

THE CRISES IN POST-WAR EDUCATION IN CLUJ

Nicoleta Chicinaș*

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Abstract

This article aims to analyse the education system in the city of Cluj during the post-war period, after World War 2, with a close focus on the period of time between 1944 and 1948. It's a period characterized by a series of successive crises resulting from political decisions. These decisions affected all levels of education, all ethnic and religious groups in the region, as well as the political opponents to the newly established communist regime of the Romanian Communist Party, primarily represented by these three political parties: the National Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party, and the Socialist Party.

Throughout the research into education within this time period, a combination of methods were used, including historical, comparative and statistical methods, and the sources used refer to both official and unofficial archived documents, contemporary press, and edited documents.

Keywords: *crises, communism, education, Cluj, democratization, reform*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. THE TIME PERIOD BETWEEN: AUGUST 30, 1940 - OCTOBER 11, 1944

Following the Vienna Dictate, the way schools were organized in Transylvania during the 1940-1944 period caused great dissatisfaction for Transylvanian Romanians. The Hungarian government ordinance from November 6, 1940, determined that existing state run primary schools in exclusively Romanian communities would be changed into schools for the Romanian minority. However, the Hungarian school administration only limited itself to establish and add a few Romanian educational institutes

* PhD in History, Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, nicoleta.
Email: chicinas@ubbcluj.ro

alongside the schools that were transformed into Hungarian state primary schools. This led to a situation where, despite the Romanian population outnumbering the Hungarian one by a staggering 200,000, the Romanian community didn't even have half the number of schools the Hungarians had, with many of these few Romanian schools having a very Hungarian-specific character. Out of approximately 4,700 Romanian nationality teachers teaching in Northern Transylvania in 1940, a vast majority of nearly 3,900 of them left in August alone after the Hungarian troops entered, after having to face expulsions and/or persecution. Among the few that remained in the country, many were fired for political reasons or transferred to old Hungary.¹

During 1939/1940 academic year, there were 14 high schools in Cluj, 7 taught in Romanian and 7 in Hungarian. Following the Dictate, the Horthy authorities suspended all 7 Romanian schools, only allowing and authorizing one section taught in Romanian at the former "Gheorghe Barițiu" high school to keep running. However, quickly afterwards even this section was dismantled, and from the 1941/1942 academic year, Romanian students no longer had the opportunity to attend secondary education courses in their native language. Students were only able to attend secondary education in their own Romanian tongue after the liberation of Northern Transylvania.²

For Romanians, the situation in secondary and vocational education was worse than what was happening in primary school education. Out of the 17 existing higher education schools in 1940, in addition to the various other vocational schools, the Hungarian government maintained only one state school, which was the Romanian high school in Năsăud. For the others, permission was given to establish Romanian sections and departments alongside within a select few secondary schools, the normal superior school, and a Hungarian higher commercial school. Even though the teaching jobs in these Romanian schools, sections and departments were reserved for Romanian native teachers they were held almost exclusively by Hungarians.³

In 1940, the "Franz Joseph" University returned from Szeged to Cluj and resumed its activities there, whilst the Romanian "King Ferdinand I" University took refuge in Sibiu, where it remained for the next 5 years, until 1945.⁴

¹ *Istoria României. Transilvania, Vol. II (1687-1947)*, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. "George Barițiu", 1999, pp. 1488-1489.

² Ștefan Pascu (red.), *Istoria Clujului*, Consiliul Popular al Municipiului Cluj, 1974, p. 421.

³ *Istoria României...*, loc. cit., p. 1489.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

In the autumn of 1944, the confessional education system represented the basis and foundation of the Hungarian education system that was in place in Transylvania. This system worked as a network which included 1041 educational units of the four big confessions (Catholic, Reformed, Unitarian, and Evangelical), and ranged from rural schools to secondary schools that were financed by church funds.⁵

THE TIME PERIOD BETWEEN: OCTOBER 12, 1944-1948

Following the annulment of the Vienna Dictate, primary, secondary, as well as university-level education underwent a series of changes in Cluj. The educational system faced many challenges, primarily the the lack of space with many of the previously existing schools having been destroyed during the war, as well as a lack of Romanian teaching staff available. In Cluj County, schools opened back up in December 1944 after the war ended. Hungarian ethnic students continued their classes in the old school buildings, whilst new schools were planned to open up for Romanian students.

Shortly after the liberation of Cluj, the Hungarian university moved to Szombathely. At the same time, Hungarians who remained in Cluj negotiated for the resumption of the Hungarian universities activities to continue. Various Hungarian university professors wrote articles in the Hungarian newspaper "Világosság," seeking to justify the necessity of resuming and continuing education in the Hungarian language by evoking the historical past of the Hungarian education as a whole. With the support and aid of the Soviet military command in Cluj, their efforts were not in vain. The "Ferenc József" University (now named the Hungarian University of Cluj) managed to continue to function, with the vast majority of its staff and its leadership keeping their positions. However, it was not exempt from attacks; starting in November, right-wing Romanian nationalists questioned the university's right to exist. These right-wing nationalists were also helped by the far-left political extreme, as they shared the same opinion. Prominent political figures in the far-left, Vasile Luca and Ana Pauker, deemed it should sufficient just to establish a Hungarian language department rather than have a whole university.⁶

⁵ Endre Barabás, „A magyar iskolaügy helyzete Romániában 1918–1940”, in *Kisebbségi Körlevél*, 1943, pp. 271-286, pp. 351-363.

⁶ Mihály Zoltán Nagy, Gábor Vincze (eds), *Autonomists and centralists. Enigmas of historical decisions. Northern Transylvania from September 1944 to March 1945*, Cluj-Napoca: Fundația CRDE, 2008, p. 78.

On a local level, both Romanian and Hungarian Communists accused the Hungarian university of not having enough professors "with democratic thinking" and through an address drafted by Prefect Vasile Pogăceanu, it demanded the Hungarian university rectorate to appoint "sincere and democratic" professors for various faculties and departments. This was then followed by another address in January 1945, where the prefect demanded the resignation of 29 professors on the basis of them having "an anti-democratic, chauvinistic, and fascist attitude." A day later, the prefect went on to suspend the autonomy of the Hungarian university, as well as the University Council. However, this directive wasn't enforced and simply remained only on paper.⁷

On November 9, 1944, the first assembly of Romanian students in Cluj took place at the Academic College premises, where they decided to collaborate with Hungarian students. This helped bring about improvements to the students lives, students were now provided with a canteen, a male student dormitory on Avram Iancu Street, and a female dormitory on Calea Moșilor, and a dormitory leadership was created made up of six boys and six girls.⁸

Secondary, higher, and university education reorganized at a faster pace than primary school education after the liberation of Cluj, mainly as a result of the quick enrolment of children from affluent social backgrounds. The more "democratic" outlook and changes desired to be brought about were made by integrating the old teaching staff into "democratic" organizations and the Communist Party's in efforts to provide a much more "democratic political education", alongside the removal of teaching staff that expressed opposition and resistance to this movement.⁹

A unique situation within university education arose in the case of the Faculty of Medicine in Cluj, which in the summer of 1940, after the Vienna Dictate, moved to Sibiu, along with all the faculty's teaching staff. After the liberation of Cluj, the Faculty of Medicine wished to return back to the city of Cluj. To try and accomplish this task, at the end of October 1944, a delegation of doctors from the Faculty of Medicine was formed, led by Prof. Dr. Iuliu Hațieganu, who was the former rector of the University of Cluj before the Dictate. However, Hațieganu was unable to achieve this task as he was very shortly afterwards arrested in November 1944. Although he was later released,

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Tribuna*, 11.11.1944, p. 2.

