



# Hungarian-Romanian Political Relations in Northern Transylvania between 1940 and 1944 from the Perspective of the Transylvanian Party

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In this study I would like to give a picture about a very difficult question, the interethnic relations in Transylvania, during the Second World War. More precisely I will describe the situation in the Northern part of Transylvania, then under Hungarian rule. The main objective is to make a short analysis of the problem of political perspective, through the presentation of the minority politics of the Transylvanian Party (*Erdélyi Párt*). This party was the dominant political formation in the 1940–1944 period in Northern Transylvania, which held together the Hungarians of the region, then being a slight majority. During the communist regime in Romania it was impossible to do any research on the Transylvanian Party, because it was active under the former Hungarian rule known as *kicsi magyar világ* ('Little Hungarian World') and it had dominant regional characteristics which were in contradiction with the centralising Romanian Communist ideology. In the following I will describe the situation in which this almost forgotten party tried to find a solution to the old problem of Hungarian–Romanian ethnic conflict in Transylvania in a period when the relations between Hungary and Romania gradually devolved into war.

The Treaty of Trianon in 1920 prescribed that the Hungarian government cede a 103,093 km<sup>2</sup> territory to Romania. From this, on 30 August 1940, following the German–Italian arbitration, the Northern part of Transylvania and the Partium, Szeklerland and Maramureş regions were given back to Hungary.<sup>1</sup> The total territory of the *visszacsatolt észak-erdélyi és keleti országrész* ('the re-annexed Northern Transylvania and the eastern parts'), using the expressions of this period, was 43,104 km<sup>2</sup>,<sup>2</sup> with a very mixed population. According to the 1941 Hungarian census, there was a Hungarian majority of 52.1% in a population of 2,557,000 people. The Romanian population comprised 41.5%.<sup>3</sup> Besides the 1,380,000 Hungarian inhabitants there were 1,057,000 Romanians and 44,000 German people living in this territory.<sup>4</sup> However, as

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1 B. L. BALOGH, *A magyar–román kapcsolatok 1939–1940-ben és a második bécsi döntés*, Csíkszereda 2002, p. 5.

2 L. THIRRING, *A visszacsatolt keleti terület. Terület és népesség*, in: *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle*, No. 8–9, 1940, p. 663.

3 Z. FOGARASI, *A népesség anyanyelvi, nemzetiségi és vallási megoszlása törvényhatóságokint 1941-ben*, in: *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle*, No. 1–3, 1944, p. 4.

4 B. ABLONCZY, *A visszatért Erdély 1940–1944*, Budapest 2011, p. 47.

of Romanian data, 50.2% of the population was Romanian, and only 37.1% Hungarian.<sup>5</sup> We have to mention that at the same time approximately 440,000 Hungarians remained under Romanian rule in Southern Transylvania, from which in half a year after the Second Vienna Award, until April 1941, almost 80,000 people crossed the new border to Northern Transylvania. In this way only 363,000 native Hungarians remained in Southern Transylvania, forming 11% of the whole 3.3 million population of the region.<sup>6</sup>

The new borders satisfied neither the Hungarians nor the Romanians. In these circumstances, the division of the historical region of Transylvania, made by Great Powers without asking the two parts and without resolving the minority issue, couldn't be a definitive solution to the problem. The territory of Northern Transylvania, with a mainly mixed population, set hard tasks for the Hungarian government as well as for the Transylvanian politicians on how to organize the political representation of the local population. It was impossible to hold parliamentary elections, because the last were held only one year and a few months before, on 28 — 29 May 1939, and the political parties were against new elections in order to preserve their positions.<sup>7</sup> The idea of new elections would have favoured only the Hungarian extreme right. In order to solve the problem, Prime Minister Pál Teleki called for a Cabinet meeting in Budapest on 25 September 1940. They discussed the bill regarding the annexations of the regained territories. They put together a list of names, following the Prime Minister's lead, of those people who would represent Northern Transylvania in the Hungarian Parliament.<sup>8</sup> The government decided to co-opt the Parliament with political representatives of the re-annexed territories by invitation. Those who were chosen as new Transylvanian deputies were only Hungarians. Public life personalities with Romanian origins initially weren't invited at all.<sup>9</sup> This bad decision had only one reason: The Hungarian community of Southern Transylvania with almost 363,000 persons had not even one deputy in the Romanian Parliament.

