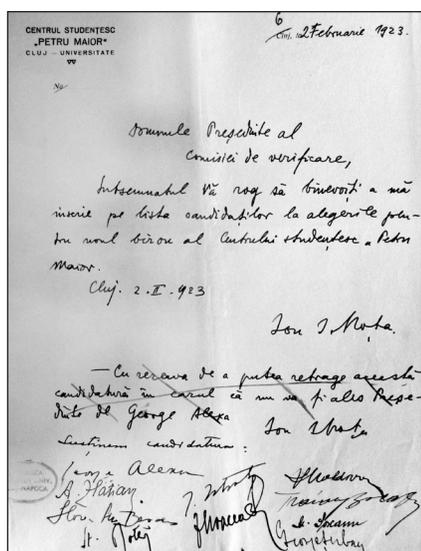


Changes in the Leadership of the Petru Maior Student Center of Cluj (Spring 1923)

MARIA GHITTA



ION I. MOȚA’S candidacy application for the leadership of the committee of the Petru Maior Student Center (Lucian Blaga Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5993)

Maria Ghitta

Researcher at the Center for Transylvanian Studies, Romanian Academy. Co-editor of the vol. **Dilemele conviețuirii: Evrei și neevrei în Europa Central-Răsăriteană/Dilemmas de la cohabitation: Juifs et Non-Juifs en Europe centrale-orientale** (2006).

BETWEEN 26 April and 1 May 1923 a rather unusual and somewhat mysterious change of leadership took place at the Petru Maior Student Center of Cluj. Unusual, because no ordinary elections had been scheduled. Somewhat mysterious, because there are no minutes of the meetings that might have taken place during this brief interval for the designation of a new leadership. At any rate, the documents kept in the archives of the Center indicate that on 26 April the organization was chaired by George (Gheorghe) Alexa, a law student, elected in early February; on 1 May, however, it was led by Ion I. Moța, as its ‘ad-hoc’ chairman.

A non-statutory chairman was hardly ideal for an association such as Petru Maior. After moving to Cluj in 1919, after many years of activity in Budapest (since 1862), the association had actively sought to organize itself and operate on the basis on clearly defined statutes.¹ The statute adopted in December 1921 stipulated that the Center was to be led by a “committee elected for the duration of one aca-

ademic year, in the first semester of the academic year” (art. 20, chap. VII). For the election of a new committee, the old one had to be officially discharged following an activity report. The report was to be examined by a “supervisory committee” operating for the duration of the elections. It was called upon to “verify the actions taken by the outgoing committee” and “chair the general elections,”²² thus ensuring their fairness. The election of the new representatives (15 in number, with clearly defined attributions) had to be above suspicion, as they needed to be accepted by both students and the university authorities. Their names and positions were notified, in the press or through special letters, to all relevant institutions (the University Senate, foreign and domestic student organizations, etc.). The new committee was instituted during an official ceremony, as indicated by a press release dated 25 March 1922 and sent to the local newspapers: “On Sunday 2, 1 c. (April) at 11.00 the Great Hall of the university will host the festive inauguration of the committee of the Petru Maior Student Center.” The note specified that “this activity is to become a tradition in the student life of Cluj” and that the ceremony was “to be chaired by the rector, with the deans and all the students in attendance.” Indicating that the ceremony was to be a solemn one and that it had been prepared in minute detail, there was even a mention of the songs that were to be sung: “Gaudeamus, The Tricolor, and On Our Flag.”²³ If in the spring of 1922 such a festive occasion could be held in the Great Hall of the university, in the presence of those listed above, the situation would be totally different the following year.

The year 1922–1923 was itself an unusual one, and the student elections, not surprisingly, would be no different. After the comprehensive and sustained efforts requested by its founding and early activity, Cluj University was experiencing a “mysterious”²⁴ contrary trend, which sought the repeal and replacement of some existing rules. The anti-Semitic incidents that began in late November of 1922 in the laboratories of the Medical School expanded rapidly, eventually paralyzing all activities at Cluj University and in other similar institutions throughout the country.

