

REVIEW ARTICLE

A History of Transylvania: Its Impact and Reception

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Béla Köpeczi, ed. *Erdély története*. 3 vols. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1986.

History should be written *sine ira et studio*, but that is never wholly possible; nor can it ever measure up to the Rankean ideal, but nonetheless should attempt to approach it. These volumes on the history of Transylvania certainly attempt this in spite of the great temptations and difficulties involved in writing about this part of the world and its competing nationalisms.

However, there is another factor in the writing of history than the scholarly intentions of the historians, namely the political-cultural context in which one of necessity must live and work. Then there is also the network of world politics and the particular place in it occupied by both reader and writer, which in turn gives rise to interpretations and evaluations, indeed misinterpretations and re-evaluations based upon subjective interests. This is something no writer or historian can fully anticipate or control. The work has a life of its own and becomes a part of the consciousness of its readers, living on and influencing life in its myriad dimensions. This review is thus an expression of this consciousness in the life of one historian, hopefully a fair and meaningful one.

A detailed and comprehensive three volume history of Transylvania has been published under the aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and edited by the then minister of cultural affairs Béla Köpeczi, a literary and cultural historian of some renown. The work has generated more controversy among historians, politicians, and the public in Hungary, Rumania, and indeed throughout the world, mostly on account of the bitter response

it has elicited from Rumanian academic and political circles. This has been augmented and followed by the defence of the volumes by spokesmen for the Hungarian government as well as those for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.¹ Furthermore, scholars throughout the world, especially those concerned with the history of East Central Europe and also those dealing with minority issues, have also responded to the volumes and the controversy surrounding them in both the media and scholarly publications.² One needs to add that if the interest extends beyond purely academic circles and is perceived in political terms, even the language of publication, i.e. Hungarian, mostly ceases as an issue of concern. After all, numerous significant and controversial books have been published in the Hungarian language without generating interest and controversy of this magnitude, extending from the pages of leading world newspapers to the halls of the U.S. Congress and beyond.

Obviously, there must be a number of reasons for this vast interest in a rather lengthy (almost 2,000 pages) and detailed scholarly work dealing with a small and isolated geographical entity populated mostly by Hungarians, Rumanians, and Germans; a part of Rumania since the peace treaties after World War I, it was for most of its history a part of the Hungarian kingdom and also for approximately 150 years an independent principality quite conscious of its Hungarian ties. The interest is certainly not evoked either by the style and detail of the three rather hefty volumes, representing difficult reading even for one well versed in the history of the people and nations involved. Perhaps the interest can be explained in part because nothing comparable has been written or published in Hungary for more than forty years; this, however, would only explain the interest in the volumes by Hungarians and Hungarian-reading specialists and scholars dealing with these topics. Nonetheless, any reawakening of interest in the history of Transylvania and its peoples in any context is welcome.

The concern and interest of Rumanian historians and the reading public in Rumania should be and is self-evident. The volumes deal with topics which involve their ancestors in Transylvania, the development of the Rumanian nationality there, and their status in the region, among other issues.³ Nonetheless, the volumes deal with these topics in a way which often challenges the assumptions of Rumanian national sentiment and especially Rumanian nationalist historiography. Indeed, the response to these volumes borders on politically induced hysteria, by no means a proper response to volumes from which chauvinistic mentality and tone, which had marred some other writings on this theme, are decidedly missing. One cannot but believe that the Rumanian response, especially by its political leaders and many of its historians and writers, is unwarranted and unjustifiable.⁴