On the basis of Pál Teleki's considerations, and according to the law XXVI of 1940,<sup>10</sup> those invited would be those who protected successfully the interests of the Hungarians in royal Romania. Thus the leading politicians of the former National Hungarian Party (*Országos Magyar Párt*) founded in 1922, led by Count György Bethlen became members of the Chamber of Deputies in the Hungarian Parliament. Among the fifty Transylvanian Hungarian deputies twenty-seven were former leading members of the National Hungarian Party. Besides György Bethlen, we could mention Dezső Albrecht, István Angi, Árpád Árvay, Artúr Balogh, Ignác Bartha, László Bethlen, Zoltán Bölöni, Gyula Deák, Géza Ember, Albert Figus, József György, Ákos Hinléder-Fels, Gábor Jodál,

5 S. AURICĂ, *Dictatul de la Viena*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., București 1996, p. 363.

6 B. L. BALOGH — N. BÁRDI, *A dél-erdélyi magyarság jogi és politikai helyzetete a második bécsi döntést követően*, in: N. BÁRDI — C. FEDINEC — L. SZARKA (Eds.), *Kisebbségi magyar közösségek a 20. században* Budapest 2008, p. 162.

7 I. ROMSICS, *Magyarország története a XX. Században*, Budapest 2003, p. 226.

8 P. TELEKI, *Erdélyi feladatok*, in: *Ellenzék*, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1940, Vol. 51, No. 217, pp. 1–2.

9 ABLONCZY, p. 112.

10 G. EGRY, *Az erdélyiség „színeváltozása”: Kísérlet az Erdélyi Párt ideológiájának és identitáspolitikájának elemzésére 1940–1944*, Budapest 2008, p. 29.





Ferenc Kölcsey, Gusztáv Kövér, Dezső László, Árpád Paál, Gábor Páll, Károly Pakocs, Ákos Székely, Béla Szentkereszty, Olivér Szilágyi, Ernő Teleki, Mihály Toldalaghy, Andor Török and Gábor Tusa.<sup>11</sup> Most of the politicians who had collaborated with the Romanian authorities were left out of the invited deputies. They had played a great part in the so called *Romániai Magyar Népközösség* ('Hungarian People's Community') since 1939 at the side of Count Miklós Bánffy. Among them there were well-known personalities of Transylvanian Hungarian public life such as Károly Kós or Áron Tamási.<sup>12</sup>

The invited group of deputies were young, socially sensitive intellectuals who had effectively activated the youth movements and had been generally known to reject the extreme right ideas of the *Nyilaskeresztes Párt* ('Arrow Cross Party'). Among others, one of these young people was the reformed priest from Kolozsvár (today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania), Dezső László, one of the leading personalities of the *Erdélyi Fiatalok* ('Transylvanian Youth') organization.<sup>13</sup> Leading personalities from Transylvanian social-economic organizations were also invited. The most significant among them was Count Béla Teleki, vice-president of the *Erdélyi Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület* ('Transylvanian Hungarian Economic Association').<sup>14</sup> The invited Transylvanian deputies thus were a mixed type, while some were active politicians, others were young intellectuals, or business men. At the beginning, the group was disturbed by inner conflicts, mainly because of different views on relationships with the Romanians. Still, the heterogeneous Transylvanian parliamentary panel in some weeks became coherent. The common interest, the enforcement of Northern Transylvanian Hungarian expectations in the Hungarian Parliament, pushed into the background the inherited inner conflicts which were often personal.<sup>15</sup>

Although the political group made up of Transylvanian deputies in the autumn of 1940 had only Hungarian members, the possibility of inviting Romanian deputies in the future wasn't dropped at all. Besides the fifty seats occupied by Hungarian deputies from Northern Transylvania, the Hungarian government reserved twelve more seats in the Chamber of Deputies for Romanians. But these remained unoccupied. The same situation was repeated in the Upper Chamber, where three seats from the fifteen of Northern Transylvania were reserved for leading Romanian politicians (for example: Iuliu Hossu, Greek Catholic bishop), which also remained unoccupied. During 1941 and 1942, the Hungarian government made some efforts to normalize the situation, but these were rejected every time by the local Romanian leaders, who cited the Romanian government's prohibition as the reason.<sup>16</sup> Why did Bucharest choose to

11 Ibidem, p. 30.

12 S. BALÁZS, Mikó Imre: *Élet- és pályakép: Kéziratok, dokumentumok (1933–1968)*, Kolozsvár 2003, p. 300.

13 S. BALÁZS, László Dezső a magyar parlamentben, in: P. CSEKE (Ed.), *László Dezső emlékezete 1904–2004*, Kolozsvár 2004, p. 99.