As early as 30 November, barely two or three days after the first incidents, the Petru Maior Student Center began to coordinate the actions of the students. A memorandum sent to the Senate included the following demands: “numerus clausus, a satisfactory solution to the issue regarding the dissection of cadavers, the Romanian language proficiency exams and admission exams for the Medical School, etc.”²⁵ These demands, alongside the “social and cultural ones” (dormitories, canteens, scholarships, textbooks) would also be present in the memorandum sent on 10 December to the government (Education Ministry) on the occasion of a large demonstration organized in the capital city and attended by representatives of all university centers in the country. The students clashed with the army, which further fanned the flames of the movement. As a national con-

sensus around the idea of a numerus clausus emerged rather rapidly, henceforth the universities began to compete in radicalism: no one was supposed to give an inch. Whenever some student representatives seemed willing to compromise, colleagues from other centers quickly made them toe the line. Whenever the situation in one university—such as Cluj, for instance—seemed about to return to normal, incidents occurred in Bucharest or Iași came to pour fuel on the fire.

The leadership of the Petru Maior Center also experienced a number of changes after the conflicts broke out: “the previous committee chaired by Mr. Adam Popa resigned on 30 November.”²⁶ In the meeting of 19 December, the chairman presented the activity report and explained his decision. “If he had nevertheless decided to resign, in the well-known circumstances, this was not because of a difference in beliefs or feelings, but rather because the official approach of the previous committee no longer coincided with the path chosen by the students on 30 November.”²⁷ In fact, a few days later A. Popa would be one of the members of the small delegation that took the cause of the Cluj students to Bucharest. The new committee, called the “Alexa committee” on account of its chairman, was itself an offshoot of the recent events, of extraordinary circumstances that allowed no time for any ordinary rules of procedure. While the former committee had stepped down because it could not “officially” embrace the new agenda of the students, the new one was perfectly ready to do just that. In the evening of 22 December, “the students convened a non-statutory meeting, not on the premises of the university and not in the student residences.” On that occasion, they decided that “Chairman Alexa was to be the main delegate of the students in the future contacts with the authorities.”²⁸ This brief notice in the official publication of the student movement shows us how the students operated and saw themselves. They had gathered in a “non-statutory” meeting, far from the “premises of the university.”

Convened on 21 December, the University Senate acknowledged that the “pacification actions” had not been effective. Classes were still being disrupted, the Jewish students were prevented from attending, and the activity of the university was seriously affected. Consequently, the Senate decided to suspend all university activities beginning with the following day and banned any rally “on the premises of the university or in the student residences.”²⁹ The upcoming winter holiday was expected to bring a necessary respite. It was not to be so.

The resumption of activities faced numerous difficulties. The faculty and the students, the older generation and the youth, saw things rather differently. “The students are back in class. Some of them, however, are trying to decide whether they should sit down and learn something in earnest, or rather continue with this agitation that goes beyond the horizon of a youth getting ready to guide our public life towards civilization.” These words belong to one faculty member who believed he had the necessary authority to speak on the matter, being the author of a book titled *Românii și Evreii* (Romanians and Jews). He believed that

the anti-Semitic agitation was part of “a political struggle . . . in which the University cannot allow itself to be dragged, under any circumstances.”¹⁰ An anonymous member of the young generation also spoke up in the days preceding the resumption of classes: “The government has rejected our main demands, but we shall not give in and once again demand loud and clear: Numerus clausus! The universities in our country must reopen with no kikes in them!”¹¹

The two opinions briefly expressed above sum up the whole situation, fully illustrating the generation gap on the issue of anti-Semitism. The subsequent information was related to the ongoing negotiations with the government. In point of fact, throughout the protests, the university or government authorities were willing to accept many of the student demands, or indeed those that were economic or social in nature. However, they refused to entertain the idea of a numerus clausus, in keeping with the principles of free access to education and of equality between citizens.¹² The only limitation of the access to education they were willing to consider applied to foreign citizens. The brief youthful outburst quoted by the publication of the Cluj students indicates what actually hid behind the requested threshold for Jews: “no kikes.” Thus, numerus clausus became numerus nullus.

While the request to limit the access of Jews to the schools brought no official results, there were practical consequences of the student unrest: “The Jewish students seem utterly disheartened and avoid any contact with their Christian counterparts. Many of them have begun to leave the city.” According to some rough estimates, “about 50 percent may have already left.”¹³ Even so, reopening the university turned out to be very difficult indeed.

