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Rumanian Socialists and the Nationality Problem in Hungary, 1903–18

The history of the Rumanian socialists of Hungary in the decade before the outbreak of the First World War and during the final crisis of the Dual Monarchy in 1918 offers a striking illustration of the importance of national feeling in socialist and working-class movements of peoples who had not yet achieved their national-political emancipation and who were still overwhelmingly agrarian. In seeking support, Rumanian socialists had to compete with the middle-class Rumanian National Party, which was well established as a staunch defender of Rumanian rights against the aggressive nationality policies of the Hungarian government, and the church, which maintained a strong hold over a devout and traditional peasantry. They were hampered also by having only a modest constituency of their own. Not only was the Rumanian working class small, but in those places where Rumanian factory workers had congregated in significant numbers—Budapest, Arad, Timișoara—they were swallowed up in the greater masses of Magyar and German workers and were in danger of losing their national identity. They provided only a fragile base for an independent socialist party. Until the First World War, Rumanian socialists developed their activities under the aegis of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (MSZDP). In time, they found ideological and financial subordination to the MSZDP to be a serious handicap in efforts to recruit new members. At a time of growing national tension, they were hard put to explain how a party dominated by Magyars, even socialists, could benefit Rumanians. Yet, in spite of their protestations of socialist internationalism and their open disdain for nationalistic impulses, they could not ignore nationality. Indeed, the idea of nationality lent their movement a distinctiveness that set it apart from the other socialist movements of Hungary and, in the end, gave it its reason for being.

Before 1900 there was no organized Rumanian working-class movement in Hungary. In the 1880s and 1890s growing numbers of Rumanians began to migrate from the village to the city to seek work and some relief from overpopulation and harsh economic conditions. By the end of the century, this group had become numerous enough to attract the attention of the MSZDP, which had been founded in 1890 and whose leaders were at this time eager to increase its membership among non-Magyar workers. At general congresses

in 1899 and 1900, the MSZDP discussed the establishment of a Rumanian “organizing committee” to manage the planned propaganda effort and take responsibility for editing a Rumanian-language newspaper.

The party had good reason to concern itself with Rumanian and other non-Magyar workers, for together they composed a significant percentage of the total industrial work force. According to the census of 1900, approximately 43 percent of industrial workers gave a language other than Magyar as their mother tongue. By 1910 that figure had declined to 37 percent, but in a number of industries, non-Magyar workers continued to form either a majority or a significant minority. The party’s interest in Rumanian workers culminated in its sponsorship of *Adevărul*, the official organ of Rumanian socialists from 1903 until 1919.¹ The party also took the initiative in forming a Rumanian coordinating committee which, in the fall of 1903, issued an appeal to the Rumanian workers of Budapest to organize themselves under the protection of the MSZDP. Citing unbearable economic and political conditions in Transylvania, the party insisted that Rumanian workers had no choice but to organize if they ever hoped to gain political rights and economic freedom.²

The Rumanian section of the MSZDP, as it was known officially for most of its existence, came into being slowly and painfully. On November 1, 1903, after repeated urgings, a small number of workers finally met and established a “Club of Rumanian Workers of Budapest.”³ It did not flourish, and for the next two years organizational responsibilities devolved upon the editors of *Adevărul*. Rumanian socialists remained a group largely without form or direction.

Hoping to rally additional support for the party’s campaign on behalf of universal suffrage and other political and economic demands (undertaken at this time in order to profit from the confusion caused by a severe constitu-

1. During its existence *Adevărul* was published weekly, semi-weekly, and monthly, depending upon the financial condition of the section and the generosity of the parent party. Between 1907 and 1912 *Adevărul* and *Glasul Poporului* were published in alternate weeks to avoid the legal requirements for a substantial cash deposit guaranteeing observance of the press laws. *Adevărul* and *Glasul Poporului* were, in fact, the same newspaper appearing weekly under two different titles.

Newspapers are the most important source of information about the activities and ideas of Rumanian socialists. The archive of the Rumanian section, if it ever existed, has not been discovered; nor have the personal papers of its leaders come to light. There are scattered pieces in the Archive of the Institute for the History of the Party in Budapest, but, to my knowledge, similar materials are not to be found in the Institute for Social and Political Studies in Bucharest.

2. Magyar Szociálista Munkáspárt (henceforth, MSZMP), Párttörténeti Intézet Archívuma (henceforth, PI Archívuma), Budapest. Röpiratgyűjtemény, I.1/1903/4205: “Főlhívás Budapest román ajku munkásaihoz.

3. *Adevărul*, November 8, 1903.

tional crisis), the MSZDP again took the initiative by convoking a congress of Rumanian socialists at Lugoj in the Banat for December 25–26, 1905. This was the period of the party's greatest interest in the Rumanians and other non-Magyars.⁴ In order to spur the recruitment of new members, an organization was set up for the Rumanians similar to those already formed by Germans, Slovaks, and Serbs, but the party had no intention of encouraging separatism and kept the Rumanian section under close supervision. The first Rumanian socialist congress was well attended with seventy-eight delegates from forty communities, but the new organization showed little cohesion. Nothing had been done to recruit new members or disseminate propaganda, a disappointing state of affairs which evoked complaints from the parent party about the "large sums" it had spent on the Rumanians for naught.⁵

In the next decade the Rumanian section gradually expanded its network of local branches in Transylvania. Activity was especially brisk in the spring of 1910 because the section hoped to make a respectable showing in the June parliamentary elections. Aurel Cristea, a typesetter by trade and the editor of *Adevărul*, led the campaign, speaking in city after city and participating directly in the founding of branches in Sibiu and Orăștie.⁶ Cristea and a few colleagues also took steps to coordinate activities of the new branches, some twelve in number, with the older ones (especially the Budapest organization) by creating the National Rumanian Committee of Hungary,⁷ a name later changed to Rumanian Central Committee in order to emphasize the fact that theirs was an independent movement.⁸ As we shall see, such a claim was largely illusory.

Throughout its existence the Rumanian section remained small and its influence on events slight. The MSZDP leadership was partly to blame for this unhappy condition because of its neglect of non-Magyar socialist movements after the initial period of enthusiasm. The dominance of Magyars and Germans over local party affairs in Transylvania and the Banat, where Rumanian industrial workers were most numerous, also discouraged the recruitment of new members. Propaganda and other activities were carried on in German or Magyar, and at regional party conferences Germans and Magyars were the main speakers and conducted the meetings to suit their own interests. Although a few speeches were usually given in Rumanian, and questions were raised about the nationality problem and financial support

4. János Kende, *A Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája 1903–1919* (Budapest, 1973), pp. 15–31.

5. *A magyarországi szocialisztikus munkásmozgalom* (henceforth, MSZMM) *az 1905. évben* (Budapest, 1906), pp. 367–68.