14 Z. TIBORI SZABÓ, Teleki Béla erdélyisége: *Embernek maradni embertelen időkben*, Kolozsvár 1993, p. 5.

15 J. K. MURÁDIN, *Being in Minority or Majority? The Transylvanian Party in the Hungarian Public Life Between 1940 and 1944*, in: I. HORVÁTH — I. SZÉKELY — T. SZÉKELY et al. (Eds.), *Minority Representation and Minority Language Rights*, Cluj-Napoca 2014, p. 173.

16 ABLONCZY, pp. 112–113.



proceed like that? I think Bucharest had at least two motives: The Romanian government refused to acknowledge the new political situation after 30 August 1940 and it wanted to hinder the consolidation of the Hungarian rule in the Northern Transylvanian territories, because, after all, it prepared constantly for an eventual territorial reorganization.<sup>17</sup> But what should have been the reason of the Romanians rejecting the occupation of the reserved seats in the Hungarian Parliament? We do not know, but it is certain: the political reconciliation between Hungarians and Romanians in Northern Transylvania failed!

With a new, very ambiguous border and with a distrustful, politically unrepresented, in some cases even hostile large ethnic minority, the Hungarian government sought to realize Hungarian political union in Northern Transylvania as soon as possible. For this Budapest needed a brand new, independent Transylvanian Hungarian party to avoid Hungarian party competition in the region and to strengthen the Hungarian characteristics of the re-integrated territory. The main political objective of the government for Northern Transylvania, led by Prime Minister Pál Teleki, was to unify all the political streams in a collective Hungarian party which would be able to strengthen the politics of the Hungarian government. In this way it became possible to prevent Northern Transylvanians from organizing extreme right political parties, at first the Arrow Cross Party and the *Magyar Megújulás Pártja* ('Party of Hungarian Renewal') led by Béla Imrédy.<sup>18</sup> Besides these objectives, in the vision of the government, such a unique Transylvanian Hungarian Party had another advantage: it should represent more effectively the special ethnic problems of Northern Transylvania in the Hungarian Parliament. In this way, the independent political party formed by the Transylvanian deputies became a current political requirement. The foundations of the party emerged quickly. The Northern Transylvanian parliamentary group, named officially *Erdélyi Magyar Képviselők Pártonkívüli Csoportja* ('The Independent Group of Transylvanian Hungarian Deputies'),<sup>19</sup> assumed the name *Erdélyi Párt* ('Transylvanian Party') at the meeting held between 13 — 15 December 1940<sup>20</sup> and started work as a club party.<sup>21</sup> The closing moment of the foundation of the party was the founding general assembly held in Kolozsvár on 28 May 1941<sup>22</sup> where a party programme was voted on and a new, national board of directors was elected. Count Béla Teleki, landlord from Zsibó [today: Jibou, Romania] became the president of the Northern Transylvanian political formation. He was a distant relative of Prime Minister Pál Teleki who tragically died in the meantime.<sup>23</sup> Deputy Dezső Albrecht from

17 J. K. MURÁDIN, *Az Erdélyi Párt a magyar Országgyűlésben 1940 és 1944 között*, in: G. ÚJVÁRY (Ed.), *VERITAS Évkönyv 2014*, Budapest 2015, p. 226.

18 I. T. SZÁSZ, *Pillantás az Erdélyi Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület utolsó éveire*, in: *Korunk*, Vol. 23, No. 11, 2012, p. 101.

19 *Erdélyi magyar szövetség alakítását kezdeményezik az erdélyi képviselők*, in: *Ellenzék*, Vol. 61, No. 265, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1940, p. 8.

20 *Három napig tartó értekezleten határozták el az erdélyi képviselők az "Erdélyi Párt" megalakítását*, in: *Ellenzék*, Vol. 61, No. 289, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1940, p. 8.

