Leitha River to the Black Sea, a block whose central nucleus would have been a Hungarian-Romanian confederation where the custom borders would have been abolished, creating a unique currency and installing the fullest political cooperation²⁵.

Petru Groza's initiative for the establishment of a custom union was not accepted by the political men in Bucharest. A note to the Legation of France in Romania, delivered to the Foreign Ministry of France, on November 4, 1946, stated: *It seems otherwise that needing the votes of the minorities to support him in the elections held on the 19th of this month, Groza's government was very generous in promises.*

Commenting Groza's statements, the author of the diplomatic note from the Legation of France mentioned that: *A recent conversation with the president of the Government (Petru Groza, our note) made me ascertain that Dr. Groza persists in his manner of seeing things. But, Mr. Tătărescu, who I asked on this subject, did not hide his reserves concerning such an unwise politic and upon which the government did not deliberate²⁶.*

Another diplomatic note sent by Gabriel Richard, the consul of France in Cluj, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Bidault, having as subject *the Romanian-Hungarian relations seen from Cluj*, stated: *In the economic field, the Romanian and Hungarian statesmen also endeavor to strengthen the ties between the two peoples. On numerous occasions they confessed that Romania and Hungary complement each other. Romania needs mining technique, agricultural machinery and electric material, articles that it can easily acquire from Hungary; in its turn, Hungary has to import coal, salt, building and heating wood, products that Romania can provide ...* Further describing the opportunities of Romanian-Hungarian cooperation, the note shows: *I remind for actualization that, several times, they went as far as having in mind a Romanian-Hungarian custom union and the abandonment of the passport visas between the two countries. The President of the Romanian Council of Ministers, Dr. Groza, was very clear in this regard, on several occasions, especially in his speeches in Târgu Mureș and Cluj, on 20 and 27 October 1946, but this project does not seem to have reached a favorable audience at a foreign factor that still plays a prevalent part in the relations between the two states. Since then, the press has not spoken about it anymore²⁷.*

In the spring of 1946, Prime Minister Groza visited Budapest, participating to the inauguration of the Mocsary College, fact that caused excitement in Prague, the Czechoslovakian government being concerned about a possible Romanian-Hungarian approach. A decoded telegram of the French Legation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed by Boncour, said: *The Minister of Foreign Affairs has just repeated that this visit had no political significance and that he wired to Prague, to calm down the worries that this subject might arouse. Mr. Tătărescu briefly let the Czech leaders know that they did not have to pay too much attention to the exaggeratedly Hungarophile words that the head of the Romanian government says often too easily²⁸.*

²⁴ Idem, *Fund Relațiile româno-ungare*, File62, page 21; See also Corneliu Cezar Sigmirean, *Relațiile postbelice dintre România și Ungaria în viziunea Primului-ministru, Dr. Petru Groza*, in *Simpozion. Comunicările celui de-al XVIII-lea Simpozion al cercetătorilor români din Ungaria*, Giula, 2009, pp. 140-148.

²⁵ Fülöp Mihály, *Pacea neterminată. Consiliul Miniștrilor Afacerilor Externe și tratatul de pace ungar (1947)*, Iași, Institutul European, 2007, p. 53

²⁶ A. Faur, *op.cit.*, p. 120

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 167.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 190.

Petru Groza's assertions in the *Szabadság* newspaper were instead very well received in Budapest. Gyöngyössi János, Hungary's Foreign Minister, on the occasion of the Congress of the Independent Peasant Party, held in Erdöd, stated that the Hungarian government welcomes the friendly hand extended by the Romanians and considers the former chauvinistic politics as an expression of feudalism and reaction, now forever vanished²⁹.

In his quality of head of the Budapest government, Tildy Zoltán declared that the custom union idea launched by Groza had a strong echo in the Hungarian public opinion. *His Hungarophile statements reinforce my former confidence that the relations between these two countries and peoples can be built on healthy foundations and that is why our personal meeting would be useful*³⁰.

Petru Groza's formula regarding the creation of a custom union was not new as a project of organizing Central Europe. Even some articles of the Trianon Treaty referred to the necessity of economic agreements in order to avoid the collapse of the Hungarian economy.