⁹ *National Archives Cluj County Service, Fund Regional Committee RCP Cluj*, Inv. 2, Dos. 1/1947, f. 90.

Hațieganu remained under constant military surveillance. He was reintegrated and once again appointed into teaching, where he continued his teaching career until 1948 when Professor Aurel Moga accepted to collaborate with the Communist Party to eliminate Hațieganu from higher education.¹⁰

The Faculty of Medicine in Cluj managed to achieved its mission of returning back only after March 6, 1945, when the administrative and technical service of the university returned to the capital of Transylvania, bringing along with it the Faculty of Medicine, its teaching staff, and its students.¹¹

During the Soviet administration, the situation of all levels of education in Cluj County was precarious due to the lack of teaching staff and spaces available for conducting classes. If these difficulties weren't hard enough to deal with, the situation was also made worse by conflicts that arose on political and ethnic grounds among the student body.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHERS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE CITY OF CLUJ

Starting from January 1945, through a prefecture ordinance, it was established that until the legal communal elections were to be conducted, 56 members of the Municipal Council of Cluj Municipality would be appointed by their respective local parties, among the city's citizens. Among these 56 members, the University rector automatically was given a position in the Municipal Council. Additionally, prominent figures from the city, including the likes of Dr. Emil Petrovici (rector of the "King Ferdinand I" University) and Dr. Lajos Csógor (rector of the "Bolyai" University), were invited and participated in the most important sessions of the council.¹²

There were a significant number of teachers that played a crucial political role in the city's life, and whilst also being teachers, some of them also held high administrative positions: Dr. Lajos Csógor who was the assistant at the "Ferenc József" University (renamed as the Hungarian University of Cluj) and from

¹⁰ Marcela Sălăgean, *Soviet Administration in Northern Transylvania (November 1944 - March 1945)*, Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane/Fundația Culturală Română, 2002, pp. 23-24.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Dan Brudașcu (coord.), *80 Years Since the Establishment of the Romanian Administration in Cluj-Napoca, Vol. II*, Cluj-Napoca: Consiliul local al municipiului Cluj-Napoca, Primăria municipiului Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 19.

1945, the rector of the "Bolyai" University was also the vice prefect. Tudor Bugnariu was a university professor and also simultaneously held the Mayor role, as well as Dr. Ioan Demeter who was also a university professor in addition to being the Deputy Mayor.

"DEMOCRATIZATION" OF EDUCATION

The so-called elimination of "fascism" from the Romanian education system, which in reality was all a facade and turned out to be its communist transformation, started under the leadership of the new Minister of Education, Comrade Pavlov. He aimed to purge education at all levels, attempting to remove all elements that were an inconvenience to the regime, including teachers, educators, students, and pupils as well as old textbooks containing passages explicitly hostile to Russia. Romanian schools began to serve as a means of Russification of the Romanian students. The entire historical Romanian, Latin, European, and Christian cultural tradition was abandoned, and replaced with the imperative of Russian, Bolshevik, and Pan-Slavic "internationalism". Russian language became a mandatory subject for pupils starting from the fourth grade in primary schools and carried on throughout all other schooling levels, with a significant number of hours allocated to its teaching. Even the Ministry of Public Education's advertising sector, "Gazeta învățământului," turned into a purely Russian newspaper where only the language remained Romanian.¹³ Even at festivities and events, they started not only with the singing of the Romanian national anthem but also with the Soviet one.

PURGING EDUCATORS DURING THE HORTHY REGIME (OCTOBER 11, 1944 - MARCH 6, 1945)

After the liberation, in primary education, most teachers who worked during the Dictate period went into politics, many joining the Socialist Party, and many maintained a "hostile" attitude towards democracy. Nevertheless, to align with the new trend, they took some facade actions. One such action was the gathering of teachers in Cluj on November 19, 1944, where a motion was passed, emphasizing the duty of the teaching staff to fight against fascism and chauvinism throughout Northern Transylvania. The task of purging the

¹³ Onisifor Ghibu, "Memories to Groza, March 1946", in *Call to the judgment of history*, Vol. I, București: Ed. Albatros, 1992, p. 106.

teaching staff of all fascist and chauvinistic elements was considered crucial. Some of the other points included the fight to offer education to students' in their native mother tongue and the establishment of schools in each region, that were tailored to its geographical, economic, and social characteristics. The assembly also advocated for the collaboration between the union, regional inspector, and high school directors in Cluj, and also promoting the mandatory teaching of the Hungarian language and literature in Romanian high schools.¹⁴

A purification commission was then established on November 22, 1944, tasked with this purging of the primary and secondary teaching staff in Northern Transylvania. Working in collaboration with political organizations, professional organizations and authorities, the commission required all teachers to complete a questionnaire regarding their activities during the previous regime.¹⁵ The commission aimed to dive in and analyse the teachers' past and highlight their political alignment and attitudes in order to remove and purge all members who supported fascist principles from their teaching positions.

After three days of work, the commission made several decisions:

1. Vigorously examine the past of all teaching staff members, focusing on fascist or democratic attitudes.

2. Proposed removing all directors who served the former regime after March 19-20, 1944, from school leadership positions, allowing them to continue only as teachers unless there were specific objections.

3. Excluded 7 teachers from directorial or union roles, considering them fascists.¹⁶

4. Admitted 6 teachers to the union, proposed the removal of 4 staff members from the Inspectorate and suggesting their transition to teaching roles.

5. Provisionally admitted around 80 teachers to the union, with the right to appeal, by November 26.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Tribuna Ardealului*, Year V, No. 1174, 28.11.1944, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Tribuna Ardealului*, Year V, No. 1171, 24.11.1944, p. 4.

¹⁶ Dr. Kántor Lajos, Szopos Sándor, Szabó Dezső, Kányády Béla (*Tribuna Ardealului*, Year V, No. 1175, 29.11.1944, p. 4).

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

Most teachers judged by the commission continued their educational activities. Out of the 11 cases judged in the first week of December 1944, the outcome resulted in one teacher retiring, one was restricted to teaching only in the province, and the others received permission to continue their teaching activities. By December 5, approximately 500 teachers and professors were reviewed.¹⁸

On December 14, 1944, the decisions taken by the Purification Commission for teachers in Northern Transylvania were made public. These also included the admission of 45 teachers, mostly restricted to provincial positions, rejecting 5, and retiring 2, along with 11 whose status remained uncertain and yet to be decided. The commission's decisions were considered provisional and subject to appeal.¹⁹

A year later, during the general assembly of the Secondary School Teachers' Union in Cluj, in December 19, 1945, the teachers reviewed the post-liberation education period. They observed that Hungarians had been reorganized and integrated into democratic societies, and had formed the Teachers' Union that included both primary and secondary teachers which was led by Hungarians. Only three teachers who remained in Cluj under the Horthy regime were part of this union and consequently, it was claimed that the union was used to exclusively serve Hungarian interests.