21 ABLONCZY, p. 110.

22 EGRY, p. 35.

23 ABLONCZY, p. 110.



Bánffyhyunad (today: Huedin, Romania) became the executive vice-president of the party; Géza Ember, deputy of Szatmárnémeti (today: Satu Mare, Romania) and József Kolumbán, a lawyer from Csíkszereda (today: Miercurea Ciuc, Romania) were elected as vice-presidents, and deputy Imre Mikó became the general secretary of the Transylvanian Party.<sup>24</sup>

The Hungarian inhabitants of the re-annexed territory entered the new political formation in large numbers starting from January 1941. The Transylvanian Party turned into a regional mass party from the club party of the capital in only a few months, and became a dominant party in ten counties (Szatmár / *Satu Mare*, Szilágy / *Sălaj*, Bihar / *Bihor*, Kolozs / *Cluj*, Szolnok-Doboka / *Solnoc-Dăbâca*, Beszterce-Naszód / *Bistrița-Năsăud*, Maros-Torda / *Mureș-Turda*, Udvarhely / *Odorheiu*, Csík / *Ciuc* and Háromszék / *Trei Scaune*) of eastern Hungary by the spring of 1941. The slogan *Mindent Erdélyért!* ('Everything for Transylvania!')<sup>25</sup> conquered almost the whole of Northern Transylvanian society. Its rapidly growing members represented all social classes from the land owning aristocracy to the middle classes of towns through the tradesmen and the working classes to the peasants. The number of party members had risen rapidly. By the founding general assembly in May 1941 it reached 200,000;<sup>26</sup> the maximum was reached in January 1942 when the Party had 700 local branches and 243,500 active members.<sup>27</sup> In December 1943 the Transylvanian Party still had 231,181 members.<sup>28</sup> There were still over 200,000 members before Soviet front lines passing through the region in September 1944. Altogether, on the basis of the 1941 census, we can state that every fourth Northern Transylvanian adult Hungarian was a member of the Transylvanian Party.<sup>29</sup>

The new political formation of Northern Transylvanians was a unique political party in Hungarian political history. Due to the government's support, immediately after its founding it became an organic part of the national political life. Meanwhile it preserved some regional Transylvanian characteristics based on local political traditions. At the beginning, the Transylvanian Party has three principal roles: to hold together the Northern-Transylvanian Hungarians, to represent Northern-Transylvanians in the Hungarian Parliament and to mediate between the local Hungarian, Romanian, German and Jewish populations and the Hungarian government. Based on these roles, the Transylvanian Party proposed three elementary objectives. These

24 *Megválasztották a párt országos vezetését*, in: Kolozsvári Estilap, Vol. 9, No. 121, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1941, p. 6.

25 J. VÉGH, „*Mindent Erdélyért*”: Vasárnap délelőtt tartotta meg első értekezletét az Erdélyi Párt, in: Kolozsvári Estilap, Vol. 9, No. 15, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1941, p. 1.

26 *Teleki Béla gróf lett az Erdélyi Párt országos elnöke. Ötszáz tagozati vezető jelenlétében zajlott le a Redout falai között a történelmi jelentőségű ülés*, in: Kolozsvári Estilap, Vol. 9, No. 121, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1941, p. 1.

27 EGRY, p. 44.

28 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives, State Archives], Budapest, P 2256. No. 117, *Teleki Béla iratai 1942–1944*, 1. csomó, 143. tétel, 3373./1943. sz. Dr. Páll György főtitkár jelentése Teleki Béla pártelnöknek, Cluj-Napoca, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1943, p. 1.

29 ABLONCZY, p. 110.



were: 1) To preserve the political, economic and cultural unity of the Hungarians in Transylvania; 2) To rebuild Transylvania in co-operation with the Hungarian Government and connect it to the single national circulation; 3) To serve Hungary's inner change and strengthen it with Transylvanian mentality.