In its meeting of 1 February 1923, “the Senate has decided to suspend all classes and practical activities in all faculties beginning with 2 February, until new orders are issued.”¹⁴ The incidents had taken place at the Medical School, and Rector Iacobovici declared that “the student demands can only be solved at legislative level, by the parliament. As to the university authorities, they did everything they could in keeping with the rules and regulations in force.”¹⁵ The events that had taken place in Bucharest during the same days had requested the firm intervention of the authorities. After massive unrest at the university and on the streets of the capital city between 30 January and 1 February, the relevant decisions were taken by “the Council of Ministers in the presence of the police prefect.” They decided to “close down the university, the student dormitories and canteens, and prosecute the agitators, discontinue the legal benefits granted to students, and ban the publication *Cuvântul studențesc*.”¹⁶ A number of students were subsequently arrested.

The university authorities were presently exasperated by the lack of flexibility shown by students, by their refusal to accept any compromise. As rational arguments (a whole academic year lost, at tremendous financial cost, negatively

impacting the activities of the following years, etc.)¹⁷ failed to work when faced with the youthful intransigence of the students, various explanations for this attitude began to emerge. The minutes of the meeting of the great academic council held in Bucharest, submitted for publication, contended that “the unrest began in Cluj, indicating the influence of foreign elements, inimical to our country”; the same text “expresses the desire to open the universities to all citizens of Romania and rejects the *numerus clausus*.”¹⁸ In fact, Emil Pangratti, the rector of Bucharest University, also declared on a separate occasion that “the *numerus clausus* is out of the question. It is a purely Hungarian invention.”¹⁹

The discourse turned increasingly towards the political interference in the student movement or towards the political connotations acquired by the latter. The same Rector Pangratti argued: “an academic and economic movement has turned into a political one.”²⁰ One of his counterparts in Cluj made the same observation: “The student movement has transcended the university and moved to a higher political plane,”²¹ deeming it relevant in the context of the adoption of the new Constitution.²²

Some representatives of the students were already planning to politicize their demands. This is clearly indicated by the statements made by one student delegate upon his return to Cluj, after consultations held in Bucharest. Informing his colleagues about the decision to continue the struggle, he concluded: “Our last weapon—argued Mr. Moța—is the recourse to parliament, and if they refuse, we shall continue the struggle by way of non-demagogic propaganda among voters, ensuring the election of those candidates whose program includes the *numerus clausus*.”²³ The same meeting reconfirmed the previous decision “not to give in, even at the risk of losing the academic year,” and made an announcement about the organization of new elections. “There is little interest in such elections, given the absolute trust in the current committee.”²⁴

Despite that, the committee established following the unrest at the end of the previous year insisted on holding new elections, as they needed legal validation. These elections took place in early February and G. Alexa remained chairman, this time after a proper ballot. In some notices regarding the newly elected committee we find a handwritten addition indicating that Moța was the archivist of the Center.²⁵ The other such notices make no reference to him.²⁶ Whatever the reason behind this discrepancy, the fact remains that Moța was a fervent supporter of the cause. He had been doing editorial work at *Dacia Nouă* since the founding of the publication, in December. Also, as we have already seen, on certain occasions he had been the representative of the Cluj students (see note 23). His activity within the new committee would be anything but low profile.

Quite quickly his talents as a publicist and future lawyer were put to work, in a memorandum addressed to the University Senate.²⁷ In its meeting of 5 February, the Senate had dealt an unexpected blow to the Petru Maior Center, decid-