There must be more to the generally expressed Rumanian attitude toward these volumes than a concern with scholarship and alternative in-

terpretations; the tone of the writings and polemics directed against the work certainly points in such a direction. In the judgment of this reviewer this something else is the politization of scholarship, especially history, to serve the goal of creating a unitary national state by the current regime at the expense of destroying the national past of the major ethnic minorities in Rumania today, namely the Hungarians and Germans of Transylvania. The changes in nationality policies the past twenty years certainly point in this direction. Consider the following; many local archives, especially in Transylvania have been gathered together and forcibly removed to Bucharest and other locations; decrees have limited education in the languages of the minorities and publication opportunities have been greatly restricted. The list could be extended to include political and socio-economic decisions which have impacted negatively on the quality of life in Rumania, but these have also affected all citizens of the state regardless of nationality and have led to some limited manifestations of dissatisfaction with the regime and the unparalleled and unprecedented number of refugees (and not just ethnic Hungarians) seeking refuge in Hungary and elsewhere.

All of these events have had an impact on the conscience of peoples throughout the world, especially in Western Europe, the United States, and Canada (which together with Hungary sponsored a resolution on human rights at the Vienna conference on cooperation and peace) and which has resulted in some unpleasant and damaging political publicity for the Rumanian regime. Quite simply, the fate of the largest national minority in East Central Europe—the Hungarians of Transylvania—is a matter of some concern and this is by no means totally unrelated to the history of Transylvania and its peoples. Thus, the publication of this three volume *Erdély története*, by the publishing house of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, has once again focused attention on an issue which for the past forty years has been kept alive mostly outside of Hungary. It is to this situation that we must now turn.

With the imposition of Soviet hegemony over East Central Europe in the immediate post-World War II era, it was stressed that the imposition of a new internationalist ideology would remove or at least alleviate the national antagonisms of the region. Given the extent and depth of nationalist sentiment this did not and has not happened, but two consequences of the somewhat altered nationality situation in post-war East Central Europe must be noted nonetheless. First of all, the peoples of the region suffered a similar fate under native Stalinist regimes. Secondly, the Hungarian minority in Rumania obtained more autonomy, especially in educational and cultural matters, than during the Ceausescu years. It was undoubtedly the situation of the Hungarian minority, especially during the past few years, which led to the decision on the part of the Hungarian Academy of Sci-

ences (with the necessary consent of the government) to proceed with the publication of this work.

In a preliminary review of this work, Nandor Dreisziger noted that the publication of these volumes was a "debt paid in Budapest,"⁵ after more than forty years of official silence about Transylvania. One might extend this observation by noting that the historical consciousness of the elder generation had not forgotten about Transylvania, but had no forum to express its concern. The younger generation, meanwhile, generally only knew about Hungarians living in Rumania and was mostly unaware of the historical connection between Hungary and Transylvania. It was the joint activity (still mostly unrecognized) of Hungarians in the western world and the writings and activities of writers such as Gyula Illyés and Áron Tamási on behalf of the Hungarian minorities which awakened the consciousness of many Hungarians and brought about a renewal of interest and concern with Hungarians beyond the borders of Hungary in the early 1970s.⁶ Hungarian writers and scholars in the Western World had not been affected by Budapest's non-concern for Transylvania (and the Hungarian minorities in general) and had kept alive in their consciousness the historical connection of Hungary and Transylvania, even if not always with the necessary critical spirit. One could thus argue that the confluence of concern for Transylvania by Hungarians throughout the world was united by the rising intolerance of the Ceausescu regime toward its minorities generally and the Hungarian one specifically. The most recent manifestations of this concern were the huge demonstration in Budapest on June 27, 1988 and the ongoing activity of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation and other such organizations in the United States and elsewhere.⁷ All of these and other activities are tied in with the renewed interest of Hungarians with Transylvania and the publication of these three volumes is also tied in with this, even if only indirectly, with the consequences of its publication, and certainly not with the intentions of its writers who consistently maintained a sense of scholarship and a moderate tone in their work. In spite of the extent and quality of the three volumes (and the large number of copies sold and distributed), for many people it still remains a mostly unread symbol of care and concern resting on their bookshelves for others to see. It should be noted that the scholarly level and sometimes turgid style ill suits this work for a popular audience. For academics and scholars, however, it is and remains an essential and latest component of an on-going tradition of historical writing on Transylvania. Its impact could nonetheless be multiplied by publishing a one volume summary in both Hungarian and other languages so that its values and accomplishments may become known in wider circles. Nonetheless, it still remains our task to discuss it and its place in the long tradition of Hungarian historical writing on this topic.