The most important task of the party was to help the government in its efforts to establish a new, effective minority policy in order to relieve the interethnic tensions of the re-annexed territories. The leaders of the Transylvanian Party, in their concepts and actions on minority issues often based on their own minority experiences from the period of Romanian rule in the interwar period, served as negative models not to be followed. These covered: exclusion of minorities from the political life of the country, impediment of their development, and forced assimilation. Such measures proved to be no solution to the minority problem. That is why the Transylvanian Party worked out new, more effective modalities of a functional minority policy. On the one hand, the inclusion of minorities in the Hungarian political nation, and on the other hand the consolidation of the Hungarian nation itself in every possible way — political, economic, cultural and demographic — in order to speed up the natural assimilation process by re-enforcing the attractiveness of the Hungarian nation.<sup>30</sup> In the terminology of our times it can be defined as 'positive' minority politics.

Taking one by one the North Transylvanian minorities, the Transylvanian Party had different attitudes to them in each case. The well-organised German (Saxon and Swabian) minority, supported by the Nazi Germany, was in a privileged situation, and the party respected its autonomous status based on centuries of tradition. Meanwhile, against the much larger Romanian minority of the re-annexed territories, the Transylvanian Party accepted some discriminative measures. As the party programme states in its 9<sup>th</sup> point, the official view of the party against the Romanians was as follows: "*We wish to assure the use of the Romanian language in education, administration and jurisdiction, the appreciation of their churches, the freedom of work, the protection of its national feelings, political and legal rights for the Romanians accepting the Hungarian conception of the state*" [meaning only a small part of the Northern Transylvanian Romanians].<sup>31</sup> All these minority rights, viewed today as normal, were ensured by the Transylvanian Party only by the extent to "*which the Hungarians from Romania are provided with these rights*".<sup>32</sup> However, it was well-known that Hungarians lived under oppression during the Antonescu regime.<sup>33</sup> This way of thinking, after all, reflects the so called 'politics of reciprocity' which has been started between Romania and Hungary in national minority issues shortly after the Second Vienna Award. Under these conditions, the basic 'positive' minority policies of the Transylvanian Party couldn't have been realised.

The most important question in minority issues of those times was the Jewish problem. In this case — similar to the point of view concerning the Romanian minority — the party accepted some discriminative measures, but it was against the method used in the Third Reich: The so called "Final Solution" (*Endlösung der Juden-*

30 *Erdély a magyar Képviseletében II*, Kolozsvár 1943, p. 42.

31 *Az Erdélyi Párt programja*, Marosvásárhely 1942, p. 7.

32 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

33 BALOGH -BÁRDI, pp. 162-167.





frage) was unacceptable. The seventh and eighth paragraphs of the party programme contained only the civil strictures against the Jews. In addition, the Jewish population were excluded from many areas of public life and educational opportunities. The eighth paragraph of the programme stated: “*The Jewish population voluntarily broke away from the Transylvanian Hungarians [sic!] during the Romanian regime, that is why we agree and urge every legal and governmental measure that excludes the Jews from the fields of education, public opinion formation and jurisdiction until the issue is solved on the European level, and we offer a quick method for the Hungarian professionals to take over their place in economic life. As we view productive capital as a national property, the control of capital and production cannot stay under Jewish control*”.<sup>34</sup> We can thus state that the Transylvanian Party was less extreme in minority issue than most of other Hungarian parties of those times, that supported the deportation of Jews.

Meanwhile, as the repressive measures against the Hungarian minority in Southern Transylvania became harder and more offensive, leading to ghettoization, the Transylvanian Party tried desperately to mediate between the Hungarian and the Romanian governments in minority issues in order to reach a compromise. Unfortunately, these efforts didn't lead to any results. The politics of reciprocity in the relations between the two countries shortly become an everyday reality. Also, the Transylvanian Party proved ineffective due to its limited influence upon the Hungarian government, and its total inability to influence the Romanian one. There were several reasons for its lack of power. First, the party as a whole was only a regional political formation. Second, war-time conditions were unfavourable for it, also because most of the important decisions were taken at government meetings or directly by ministers without consulting Parliament. Thus, in most cases, the leaders of the party weren't present at the decision making processes. Finally, viewed from the other side, being a Northern Transylvanian Hungarian political party, the Transylvanian Party had no legitimacy at all in Romania. It was a traditional political party and it functioned as an interest group at the same time. The source of party's inner dilemma was that it could not decide whether to be a simple party or a national political organization. Further, all the social strata of the Hungarians of the region were represented in the Transylvanian Party, whose sometimes contrary interests had a disruptive force.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the Transylvanian Party had to make compromises, which made the activity of this political formation more difficult and contributed to the decrease of its flexibility. Even so, the party was held together by its regional identity, the solidarity of the Transylvanian Hungarians seasoned during minority existence, its Transylvanian viewpoint, which was more sensible to social relationships than the Hungarians in general, and last but not least, the common demand to rebuild and revitalize the Hungarian character of Transylvania.