6. *Adevărul*, May 15, 1910.

7. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1910.

8. Kende, *MSZDP nemzetiségi politikája*, p. 72.

of *Adevărul*, Rumanian delegates obtained little more than a perfunctory hearing for their ideas. Often local party organizations were uninformed about Rumanian socialist affairs. In 1911, for example, the secretary of the powerful Transylvanian party committee did not know where or how often *Glasul Poporului* was published.⁹

There were also more direct causes for the Rumanian socialists' frustration. They had, first of all, to confront local government authorities, who were generally hostile to socialist activities of any kind. Statistics clearly reveal the extent of official harassment. For example, in 1913, throughout Hungary, local authorities forbade twenty-four of fifty-two planned meetings of the section.¹⁰ The press also had its problems. *Adevărul*, especially in its early years, suffered from the heavy hand of the censor. Within six months of its founding, issues had been confiscated four times and its editors subjected to five court tests of various violations of the press laws. Some issues contained large blank spaces where offending material had been removed, and on one occasion, February 14, 1904, almost half the issue was "white."

Rumanian socialists also had to overcome ethnic bias. Local authorities, ever vigilant at the slightest hint of nationalism among the non-Magyars, occasionally interfered with the socialists' work on what appear to have been national grounds. For example, in Arad in January 1908, Rumanian socialists requested permission from the police to hold a public lecture in a city street on the themes: "socialism and nationalism" and "nationalism and proletarianism," both forming part of a series they described as "scientific lectures." The police gave their approval, but specified that the meeting be held in one of the rooms of the city hall, that only Hungarian citizens be present, that the lectures be given in Magyar, and that no subjects other than those announced be treated.¹¹ Rumanians were by no means the sole objects of official harassment: German, Slovak, and Serb socialists were accorded similar treatment, and their newspapers were often as "white" as *Adevărul*.

Penury plagued the section throughout its existence. Complaints were registered at every congress about the failure of the membership to pay its dues or to support the "agitational fund," started in 1910. Appeals for money, printed in issue after issue of *Adevărul*, fell on deaf ears. The chief source of income was the MSZDP. In 1913, the MSZDP provided a subvention which amounted to 1,961 crowns out of the section's total annual income of 2,594 crowns. Most of this sum, 1,899 crowns, went for salaries for the editors of

9. MSZMP, PI Archívuma: 658 fond. 6/78 ö.e. MSZDP Erdélyrészi Titkársága to central party headquarters, Kolozsvár, October 30, 1911.

10. *Adevărul*, October 13, 1913.

11. MSZMP, PI Archívuma: Microfilm Collection, F 716/1.

Adevărul and various administrative needs, leaving very little for organizational and propaganda work.¹²

The leaders of the section continually had to do battle against the indifference of the membership. In 1906 *Adevărul* complained that Rumanian workers had not yet been awakened by the “trumpets of social democracy,” which had long since stirred all the other peoples of Hungary.¹³ At the Rumanian socialist congresses of 1908 and 1909, delegates criticized themselves and the workers for political apathy and failure to join trade unions, even in such a self-conscious socialist environment as the railroad car factory in Arad, where the more than one hundred Rumanian workers were still unorganized.¹⁴ The situation seems to have been no better in 1912. Rumanian socialist organizations did little to involve Rumanian workers in meetings and demonstrations organized by the MSZDP, or to undertake significant propaganda work of their own on the great political and social issues of the day.¹⁵

The degree of worker apathy may have been exaggerated. In some places, notably Budapest, there seems to have been an active group of workers which, in 1907, was meeting regularly on Sundays to discuss working conditions and political questions, helping to maintain cohesion among Rumanians in this large, cosmopolitan city.¹⁶ But this group, which included white-collar workers, was exceptional and seems to have had no direct link to the Rumanian socialist section. Elsewhere, in numerous cities in Transylvania, Rumanian artisans and workers had long since demonstrated an awakened self-consciousness by joining labor unions, but not socialist ones. Rather, they had been organized into “reunions,” like the Reunion of Rumanian Artisans of Sibiu, which were patronized by the Rumanian Orthodox church and the Rumanian National Party. Roundly denounced by the socialists as “clerical” and “chauvinistic,” the reunions, nonetheless, gave the socialists stiff competition for recruits.¹⁷

Whatever the cause, a strong socialist workers’ movement did not develop. A few months before the outbreak of the First World War, that is, almost eleven years after the section’s founding, Iosif Jumanca, one of its leaders, expressed the feelings of many of his colleagues about the weakness of their movement and their own failures when he admitted publicly that they did not have an organized working class behind them. He thought that

12. *Adevărul*, October 24, 1913.

13. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1906.

14. *Ibid.*, January 16, 1909; MSZMP, PI Archívuma, F 716/1.

15. *Adevărul*, March 15, 1912.

16. MSZMP, PI Archívuma, Microfilm Collection, F 716/2: Report of a detective, April 1, 1907.

17. *Adevărul*, August 15, 1910; November 7, 1913.

it would come only when they had acquired adequate material resources and a "suitable [territorial] base" from which to operate.¹⁸

The ideology professed by the more articulate Rumanian socialists was a simplified form of Marxism liberally sprinkled with the ideas of Ferdinand Lassalle, Christian socialism of the sort preached by Lamennais in *Les paroles d'un croyant* in the first half of the nineteenth century, trade-unionism, and agrarian socialism. In assessing the eclecticism and lack of originality of the ideology, we must keep in mind that, with very few exceptions, the leaders of the Rumanian section were workers, not intellectuals. As a result, inconsistencies abound in their public statements, but several continuing strands of thought are, nonetheless, discernible. Like their Magyar mentors, Rumanian socialists generally agreed that the capitalist system was to blame for the misery and oppression of the workers,¹⁹ that it was "putrid," and that it had to be replaced by a world in which there would no longer be rich and poor, master and servant, but one in which everyone would enjoy the fruits of his own labor.²⁰ They were encouraged by the "scientific character" of Marxian doctrine to believe that capitalist society would give way automatically to socialism through the operation of fixed historical laws. They recognized the transfer of property rights over the means of production from the ruling classes to the exploited as the essential law of social development.²¹ Their acceptance of these "elemental facts" seems to have bred an optimism that could withstand even their own failures and the slow progress of socialism generally in Hungary. Ioan Crețu, perhaps the section's most active theorist, was confident that existing society was heading rapidly toward socialism,²² and Iosif Jumanca was persuaded that all mankind was evolving toward "something better."²³