Even a cursory examination of the development of Hungarian historiography will confirm that the history of Transylvania has always been a significant component of it. From the earliest chronicles, through the writings of the Renaissance and humanist scholars, the accounts of seventeenth century memoir writers, and extending into the era of modern and contemporary historical scholarship, Hungarian and Transylvanian history have generally been treated as parts of an integral entity, even when some parts were independent or under foreign rule at different times in a more or less common past. One should also add that this common history included the past of the non-Magyar peoples who also live in Transylvania.

These historical writings before the eighteenth century generally dealt more with the monarchy and aristocratic and military elements of the society and did so generally without sharply distinguishing ethnic or national background; that was not their primary consideration. With the eighteenth century—and accelerating in significance—there commenced a great interest in the past which resulted in the formulation of national histories for the various peoples of Europe generally, but especially for those who lacked a distinct historical tradition of their own. It was thus during the late seventeenth and mostly during the eighteenth century that there developed distinct historiographical traditions in Transylvania among Hungarians (in addition to the already developed currents of Hungarian historiography), Rumanians (in conjunction mostly with the Moldavians and Wallachians), and Saxons (also distinct from other German historical developments). Needless to say, these emerging traditions could best be described as incipiently self-conscious, leading eventually to a fully developed romantically inspired nationalism.

Some examples of this development can be pointed out here, but it is not possible to provide a comprehensive account of these historiographical traditions.⁸ Nor do the volumes discussed in this review provide more than an episodic and scattered historiographical account—one of their most obvious shortcomings. A distinctive historiographical tradition emerges from the writings of Gábor Bethlen, prince regnant of Transylvania in the early seventeenth century, including especially the writings of Bethlen himself, that of his court historian Gáspár Bojthi Veres and also János Kemény among others.⁹ This tradition was continued apace during the balance of the century and even beyond. A few examples may be noted: Péter Apor, *Metamorphosis Transylvaniae* (1736); Péter Bód, *Magyar Athenas* (1766); also the historical writings of Mihály Cserei, Pál Debreczeni Ember, József Benkő, and János Kénosi-Tőzser. Among the Saxons one must take note of Marton Schmeizel who taught a generation of Saxon historians in Transylvania. Hence in the centuries during which modern historical scholarship

developed, the Hungarian and Saxon scholars of Transylvania produced valuable work.

Rumanian scholarship in Transylvania also began to develop in the early and mid-eighteenth centuries and found support among the Rumanian aristocracy and clergy. Especially significant was the political and scholarly work of Inochentie Micu-Klein and his activities were significant for the subsequent development of Rumanian historical consciousness,¹⁰ specifically the first formulation by him of the theory of Daco-Roman-Rumanian continuity in 1735. There were hardly any other significant formulations before this time.

The ongoing interest in and concern with the past of the various peoples who populated Transylvania through the centuries received an obvious impetus from the gradual extension of nationalism to more and more elements of the population. Historical writings increased in number and became the foundation of those historically based ideologies which became and continue to be significant for shaping and influencing the historiographical tradition and historical-political consciousness of these peoples. The strict devotion to scholarly canons characteristic of many (by no means all) eighteenth century works gradually gave way to historical writings and attitudes characterized by a sense of romantic nationalism; this may have been helpful for the development of literary and cultural life in a national context. It was certainly not favourable for the maintenance of the commitment to finding out what happened, so essential to the continued writing of sound history. Indeed, the historical works of the first half of the nineteenth century (with very few exceptions) were characterized more by a love of nation than dedication to historical truth. A romanticized version of the history of the peoples of East Central Europe became—and continues to persist in some form—as a component part of the respective historical mythology of these peoples. This has not been salutary for either scholarship or the promotion of understanding among these peoples. The political history of Transylvania is certainly a telling and instructive commentary on this situation.¹¹