In the spring of 1945, an ad-hoc provisional committee was formed to oversee the union until new elections were held in the fall. The use of the union²⁰ for political purposes that favoured the occupiers and Hungarians prompted Romanians to demand the separation of Romanians and Hungarians, starting with higher level education teachers and then extending to primary school teachers.²¹

Communists opposed this split, while non-communists advocated for it. The whole situation degenerated into chaos, leading to a disciplinary committee requesting the removal of non-communist teachers from education entirely.²²

During February 12-14, 1945, at the conference of the Cluj Regional Communist Party, the issue of the Cluj University was discussed. Two

¹⁸ *Tribuna Ardealului*, Year V, No. 1179, 05.12.1944, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, No. 1186, 14.12.1944, p. 2.

²⁰ *Scânteia*, Seria III, Year XVI, No. 552, 20.06.1946, p. 3.

²¹ NACCS, *Fund Cluj Police Inspectorate*, Dos. 635/1946, f. 8.

²² *Ibidem*, f. 8.

arguments emerged: one supporting the creation of a common Romanian-Hungarian nucleus to try and maintain unity and later separating into two autonomous universities (Teofil Vescan jr.), and the other advocating for the immediate establishment of two autonomous universities (Jordáky Lajos). The decision that was ultimately taken was to create the Cluj University Bloc, consisting of separate Romanian and Hungarian universities and a bilingual technical university.²³

Two royal decrees were then passed on May 29, 1945, which confirmed the operations of two distinct universities in Cluj, one Romanian and one Hungarian.²⁴ This marked the return of educational institutions to their pre-Dictate locations. The University "King Ferdinand I," which moved to Sibiu, and all primary and secondary schools with Romanian as their teaching language were allowed to return. Additionally, a State University with Hungarian as the teaching language was established in Cluj.²⁵ Following this, in June, 30 Hungarian professors were approved for employment at the Hungarian University.

During the Regional RCP Conference in Cluj on May 3-4, the Deputy Prefect Dr. Ludovic Csógör stated that in the issue of the university, the Hungarian community was not affected as some people previously stated, he went on to say because "*All those who were here on April 16 (1945) in the service of the University will be taken over by the Romanian state and will be assigned to their service*".²⁶ Despite this, in the first phase of the purging process, the teachers and professors who operated during the Horthy regime were targeted, most of whom were of Hungarian ethnicity, in this new second stage of this "purification" process, all those who opposed and resisted the communist regime were targeted, and in particular now Romanian teachers and professors.

²³ Nagy, Vincze, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²⁴ *Collection of laws and regulations*, Volume XXIII, January XIII-December 1945, București: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Centrală, 1946, May 1945, pp. 981-982.

²⁵ Later, these Universities will become known under the names "Babeș" University and "Bolyai" University, unified in 1958, thus forming "Babeș-Bolyai" University.

²⁶ "Minutes of May 3-4, 1945, on the occasion of the Regional conference in Cluj of the PCdR", *NACCS, Fund Cluj RWP Regional Committee*, Inv. 1, Dos. 1/1945, f. 65.

THE CLUJ EDUCATION SYSTEM BETWEEN MARCH 9, 1945, AND 1948

The Romanian Communist Party declared a strong interest in youth of society and the positions and attitudes they held. They went on to wage a fierce battle to either attract them to their side or eliminate those who resisted them. The youth, it was said, made up and represented the most dynamic force in the country, but so far they had simply just been used as pawns by legionnaires and reactionaries, fighting alongside fascists against the Soviet Union.

To change this state of affairs, the government attempted various tactics, trying either to entice them or to "open their eyes",²⁷ and if these methods failed, they resorted to punishments, especially for the most vocal opponents. Such actions commenced in schools, as they saw it as the perfect environment to mould them. To ensure that the youth received a "healthy" education, it was deemed necessary to create an environment purified of all "polluting" outside elements that could influence the students.

The Progressive Youth, a communist organization, frequently lamented that it couldn't enter and have an as active role as it wanted to in schools due to the resistance from "reactionary" teachers that stood against them. Thus, they initially moved towards purging educators, teachers, and professors who opposed them under the notion that they were against "democratization". Primary school teachers were asked to take a screening, and it was decided that teachers would return to their positions if they managed to pass successfully through it.²⁸ Educators that failed to pass were depicted as "slaves to fascist analytical programs", distorting the souls of the youth with hostile principles, promoting hatred and lies. That these teachers had stealthily infiltrated the blood of the youth, many of whom acted without realizing they were "blind and unknowing tools in the service of the fascist cause". The Communists' were also annoyed and their unease also stemmed from the fact that in their eyes, the youth refused to investigate the "truth" and persisted in a misguided idea; if they lacked the strength to break away from this, they were destined to be "pawns in the funeral procession of the Romanian nation." Left-wing media was filled with calls such as: "*Youth, it is time to wake up and join the fight for the perfection of true democracy*".²⁹ However, the efforts of the Communist Party remained largely futile, with numerous demonstrations held by teachers,

²⁷ Romulus Hatos, "Who confuses the youth?", in *Plugarii*, No. 15, p. 1, 31.01.1945.

²⁸ *Adevărul Ardealului*, No. 5, 5.04.1945, p. 7.

²⁹ *Plugarii*, No. 8, 14.01.1945, p. 1.

students, and pupils supporting opposition parties and the king himself testifying to their failure.

After March 6, 1945, education was expected to serve as a function of indoctrination, preparing children and the youth as a whole to become the "new man" of the future and eliminating the students' critical spirit and spontaneity. Alongside a demagogic campaign to eradicate illiteracy, a sinister discrimination based on class criteria was at work, and those admitted to schools were subjected to a perfidious system of "ideological training." Starting in the fall of 1944, when Stefan Voitec, leader of the PSD (Social Democratic Party), became the head of this department the Ministry of National Education the Communist Party paid particular attention to this department. Some Communists went on to blame Stefan Voitec for having an "anti-democratic spirit" and allegedly infusing this spirit into the Ministry of Education, accusing him of showing too much tolerance towards the "reactionaries" within the education system. The Communist Party advocated for a swift purging and "re-education" of students and teaching staff entirely, without any form of tolerance towards opposing ideas. The Party's radical attitude was not liked and this was evident during the demonstration on November 8, 1945, which was primarily organized by the National Liberal Youth and the National Peasant Youth, where a large number of students attended.³⁰ The reaction of the communist authorities was harsh, resulting in several dozen arrests, especially among the youth. Lists were drawn up of the students that had participated in the demonstration, and they were monitored for months. In total, 557 people were arrested, with cases classified for 188 of them.³¹

Similar actions took place in other cities across the country, not just in Cluj. The demonstration on November 8, 1945, commemorating the King's name day, was used by the Communist Party as a pretext to remove reactionary teachers from education.³² The students, who participated in the demonstrations at the Central School, mostly children of the upper class and

³⁰ Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, *Final Report*, Bucharest: 2006, pp. 472-488, [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/article/RAPORT%20FINAL_%20CADCR.pdf], 10 August 2023.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 472, *apud* Petre Țurlea, 8 noiembrie 1945, București: INST, 2000.