Rumanian socialists regarded their own role in the historical process as one of organizing workers into socialist-led labor unions and leading the struggle to achieve immediate political and economic goals. It did not occur to them to wait for a sizeable Rumanian proletariat to be created and exploited by industry before setting about these tasks. As Tiron Albani, one of the few genuine theorists their movement possessed, put it: if the Rumanians were not yet fully exploited by industrial capital, then landlords, banks, and bureaucrats were more than making up for this deficiency.²⁴

18. Ibid., April 19, 1914.

19. Ibid., October 25, 1903; March 10, 1907.

20. Ioan Crețu, "Lumea muncitoare," *Adevărul*, March 1, 1906.

21. Ioan Crețu, "Proprietatea colectivă," *Adevărul*, February 1, 1906.

22. *Adevărul*, November 28, 1913.

23. Ibid., June 21, 1914.

24. Ibid., August 8, 1913.

Undoubtedly, the image of the poor peasant was uppermost in Albani's mind. From the very beginning, he and his colleagues had recognized the enormous potential which the peasant masses, holding little or no land, represented for the movement. Between 1903 and 1910 they devoted a large part of their meager resources and considerable space in *Adevărul* and *Glasul Poporului* to the peasant's problems in an effort to recruit him into the ranks of social democracy. In the absence of a substantial urban working class, they thought that the "rural proletariat" would give them the strength to become an important force within the MSZDP. They tried to persuade the peasant that his condition would not improve as long as he provided the labor and others owned the land, and they urged him to join with his neighbors "under the red banner of international social democracy." Following the lead of the MSZDP, the delegates to the first Rumanian socialist congress in 1905 decided to organize groups of agricultural laborers in every commune to serve as permanent representatives of the party. The tasks of these representatives were to be largely educational, since the leaders of the section thought that ignorance had made the exploitation of the peasant possible. But they were also to impress upon the peasants the importance of the cooperative movement as a means of acquiring land and raising living standards.²⁵

The Rumanian socialists' efforts among the peasantry, even the landless, came to little more than token support in a few communes. The reasons are clear: there were too few propagandists and too little money; the peasant hungered for land and suspected socialists of wanting some form of collective property ("communism"), instead; the peasant was generally religious; the MSZDP showed little interest in organizing the non-Magyar peasantry; and the church and the National Party preserved an overwhelming influence among the peasantry. Partly as a result of failure to organize the peasants, the section, after 1910, turned its efforts primarily to the factory worker and the artisan.

In spite of the vehemence with which its press continually attacked the prevailing political and economic system in Hungary, the section's program, like the parent party's, was remarkably unrevolutionary. Under the impetus of the parent party, the Rumanian section demanded a democratic political system responsive to the will of the people, freedom of speech and the press, the right to organize, and social justice for the urban worker, including better pay and shorter hours, the improvement of health and safety conditions in factories and mines, and limitations on the labor of women and children. The section also opposed compulsory military service on the grounds that an army was a burden for the workingman alone to bear and served only the interests of the capitalist.

25. MSZMP, PI Archívuma, Microfilm Collection, F 716/1.

Again like their mentors, Rumanian socialists eschewed violence as an instrument of social change; they did not call for the overthrow of the existing political system by force either in 1903 or 1914. The methods of struggle they advocated were peaceful, consisting mainly of the ballot and education. The cornerstone of their platform was universal suffrage, which alone, they claimed, would enable the worker and the poor peasant to express their will and put an end to the "black misery" into which the landlord and capitalist had submerged them.²⁶ Their purpose was not to overthrow the parliamentary system in Hungary, but to gain a place for themselves and the working class, and they were confident that they could transform the constitution and the legislature into instruments of social progress if everyone over twenty received the vote.²⁷ To achieve their goal they ran candidates under the banner of the MSZDP in predominantly Rumanian districts in the parliamentary elections of 1905 and 1910. Although they must have had little hope of success against government candidates or those of the National Party—indeed, they elected no one—they pitched into the campaign of 1910 with great zeal. They regarded it as an opportunity to raise the self-consciousness of Rumanian workers, and it is no coincidence that the organization of new local branches of the section proceeded with unaccustomed vigor during this period.

The section considered a well-informed working class the indispensable foundation for both a strong socialist party and an effective parliamentary system. To provide the great numbers of illiterate workers with at least the essentials of reading and writing, they initiated a broad program of popular education. The section became, in the words of Tiron Albani, a school for adults. They established reading rooms, sponsored evening classes, disseminated socialist literature written in simple language, organized street meetings, and held numerous public lectures on a variety of themes. Iosif Jumanca was especially active as a lecturer and drew considerable praise from one of his Magyar colleagues for his insight into the basic teachings of socialism, his careful study of Marx's economic doctrines, and his effective style of presentation.²⁸ The party newspapers were also pressed into service. Editorials and news items dealt with a whole range of subjects from the evils of alcoholism to the materialist conception of history.

In the course of their struggles, Rumanian socialists had to confront an idea which had struck deep roots in the popular consciousness and had permeated every facet of Rumanian political, cultural, and spiritual life—modern nationalism. As socialists, they denounced it as an "insidious disease" which

26. *Adevărul*, March 15, 1912.

27. *Ibid.*, August 30, 1903; February 1, 1905.

28. MSZMP, PI Archívuma: 659 fond. 1913/2 ö.e. Letter to József Eszterfi, June 17, 1913.

divided the working class into hostile factions, thereby enabling the landlord and capitalist classes to perpetuate their grip upon society. They equated nationalism with all that was worst in contemporary Hungary. Yet, paradoxically, the idea of nationality and the national struggle in Hungary gave their movement its distinctive character and persuaded them that if socialism was to prosper among the Rumanians, it must have an ethnic basis.