Late nineteenth century historical writing (and this historiographical tradition continued certainly until 1914) found itself ensnared in a political-cultural conflict. As it moved away from many of the illusions of romantic historiography toward a more positivist and scientific historiography, the historical consciousness of their readers (the educated public generally) was still informed—indeed captivated—by prior vision. Thus scholarship, while moving away from that vision found itself out of touch with a nationalist inspired political system. The activities of scholars and writers such as Sándor Szilágyi, Henrik Marczali, and Imre Mikó among others, thus did not always mesh with popular ideals and aspirations about past, present, and future. Rumanian historical scholarship also became substantially more

nationalistic (cf. Xenopol, Iorga, etc.) for the reason that historical studies and consciousness emanating therefrom served Rumanian nationalist aspirations.

This politization of historical scholarship led to mutual recriminations and fostered attitudes of hostility and misunderstanding. All of this was then caught up in the throes of World War I and its all too well-known consequences, specifically the division of Austria-Hungary by the peace treaties of St. Germain and Trianon.¹² Nor did this fail to have an impact on scholarly life generally and historical writing specifically. While some attempts were made to maintain the necessary dedication to the principles and moral demands of historical scholarship, the shock of Trianon—probably the greatest tragedy in the history of the Hungarian nation¹³—was simply too much and the revisionism born of the dismemberment of Hungary acted as an impetus to politicians and very many scholars and historians to point out the injustices of the changed situation for Hungarians in this region of Europe. Thus, a new revisionist historiography was born and while in the hands of competent historians (such as Gyula Szekfű, Bálint Hóman, Sándor Domanovszky, and Imre Lukinich among others) it retained a sense of qualified professionalism, qualified, however, only in the context of revisionist attitudes; the other characteristics remained on the same high scholarly level as previously.

Revisionism became the central concern of the political and cultural life of inter-war Hungary and resulted in some very obvious dislocations in the historical consciousness of very many Hungarians; often it led to highly unrealistic political and cultural attitudes and fostered the acceptance of catastrophic and radical historical and political visions.¹⁴ For example, at the time of the second Vienna Award (1940), when a part of Transylvania was restored to Hungary, a commemorative album entitled *Erdély* (Transylvania) was published with the participation of many of Hungary's most esteemed scholars and politicians and this undoubtedly reflected rather evidently the revisionist program and its attitudes.¹⁵ However, even this volume still exhibited a substantially more moderate tone and was characterized by more respect for the standards of language and scholarship than the most recent (since the mid-sixties) Rumanian government sponsored historical or other writings on Hungary.¹⁶ Needless to say, not all writings produced by Rumanian and Hungarian writers and scholars about each other are characterized by such invective. It is precisely these three volumes which provide numerous examples of understanding and cooperation among the various peoples inhabiting Transylvania.

Movement away from excessively revisionistic attitudes on the part of Hungarian scholars and historians can be noted by the early 1940s; one must mention the establishment and work of the Teleki Institute; also, Gyula Szekfű's book *Etat et Nation* (1942) represents a movement away

from revisionism as did the writings of László Gáldi and László Makkai; the latter wrote a number of books including *Erdély története* (1946) and edited the second volume of the work under review.

The changed attitude was in no small measure the result of World War II; revisionism—or at the very least its most outspoken version—was tempered by the crucible of war and defeat, the consequence of which was the reconfirmation of the Trianon frontiers at the Paris peace conference of 1947. The imposition of Soviet hegemony over East Central Europe after the war engulfed both Rumania and Hungary and this common condition caused more concern for the Hungarians and Rumanians respectively than the nationality disputes; immediate post-war relations between the various peoples were better, though by no means free of conflict and controversy. Hungarian historians in post-war Transylvania carried out some historical work characterized by sound scholarship and a somewhat more conciliatory spirit—especially the work of Lajos Kelemen and his students—but this nonetheless remained the work of a tolerated minority; the same is true with regard to the work of Imre Mikó.