As the war wore on, the situation of the Transylvanian Party became more and more difficult. Using the words of Count Béla Teleki, the president of the party, until the German occupation, the party's situation “*was hard, then hopelessly impossible*”.<sup>36</sup> After losing its remaining sovereignty, as a result of German aggression on 19 March

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<sup>34</sup> *Az Erdélyi Párt programja*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> BALÁZS, Mikó Imre, pp. 329–330.

<sup>36</sup> TIBORI SZABÓ, p. 16.



1944, Hungary was ruled by the puppet government of Döme Sztójay, former ambassador to Berlin, which heeded Hitler's management.<sup>37</sup> These new conditions put the Transylvanian Party into a very delicate situation. The Party divided into two. Many politicians of the party, led by Sándor Vita and Count Béla Teleki, stepped aside and gave up their parliamentary seats. But other Transylvanian Party deputies, led by Dezső Albrecht, carried on their work in the Parliament and consistently supported the steps taken by the government.

Because of its inner fragmentation, the Transylvanian Party could not frame a common position on such an elementary important question as the deportation of Northern Transylvanian Jews after the German occupation. Some branches of the party supported the deportation, but the majority of the leaders not. The party as an organization didn't raise its voice against the mass extirpation of 90,000 Transylvanian Jews. Only personal actions, for example the intervention of Deputy Sándor Vita could save some of them, especially intellectuals. Vita made a name list of those Transylvanian Jews, who had extraordinary achievements in Hungarian cultural and economic life, and who fought bravely in the First World War in the Austro-Hungarian Army, this way obtained from the Hungarian government the exemption of these 208 Jewish people from deportation.<sup>38</sup> The fact that the party couldn't stop or even lessen the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania shows its limits and lack of influence in the most important nation-wide problems. Obviously, the fate of the Transylvanian Jewish population defeated all of the party's possibilities for action.

The deportation of Northern Transylvanian Jews in May — June 1944 meant the end of the Transylvanian Party's minority policy. After all, even the party itself disintegrated. The decree regarding the dissolution of political parties issued on 24 August 1944, the second day after Romania changed sides,<sup>39</sup> had little influence on the party. It had already fallen apart. Many smaller groups resulted from the disintegration. One group led by Deputy József Nyírő fled to Hungary with the evacuation of the Hungarian government from Northern Transylvania. The other group, formed in Kolozsvár around Imre Mikó with the participation of Count Béla Teleki, Sándor Vita and others, urged the withdrawal of Hungary from the war, starting a relationship with the Communists, and drawing closer to the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup> The so called 'left wing' group of the party<sup>41</sup> and the Hungarian Left's leading personalities from Northern Transylvania (Lajos Csöggör, János Demeter, Edgár Balogh, Lajos Jordáky etc.), with church prefects and different Hungarian intellectuals joining them, founded the *Erdélyi Magyar Tanács* ('Transylvanian Hungarian Council') on 29 August 1944. This new political formation had triple objectives: To build up relations with the Romanian government; to withdraw Hungary from the war; and to give up the military defence of Northern Transylvania against the Red Army and the Romanian Royal Army. The Transylvanian Hungarian Council took action immediately after its foundation and put together a memorandum to Miklós Horthy, the governor of Hungary.

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37 ROMSICS, p. 262.

38 S. KÓNYA-HAMAR, *Vita Sándor*, in: *Művelődés*, Vol. 66, No. 3, 2013, p. 19.

39 ABLONCZY, p. 114.

40 BALÁZS, *Mikó Imre*, pp. 338–340.

41 TIBORI SZABÓ, p. 27.





In this very important document, the members of the Council asked the governor to withdraw Hungary from the war and to give up Transylvania.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately they could not have their demands fulfilled, and the country continued its way to the catastrophic end.