³² Fanu Duțulescu, *"The Democratization of the School"*, Craiova: Institutul de Arte Grafice RAMURI, 1945, p. 3.

wealthy people, were to be sent to peripheral schools, and replaced with children of the working class to take their place.

Professor Mihail Dragomirescu whilst being a faculty professor was at the time a leader of the Patriots Union. He declared in a meeting on November 27, 1945: "*The most brutal reaction, the remnants of the Legionnaires linked to the National Peasants and Liberals, concentrate in schools, through directors, teachers, and senior students, as well as in the student body. [...] The question arises whether it is good to bring this youth to the popular demonstrations of the National Democratic Front (FND).*" Vasile Luca's response was: "*If they go on to do something, we beat them, and they will lose their desire to do anything. We can integrate them among workers*".³³ Later, the violence escalated and resulted in massive arrests among students.

Alongside the demonstrations supporting the political opposition, there were protests that actively fought against the policies of the Communist Party and the ones they wanted to implement. One such protest occurred at the Theoretical High School in Buzău, where the sixth-grade girls opposed the placement of Stalin's portrait in their classroom, which disappeared after a few days after it was placed. Because no measures were taken against the perpetrators, the headmistress Florica Martinaș was arrested by the Security Service, after it was concluded that she must be held responsible for the overall atmosphere and activity in the school she led, and had to assume the guilty of violating one of the important roles she had: demonstrating to be a convinced democrat by taking measures to perfect the school's democratization process. Under this role she held, she wasn't allowed to tolerate such actions in her school, and so she was blamed for what had happened.³⁴

Realizing that such issues wouldn't resolve themselves, a decision by the Ministry of National Education in April 1946 prohibited students from all state, denominational, and private schools to participate in any from political party activity, both in school and outside it. All associations and committees formed by students, except for class committees and cultural societies, were disbanded, through which the Party continued to manipulate and use students for propaganda purposes. Thus, in May 1945, during the RCP Regional Conference in Cluj, Emil Huluba declared in favour of using students for political purposes

³³ *Final Report, loc. cit.*

³⁴ Duțulescu, *op. cit.*, p. 3; Gheorghe Onișoru, *Romania Between 1944-1948, Economic Transformations and Social Realities*, București: Editura Fundației Academia Civică, 1998, p. 167.

as he stated that "*There are enough students. These students should form teams for villages, with songs, Hungarian and Romanian dances, and each team should have a Party leader. This way, we could enter in more beautifully and deeply into the souls of the villages and the people*".³⁵

However, the dissatisfaction of the students couldn't be compared to the "reactionary" agitations and response of the students. A pole of resistance against the communist regime being established in Romania was formed by students from all university centres. They organized into anti-communist groups, as Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu³⁶ reports, acting under the "ideal inoculated by the Iron Guard" and fighting in the name of faith, love for the country and justice. The bolshevization of the country in their eyes represented the greatest danger Romania had ever faced and had to be opposed. Their actions resulted in mass arrests, heavy legal action and sentences of years in prison, pain, tears, and humiliations.

One of the figures that caused trouble for the secret police was a university professor at the University of Cluj, Raul Volcinski. Professor Volcinski dedicated much of his time to the anti-communist struggle and fight. Upon learning about the group of fighters in the Făgăraș Mountains, he tried through various means to contact them in order to aid and support their actions. This led to the birth of his relationship with the Făgăraș students in Cluj.³⁷

STUDENT STRIKES IN 1946

The failure of the Party to attract and inoculate the student youth was further highlighted at the Regional Assembly of the Romanian Communist Party in Cluj on May 1945 when Ioan Várady strongly criticized the weak

³⁵ "Minutes...", f. 60.

³⁶ Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu was the leader of the Anti-Communist Armed Resistance in the Făgăraș Mountains between 1948-1957, and in 1946 he took part in the student revolt in the "Avram Iancu" dormitory in Cluj-Napoca. The communist authorities sentenced him to 15 years in prison in 1948, and to death in 1951. After the decimation of his group, Ogoranu stayed hidden for 21 years without being caught by the Securitate (S. Puris, "Communist regimes condemned in Cluj" [http://epochtimes-romania.com/article.php?article_idî8869], 11 November 2019).

³⁷ Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, Lucia Baki, *Fir trees break, but they do not bend*, Vol. III, Timișoara: Mesagerul de Făgăraș, 2011, pp. 171, 174.

activity of the The Union of Communist Youth (Romanian: Uniunea Tineretului Comunist; UTC), which failed to become a large successful movement and organization, because as Várady stated, it did not take into account the spirit of the local youth. In Cluj, most young people were students and pupils, not workers. Furthermore, most of the young people who joined the ranks of the UTC were Hungarians which was an additional reason why the Romanian youth rejected to join and align themselves with it.³⁸

Further problems arose as inter-ethnic conflicts worsened in 1946. During the academic life in the spring of this year, in Cluj, communism was not the main concern. There was still hope and belief that the Western powers would restore classical democracy. But rather 'the Hungarian issue', was the foremost cause of concern as it became an old but renewed problem now the Hungarian rule had been expelled from Northern Transylvania. Bartolomeu Anania wrote in his memoirs that "*if Romanians returned home now and fully lived and enjoyed in the sentiment of victory, Hungarians did not hesitate to show their animosity towards this victory and to popularize among their people the idea that the Romanian victory is fleeting, and that Transylvania will be returned to Hungary diplomatically*".³⁹ So, this was a major problem that communist authorities now faced, as now it was even more prevalent than in previous years. This conflict between Romanian and Hungarian students, Romanian adherents of historical parties on one side, and Hungarian students and workers, supporters of the CP, on the opposing side became the main concern.

To try and unite them and bring them together within the Communist Party, the communists tried using various methods. Some proposed that the best measure to calm spirits in student circles would be to provide them with material and moral help. Students on the whole were mostly poor, without housing, without food, and without books for their studies, the University also did not have heating, and pupils had to attend classes in coats. It would be good, suggested Comrade Belindeanu, for Dermata (a shoe factory in Cluj) to provide boots for students, thus aiming to improve the relationship between students and worker communities. The boots were to be distributed through the Progressive Youth organisation, as well as all other facilitations.⁴⁰ For the

³⁸ "Minutes...", f. 52.

³⁹ See Valeriu Anania, *Memorii*, Iaşi: Ed. Polirom, 2008.

⁴⁰ RCP Cluj County Committee, Inv. 2, Dos. 16/1946, f. 1.

most "sincerely democratic" students, the Cluj PRC instituted offered 7 scholarships of 50,000 lei each on February 1946.⁴¹

For the same purpose, Teohari Georgescu brought a sum of 25 million lei and a wagon of wheat to give out to students in Cluj.⁴² However, despite these efforts, the measures proved to be ineffective. On the one year anniversary since the installation of the Groza government, conflicts arose on the streets of Cluj, confrontations and fights especially between Romanian students and Hungarian workers. Sadly, these confrontations resulted in casualties.