All the European interwar projects returned to the necessity of rendering certain political and economic coherence to the Danube Basin. Such proposals appear in relation with the Briand Project, expressed by Romanian political men. In 1932 the Tardieu Plan was launched. It provided the coagulation of an economic bloc composed of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and Yugoslavia, extricated from the great powers' influence. Professor Elemer Hantos from Budapest, the creator of the *Mitteeuropä* Institute in Vienna, Budapest, Brno and Genoa, specified: *The economic problems in the Danube Basin cannot be solved either by a group of Danube countries or by one or another great power. It requires an association of free countries, with the same status, with no political relationship.* The saving solution for Central Europe would have been, according to Professor Hantos, the creation of an economic alliance and of a general custom union, including all the successor states, except Poland, providing free movement in the Danube Basin³¹.

In 1943, the exiled Polish government sent a message to the Romanian political man Iuliu Maniu, which proposed the creation of a confederation of states that was going to include Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey. Iuliu Maniu agreed, mentioning that the project corresponds in essence with his former plan. In fact, in a speech delivered on April 4, 1934 in front of the Assembly of Deputies. Maniu specified that in the first years after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he had already considered that *shortly after the establishment of the South-Eastern European national states, they would have to create a South-Eastern European Confederation in order to build a common force and to create an unitary economic space, each state keeping its sovereignty, to provide thus the sale of their goods in a rational way*³².

After the instauration of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the projects of custom union or Central and South Eastern Europe confederation have disappeared for almost 50 years.

Through the Peace Treaty signed with Romania, Transylvania returned entirely to the Romanian state. In an interview given upon his return from the Paris Peace Conference, Șerban Voinea, one of the members of the delegation, confessed: *The strategy of the delegation focused entirely on Transylvania's issue*³³. On August 23, 1947 it was ratified by the Romanian Parliament.

²⁹ George Ciorănescu, *România și ideea federalistă*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1996, pp. 156-157.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 157.

³¹ Christian Chereji, *Identități ale Europei Centrale. 1815-2002*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Accent, 2004, p.103.

³² Ștefan Lache, *România în relațiile internaționale 1939-2006*, București, Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2007, p. 163.

³³ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, *Conferința de Pace de la Paris, 1946*, File 8, p. 31.

In the history of the international relations between Romania and Hungary a new chapter was closed. It was unfolded on the background of peace after the great world conflagration, where Transylvania was the main stake. Represented by political men and experts of great international value, the Romanian diplomacy made a remarkable effort for the safeguarding of national interests. The revocation of the Vienna Diktat, of August 30, 1940 and the return of the entire Transylvania to Romania undeniably represented the great achievement of the Romanian diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference. Gheorghe Tătărescu, the head of the Romanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference considered that the Treaty “also comprises certain difficult terms and certain very difficult terms and certain unjustly difficult terms”, but, he specified: *We will admit on the other hand with satisfaction shared by the unanimity of the Romanian people that this treaty solved the issue of Northern Transylvania according to the justice and people’s interest. The complete acknowledgement of Romania’s rights on Transylvania permanently appeases a great historical process*³⁴.

ANNEX

SERVICE NOTE³⁵

To Mr. General Secretary V. Stoica

The General Secretary of the Small Farmers’ Party, Mr. Csornoky Viktor, whose member is also Mr. Gyöngyösi Iános, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered on 27 July about *The neighboring states on the Danube valley*.

About the Romanian-Hungarian relations, Mr. Csornoky Viktor said, I cite after the official *Kis Ujság* from July 28, 1945 of the small farmers’ party:

The Romanian-Hungarian relations were in the past probably harder than the Yugoslav-Romanian relations. In the new world that is developing it is not allowed to continue the controversy on Transylvania. Let the peace conference decide what is happening with Transylvania. Whatever happens with Transylvania, a thing is sure: Transylvania cannot be anymore a separating wall between the two countries, but a connecting bridge. From the Romanian side serious gestures were made toward us. We think that the Romanian people are as aware of the necessity of collaboration as the Hungarian people.

August 9, 1945

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Political Direction
Hungarian Section

December 15, 1945

REPORT³⁶

Watching the way the way the Hungarian press presented the statements of Dr. Petre Groza, the President of the Council of Ministers, made at the plenary session of the Hungarian Popular Union, held on 17 November this year, at Tg-Mureș, but also the debates of that meeting

³⁴ Cornel Sigmirean, Corneliu Cezar Sigmirean, *România și Ungaria în fața Conferinței de Pace de la Paris (1945-1947)*, p.24.

³⁵ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, *Conferința de Pace de la Paris, 1946*, File 105, p. 35.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, File 105, p. 16- 17

and the motion of the Union's Central Committee, I have discovered that all the Budapest papers have published from the speech of the Prime Minister the part referring to the custom union and the abolition of passports, about 30-35 lines, with a title on two columns.