In conclusion, we can state that the Transylvanian Party was characterised by a tragic dichotomy. On the one hand, between 1940 and 1944 it was the most important political party of Northern Transylvania, which held together the Hungarians who formed the majority of the region's population. On the other hand, it had not enough influence upon the central power of Hungary to find a good solution to the main problems of the re-integrated Northern Transylvanian territories: the minority question. The minority policies of the Transylvanian Party itself, were unsuccessful. The biggest problem was that the party had no connection with the Romanian minority in Northern Transylvania, being a mono-ethnic political organization in a multi-ethnic region. In addition, the Transylvanian Party had no mediation capacity between the Hungarian and Romanian governments in minority issues, and almost no influence at all upon the Hungarian central decision making on minority politics.

In order to give a real image about the Transylvanian Party, the circumstances under which it had to function must be mentioned. The general nationalistic climate after the Second Vienna Award made it very difficult to propose a new, tolerant minority policy. The fact that the Transylvanian Party represented only half of Transylvania was an impediment to realising the party's initial goals. Finally, the Transylvanian Party was active only for a very short period and in times of war.

In spite of these handicaps, the party still had some political successes in the issues of minority policy and interethnic relations. The most important realization of the Transylvanian Party was the establishment of Hungarian national unity in Northern Transylvania in such way as to preserve the local political traditions after re-integration into Hungary. Even its unsuccessful minority policy had benefits later, because it showed the necessity of a continuous political communication between the different nationalities in order to reach ethnic reconciliation in Transylvania. These became important elements in Hungarian minority survival in Romania after 1945.

Although the Transylvanian Party represents only a short chapter in Hungarian political history, it left behind an important spiritual heritage. This can be found in the closing part of the party programme, when it stated that *“the Transylvanian Party completely accepts that it is indebted on the one hand to Transylvania and Hungary, and on the other hand to Europe. This obliges it equally to the Hungarian nationality as this was clarified during the period of minority, as well as to the historic Transylvanian spirit which represented the eternal values of the European spirit. [...] In a Hungarian way and spread it throughout south-eastern Europe. We feel that these spiritual and social changes prepared and made the Hungarians of Transylvania adequate to proceed on the way that leads to the establishment of a Hungary that can fulfil its strong, independent and eternal historic task in a new Europe, along with the best people of the nation. The Transylvanian Party wishes to put the spirit, intellectual and moral strength of the Transylvanian Hungarians hardened*

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<sup>42</sup> M. Z. NAGY — G. VINCZE, *Autonomisták és centralisták: Észak-Erdély a két bevonulás között (1944. szeptember–1945. március)*, Kolozsvár/Csíkyszereda 2003, p. 117.

*in trials to serve these objectives*".<sup>43</sup> The vision of a new Europe of the Transylvanian Party did not approach the idea of a continental unity embodied in the European Union of today, but it definitely pointed beyond the Fascism and National-Socialism of the age, and pointed to some of the ideas and ideals that have led to the Europe of the European Union.



## **HUNGARIAN-ROMANIAN POLITICAL RELATIONS IN NORTHERN TRANSYLVANIA BETWEEN 1940 AND 1944 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN PARTY**

### **ABSTRACT**

The paper deals with the problem of ethnic relations in Northern Transylvania after the Second Vienna Arbitration, when Hungarians became a majority and Romanians became a minority in the region, offering an overview of the problem from the political perspective. The paper concentrates on the analysis of the minority politics of the *Erdélyi Párt*, the most important party of the Transylvanians at that time, with special focus on its basic conception regarding ethnic problems in Transylvania. It presents the foundation of the Transylvanian Party, its representation in the Hungarian Parliament and its relations with the government concerning the minority issue. The paper tries to give an overview on of the politics of the Transylvanian Party regarding the national minorities in Northern Transylvania: Romanians, Germans and Jews. It presents the successes and the failures obtained by the party in this matter in some very important aspects. Finally, the decline of the Transylvanian Party and its political heritage are presented. The source material of the paper consists of archival data, publications of the Transylvanian Party, special books, studies and publications in the contemporary press.

### **KEYWORDS**

Second Vienna Arbitration; Re-annexation; Interethnic Relations; Political Representation; Party Politics; Minority Politics; Minority Rights; Politics of Reciprocity; Discriminative Measures

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43 *Az Erdélyi Párt programja*, p. 8.