ing to close it down. Arguing that the statutes of the organization infringed upon the provisions of a specific article (89 paragraph 2) in the University Code of Conduct, the Senate ruled that the assets and the archive of the Center were to be transferred to the university administration and allowed 15 days for the modification of any statutes of the student organization in keeping with the existing regulations.²⁸ The Senate was trying to regain some of the authority it had lost, using the bureaucratic arsenal. As the numerous calls for a peaceful return to class had been ignored, in the conflict with the students the Senate decided to rely on a specific article in the university regulations. The issue had to do with the presence in the leadership of the Petru Maior Center of students from other Cluj higher education institutions (the Commercial Academy and the Agronomy School), whom the university authority could rightfully reject given their different institutional affiliation. This was also a precautionary measure against students “not belonging to our university,” whose participation in the protests had had a negative impact upon the activity of the institution.²⁹ At any rate, on this issue the representatives of the Petru Maior Center showed a lot more willingness to cooperate with the university authorities than on the other divisive issues that troubled that academic year. On 14 March they petitioned the Senate to “appoint a faculty commission that would discuss and identify, together with our representatives, a final solution to the issue regarding the statutes of the Society.”³⁰ The Senate itself had rescinded the order disbanding the student association, “needing the authorized consent of the student body,” and therefore expected “calmer spirits and a solution to the existing situation.”³¹ Employing all possible methods, during this period the university authorities sought to come to an agreement with the students.

As to the students themselves, they were weighing their options. The meeting of the Center’s committee of 17 February 1923 was held in the presence of “Mr. Zelea Codreanu, the delegate of the Iași students.” That year, receiving guests and sending delegates to consultations became common practice for the student organizations. This kept the communication channels open and ensured that the various university centers took similar decisions. The aforementioned guest, however, was no ordinary delegate. In actual fact, Zelea-Codreanu could not have represented the students of Iași, as he was no longer enrolled at that university. He was coming from Germany, where he had continued both his studies and his anti-Semitic activities.³² The Cluj students were familiar with what he had done while studying in Iași, and therefore extended to him a deferential welcome and requested his advice on how to proceed. Alexa, the chairman of the Center, envisaged two possibilities: a “peaceful return to class,” without however discarding a program that was to be carried on by way of “conferences and book clubs,” and an aggressive continuation of the struggle, “as we have waged it thus

far.” The latter option entailed the risk of “defection by some students.”³³ When invited to express his opinion, the guest outlined a comprehensive project (which went beyond the confines of the university): “Our struggle goes beyond the university and should be taken to the great mass of Romanian citizens.” Thus, he envisaged a “great civic assembly” that would bring together “inhabitants from the various regions of Romania.” The four university cities were to become “four centers of national propaganda . . . which at one point could make it possible for us to have the core of a national organization in every town.”³⁴ The two interventions come to highlight the difference in perspective between Alexa and Zelea-Codreanu and foreshadow the future achievements of the latter.

Zelea-Codreanu did more than just attend some strategic meetings of the local student leaders. The students were set to work on the great white and black flags bearing the swastika and lined with the tricolor.³⁵ A young lady, Elena Ilinoiu, contributed a lot to the making of these flags, signing receipts that indicate, in the accounting of the Petru Maior Center, the amounts spent on the “making of flags.”³⁶ The lady in question was none other than the future wife of the staunch nationalist militant who was visiting Cluj at that time.

Before bidding him farewell, the naïve Alexa asked his guest: “When will these projects be carried out, right now or during the summer holiday? Mr. Zelea Codreanu: right away, for otherwise the government will adopt the Constitution, and any action taken after that moment cannot bring the desired results.”³⁷ The guest then went on to put his plans into practice, leaving Alexa with his dilemmas: return to class or fight on? As we have already seen, he was torn between the two possible courses or action. In the weeks that followed, he seemed increasingly inclined to listen to those who advocated a return to class and the separation between the student and the political agendas. It was obvious (to those willing to accept reality) that the government and the parliament could not introduce measures that granted citizenship rights to the Jews (by adopting the new Constitution) and at the same time restrict their access to education (*numerus clausus*). The nationalist and anti-Semitic movements also understood very well that they had to take maximum advantage of this “student movement,” which is precisely what they did.³⁸

During all this time (February–April), the leadership of the universities and the representatives of the Education Ministry did their best to persuade the students to drop their main demand (*numerus clausus*), accept the offer of the authorities and return to class. On several occasions, they seemed to come close to an agreement. The Senate meeting of 2 March 1923 made reference to the “agreement concluded between the student representatives and the delegates of the University Senate,” which would give “the true students the possibility to attend classes and not pointlessly waste an academic year.”³⁹ Announcing the

reopening of the university, a local newspaper also indicated that “We should put a question mark after the title above. Indeed, of late our universities have resumed their activity so many times, only to suspend them completely the following day.”⁴⁰ The same happened on this occasion as well.