Rumanian socialists spoke of their people as an “oppressed class” and frequently complained of a “double yoke”—social and national. As time passed, they became convinced that the Hungarian government had singled out the Rumanians for special discrimination. When, in 1906, the government published statistics on the state of agriculture showing Rumanian-inhabited areas to be among the most depressed, *Adevărul* called the situation “natural,” since no one in authority bothered about the fate of “helots.”²⁹ Rumanian socialists openly ridiculed statements by László Lukács, the prime minister in 1912–13, and his successor, István Tisza, that all the nationalities of Hungary were treated the same, citing numerous examples that proved just the opposite. The electoral reform bill proposed by the government in 1913 struck them as a particularly glaring example of discrimination in that it failed to offer the non-Magyar nationalities a role in political life commensurate with their numbers. They could discern no inclination on the part of the Hungarian ruling parties to abandon policies of half a century because the classes these parties represented feared the nationalities—the Rumanians of Transylvania, in particular—and were determined to stifle their social and economic advancement.³⁰

Yet it was evident to many Rumanian socialists that the dangers threatening their movement did not emanate solely from outside. Jumanca and some of his colleagues were deeply disturbed by their own alienation from the mass of their people. They recalled how they, as young artisans, had left the countryside and the smaller towns to settle in Budapest or other industrial cities, learning a new language and different customs and gradually being assimilated by a foreign culture. To be sure, they acquired a socialist culture in the trade unions, but it was one that corresponded to the conditions and needs of Magyars rather than Rumanians. As a result, the Rumanian socialist leaders found it increasingly difficult to maintain links with the Rumanian worker outside the few great industrial centers, and could foresee the time when all contact would cease and they would be unable to continue to work for enlightenment where it was needed most. They readily acknowledged that socialism was, and should be, international, since its goal was to free the working class of the world regardless of national boundaries. They were now

29. *Adevărul*, June 3, 1906.

30. *Ibid.*, January 24, 1913.

convinced, however, that every people had to adapt its methods of organization and struggle to fit unique circumstances.³¹

Opinion on the question was far from unanimous. Another group within the Rumanian section saw the nationality problem in a quite different light. They were afraid that too much emphasis on national differences within the socialist movement would merely fragment it and, in the end, lead to the isolation of the Rumanian worker. They believed that he could improve his standard of living and develop intellectually only in close union with his Magyar, German, and Slav brothers. They accused their colleagues in "Transylvania proper," who demanded a purely Rumanian organization, of violating the principles of international socialism and poisoning the work of true socialists. As they saw it, their task was to draw the Rumanian worker and peasant out of the narrow cultural environment of his small town or village into the broader society of his fellow workers of other nationalities; only in this way could he develop a true proletarian consciousness that would free him from the constraining influences of his own bourgeoisie and the church. Consequently, they urged every Rumanian worker to join a labor union and participate fully in its activities, even though, as was likely, he might find himself in the minority and unable to understand the language. Yet, they did not propose that he give up his own language and culture. They recommended the formation of "Rumanian cultural groups," whose function it would be to organize lectures and other cultural events in Rumanian and in this way draw even the most reluctant workers into the union.³²

In spite of these differences, all Rumanian socialists were united in demanding equality for the nationalities of Hungary and denouncing those forms of nationalism that promoted the interests of the ruling classes at the expense of workers and peasants. They judged the policies of the Hungarian government severely, taking its handling of the delicate language question as a prime example of persecution. Their comments on successive Magyar language laws also chronicle the evolution of their thinking on the nationality problem in general. Their criticism of government efforts to extend the study and use of Magyar in Rumanian church schools, almost the only national educational institutions the Rumanians possessed, had none of the fervor displayed by the leaders of the Rumanian National Party. They indeed rejected the idea that children should study only Magyar in school, but they urged Rumanians to learn the language of the state as a useful tool. The real question, as they saw it, was not language at all, but more and better schools and compulsory free education for everyone.³³ They took a stronger stand

31. *Ibid.*, March 22 and April 19, 1914.

32. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1913.

33. *Ibid.*, April 17, June 5, and June 12, 1904.

after the passage in June 1907 of the so-called Apponyi Law, which brought the church schools of the nationalities under greater state control and expanded the use of Magyar as the language of instruction. They branded it as Magyarization pure and simple, but they showed no sympathy for the Rumanian Orthodox and Uniate churches, claiming that they were chiefly concerned about a loss of influence as the parish school was weakened. The perniciousness of both “Magyar chauvinism” and “Rumanian clericalism” struck the socialists as self-evident.³⁴

The language question became increasingly important to Rumanian socialists as they moved closer to the creation of an autonomous organization. In January 1914, Ioan Crețu promised Rumanian workers and peasants that the section would fight to obtain educational rights for Rumanians equal to those of Magyars. He advocated “absolute cultural liberty,” by which he meant that Rumanian would be the only language taught in Rumanian village schools and that it would also serve as the language of administration and justice in compact Rumanian areas.³⁵ A few months later Jumanca decried compulsory study of Magyar in the beginning classes of the primary school as “barbarism.” He did not object to the study of Magyar itself, but he insisted that young children could make intellectual progress only in their own languages. He attributed the high rate of illiteracy and “cultural stagnation” among Rumanians to Magyarization policies and demanded that interference with Rumanian schools cease.³⁶

However great their defense of national rights may have been, Rumanian socialists warned their people not to expect a solution to the nationality problem from either Magyar political leaders or Rumanian nationalists. They pointed out that there was no essential difference between the two: both were bourgeois and relied on political chicanery and economic exploitation to maintain their wealth and power. Under these circumstances, then, the Magyar worker fared no better than the Rumanian, and only the triumph of socialism could bring about a just and lasting solution to the nationality problem in Hungary. They were convinced that the liberty of whole peoples depended in the first instance upon the economic freedom of individuals, and they rejected the idea that nationalists could ever provide an economic base for freedom because they were essentially bourgeois. Class struggle, which aligned all workers, regardless of nationality, on one side, and all capitalists on the other, was the only way to achieve it.

Rumanian socialists naturally looked to the MSZDP to lead the class struggle of the united proletariat of Hungary, and in the first few years of

34. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1909.

35. *Ibid.*, January 7, 1914.