The newspaper *Szabad Nép* (from which I add the excerpt in question) the official paper of the Hungarian Communist Party, published more and at the forefront, on the first page, the first news, top right.

Szabad Nép published excerpts from the text delivered on Radio London, Radio Bucharest and from the reportage published in the Ploughmen's Front newspaper.

No newspaper published entirely or partially the motion of the Hungarian Popular Union, by way of which action was taken against those who believed that *the solution of the national issue in Transylvania was a border issue*, but also against *the exchange of population*.

X

An acquaintance of mine recently informed me that he read in the late November issue of the communist official newspaper *Szabad Nép*, an article that tried to bring amendments to the weekly *Új Magyarország*, stating that the newspaper was poisoning the Romanian-Hungarian good relations by publishing such articles.

Among the newspapers coming from Budapest by the last courier I have not found any newspaper to have published such article.

Bucharest, December 15, 1945

I. Isaiu
Head of Service

ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Hungarian Section

Hungarian government officials and
the preparation for the Peace Conference:
Border Issue

December 20, 1945

REPORT³⁷

The newspaper *Új Magyarország*, subtitled *The weekly paper of international politics and Hungarian spiritual life*, appears in Budapest since July 1, 1945 under the auspices of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the constant contribution of Mr. Gyöngyösi Ianos, the head of the Department. Most of the contributors are leaders of the Small Owners Party, like Mr. Borsody István, Boldizsár Iván, Auer Paul, Kovács Imre, or scholars, like Professor Szekfű Gyula, the actual minister of Hungary in Moscow.

The weekly *Új Magyarország* has pages dedicated to the political issue and situation in the USSR, England, France and Hungary's neighboring countries; a page: *The mirror of world*

³⁷ *Ibidem*, File 105, p. 65-66.

press, with reproductions from the foreign press, with no comments and a permanent column: *Hungarian observer in the Danube Basin*.

Every issue publishes news from Romania, article-comments, several columns, regarding the situation and political life in our country.

In the issue of current November, Mr. Auer Pal, deputy, the head of the commission for foreign affairs of the Small Farmers' Party, synthesized the article entitled *How can Danube peace and cooperation long-lasting*.

The author, after showing that the Great Powers deal with the preparation of the peace treaties, which will be signed soon, writes:

The Hungarians are looking forward to this event, which will grant them the right to complete independence, establishing the norms of State life and including Hungary again in the international life, also bringing about the financial regulations and the cooperation between peaceful peoples. We are not afraid that exalted passions might dictate the peace, because we believe that the statesmen, on whom this international act depends, will achieve true peace. We are not afraid that the officials will not have enough time to look into the depth of the problems, because they are well known, problems referring to the Danube Basin and the revision of the Paris peace treaties. These problems were thoroughly studied by the winners in the period between the wars.

The patriot Hungarians are looking for useful arguments in order to obtain the impartiality of those who decide the future of Hungary, arguments that refer to the Trianon Treaty, unjust and unacceptable, to German propaganda, to the Swabians' betrayal, a prime-minister's suicidal and the action of another foolish prime-minister, which pushed the country to catastrophe. They will refer to the fact that, excepting most of the officers and public clerks, the action of resistance has manifested in all the social strata, and thousands of Poles were sent to England and French in De Gaulle's troupes to fight alongside the Allies. On the other hand, young Hungarians fought together with Yugoslav and French partisans, and when it was possible they joined the Allies, declaring war on the Germans, and the Soviets acknowledged the Hungarians' contribution to victory. We are not short of economic, geographic, strategic and historical arguments, which are meant to support our claims on more favorable borders than the actual ones.

But, in the first place, we do not expect from these factors an alteration of the situation for our benefit. The winning powers are mostly interested in the way permanent peace and peaceful climate may be achieved in the Danube Basin and a friendly cooperation between these small and restless peoples.