On May 10, during other demonstrations, the students came out with a portrait of Maniu and stood before the Local Commission, shouting 'Down with terror!' in front of the Communist Party. Then they protested in front of the Prefecture, shouting 'Down with the government, down with the prefect!'. They were arrested.⁴³

This conflict ultimately culminated in the daytime attack on the 'Avram Iancu' dormitory near the University, where the medical students were housed. The 'Avram Iancu' dormitory had long been on the blacklist, seeing as it was considered a 'fascist nest where Legionnaires were reorganizing and a storehouse where there had to be serious arms deposits.' Comrade Mihai Patriciu requested a list of leaders to take vigorous action against these 'fascist movement chiefs,' more than just arresting and mistreating them at the police station for shouting in the streets, but that greater action needed to be taken.

An attack was carried out by a group of chauvinistic Hungarian workers from the János Herbák factory (formerly Dermata). They came out with two trucks and armed with sticks, bats, and other blunt objects, including firearms, and they attacked the reactionary students in order to give them a 'worker's lesson'. After vandalizing the dormitory and attacking the students, the workers, frightened by a Soviet patrol, fled. The students then went on strike, demanding the withdrawal of the accusations against the student body, the repair of the damages, and the punishment of those responsible for mistreating the students and vandalizing the dormitory. But the authorities hesitated to identify the 'working class' aggressors, and who were untouchable by the law enforcers. To resolve this conflict, the central political parties and the Groza

⁴¹ *Cluj RWP Regional Committee*, Inv. 1, Dos. 9/1946, f. 34.

⁴² *RCP Cluj County Committee*, Inv. 2, Dos. 16/1946, f. 1.

⁴³ *NACCS, Fund General Administrative Inspectorate Circ. III Cluj*, Dos. 6/1946, f. 198.

government sent Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu to handle the situation. The minister tried to persuade the students to give up the strike and attend their lessons and exams, promising to reopen the canteens and take action against those who triggered this conflict between the student body and communist workers. This was when Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu made the famous statement: *"First and foremost, I am Romanian and then a communist"*.⁴⁴

In the days following the event, everyone awaited the start of an investigation to determine the true culprits for the events of the night of May 28. However, not only was there no investigation that took place, but moreover, it was not even desired or planned by the authorities. The authorities on the contrary intended to cover up everything and blame it on the students, saying "those hooligans who had repeatedly provoked our Hungarian brothers and fellow citizens" (are to be blamed).⁴⁵

On May 29, 1946, a medical student, Ciortin Horațiu, the National Peasants' Party (NPP) youth leader at the University, was arrested and sent to Bucharest. According to communist sources, he was the one who covertly led all the student actions, strikes and demonstrations. After being informed that he was wanted by the police for arrest, Ciortin Horațiu went into hiding, and his place was taken by another medical student, Pițurcă. The same source wrote that all the actions of the students and peasants from Mănăștur and Florești were directed by the NPP leaders.⁴⁶

Other strikes followed, so that on June 19, after 19 long days of strike, it was announced that one of the seven arrested students, of those who were taken out of the city of Cluj, had been released. At that moment, a statement was issued announcing the end of the strike. The next day, another statement came, announcing the self-dissolution of the "Petru Maior" Student Center. In just a few days, Cluj was again filled with young people as the tensions were seemingly declining. The dormitories and canteens were then reopened, and the "Avram Iancu" dormitory was swiftly repaired. No one talked about the strike anymore, and all of it had now passed and was nothing more than a

⁴⁴ Gheorghe Marian, "Student strike from Cluj - 1946" [http://epochtimes-romania.com/articles/2007/03/article_8893.html], 23 June 2020.

⁴⁵ Laura Șuteu, "1946: The «Bearded Angel» Anania Led the Student Strike, Provoked by the Violence of the Hungarians" [<http://www.ftr.ro/1946-ingerul-cu-barba-anania-a-condus-greva-studentilor-provocata-de-violentele-ungurilor-46997.php>], 12 July 2020.

⁴⁶ Cluj RWP Regional Committee, Inv. 1, Dos. 10/1946, f. 21.

tragic memory. The words of the Cluj police chief were confirmed: 'The government could not be overthrown by the strike of brats.'⁴⁷

After these events, next up followed an assault of indoctrination on the students with the creation of so-called "voluntary work sites".⁴⁸

The students were to be very closely monitored. The communist press spoke on behalf of the "democratic" student body that condemned the "chauvinistic manifestations of the hooligans in Cluj", who, through "political maneuvers, drive the student body to hooligan acts". Then, just two months after, on the occasion of an attempt to capture them, the University Democratic Front received from the same students the promise and commitment to not engage in any political activity.⁴⁹

In March 1947, after the short-lived experiment called Progressive Youth ended, the Communist Youth Union was re-established. Later that year, in May, the National Union of Students of Romania was created in Cluj. This union was controlled by communist representatives, including the likes of: Corneliu Bogdan, Gheorghe Brătescu - Ana Pauker's son-in-law - and the left-wing social democrat Alexandru Glanstein-Muşat.⁵⁰

The fact that, despite the numerous purges of university personnel that occurred, students still remained loyal to the historical parties in Romania demonstrates their conviction that the Romanian Communist Party is the true enemy of democracy and of the nation. However, the purges did not stop. The purges continued and were enforced relentlessly in the hope that the situation would eventually be resolved and they would eventually win over the students loyalty. Based on Laws 486 and 594 regarding the purification of public administration, several professors from the Faculty of Law in Bucharest, and the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy - P.P. Panaitescu -, as well as the Faculty of Medicine - Petre Tomescu -, and the Faculty of Theology - Nichifor Crainic, were dismissed from service. They ceased to be part of the university teaching staff. Similarly, in other faculties across the country, the Purge Commissions removed many university professors and "lecturers of fascist doctrines" from education. The newspaper *Dreptatea* protested against these actions, writing

⁴⁷ *RCP Cluj County Committee*, Inv. 2, Dos. 16/1946, f. 7.

⁴⁸ *Patria*, Year XXVII, No. 17, 09.03.1946, p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Scânteia*, Seria III, Year XVI, No. 538, 02.06.1946, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Final Report*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

that “in the highest cultural forum, where objectivity and seriousness were expected to prevail over personal or political interests, the purge was carried out in the same terms and sentiment as in all other institutions”. The Peasants also expressed their dissatisfaction for the purge of university teaching staff in Bucharest.

Immediately after August 23, 1944, a commission composed only of representatives of the Romanian Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party was set up, in which representatives of the National Peasants' Party and the National Liberal Party could not interfere and take part in any way. Until March 6, 1945, the commission purged 49 out of the 1,000 members of the university teaching staff in Bucharest, including professors Mihai Antonescu, Nichifor Crainic, and Gheorghe Dima, and leaving aside many others who had a marked activity during the dictatorships. Some of those professors who had been purged were later on reinstated, especially those who, in the meantime, “completed their registration form in one of the National Democratic Front parties or groups”.

On April 4, 1947, during the County Conference organized in Cluj, Mogyorosi announced to comrades that they had two weeks to draw up a table of the teaching staff that further needed to be purged. “*The teaching staff is not in our hands*”,⁵¹ the angry communists admitted.

On May 27, 1947, the leadership of the national peasant youth, composed mainly of students, was arrested throughout the country. Arrests continued even in 1949, after the The Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) boasted that they were successfully stabilizing the situation.