36. *Ibid.*, June 21, 1914.

the section's existence a fairly harmonious relationship seems to have prevailed. Their cooperation was in large part attributable to the early interest the party took in the activities of the nationality sections and to its support of the principle of national equality. The party program of 1903 demanded full equality before the law for all the nations of Hungary,³⁷ and during the widespread protest movements of 1903–4 among the non-Magyar peasantry, party leaders undertook a vigorous campaign to recruit non-Magyar members.³⁸ As we have seen, the Rumanian section was founded and *Adevărul* began publication during this period, and various provincial party organizations, notably the Transylvanian Regional and Arad County committees, recommended a more determined effort to win the "nationality workers" away from their respective bourgeois parties.³⁹ At the party congress in 1904, the nationality question was placed on the agenda for the first time. Party leaders acknowledged that non-Magyar workers suffered from a double oppression—national and social—and offered the MSZDP as their only true representative, as the national parties were essentially bourgeois and hence very close to the Magyar ruling classes.⁴⁰

After 1905 the party displayed less sympathy toward the nationality sections. It ceased to give the strong moral and material support that they had come to expect.⁴¹ There were good practical reasons for the change. The party suffered from a chronic shortage of funds, which drew from its leaders frequent warnings that they could not continue to support two movements—one Magyar and the other Slovak, Serb, and Rumanian—thereby sacrificing the whole socialist cause in Hungary.⁴² Furthermore, they discerned little benefit to their cause from the sums spent on non-Magyars, particularly the Rumanians. In dealing with the nationality question, they were guided and, in a sense, encumbered by doctrine. They directed their attention almost exclusively to the class struggle and refused to recognize the existence of a separate nationality problem. There were only two "nationalities" in modern society—the exploiters and the exploited. Theirs was the decisive struggle, while the contest among nationalities was a "minor skirmish" carried on ex-

37. *A magyar munkásmozgalom történetének válogatott dokumentumai* (henceforth, MMTVD), vol. 3 (Budapest, 1955), p. 140.

38. Dezső Farkas, *A Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt és az agrárkérdés 1900 és 1914 között* (Budapest, 1973), pp. 135–41.

39. Kende, *MSZDP nemzetiségi politikája*, p. 30.

40. *MMTVD*, vol. 3, p. 199.

41. For general accounts of the party's nationality policy during this period see: Tibor Erényi, "A Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája (1890–1917)," in *Magyar Történeti Kongresszus* (Budapest, 1954), pp. 308–17; Tibor Erényi, "Az 1918 előtti magyarországi munkásmozgalom és a nemzeti kérdés," in *A magyar nacionalizmus kialakulása és története* (Budapest, 1964), pp. 194–208; Kende, *MSZDP nemzetiségi politikája*, pp. 40–74.

42. *MSZMM az 1905. évben* (Budapest, 1906), pp. 247–49, 343–44.

clusively in the interest of the propertied classes.⁴³ Hungarian socialists generally held to the belief, at least until the First World War, that a lasting solution to the nationality problem was possible only after socialism had replaced capitalism. It is not surprising, therefore, that they believed they had done enough for the nationalities by lending a hand to establish the sections and that, henceforth, the nationalities should fend for themselves.

There was, of course, more than this to the party's attitude. Party leaders were suspicious of national aspirations in principle. They cherished the idea of the Habsburg monarchy as a single economic entity exerting a salutary influence on the development of capitalism and, hence, on the growth of an industrial proletariat. Since nationalism threatened to fragment this highly beneficial structure, the party condemned it as reactionary. This attitude helps to explain why the party at its congress in 1906 refused to allow the nationality sections to engage in organizational activities in places where regular party organizations already existed, or to enjoy genuine financial independence by collecting dues directly from workers of their own nationality.⁴⁴ Behind these prohibitions also was the desire to preserve the unity of the socialist movement in Hungary. Party leaders recognized the party's weaknesses and seriously doubted that it could withstand the constant pressure from the government if the party was transformed into a loose federation of regional committees. The party neglected the national sensitivities of its non-Magyar members in other ways, too. It failed to come forward with a radical solution for the agrarian problem which would have satisfied the yearning of the Rumanian and Slav peasant masses for land and made socialism more attractive to them. Some party leaders, like Zsigmond Kunfi, a member of the Executive Committee, regarded the non-Magyar peasantry as a conservative force precisely because of its attachment to land and hence an enemy of socialism. Others, while advocating equality of rights for all citizens regardless of nationality and denouncing forcible Magyarization, hoped, nonetheless, that the nationality problem could be resolved "naturally" through the enormous assimilative powers of the largely Magyar industrial cities.⁴⁵

The Rumanians protested almost immediately against alleged "mistreatment" by the party. At the congress of the MSZDP in 1907 they complained about the party's unwillingness to increase its support of *Adevărul* and its general neglect of Rumanian affairs;⁴⁶ at the 1908 Rumanian socialist congress

43. Farkas, *MSZDP és az agrárkérdés*, p. 195.

44. *MSZMM az 1906. évben* (Budapest, 1907), pp. 209–10.

45. Ernő Bresztovszky, "Adatok a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," *Szocializmus*, no. 18 (1906–7), pp. 555–58; no. 20 (1906–7), pp. 631–35.

46. *MMTVD*, vol. 3, p. 520.

they blamed the section's organizational difficulties on the party leadership's "passive attitude" toward them because they did not speak Magyar;⁴⁷ and at the general party congress in 1910 they protested against the party's failure to supply them with propaganda materials in their own language and to sponsor Rumanian meetings in those cities where a large Rumanian working class had congregated.⁴⁸

Party leaders responded to these criticisms with mounting irritation. At the 1911 congress Manó Buchinger, the party's general secretary, noted that Magyars paid most of the dues and could not be required to give more in order to support nationality movements; and Jakab Weltner, an editor of the party organ, *Népszava*, claimed that the party had already done too much for the nationalities, who had done nothing for themselves⁴⁹—a view widely held by his colleagues. In the following year, Buchinger reluctantly agreed to continue financial support of *Adevărul*, but made it plain that the "Rumanian comrades" could not rely on others to keep bailing them out of financial difficulties.⁵⁰

Charges and countercharges continued to be exchanged in 1912 and 1913, as the nationality problem now became the focal point of relations between the Rumanian section and the parent party. The Rumanians publicly accused the MSZDP of renegeing on promises of equality for all the peoples of Hungary and of showing preference to Magyars, the very same practice for which the Hungarian government had been repeatedly condemned. Ioan Flueraş, the editor of *Adevărul* since 1911 and the leader of the dominant Budapest committee, suggested the formation of purely Rumanian trade unions as a means of strengthening the Rumanian socialist movement,⁵¹ and at the Rumanian congress in 1912 many delegates urged the section to collect dues directly from Rumanian workers to be used for political education and trade union organization without prior consultation with the MSZDP leadership.⁵² Although the motion carried by a wide margin, the majority stopped short of a formal break with the parent party.