The Rumanian historical attitudes were mostly maintained, but were marked by an ever increasing Marxist character. This also was true of the scholarly work of the national minorities. Although hampered by the restrictions of this ideology, the internationalist attitudes of the Soviet imposed regimes somewhat attenuated nationality conflicts, at least until the late 1950s. Since that time the increasingly intolerant nationality policy of the Bucharest regime has weighed ever more heavily on the nationalities, especially the large Hungarian minority. Indeed, there has been and continues to be a strongly chauvinistic tone to Rumanian political and cultural policies. This was also evident in the planning and execution of the International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Bucharest in 1980.

On account of the close connection between some elements of Hungarian revisionism and Nazi Germany—most manifest in the German role in the two Vienna awards—the post-war regimes were not particularly receptive to the revisionism of the pre-war years, but were nonetheless somewhat concerned with the fate and future of the Hungarian minorities. This changed abruptly with the imposition of the Soviet-backed communist government in 1948 and revisionism—and even nationalism—became in effect taboo subjects. Hungarian nationalism and concern with Hungarian populations in the so-called former succession states were neglected and proscribed. The struggle against nationalism and its manifold manifestations occupied the time of many historians and ideologues. Although there remained some minimal evidence of concern with the minorities, the issue continued to be neglected and even actively discouraged until the early 1970s, at which time a few studies on Hungarian minorities once again appeared and some public attention was once again focused on these issues.¹⁷ With the excep-

tion of a few relatively minor and highly specialized historical writings on the minorities, the three volume *Erdély története* published in 1986 was the first comprehensive history of Transylvania published in Hungary since the volume also entitled *Erdély története*—by László Makkai some forty years earlier. His scholarly activity thus provides the only continuity of writing on Transylvania in Hungary today.

The Rumanians had not destroyed so completely the historical consciousness of their people regarding their claims to Transylvania and the myth of Daco-Roman continuity and had made these claims known to the world, especially since 1963. This situation, coupled with the seemingly more independent line of Rumanian foreign policy, has created much good will for Rumania and has also contributed indirectly to a wider acceptance of her “historically-based” claim to Transylvania. The ever increasing repression of the national minorities by the Rumanian government during the past two decades, however, has recently elicited extensive opposition from human rights groups, including among others Amnesty International, and increasingly from other nations and even regional organizations. The force of this pressure was then compounded by the publication of these volumes and its sponsorship by the highly regarded Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This has resulted in more pressure upon the cultural life of the Hungarians in Rumania and led to a worsening of Hungarian-Rumanian relations. By declaring those issues which are fundamentally supportive of Rumanian chauvinism historical mythology, the work angered and provoked the Rumanian government; thus this history of Transylvania not only became a scholarly concern but entered the political arena. Rumanian government reaction to these volumes has been virulent in the extreme and the academic and cultural media have taken their cue from the government response.

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In this connection it may be useful to examine the motivation of Hungarian historians for producing this work; it should be evident from the amount of work and effort that went into it that it has been in the planning and writing phases for a number of years and thus could not have been motivated by strict political considerations alone. In another sense, however, it represented an ongoing concern which had been kept under political wraps for quite some time; the history of Transylvania, after all, has always been a part of or intimately related to the history of the Hungarian people for a thousand years and has always been studied or written about by Hungarian historians as they dealt with the history of Hungary. The publication of a separate or specific history of Transylvania, however, has been subjected to political restraints for many years since 1946. Hence, the publication of

these three volumes now is not totally unrelated to either the political vicissitudes of the last forty years in Hungary specifically and the Soviet bloc contextually; nor is it unrelated to the much longer tradition of Hungarian historical writing about Transylvania.