The reopening announced for 16 April (after Easter) seemed finally certain, prepared in minute detail. The government announced additional funds for the universities: an additional 5 million lei for “dormitories and canteens,” “200 million to outfit existing labs and establish new ones”;⁴¹ Cluj was getting a new pediatric clinic, an institute of physiology, money for the libraries, one student dormitory, etc.⁴² But the government also threatened with reprisals: “Those students responsible for the unrest shall be expelled.”⁴³ It seemed that an agreement with the students had finally been reached. In a meeting held before Easter, the student delegates had declared themselves “happy with most of the solutions offered in response to their demands” and had accepted “out of patriotism, to drop the only unfulfilled and impossible claim: the introduction of a numerus clausus for schools.” However, they reserved the “right to continue the struggle outside the university, as citizens.”⁴⁴ Praising them in such propaganda pieces for their “lofty national feelings” and “admirable sense of discipline,”⁴⁵ everybody was seemingly courting the students in order to achieve the desired results. A meeting of the Senate ruled that “the deans shall notify the faculty members asking them to abstain from making any comments in connection to the recent events.”⁴⁶ The outcome? Identical. The universities failed to reopen!⁴⁷

The situation in Cluj seemed better. While many students were still absent, at least there were no incidents. In fact, the medical students themselves were the most eager to return to class. If, in a way, they had started the whole story, presently they were the most interested in ending a conflict that had gone beyond their original claims.⁴⁸

In its meeting of 18 April, the committee of the Petru Maior Student Center discussed a letter of the Medical Students’ Society “requesting a plenary session of the Center which would decide on a resumption of classes”; should the request be turned down, “the Society will proceed on its own.”⁴⁹ The leadership crisis within the Petru Maior Center was becoming acute. Faced with the possible withdrawal of a major student society, amid profound divergences within the committee (Alexa was accused of having mismanaged one particular meeting), on that very same day the chairman received the resignation of his secretary general, Victor Șuiagă. Nevertheless, at the request of its chairman, the committee voted on the return to class, but the final decision was to be taken in a “plenary session of the Center.”⁵⁰

In the meeting of 26 April Alexa handed in his resignation “because, according to him, the students have strayed from the righteous path, joining the organiza-

tions of Mr. Cuza, which are only meant to serve a personal and political agenda. I believe that continuing the struggle would tarnish our reputation.” After initially urging him to reconsider, Moța declared that “he and Mr. Alexa have parted ways” and continued with a phrase that contained both an affirmation and a negation in regard to the main topic of that moment: “I am for a return to class but, for as long as the students in other university centers remain on strike, we can only follow suit.” The break was final and Alexa had been defeated. “The committee, with the exception of the chairman, endorses the proposal of Mr. Moța.”⁵¹

The die had been cast, and in the planned plenary session of the Center, on 30 April, as Moța himself declared, he was “elected ad-hoc chairman, but only for the ongoing meeting; therefore, we must quickly proceed with the election of the new chairman.”⁵² On 2 May he sent a letter to the rector, informing him about the changes occurred within “the Cluj student organization.” He indicated that the former chairman had resigned and that the committee “was still operational.” He also provided information on the upcoming procedures, the elections for the vacant positions in the committee and the election of the new chairman. The signature read “Ion Moța, ad-hoc chairman.”⁵³ The rector was also informed that the same plenary session of 30 April had decided “by unanimous vote on complete solidarity with the other universities,” meaning that “no student would attend classes and they would prevent the Jews (the Jewish students) from entering the premises of the university.”⁵⁴ Cluj University had rejoined the others! It also had its share of “violence and disturbances,” according to a report presented by the rector to the Senate in its meeting of 3 May. As a consequence, seven students were “expelled in perpetuity from Cluj University”; the “Esteemed Ministry” was requested “to ban them from the other Romanian universities.”⁵⁵ One of the seven was Ion I. Moța, the recently appointed ad-hoc chairman.