To some extent, the argument can be made that the Communists' had managed to achieve their goals at the University. Seeing as at the beginning of 1947, there were 600 party members in the Romanian University and almost none in the Hungarian University, by the end of the year, the County boasted the existence of a single student party organization, which had over 1,400 members in the Romanian University and over 200 in the Hungarian 'Bolyai' University, hence suggesting that the communists successfully brought about unity. If in 1946 there were 80 student party members, by February 1947, there were already over 650.⁵²

⁵¹ CRP Cluj Regional Committee, Inv. 2, Dos. 1/1947, f. 101, 127.

⁵² CRP Cluj Regional Committee, Inv. 2, Dos. 1/1947, f. 90, 111.

One of the greatest dissatisfactions of the RCP leadership was the issue of refractory students, one that was relevant throughout the Communist regime, which is also why the most radical measures seen were taken against them. It led to the gathering of all imprisoned students who were then sent on the "island of absolute horror", in the prison of Pitești, where, from 1949, a monstrous experience called the "re-education" began.

PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN 1947

In 1947, there were only 10 schools for illiterates in the city of Cluj, attended by 410 people and led by teachers who were mostly communists. There were 24 primary schools in the city, with 20,960 attendees, taught by 552 teachers. Similar to previous years, the schools were simply unsatisfactory for many. They were plagued by Material difficulties, such as a lack of didactic materials, furniture, or adequate premises - in relation to the number of students, as well as a need for an additional 300 classrooms at the county level - , poorly revised manuals, with some manuals even containing lessons contrary to the "concepts of historical materialism". The schools were also suffering from the "*inconvenience of adequate education seeing as they were not being entirely staffed with purely democratic elements or at least sincerely adopted by the new democracy*".⁵³ Another dissatisfaction was the failure to change the attitude of the peasantry, especially the poor, towards school and the education system.

Given these difficulties, priorities focused on "*democratizing the teachers and replacing didactic material based on bourgeois-reactionary ideology with new material, necessary for the democratization of primary education*".⁵⁴

By the end of the year, the organization of cultural activities in primary and secondary schools began. In the public education domain, some successes were achieved and seen. In November 1947, 36 teachers joined and became party members, however, these new 36 members were superficially selected. In the following years, after further ongoing, multiple purges among the teaching staff, the percentage of students with failures and those that had to re-take the classes increased highly, too high when looked at as a percentage the total

⁵³ CRP Cluj Regional Committee, Dos. 9/1947, f. 39.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, Inv. 2, Dos. 1/1947, f. 89-90.

number of students, which, as the communists themselves noted, indicated the “weakness” of the teaching body.⁵⁵

Additional problems were encountered in denominational schools, which in secondary education were quite numerous in Cluj, where achievements couldn't be compared to, and did not even reach the level of those in state education.⁵⁶

Part of these problems will persist in the following years, unable to be solved so easily. The composition of what made up the teaching staff in Cluj was deemed to required “greater vigilance” from the Education Section. Even by 1951, there were still considered to be many staff members who were described as 'outdated', staff members that were originating from priests, officers, who although well-trained professionally, were dominated by the bourgeois spirit.⁵⁷

THE REFORM OF EDUCATION IN 1948

On August 3, 1948, through Decree no. 175/1948, of the *Law for the reform of education*, was adopted and enforced, and the formation of young people in a communist spirit was decreed. This brought about much stricter control over elementary, middle, and higher schools and suppressed the amount of autonomy universities had, as well as providing staff for the industrialization plan by expanding medium and higher technical education. The 1948 education reform aimed to complete the politicization of the education system as well as “cleansing” the Romanian education by introducing social discrimination in the admission process into middle and higher education. The communist leadership also aimed to create a layer of staff to apply the party's policies in the state apparatus, army, justice, and culture in general. In the vision of the leaders in Bucharest, school represented the first link in the system of preparing the staff necessary for building socialism.⁵⁸

According to the new law, preschool education was now optional and addressed children between 3 and 7 years old, having nurseries and pre-

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, Inv. 2, Dos. 9/1947, f. 29; *F. Primăria Municipiului Cluj*, Dos. 3-17 XII. 1950- 27 XII 1951, p. 54.

⁵⁶ *CRP Cluj Regional Committee*, Inv. 2, Dos. 1/1947, f. 90.

⁵⁷ In the same year, a census of all illiterates was conducted, revealing a total of 1157 individuals. To address this issue, a work plan was developed, including home literacy programs (NACCS, *F. Sfatul Popular al orașului Cluj*, Dos. 3/1950-1951, f. 51).

⁵⁸ *Final Report*, *loc. cit.*, p. 474.

schools directly subordinated under the control of the Ministry of Public Education. The child had to be educated in the communist party's spirit from an early age. To achieve this goal, the recognition of equal rights for women with men was also inscribed. Enjoying new freedoms, women were even encouraged to aim for and occupy any positions, including political ones. Women were increasingly encouraged to abandon household activities, leaving the education of children to the Party and government. "*Instead of wandering in the streets, (the child) is given a healthy education*",⁵⁹ declared the Minister of Education, Gheorghe Vasilichi, at a national conference with school inspectors. However, it was a poisoned gift, as communism thus struck and entered the family without the parents really realizing what was happening. Later on, mothers would be obliged to take up their jobs just three months after giving birth, so that the child can be moulded from the earliest stages of infancy, starting from the cradle, then from kindergartens, general schools, high schools, and eventually universities, all in order to minimize the parents' contribution to their children's education and hence manage to indoctrinate the child as early as possible. It was no coincidence that there was a continuous effort to purge teaching staff who did not conform to the party's line of thought and a massive push to involve women in political life. More and more women now involved in the work force meant there were now more and more tax payers which in turn resulted in greater government revenue from tax.

Elementary education was set to start at 7 years old, the first four grades being general and mandatory. The 4-year middle education was divided into the following types of schools: high schools, pedagogical schools for training teaching staff needed in preschool and elementary education, and technical and vocational schools. The enrolment of high school graduates into university was reserved, with a few exceptions, for students with a "healthy origin", upper class children from wealthy, influential families and former party activists (or UTC, UASCR).

The 1948 education "reform", following the Soviet model, had serious long-term consequences on the Romania's cultural state. By deliberately brutalizing and changing the analytical programs of schools and faculties, the "reform" produced many generations of "point-based" pseudo-intellectuals, who constituted the new ruling class of society during the communist regime.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, apud *Scânteia*, 8 august 1948, p. 1.