The reasons motivating the publication of these volumes were stated and specified in a lecture given by Zsigmond P. Pach (academician and director, Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences) entitled "Why do we write the History of Transylvania," presented to a professional conference devoted to this topic and published in the literary-cultural weekly *Élet és Irodalom* (Life and Literature).¹⁸ Pach makes three key points in his lecture. First of all, he rejects any association with prior Hungarian nationalism and revisionism, stating in the process that they as Marxists are opposed to all kinds of nationalism and also reject nationalist Hungarian historical writings. Secondly, Pach rejects with equal vehemence the older, newer, and most recent formulations of Rumanian nationalist historiography as well, specifically the theory of Daco-Roman continuity and the related "historical rights" of the Rumanians to Transylvania. This brief critique is then concluded with a third point, namely the unwillingness of Hungarian historians to engage in a nationalist dispute, stressing instead that the history of Transylvania forms an integral part of both Hungarian and Rumanian history and that historical scholarship should not be used to deny the existence or rights of the other.¹⁹

This statement, while undoubtedly academic in tone, and not dealing specifically with the political dimension of the conflict over Transylvania and the human and national rights of the minority populations, nonetheless stands out in bold relief from the bulk of the Rumanian statements and reviews of these three volumes. The reaction of the Rumanian party and political leadership, as first formulated by Ceausescu and repeated by numerous others on many levels and at different forums, accused the Hungarian government of fascist tendencies, Horthyite revisionism, and the utter falsification of history, among other similar charges and characterizations. Many of the statements were then repeated in not only the popular, but also the professional and academic media and official government publications in foreign languages. The vehemence and tone of these responses and reviews have even been noted by western scholars who have reviewed these volumes in literary and professional reviews. Herewith are but two examples. Norman Stone, writing in the *Times* (London) *Literary Supplement*, concludes as follows: "Meanwhile, the sheer hardship of life, in terms of hunger and cold and darkness, is the one thing that has remained genuinely internationalist in present-day Rumania. That darkness, to judge from the over-reaction of the Rumanian Academy of Sciences to a scholarly work of high standard, goes far."²⁰ Another reviewer, Martyn Rady, writing in the *Slavonic and East European Review*, writes the fol-

lowing: "Nevertheless, despite the evident scholarship of its contents and the impressive—and hitherto unsullied—reputation of its individual contributors, *Erdély története* has been roundly condemned in Rumania as a mischievous work which deliberately falsifies the historical record."²¹ It should be noted that this review attempts sympathetically to understand the Rumanian version of Transylvanian history and the Rumanian point of view.²²

Professional reviews of this work inevitably praise its scholarly tone, comprehensiveness, organization, and the conscious effort to incorporate the history of the Saxons and Rumanians. While written from a Hungarian perspective, its discussion of the Rumanian role in the history of Transylvania is quite detailed and balanced; there is no denial of their role and place in Transylvania and the chauvinism expressed by some Hungarian statesmen and writers in the latter nineteenth century is as roundly condemned as the formulations of Rumanian historical mythology. There is some disagreement on the interpretation of the role of the Rumanians in the 1848 revolutions, but then Hungarian historians are not agreed on similar issues concerning 1848 in other parts of Hungary either. There is a very detailed discussion and analysis of the early settlements which conclude, on the basis of archaeological and historical analysis, that the theory of Daco-Roman continuity is not tenable; it should be stressed that some Rumanian archaeologists also dispute that point on the basis of archaeological and historical evidence.²³

It may be instructive to point out that the periodization and some of the discussion is based upon self-confessed Marxist categories, but this is generally subdued and thus only marginally evident. Furthermore, the books are supplemented by comprehensive bibliographies; further documentation can be found in the notes which are not as extensive as one is used to in historical monographs. However, this is not so much a monographic study than a synthesis and if viewed in that context the documentation can be judged as sufficient. There is one disturbing element and that is the excessive role assigned to the history of economic affairs and the vast amount of such detail; this is especially evident in the third volume covering the period since 1830. Intellectual and cultural affairs are not given as much prominence as one would have desired and the role of the churches is mostly limited to their political role. The rich spiritual and theological heritage is not given its proper estimate. These comments notwithstanding, the work achieves its major goal of presenting a synthesis of the history of Transylvania.