Partly as a result of disenchantment with Hungarian socialists, the Rumanians tried to expand contacts with the Social Democratic Party of Rumania (PSDR). This relationship was marked by an exchange of visits

47. MSZMP, PI Archívuma, Microfilm Collection, F 716/1: Report of a police official, January 9, 1908.

48. *MSZMM az 1910. évben* (Budapest, 1911), p. 280.

49. *MSZMM az 1911. évben* (Budapest, 1912), pp. 161, 173.

50. *A Magyarországi Szociál-demokrata Párt 1912. évi április 7., 8. és 9. napjain Budapesten megtartott XIX. pártgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve* (Budapest [1912]), p. 82.

51. *MSZMM az 1911. évben*, p. 185.

52. *MSZMM az 1912. évben* (Budapest, 1913), p. 437.

and by a flow of socialist literature from Bucharest to Budapest and Transylvania, making up, to some extent, for the paucity of Rumanian-language materials in Hungary. Some idea of the intense interest the leaders of the Rumanian section took in the socialist movement in the Old Kingdom can be discovered in the pages of *Adevărul*. The newspaper carried frequent editorials and news items about strikes and other socialist-led activities, and eagerly pointed to any success achieved by the PSDR as an example to the Rumanian workers of Hungary.

For the most part, socialists in Rumania lent willing, if modest, support to the Rumanian section. They were especially interested in the nationality problem in Hungary because of its possible adverse effects on the socialist movement. In 1910, a lead article in the party's main organ, *România Muncitoare*, accepted the idea that the "oppressed nationalities" suffered from national as well as economic exploitation and even went so far as to advocate "national autonomy" as a prerequisite for economic and social progress. But the article made it clear that the party was not trying to promote irredentism among the Rumanians of Transylvania or to produce a schism between the MSZDP and its Rumanian section. It emphasized, rather, that national autonomy was not the final goal but primarily a means toward political and economic freedom. It declared also that the national liberty of the Rumanians of Transylvania depended upon the success of "all the workers of Hungary united in their class party."⁵³

The Rumanian section's relations with the Rumanian National Party and the Orthodox and Uniate churches in Transylvania were of a quite different nature. On the surface, it would seem that all Rumanians had much to gain by creating a united front, since Rumanian nationalists and clergy were as much objects of the Hungarian government's restrictive measures as were Rumanian socialists. But neither side saw it that way.

The National Party, led by middle-class professional and business people and intellectuals, was the chief political representative of the Rumanians of Hungary and Transylvania, and through affiliated cultural organizations and links with the church and various financial and commercial institutions, had achieved a dominant position in almost every area of Rumanian public life. Yet that position had been won and was maintained at great sacrifice. Since its founding in 1881, party leaders and the editors of the party newspapers had suffered arrest and imprisonment on numerous occasions and had seen possibilities for effective political action systematically curtailed. After a period of internal crisis and inactivity at the end of the century, the party

53. *Documente din istoria mișcării muncitorești din România 1910–1915* (Bucharest, 1968), pp. 146–50; *România Muncitoare*, May 30, 1910.

had reestablished claims to national leadership by winning fifteen seats in the parliamentary elections of 1906.

Rumanian socialists were unimpressed. The National Party was regarded as a competitor for the allegiance of the laboring masses, particularly the artisans of the small cities of Transylvania and the peasantry. Lacking the material resources, organization, and numbers to challenge the National Party directly, the socialists tried to discredit party leaders by exposing their connections with the exploitive classes and by impugning the genuineness of their concern for the common people.

To Rumanian socialists, the Rumanian National Party was essentially no different than any other bourgeois political party. Its leaders and many of its members were “gentlemen” (*domni*) who were committed to the maintenance of the capitalist system and, hence, to the continued subservience of the working class in the existing unjust order of society. Rumanian socialists included the “intelligentsia”—lawyers, doctors, priests, and school teachers—in this sweeping indictment. In the socialists’ view, the intelligentsia may have been well-intentioned, but, in the final analysis, they could not offer the people any more hope of a change in status than bankers and businessmen.⁵⁴ That the leaders of the National Party and the working classes belonged to the same nation was not significant. To the socialists exploitation was exploitation, and they scoffed at the National Party’s claim that no class differentiation could exist within the nation and that all Rumanians stood under the same banner. The socialists argued that, far from wanting to free the Rumanian people from the yoke of the Magyars, the nationalists wished to replace the Magyars as the masters, and merely used appeals to patriotic sentiment to mask their real intentions.⁵⁵

In spite of these virulent attacks, and reciprocation by the National Party, a few half-hearted, and unsuccessful, attempts at rapprochement were made.⁵⁶ It had become clear to both sides that the bases for genuine cooperation did not exist. They could agree on little except universal suffrage. Even the definition of national rights, which both favored in principle, sometimes led to violent disagreement. Leaders of the National Party regarded the socialists as too weak to be effective partners and rejected the socialist program as a threat to the economic and religious foundations of the national movement. The socialists, on the other hand, saw little evidence that the National Party had any serious intention of protecting the workers from

54. *Adevărul*, September 20, 1907; *Glasul Poporului*, November 1, 1910.

55. *Adevărul*, January 17, 1904; December 20, 1907.

56. I. D. Suciu, “Aspecte ale colaborării Partidului Național Român din Transilvania cu mișcarea socialistă,” *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, 21, no. 1 (1968): 95. The author emphasizes cooperation and passes over the fundamental issues that divided the two parties.

exploitation by Magyar, let alone Rumanian, industrialists and businessmen.⁵⁷ They also doubted the nationalists' willingness to organize workers into strong unions or to countenance the use of strikes for economic demands.⁵⁸

The quarrel became especially bitter in 1913 and 1914 during negotiations between the National Party and the Hungarian government to achieve a *modus vivendi*. The National Party had suffered a shocking defeat in the elections of 1910, reducing its representation in parliament from fifteen to five. Moreover, unrelenting pressure from the government had persuaded most party leaders that only an immediate accommodation, guaranteeing the Rumanians a minimum number of seats in parliament, recognizing the autonomy of the Orthodox and Uniate churches and their schools, and allowing the use of Rumanian in local government, would protect their existence as a nation. Negotiations went on from January 1913 to February 1914, when the executive committee of the party, convinced that Prime Minister Tisza would make no substantial concessions, finally decided to break off discussions.