MINORITIES, BORDERS, PEACE

The Great Powers wish lasting peace and peaceful, untroubled evolution, - expressed in the United Nations Chart. It is impossible for the Great Powers not to understand that one of the causes of the present world war consists in the numerous mistakes of the First World War's Peace Treaties. They will also understand that if there was solid cooperation in the Danube Basin, the Anschluss could not have been achieved and the Danube States would not have fallen under German occupation one after the other. The Great Powers are also aware that in the Danube Valley lasting peace, economic consolidation and friendly collaboration cannot be imagined unless asperities are reduced to minimum and the nationalities' problems are solved as soon as possible. As the Danube peoples proved – which is also confirmed by the Slovaks'

attitude towards the Hungarians from Czechoslovakia – that they are not mature enough with respect to the implementation of a democratic minority regime, or for spiritualized borders, - the decrease of the number of nationalities has to be urged. But, obviously this cannot be done through the expulsion of minorities. This operation is not only a violation of Human Rights, but it would mean for the Trianon Hungary to accept more than two million Hungarians, who could not be conferred ownership anymore as result of the agrarian reform in Hungary, and our industry, being paralyzed after the German robberies and subsequent repairs, the expelled could not be used in factories. The natural solution would be to apply the auto-determination principle in the regions close to the borders, where compact Hungarian majorities live.

If the will of the interested population is disputable, a plebiscite has to be organized, - and the neighboring lands where the Hungarian minorities are in relative majority and want to be united with Hungary, they have to be annexed to Hungary according to the directions of the Commission for boundary demarcation. This opinion cannot be suspected to be dictated by imperialist and chauvinistic considerations, or that it would harm Czechoslovakian or Romanian interests. Czechoslovakia would still remain after this solution a *Danube state* owning the Bratislava port and its structure would not undergo any considerable alteration. Romania would keep the greater part of Transylvania and the mines it would have to give up are also found in southern Transylvania with no exception.

In exchange both States would gain permanent peace, a lasting peace, the advantages of a much desired Danube collaboration and Hungary's genuine unreserved and undisturbed friendship. And the Great Powers could find a good market in the Danube basin.

EXCHANGE OF POPULATION

Where scattered Hungarians live along the borders, a free and humane exchange of population might be a solution. For the Hungarians staying in other countries the protection of minorities should be guaranteed under international control, by regulating their right of complaint.

The competent authorities would be the United Nations and the International Court. Moreover, the problem of opting for other citizenship should be regulated.

We will see the attitude the Great Powers are going to take towards the issue of Transylvania's possible independence. This problem might be certainly easier solved in the frame of a Danube federative organization than in the unorganized Danube basin.

Such an organization can be only economic for the time being, in the form of custom union. Nonetheless the custom barriers cannot be altered straightaway, but five, ten, fifteen years are needed.

These are our concerns related to peace treaties. In what feelings and aspirations are concerned, we have to keep silent since we have lost the war.

On July 6, 1939, Mr. Churchill made the following confession:

I know that the Hungarian people were ready to fight for their independence. We know the part played by Kossuth in the history of Hungary and England. I know and I regret that the Peace treaty enforced very unjust provisions on you. I was very moved by Count Apponyi's former speech delivered in Genoa. You have to know that if you fight for independence and resist German pressure, and if in case of war you try hard together with Poland and the Small nations that surround you to hinder the Germans to invade Central and Eastern Europe – Hungary's revisionist aspirations will be generously met. If needed, remind me my statement.

These statements unpublished till now, authentically confirm that very unjust provisions were forced upon us after the First World War. We were promised the reparation of prejudices in case we fight for independence and resist German pressure, *but among our neighbors only Yugoslavia tried to resist, consequently we cannot rely on a generous prize, but we hope for a useful solution to guarantee the peace of our neighboring peoples and ours, putting an end to a quarter of a century long litigation.*

The Hungarian press³⁸

The *Szabadsag* newspaper, March 22, 1946

Let's shake hands and work together

- Mr. Petre Groza, the Romanian Prime-Minister, made statements to the "Liberty" about the government's one year activity, about reaction; about the Romanian-Hungarian relations and the collaboration of the Danube Basin peoples' family.
- Bucharest, March 22. A year has passed since the Petre Groza government took over the leadership of public affairs. It is a hard and exhausting work waiting for the new government in order to re-establish domestic order and security, to reorganize economic life, to start rebuilding the country and to lead a healthy foreign policy. If each of them represented a difficult task, what about all of them? Groza took responsibility and now, when he makes the one year activity balance he observes with satisfaction that the efforts and good intentions correspond with achievements. There are still hardships, but Groza is a political man who appreciates hardships, he confronts them. He is committed and he loves work. He is a man who overcomes work in unimaginable conditions. There are days when he works for 18-20 hours, but during his overcrowded tasks he kindly welcomes the Hungarian journalist, in order to address the Hungarian public through the columns of the "Liberty".

The one-year balance

Mr. Prime-Minister, which was the greatest difficulty for the Groza Government this year?