Having previously noted the response of Rumania's political leadership to this work, a brief characterization of the reviews and statements of some Rumanian scholars may also prove instructive. Sadly, however, these statements in their essentials follow the lead and tone of the political declara-

tions; indeed it was expected, even mandated that this be so. The work under discussion is generally characterized as a malevolent work which deliberately falsifies history in the service of Hungarian revisionism. An essay by Titus Popovici entitled "Deliberate Falsification of History: Method and Style" manages to gather more invective—punctuated by personal insults against one of the major authors, László Makkai—and distortion into fifteen pages than most writers. Just one example, and by no means the most offensive, is the following: "I shall endeavor to describe the content of *Erdély Története*, a still-born product of a gang-rape of history, showing no leniency to the 'intellectual' stature of the authors of this hybrid concoction which displays a distressing simplicity and lack of sophistication even in the use of nuances."²⁴ One should add that the description of the content assumes the work to be a cheap pulp novel, a characterization varied and repeated any number of times. Obviously, this kind of writing is best left without comment.

Another such critique, while somewhat more subdued in tone, discusses mostly the first volume, specifically the archaeological chapters written mostly by András Mócsy. Not satisfied with disagreeing with Mócsy's conclusions, which is after all a right any reviewer and critic possesses, they constantly characterize it as tendentious and non-scientific; however, the constant repetition of charges without substantial contrary evidence does not qualify as a critical assessment.²⁵

The attribution of ill will, obvious chauvinistic attitudes, the falsification of history—charges constantly repeated—is also typical of an article entitled "A Conscious Forgery of History under the Aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences."²⁶ After a brief review of some contested points typical of most Rumanian critical observations on these themes, the authors, including Stefan Pascu, a leading Rumanian historian specializing in the history of Transylvania, assert "that the national question has been fully and finally settled,"²⁷ thereby denying even the very existence of minority populations in Rumania. After this political assertion, the review goes on to castigate some of the writers personally and bemoans the lack of attention to twentieth century developments, specifically noting that the volume does not mention what the reviewers characterize as the great industrial accomplishments of socialist Rumania.

While it is correct that the history of Transylvania published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences treats the history of Transylvania beyond 1918 only very briefly in a postscript type of chapter, even that fact may be explained by other considerations. The historical sources and the necessary critical analysis has not as yet been completed and finalized, but more to the point; these events are still too close in time to allow the necessary perspective for a nuanced, sound, and balanced analysis. The events of World War II, the passions engendered by human rights issues, the current

situation of the Hungarian minority there, are all factors which make it emotionally difficult to achieve the necessary scholarly striving for some semblance of objectivity.

The history of twentieth century Transylvania still remains to be written. In this connection, it should be stated that the publication of these volumes has already engendered a renewed interest in the past and present of Transylvania. This interest must be maintained and it is surely to be hoped that cooperation with historians from Rumania, and especially, the involvement of historians from Transylvania's minorities in the future will be possible once the tone changes and the minorities in that country can once again continue to develop their cultural identity. In spite of the hope here expressed, the prospects appear even dimmer if one examines the future of education and cultural life for the minorities there. The destruction of villages planned by the Ceausescu regime, which elicited a huge demonstration in Budapest, also pushes the possibility of intellectual and cultural cooperation further into the future. Even in this context, one of the marchers in the Budapest demonstration carried a sign which read: "We do not wish the return of Transylvania, but rather the restoration of a more human life in Transylvania."²⁸ This sentiment should be read in the light of the statements cited from the reviews published in the Rumanian media.