Rumanian socialists reacted to the possibility of a pact between the National Party and Tisza with extraordinary hostility. Condemning the whole proceeding as a deal between two bourgeois groups, neither better than the other, the socialists accused the National Party of blatantly ignoring the interests of the Rumanian people. Using such epithets as "traitor" and "lackey," the socialists denounced the nationalists for suspending the protest movement against government policies and for abandoning the principle of universal suffrage in return for a guaranteed number of seats in parliament (which the nationalists would proceed to fill without bothering to consult the people).⁵⁹ Behind these attacks lay the socialists' desire to present themselves as the true leaders of the Rumanian nation of workers and peasants and as the only consistent and steadfast opponents of the oppressive policies of the Hungarian government. The socialists had now come to regard the nationality struggle as essentially a class struggle, in which the Magyar bourgeoisie was the ruling class and the nationalities the poor and oppressed.⁶⁰

The socialists attacked with equal vehemence the church, which had far deeper roots in the Rumanian past than the National Party. The Orthodox and Uniate churches were regarded as pillars of a society that the socialists were determined to change. Because of the church's role in the national movement and the importance of religion in the life of the peasantry, the conservative social doctrines of the church and the clergy were viewed as serious

57. *Glasul Poporului*, December 4, 1909.

58. *Ibid.*, July 1, 1911.

59. *Adevărul*, January 31, February 7, October 17, and December 12, 1913.

60. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1914.

obstacles. The socialist offensive against the two churches had the peasants as its main objective. The plan was to undermine the pervasive influence of the parish priest in the peasants' political and cultural life and to destroy the aura of sanctity which surrounded the higher clergy. In this way, the socialists expected to open up the patriarchal village to a new world of rational and materialist ideas and, thus, to win vast numbers of converts to the new religion of socialism.

The socialists, at the very beginning of the section's activity, stated their position on the place of religion in the socialist movement. They insisted that they were not against religion itself—belief or unbelief was a personal matter which depended upon the conscience of the individual and had nothing to do with the affairs of a political party. The important thing was to be a worker and to embrace the worker's cause. But even as they tried to reassure a faithful peasantry that the intent was not to destroy religion, the socialists were looking forward to the time when it would "disappear." This, they predicted, would take place when poverty had been eradicated once and for all and when both worker and peasant could enjoy the fruits of their labor on earth and would no longer need to seek a better life only in heaven.

The brunt of the socialists' assault was directed not at Christian doctrine but at "clericalism." Clericalism was defined as "darkness" brought down upon the people by priests, for no other purposes than to prevent society from advancing and to make men their servants.⁶¹ The socialists found "priestly influence" especially pernicious and widespread in elementary and secondary education. The church school, which dominated Rumanian education, was in the socialists' view ill-suited to the modern age because it propagated medieval superstitions and the "barbarous doctrines" of hell and God's wrath, instead of a humanitarian philosophy of life.⁶² This attitude partly explains the socialists' ambivalence toward the Apponyi Law. On the one hand, they objected to the fact that education was in the hands of the church, which was bad for progress. But, on the other, they could not acquiesce in the destruction of confessional schools because that would mean the virtual end of national education.⁶³ The solution was "to relegate the catechism" and related subjects to the church and to preserve the school for "modern" education and culture.

Attacks on the church did little to enhance the appeal of socialism in villages, as leaders of the section soon discovered. Toning down the criticism considerably, they changed tactics. In recognition of the strong religious feelings of most Rumanians, the socialists tried to show how closely the

61. *Ibid.*, November 22, 1903; June 19, 1904.

62. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1907.

63. *Glasul Poporului*, July 4, 1908.

program of social democracy resembled primitive Christianity, discovering in Christ a fellow socialist and distilling from His teachings the primordial “Christian idea” of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” that they themselves were trying to bring to fruition in this world.⁶⁴ It was even appropriate for socialists to celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Christ, because He had come to spread peace and love among men in a world pervaded by darkness and evil.

The outbreak of the First World War brought an abrupt end to the debate of the Rumanian socialists with the National Party and the churches, and, indeed, to all public debate on controversial economic and social issues. *Adevărul* ceased publication on August 9, 1914, and the Rumanian section entered into a period of inactivity that was to last until the summer of 1917. As Hungarian leaders began to realize that victory had become impossible and that something might yet be salvaged by negotiation, a more tolerant atmosphere for socialist activity was created. In July 1917, leaders of the Rumanian section met to define their position on the question of national rights. This action seemed necessary in view of the fact that relations between the section and the parent party had reached an impasse on the eve of the war, and there had been no opportunity since to resolve their differences. Ioan Flueraș, speaking for the section, approved a general party resolution stating that national differences could never divide true socialists, but at the same time he recognized the continued existence of a nationality problem in Hungary and called for a solution based solely upon the principle of equal rights.⁶⁵ What he meant became clear as events unfolded.

By October 1918, Rumanian socialists could no longer postpone painful decisions on the grave matters that had long troubled them. They, of course, were anxious to preserve socialist integrity, but they were determined not to shirk responsibility toward their own people. The dramatic events in Hungary in October and November 1918 and the possibility of Hungary being divided into a number of separate national entities placed them in a quandary. Ideologically, they felt closer to the MSZDP than to any other party, but national feeling, which had grown stronger in the years preceding the outbreak of war, had imbued the socialists with a sense of mission to emancipate the Rumanian worker and peasant from all forms of oppression. Consequently, in spite of serious misgivings, the socialists drew nearer to the Rumanian National Party.