The education system was called upon to perform an indoctrination function, to prepare children and young people according to the “new man” mould and to eliminate the students' ability of critical thinking and spontaneity. In parallel with the demagogic campaign to eradicate illiteracy, a further discrimination based on class and religious criteria was being carried out. Those enrolled and admitted into schools were subjected to a perfidious system of ideological training. Therefore, the year 1948 would mark the disappearance of politically and ideologically neutral education as now all educational and cultural institutions became a sort of appendage of the state administration. Moreover, in the task of educating the masses in the communist spirit, alongside other persuasive work, the regime's propaganda didn't hesitate to acknowledge that a very important role was played by the influence that the state exerted.⁶⁰

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNISM ON MINORITY EDUCATION. STUDY CASES. THE IMPACT OF COMMUNISM ON HUNGARIAN MINORITY EDUCATION

Regarding the impact communism had on minority education, G. Vincze distinguishes two categories of consequences. On the one hand, there were measures that, although affecting the entire population, they had much greater repercussions on the Hungarian minority, and on the other hand, there were direct efforts targeting education in the Hungarian language, aiming to restrict and possibly even gradually eliminate it entirely. Thus, while the measures of the 1948 education reform affected all confessions and groups in Romania, their consequences for the Hungarian population were much more detrimental and it resulted in the dismantling of an entire educational network based on denominational school units. Directly following the reform's implementation, 468 Catholic school units, 531 Reformed, 34 Unitarian and 8 Evangelical units were nationalized, and their assets were confiscated and transferred over to the state.⁶¹ Also, the nationalization of denominational schools (Romanian, Hungarian and Jewish), as stated in the political report of the RWP County Committee of Cluj in August 1948, “*was received with joy by the broad masses of people and contributed to the facilitation of our work, realizing that this measure of great importance has taken in the interest of the great masses of the people. The firm and*

⁶⁰ Gheorghe Boldur-Lăteșcu, „Reeducation in România” [<http://www.romanalibera.ro/opinii/aldine/reeducarea-in-romania-147940.html>], 09 August 2020; see *Final Report*, Chapter III.

⁶¹ G. Vincze, *Illúziók és csalódások (Iluzii și decepții)*, Miercurea-Ciuc: Ed. Status, 1999, p. 196.

favourable attitude of the masses paralyzed any attempt of the Catholic clergy to undertake any opposing action from the very beginning. Overall, the action of nationalizing schools proceeded in perfect tranquillity".⁶²

Starting from the second half of the 1950s, there was a systematic process of narrowing and decreasing the scope of activities of Hungarian language education system had.

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNISM ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN CLUJ

In northern Transylvania, after the Vienna Diktat and the enforcement of anti-Semitic Hungarian laws, the proportion of Jewish students admitted to public secondary schools dropped to 3%. However, Chief Rabbi Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger managed to obtain approval from the Hungarian Minister of Religions and Public Instruction in 1940 for the establishment of a Jewish ran gymnasium in Cluj.⁶³ Besides secondary schools, Jewish elementary schools and religious schools operated from 1940 to 1944. In the time period May-June 1944, teachers and students from the Transylvanian schools, together with the Jewish population from the annexed parts of Hungary, suffered martyrdom at Auschwitz-Maidanek.

After the Holocaust, the return of the few survivors raised the issue that there had to be an institutional reconstruction of Jewish education in Transylvania. After the official repeal of racial legislation on December 19, 1944, teaching staff of Jewish origin were reintegrated into education, while Jewish schools resumed their activities.

The issue of education was often addressed by the communist Jewish press after 1945, with its purpose being to "*re-educate school youth in a fair, honest, democratic spirit, and to provide the best possible intellectual preparation to become useful adults of society*".⁶⁴ In Cluj, the elementary school with Romanian as the main teaching language of instruction but with Hebrew language courses reopened in 1945. A medium-level vocational school in machine construction was inaugurated with the material support of JOINT, alongside another trade

⁶² RCP Cluj County Committee, Inv. 2, Dos. 2/1948, f. 31.

⁶³ Moshe Carmilly Weinberger, *The History of the Jews of Transylvania*, București: Ed. Enciclopedică, 1994, p. 95. See Ladislau Gyémánt, "Jewish Education in Transilvania in the Inter-war Period", in *Studia Judaica XI-XII*, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. EFES, 2004, pp. 66-71.

⁶⁴ *Unirea*, Year I, No. 8, 21-22.12.1945, p. 3.

school. Following this, in October 1946, the Romanian-Hebrew kindergarten resumed its previous activity. Religious education also resumed. However, all these Jewish educational institutions definitively closed their doors in 1948 when, as a result of the establishment of the communist regime, the education reform saw the introduction of the centralized state system.⁶⁵

PURGING OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Rising tensions were not only prevalent among the students but also among the professors at the Cluj University. Noteworthy is the case of Nicolae Mărgineanu, a lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Cluj, who was also a key activist of Maniu, the vice president, along with diplomat Vasile Stoica, of the Romanian-American Association. His ties and connections with the West were exploited by his colleagues at the University of Cluj, who began filing complaints against him with the Ministry of Education. His compromise began in 1945 after refusing to collaborate with the Communists when the Security Police requested information on the professor's political background and current activities.⁶⁶

On February 25, 1945, in a *Report on the insinuations and undermining actions of the communist university organization led by Nicolae Mărgineanu, lecturer at the Cluj University and a trusted man of the N.P. Maniu group*, the University Cell Bureau wrote about the mentioned professor deceiving the vigilance and good faith of Prime Minister Petru Groza. He was presented by Radu Stoichiță, a UTC member, as a neutral person even though in 1945, the professor refused to join the Plowmen's Front or the Romanian Communist Party (RCP). Nicolae Mărgineanu opposed any political affiliation, not that he rejected or didn't agree with the left-wing movement. He had even been part of the "Friends of the USSR" association, but he did have a membership in the "Friends of America" association. The Prime Minister was timely warned by comrade Daicoviciu about "the dishonest and dubious character of Mărgineanu", and Radu Stoichiță was admonished. The professor was accused of being in an audience with Groza to prevent the extension of the retirement rights of Professor Ștefănescu Goangă and to defame and cast doubt on the communist members of the teaching staff at the University of Cluj, especially the likes of

⁶⁵ Gyémánt, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁶⁶ Lidia Bodea, "In the land of the forgetful, the forgetful one is king", in *Revista 22*, Year XV, No. 914, 14 September 2007.

Alexandru Roșca, Mihail Kernbach, Constantin Daicoviciu, and Emil Petrovici.⁶⁷

According to the University Cell Bureau, Mărgineanu wanted the retirement of Professor Ștefănescu Goangă to take his place in the Psychology department. However, since Tov. Roșca would be his competitor for this position, it was necessary to compromise him as well. Secondly, as a "Manist agent", Mărgineanu aimed to compromise the communist leadership of the University and sow discord between the government and professors in order to break up any form of relationship between them, allowing the "reactionaries" to work undisturbed and take over the University's leadership.

The Communist Senate members requested the continued presence of Professor Ștefănescu Goangă, beyond retirement age, after the University Cell Bureau understood that his political presence was actually necessary as he provides "valuable support in all university matters, especially in the case of new appointments". The communist party leadership thus had the "duty" to intervene in order to:

1. Expose the "Manist agen," Nicolae Mărgineanu, who was then facing the university's disciplinary council for "slander and serious deviations from academic and scientific ethics";
2. Extend the retirement period for Professor Ștefănescu Goangă;
3. Immediately publish the decree appointing Tov. Alexandru Roșca as a lecturer;
4. Amend the higher education law to prevent the reactionary atmosphere at the University and by default be able to retire the teaching staff members over a certain age who have proven themselves to be totally unproductive scientifically and didactically and replace them with capable elements;
5. Purge at least 2-3 notorious reactionaries, to make an example out of them and make others think. Regarding the purge, the University Cell Bureau proposed a "gentle" measure for those purged, but very effective for neutralizing the reaction, which was to deprive them of the right to vote, to be elected and to be part of the appointment committees at the University.⁶⁸

On February 27, 1946, two days after the University Cell Bureau's report, the Cluj RCP regional urgently sought help from the Central Committee of the RCP:

⁶⁷ *Cluj RWP Regional Committee*, Inv. 1, Dos. 1/1945, f. 198-199.