- There are difficulties in more peaceful times as well, but you are not supposed to speak about them, but to fight them. To fight unceasingly, confidently. This is what I wish for all the democratic peoples: unlimited confidence. Whatever challenges you face, you are not allowed to despair; if people are confident in their own power and if they love work and life, no matter how small, they cannot disappear.

Among difficulties, reaction had definitely played a part?

- Naturally. When a new spirit, when creative forces come to power, there are everywhere people who are still dreaming of the past days. Related to this, I remember a very old episode that happened in an afternoon, when I was still living at Deva. To my carriage was harnessed a horse that had been formerly instructed in the army service. At a crossroad I met the shepherd who started whistling. The old horse mistook the whistling for the sounds of military trumpets and grew nervous, diverting direction. In such circumstances you have to hold tight the harnesses.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, File 105, p. 32-35

Romanian-Hungarian relations

I have asked him now the most interesting question:

Mr. President of the Council, immediately after acceding to government, you have extended a friendly hand to Hungary. According to the statements of that time, this gesture had a gratifying echo in both countries.

Which is the evolution of the Romanian-Hungarian relations?

- When starting to work, a tidy man first tries to finish the most difficult part.
The first steps of the young Romanian democracy also lead to the Hungarian people, with whom we have been more enemies than friends for thousand years.
We now have the results of the collaboration. Not to mention something else than a few days ago, on the occasion of the festivities held at the Athenaeum in Bucharest, where the Romanians and Hungarians celebrated together the day March 15, sung Kossuth's hymn – and the cupola did not fall down.
This is democracy, the freedom that allowed this miracle to happen.

The custom union, the abrogation of passports

- This friendship, President Groza continues – we intend to achieve on a practical level as well. First, through the establishment of the custom union and the abolition of the difficulties caused by passports. In order to achieve this plan, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria show a special interest too. Borders are the Chinese walls in the new European democracy, which we have to destroy and if not only these four states do so, a friendly union is achieved.
The “Danube Confederation” was mentioned before, but it was not understood. I tell you and I do not speak about a confederation, but rather about a communion, the Danube peoples' family.
- The border issue is not a problem.
Man should not stick to dead borders, because these borders that have separated us till now, which represented a barrier, have to disappear and at the same time to give birth to life and prosperity.
- Believe me, these countries will not only save the costs they have with the border stations at Lókoshaza and Curtici and the other stations in different border points.
The air masters over the world and in the air matters, thoughts, spiritual preoccupations and goods meet and exchange.
If we are not going to understand this issue accordingly, then the bars of cages will last around us, and not the perspective of unlimitedly free countries.

Honest collaboration with the States in the Danube Basin

- Do not believe that when I share my opinion I have an ulterior motive.
- Truth for Romania is that on August 23, 1944 it turned against the Germans and our position improved. – Nonetheless, we did not want to live on the basis of this favorable situation, but on the contrary, we tried hard to have a honest collaboration with Hungary on the first hand, but also with the other Danube states.

Romantic nationalists should not be afraid of this collaboration, because this collaboration represents nothing else but progress. They should not fear this collaboration from the point of view of the national spirit, religion and tradition as well. In this circumstance we have to know, first, to defeat the past and to put an end to chauvinism.

Believe me, it is not important where the border is. Before the conclusion of peace treaties, the peoples should achieve spiritual reconciliation, so necessary to cooperation and progress.

In the past there were mistakes on both parts. We should not hide responsibilities either here or there. And we should not argue for eternity, about who started the dispute, because it does not change at all the present situation.

Once a peasant stole an egg from a neighbor and next day the other one stole an ox from him. The first angrily burst out: *You stole my ox! And you?*, replied the other, – *But I*, replied the first, *took only an egg from you.*

-Egg or ox. The only difference is in value. In fact there is no difference; both of them are equally guilty.

Let us not be attached to the past

- Let us not argue about who was the first on this land either. Let us not be tightly attached to the past, but in order to build the future it is not important who was the first here; it is important for the peoples who are here to live and work in friendship and mutual respect. We should not manifest ourselves either on a revisionist or anti-revisionist line. The so called historical arguments belong to the past only.

- There should be national interests, but no chauvinism, which has done nothing but make enemies face each other, nations that in fact should have stayed aside.

- I have seen the consequences of these politics both in the fate of Romania and Hungary.

- We should all serve democracy, the democracy which we are not only displaying, but which we practice and the peoples salvage for their fruitful friendship and collaboration.

We have to think realistically and realist politics demand this. *Let us hold hands and work together!*

Signed,
Pánczel Lajos