As the monarchy approached its end, Rumanian socialists became convinced that the old regime was beyond salvation and that its traditional

64. MSZMP, PI Archívuma, Pamphlet Collection, I/1/1911/5251.

65. *MMTVD*, vol. 4/B (Budapest, 1969), p. 340.

ruling classes were incapable of building a new world upon its ruins. Determined to undertake this task themselves, the socialists had to decide where a strong Rumanian working class might best develop, and where they might contribute most effectively to the creation of a democratic society. They could remain in Hungary, or support an independent state comprising Transylvania and the Banat, or unite with the Kingdom of Rumania. And, although the new state could follow the example of either the 1917 Russian Revolution (and the spectacular successes of the Bolsheviks in Russia had some influence on the Rumanian socialists) or of the evolutionary socialism of Western Europe and Rumania, leaders of the section never seriously considered any other tactic than the parliamentary, trade-union struggle they had always followed in the past.⁶⁶

The territorial question caused Rumanian socialists considerably more anxiety. Although for a time they seemed to waver over the possibility of outright separation from Hungary, they were, nonetheless, firmly committed to the principle of self-determination. Making their first important public declaration on the matter on October 9, 1917, at a joint meeting with German and Serb socialist committees, the Rumanians demanded the right of absolute self-determination. They rejected all attempts at compromise at the extraordinary October congress of the MSZDP. The Hungarian party leaders tried to persuade the Rumanians to approve a declaration of the party's determination to eradicate every vestige of national oppression and permit broad cultural autonomy, including the legal equality of all languages in state institutions, but the Rumanians refused because the document hardly went beyond the local autonomy and language rights provided for in the so-called Law of Nationalities enacted by the Hungarian parliament in 1868. Ioan Flueraş, chief spokesman for the Rumanians, also had grave reservations about the party's stated intention to cooperate with Magyar bourgeois parties. He warned that if the congress approved the idea, the Rumanian section would no longer "be attracted" to the party and the Rumanian people would, henceforth, "trust only in themselves."⁶⁷

By this time the Rumanian section was working closely with the Rumanian National Party to create a single national bloc. The first official contact between them appears to have taken place at the end of September, but the decisive moment came at a joint conference in Budapest on October 29 when they decided to create a Rumanian National Council to take over administra-

66. I have dealt with these questions in: "The Rumanian Socialists and the Hungarian Soviet Republic," in *Revolution in Perspective. Essays on the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919*, ed. Andrew C. Janos and William B. Slottman (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), pp. 109–44.

67. János Kende, "Az MSZDP nemzetiségi szekcióinak állásfoglalása a párt 1918. október 13-i rendkívüli kongresszusán," *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, 9, no. 1 (1963): 157.

tion of those parts of Hungary and Transylvania inhabited by Rumanians and to represent them in negotiations with the Hungarian government and the Magyar National Council. On October 31, in the midst of the revolution that brought the Magyar National Council to power and installed Mihály Károlyi as prime minister, the Rumanian National Council, composed of six socialists and six nationalists, formally came into being. Within a week it had left Budapest for Arad to be nearer the compact masses of Rumanians in Transylvania and to coordinate more effectively the activities of the growing number of local councils.

Rumanian socialists now conceived of self-determination in terms of a union or federation of all Rumanians. Rumanian workers and socialists everywhere were part of one Rumanian nation whose future depended upon the will of the whole. Consequently, the socialists recognized that their party might have to work with parties and individuals of widely divergent social and political views, but they persisted in the belief that they themselves did not need to abandon their own principles. According to this line of reasoning, cooperation with the Rumanian bourgeoisie was not only permissible, it was essential.

As the month of November wore on, relations between the Rumanian socialists, on the one hand, and the Károlyi government and the leaders of the MSZDP, on the other, became increasingly strained. Flueraş and his colleagues professed great respect for Károlyi, but doubted that he could exert much influence on the policies of his own government because he lacked a strong political party of his own. Moreover, the socialists had no illusions about the intentions of Magyar bourgeois parties to defend the territorial integrity of Hungary at all costs.⁶⁸ They were especially chagrined by the MSZDP's decision to join the Károlyi government and to cooperate with Hungary's traditional political parties. They saw little difference between the MSZDP's plan to preserve Hungary's historical boundaries and that of the government. Their suspicions were confirmed by the behavior of the party's representatives at the negotiations held in Arad in mid-November between a Hungarian government delegation headed by Oszkár Jászi, minister without portfolio in charge of nationality problems, and the Rumanian National Council. No agreement was possible. The Rumanians rejected Jászi's compromise plan for the establishment of autonomous Magyar and Rumanian enclaves in those areas where it was impossible to determine ethnic boundaries. Throughout the discussions, delegates of the MSZDP energetically defended Hungary's territorial integrity at the expense of national self-determination and even threatened drastic action against the Rumanian socialists unless they accepted the enclave plan.⁶⁹ This encounter seems to have dis-

68. *Adevărul*, October 20, 1918.

69. Tiron Albani, *Douăzeci de ani dela unire* (Oradea, 1938), pp. 193, 196.

couraged any further cooperation between the MSZDP and the majority of Rumanian socialists.

Rumanian socialist leaders had by this time decided that union with Rumania was their only reasonable course of action, but they faced this prospect with misgivings. The social and political system in Rumania repelled them. Although they desired to see the Rumanian people united, they could not ignore the miserable condition of the working class in Rumania and its neglect by middle-class politicians and landlords.⁷⁰ They had also to consider a question of international socialist ethics: Could they desert a democratic republic, in which the broadest liberty prevailed, for a kingdom with a long record of class oppression for reasons of nationality only? Such considerations led the Rumanians to insist that Transylvania and other areas of Hungary inhabited by Rumanians remain autonomous until sufficient guarantees of constitutional and economic reform in Rumania would assure the workers and peasants a decent standard of living and a dominant voice in managing their own affairs.⁷¹ The Rumanians were, however, resolved to support eventual union with Rumania, if that was the will of the Rumanian people.

At the Rumanian Grand National Assembly held at Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, the sixty official delegates of the Rumanian section added their votes to the overwhelming approval of union with Rumania. The next day they accepted membership in the *Consiliu Dirigent*, a Rumanian provisional government formed to administer Transylvania until its final status had been determined. At the same time they changed the name of the section to Social Democratic Party of Transylvania and moved its headquarters from Budapest to Sibiu. These acts brought the history of the Rumanian section of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary to an end.

In practical terms the Rumanian socialist section had accomplished little. Nonetheless, the contribution of its leaders to the development of socialism among the Rumanians of Transylvania and Hungary was of the utmost significance, and it came, strangely enough, in their embrace of the national idea. The decision to support the union of Transylvania with Rumania proved decisive, for it made socialism respectable among a people who were at last about to achieve their national ambitions. By this act they had refused to isolate socialism from their people's deepest aspirations. Consequently, between the wars they were able to influence the working-class movement in Greater Rumania in ways denied the Communist Party, which remained committed to a rigid internationalism.

70. *Adevărul*, November 17 and 24, 1918.

71. *Ibid.*, November 17 and 24 and December 1, 1918; Albani, *Donăzeci de ani*, pp. 165, 172–73.