⁶⁸ *Cluj RWP Regional Committee*, Inv. 1, Dos. 1/1945, f. 198-199.

"Comrades! We ask for assistance for comrade Professor Dean Daicoviciu Constantin, a member of the regional committee and a very good activist. Similarly, Comrade Rector Emil Petrovici who likewise is also a good activist and Comrade Prof. Roșca who is responsible at ARLUS and does important work. The comrades from the university provide us with great help in our work among Romanians and at the university. The reaction seeks to compromise them. The campaign is directed against the Tovis and against democratic professors".⁶⁹ The campaign was led by Mărgineanu, who had access to the Prime Minister, the professor managing to gain the friendship of Groza's son, "who often goes to Mr. Prime Minister Groza's and misinforms him, and then comes to Cluj and causes agitation among the students and uses the name of the Prime Minister, saying that he has the Prime Minister on his side. This causes great dissatisfaction among the Tovis and democratic professors.

We kindly ask for your full support to remove the reactionary elements so that these elements do not find open doors everywhere."⁷⁰

Gradually, Mărgineanu fell out of favor with the authorities, and in September 1947, he was "compressed" from the University, meaning his position was removed from the teaching staff. In April of the following year he was arrested, and was taken to the "Great Finance" trial (October 27-November 2, 1948), where he was accused of espionage in favour of "Western imperialists".⁷¹ He was sentenced to 25 years in prison for "high treason through disbelief, crimes of organization and participation in political and paramilitary fascist organizations, rebellion, conspiracy for treason, undermining constitutional order, and rebellion", of which he served 16 years. Lidia Bodea writes that the accusations, copied from the standard rhetoric of trials and sentences that characterized the first wave of communist terror in Romania, had nothing to do with reality, but was based on lies and deception.⁷²

After his release, he wrote several books about the years spent in prison (Malmaison, Jilava, Pitești, Aiud, and Gherla), an autobiographical volume, and another volume, "Amphitheatres and Prisons", about university professors expelled from their chairs or imprisoned by the Communists. Although he was employed as a documentalist at the Academy Branch Library, and later on

⁶⁹ Bodea, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁰ RWP Cluj Regional Committee, Inv. 1, Dos. 9/1946, f. 31.

⁷¹ Ilarion Țiu, "Nicolae Mărgineanu, «spy of the imperialists»" [<http://istoriacomunismului.blogspot.com/2008/01/nicolae-margineanu-spion-al.html>], 04 December 2019.

⁷² Bodea, *loc. cit.*

appointed director of the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, it wasn't until 1971 that he was allowed to return to the psychology department at the University of Cluj, with the opportunity to teach abroad in Cologne, Bonn, and Hamburg. He was invited to join the Rockefeller Foundation in 1979-1980. But after being diagnosed with cancer, he returned to Romain, where he passed away on June 13, 1980.⁷³

The purging of teaching staff continued in 1947 when, under the pretext of reducing budget expenses, the closure of over 200 chairs was announced. As well as that many more numerous teaching staff was forced into retirement due to new age limits being put in place or simply just forced to retire. These measures were politicized, used to remove those not affiliated with left-wing parties and organizations from higher education.⁷⁴ As a result, the RCP repudiated and rejected several people, some true geniuses, including university professors Petre Sergescu, Constantin Marinescu, Scarlat Lambrino, and Sever Pop. In the outlet Official Gazette No. 160/1948, an "important decision" of the Council of Ministers was published, punishing these four professors for "leaving the country." Along with the withdrawal of their Romanian citizenship, their assets were also confiscated.⁷⁵

Alongside them, it's worth mentioning some⁷⁶ of the professors who taught at the universities in Cluj:

Name, Forename	Short Biography	Sentence
Ghibu Onisifor	General Secretary of Instruction in the Governing Council, corresponding member of the Romanian Academy since 1919. From 1919 to 1945, he was a professor of pedagogy at the University of Cluj. He was expelled from teaching in 1945 for the activity conducted in 1917 in favor of the union with Bessarabia.	Arrested in March 1945 (detention in the Caracal camp), he was released, then rearrested and sentenced by the Military Tribunal of Sibiu to 5 years of imprisonment. He was pardoned in 1958 and died in 1972.

⁷³ Țiu, "Nicolae Mărgineanu...", *loc. cit.*

⁷⁴ Marin Nedelea, *History of Romania in dates, 1940-1995*, București: Ed. Niculescu SRL, 1997, p. 80.

⁷⁵ *Adevărul*, Year 62, No. 17.210, 14.07.1948, p. 4.

⁷⁶ *Cotidianul*, No. 240 (4615), 10.10.2006.

Rimiroiu Gheorghe	Founder and director of the Institute of Microbiology and Serology in Cluj, he graduated from several faculties, including the Faculty of Medicine in Cluj.	Arrested in 1950 and sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, he passed away in detention (1954). Similarly, his brother died in a camp.
Jordáky Lajos	Professor at the Bolyai University in Cluj	Arrested and tried in 1949 for "bourgeois cosmopolitanism-nationalism"
Marinescu Constantin	Director of the Institute of Universal History in Cluj and the Romanian School in Fontenay aux Bois (France), corresponding member of the Romanian Academy.	Managed to flee the country. Sentenced in absentia to 15 years of imprisonment.
Papilian Victor	A distinguished figure in Romanian medicine, son of General Constantin Papilian, a thinker, university professor, director of the National Theater in Cluj (1928), and the Opera (1934-1938). He was a member of the SDP, loyal to Constantin-Titel Petrescu.	Arrested in 1952, he left prison sick in 1954 and died in 1956 (Cluj).
Iuliu Moldovan (1882-1966) ⁷⁷	Medic, dignitary in the Governing Council of Transylvania, corresponding member of the Romanian Academy (1920), prominent member of the NPP, former undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Welfare, director of Astra (1932-1947), university professor in Cluj, founder of the School of Hygiene and Public Health in Cluj. He also wrote works about the Romanian healthcare system.	Arrested in 1950, he was interned at Sighet for 24 months, later classified under MAI Decision No. 334/1951, his sentence was increased by 60 months. He was released on July 5, 1955.

CONCLUSION

Along with the other social classes, Cluj's intelligentsia, which included pre-university and university teachers and students, was called to occupy an

⁷⁷ Romulus Rusan, "The Union's Elites Exterminated in Prisons"

[<http://www.revista22.ro/elitele-unirii-exterminate-in-inchisori-5086.html>], 16 June 2023.

important role in political and administrative life. The essential condition was belonging to the communist ideology, rejecting any bourgeois attitudes and enlisting in the struggle to purify the country of any force that would oppose the establishment of the communist regime. The response of the intelligentsia was not a unified one. While some were drawn to the new regime, out of conviction or opportunism, others fought to the death against it. The regime, however, was intolerant of any form of diversity. Communism aimed and pursued the homogenization of society at any cost, which naturally demanded the liquidation of the "elites," the peaks of society and those segments that ensured the enduring development of a society. Priority attention was directed to the "working class," which was easier to manipulate, while the intellectual class was considered as a group and often viewed with suspicion and hatred. There was a fear and concern over true intellectuals who could potentially expose them.⁷⁸

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