One can only hope that an abridged English language edition will be made available so that the knowledge about Transylvania in the Western World will become more balanced and more extensive.

Notes

- 1 Statement of the Hungarian government as given in *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), April 2, 1987.
- 2 See for example a review by Norman Stone "Bad blood in Transylvania," *Times Literary Supplement*, October 2-8, 1987, p. 1066.
- 3 These were probably the most sensitive issues in the eyes of the Rumanian reader. The reviews to be cited later tend to confirm this.
- 4 A judgment shared by most reviewers; cf. Stone review cited in note 2.
- 5 Notes by Nandor Dreisziger on recent works related to Transylvanian history, printed in the newsletters of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada and the American Association for the Study of Hungarian History during 1987-88.
- 6 The writings of Gyula Illyés were instrumental in awakening interest in the fate of Hungarian minorities. Some of his essays and poems encouraged many others, such as Sándor Csoóri and István Csurka.
- 7 The Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, an organization of mostly young Hungarians in the U.S. and Canada has been actively involved in the political arena, relief work, and publications. It has issued a number of reports on the situation of Hungarian minorities, and established a broad base of support. There are also numerous other organizations active in the support of human rights in Transylvania in the western world.

- 8 Two articles by the current writer may be of some interest in connection with these matters: "Hungarian Historiography and European Currents of Thought," in *Society in Change: Studies in Honor of Béla K. Király*, ed. S.B. Vardy (Boulder, Co.: *East European Quarterly*, 1983), pp. 391–411; "Inter Arma: Reflections on Seventeenth Century Educational and Cultural Life in Hungary and Transylvania," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. Béla Király and János Bak (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), pp. 315–334.
- 9 László Makkai, ed., *Erdély öröksége* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1941), vol. 4.
- 10 *Erdély története*, vol. 2, pp. 1030–1034.
- 11 Much of the historical mythology can still be found in the public consciousness.
- 12 Trianon formed the basis of the Hungarian revisionism and the attempt to undo some of it was the basis of inter-war Hungarian revisionism.
- 13 The comment that Trianon was the greatest tragedy in Hungarian history was once made to this reviewer by John Lukacs. It is certainly comparable to Mohács. Hungarian historians are finally coming to terms with it once again. See the text of a radio interview conducted with a number of Hungarian historians by András Gerő, "Trianon a történelemben és a történelmi tudatban," *Világosság*, April 1988, pp. 219–237. It should be stressed that only 3 pages deal with Trianon in the three volume *Erdély története*, almost shockingly disproportionate.
- 14 Some of these would include the various theories about the supposed Turanian and Sumerian origins of the Hungarians; also evident were the number of right radical political organizations.
- 15 *Erdély* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1940). The volume was also published in a number of foreign languages.
- 16 Compare with some of the Rumanian reviews of the *Erdély története* cited later in this review.
- 17 It is only now that there is ready acceptance of books on minority issues in Hungary.
- 18 *Élet és Irodalom*, Oct. 23, 1987 as reprinted in *Látóhatár*, Jan. 1988, pp. 147–152.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152.
- 20 Stone, review in *Times Literary Supplement* cited in note 2.
- 21 Review of *Erdély története* by Martyn Rady, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 66, no. 3 (July 1988), p. 482.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 484–485.
- 23 *Erdély története*, vol. 1, p. 301.
- 24 Titus Popovici, "Deliberate Falsification of History: Method and Style," *Romanian Review*, vol. 41, no. 5, p. 87.
- 25 Dumitru Berciu *et al.*, "Fallacious Theses on the Making of the Romanian People and Language," *Romanian Review*, vol. 41, no. 7, pp. 74–88.
- 26 Stefan Pascu *et al.*, "A Conscious Forgery of History under the Aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences," *Romanian Review* vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 3–21.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 28 *Tüntetés a Hősök Terén* (Budapest: Eötvös, 1988), p. 15.