□

(Translated by BOGDAN ALDEA)

Notes

1. See Maria Ghitta, “Universitatea din Cluj, anul I Centrul Studențesc Petru Maior,” in *Istoria ca datorie: Omagiu academicianului Ioan-Aurel Pop la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, eds. Ioan Bolovan and Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2015), 895–907; Ana-Maria Stan, “Forme de organizare ale Centrului studențesc Petru Maior de la Universitatea din Cluj între 1919–1925,” in *Societate și civilizație: Profesorului universitar dr. Marcel Știrban la împlinirea a șapte decenii de viață*, eds. Călin Florea and Ciprian Năprădean (Târgu-Mureș: Dimitrie Cantemir, 2002), 598–621.
2. Lucian Blaga Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca (hereafter cited as CUL-CN), Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5900, “Statutele Centrului Studențesc Petru Maior din Cluj.”

3. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5851 (Condica maculaturilor), 25 March 1922 (“Instalarea festivă a Centrului Studențesc”).
4. This is the word used to describe it—in a note dated 4 December 1922—by one of those who had contributed to the founding of Cluj University: Nicolae Iorga, *Memorii*, vol. 4, *Încoronarea și boala Regelui 1922–1925* (Bucharest: Paul Editions, 2018), 25 (“The mysterious anti-Jewish unrest continues in Cluj. An absurd and demented undertaking”).
5. “Ce am făcut până acum și pentru ce,” *Dacia Nouă* (Cluj) 1, 1 (1932): 2.
6. “Ultimele hotărâri,” *Dacia Nouă* 1, 1 (1932): 4.
7. *Ibid.*
8. “Informațiuni,” *Dacia Nouă* 1, 1 (1932): 4.
9. National Archives, Cluj County Directorate (hereafter cited as NACCD), Fond Universitatea din Cluj. Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 37 (meeting of 21 December 1922).
10. Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, “Lămuriri studențimei,” *Patria* (Cluj), 28 January 1923, p. 1.
11. “Murim mai bine-n luptă cu glorie deplină,” *Dacia Nouă* 1, 6: 1.
12. During one of the meetings that the students and the authorities had in the spring of 1923, the education minister, Dr. C. Angelescu, allegedly rebuked his interlocutors for having wasted an academic year: “Nobody is forced to become a student, just like nobody can be prevented from becoming a student.” “Redeschiderea Universităților,” *Înfrățirea* (Cluj), 12 April 1923, p. 1.
13. “Agitațiile studențești la Cluj continuă,” *Înfrățirea*, 9 February 1923, p. 4.
14. NACCD, Fond Universitatea din Cluj, Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 52.
15. “Închiderea Universității din Cluj,” *Patria*, 3 February 1923, p. 1.
16. “Agravarea mișcărilor studențești,” *Patria*, 4 February 1923, p. 3.
17. For the unfortunate consequences of the students’ refusal to accept an agreement with the government (which promised them nearly everything with the exception of the *numerus clausus*), see Gh. Bogdan-Duică, “Universitatea și studențimea: Un compromis,” *Patria*, 2 March 1923; see also “Mișcarea studențească în țară,” *Înfrățirea*, 7 March 1923, p. 4.
18. “Conflictul studențesc din București,” *Înfrățirea*, 28 February 1923, p. 3.
19. “Mișcarea studențească în țară,” *Înfrățirea*, 7 March 1923, p. 4.
20. “Caracterul politic al mișcării studențești,” *Înfrățirea*, 15 March 1923, p. 3.
21. Bogdan-Duică, “Universitatea și studențimea,” p. 1.
22. The Constitution adopted by Romania on 29 March 1923 was the first fundamental law that granted civil rights to the Jewish population.
23. “Întrunirea de seară a studențimii din Cluj,” *Înfrățirea*, 3 February 1923, p. 3. The discussion concerning “the expulsion of the Jews who came to the country after the Union, and the decision to raise this with the authorities” demonstrate that the students’ concerns went beyond the university agenda. Gradually, the “student movement” took up elements from the broader anti-Semitic agenda.
24. *Ibid.*

25. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5593, no. 43/11.02.1923 (to the Aurel Vlaicu Academic Society of Turin), no. 42/11.02.1923 (to the Romanian Students Association in Berlin).
26. For instance, in the one sent to the Dacia Traiană Academic Society of Rome, announcing “the creation of the committee of our Center for the current academic year.” CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5851, no. 17/1923, p. 39 r–v.
27. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5851, “Memoriu Onoratului Senat Universitar” (7 February 1923).
28. NACCD, Fond Universitatea din Cluj, Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 54 r–v.
29. See also an April meeting where it was decided to convene a general meeting of the Student Center, “provided that attendance is limited to the students properly enrolled in the University.” NACCD, Fond Universitatea din Cluj, Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 85 v (meeting of 13 April 1923).
30. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5851, no. 68/1923, letter of 14 March 1923.
31. “Ordinul de desfășurare a centrului studentesc ‘Petru Maior’ a fost retras,” *Înfrățirea*, 4 March 1923, p. 3.
32. Oliver Jens Schmitt summed up this brief episode in the life of Codreanu with the phrase “anti-Semitic missionary in Germany.” See his book *Corneliu Zelea Codreanu: Ascensiunea și căderea “Capitanului”* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2017), 62–64.
33. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 6011, minutes of the committee meeting of the Petru Maior Student Center, 17 February 1923.
34. Ibid.
35. Codreanu provides a detailed description of such flags, displayed several days later (on March 4) in Iași, where the foundations of the National Christian Defense League (NCDL) were laid: “The flags were black, as a sign of mourning; in the center, a round white circle stood for our hopes . . . , the white circle circumscribed a swastika, the symbol of the anti-Semitic struggle all over the world, and along all sides of the flag, the Romanian tricolor.” See Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu, *Pentru legionari* (Sibiu: Ed. Totul pentru țară, 1936), 119. A few pages earlier he indicates that such a flag was made in Cluj, and “in the house of Captain Șiancu” “we all took an oath on that flag.” Ibid., 116.
36. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 5988, receipt of 19 February 1923, signed by Elena Ilinoiu (“327 lei received from Mr. Crâșmariu to cover the cost of the following materials used in the making of the flags: 2m black satin—120 lei; 1 m white satin—39 lei; 12 m tricolor—120 lei; 3 spools of thread—48 lei”); another receipt, not dated, signed by Elena Ilinoiu (received from the same Crâșmariu “for the making of flags: 19.75 m tricolor—197.50 lei; 5 m black satin—275 lei; 2 m white satin—70 lei; total 542.50 lei”).
37. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 6011, Proces-verbal, 17 February 1923.
38. For the creation of the National Christian Defense League (NCDL), see Armin Heinen, *Legiunea “Arhanghelul Mihail”: Mișcarea socială și organizație politică: O contribuție la problema fascismului internațional*, trans. Cornelia and Delia Eșianu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 112. The “Romanian Action” was established in Cluj, on 7 June

- 1923: see Maria Ghitta, “Un episod timpuriu din organizarea naționalismului interbelic: ‘Acțiunea Românească’ (1923–1925),” in *Spiritualitate și cultură europeană: Volum dedicat Profesorului Ladislau Gyémánt la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, eds. Alina Branda, Ion Cuceu, and Claudia Ursuțiu (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană & Ed. Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2007), 103–114.
39. NACCD, Fond Universitatea din Cluj, Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 67 (meeting of 2 March 1923).
40. “Se redeschid universitățile,” *Înfrățirea*, 2 March 1923, p. 3.
41. “Redeschiderea universităților,” *Înfrățirea*, 3 April 1923, p. 1.
42. “Îmbunătățirea situației studențimii,” *Înfrățirea*, 17 April 1923, p. 1.
43. “Deschiderea Universităților,” *Patria*, 1 April 1923, p. 3.
44. “O hotărâre înțeleaptă,” *Înfrățirea*, 13 April 1923, p. 3.
45. Ibid.
46. NACCD, Fond Universitatea din Cluj, Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 85 (meeting of 13 April 1923).
47. “Great turmoil yesterday at Bucharest University” (“Agitația studențimii,” *Patria*, 19 April 1923, p. 3); or, on the same page: “Iași University remains closed . . . the students have barricaded themselves inside the university.”
48. “Noua fază a conflictului universitar,” *Înfrățirea*, 22 April 1923, p. 3.
49. CUL-CN, Fond “Petru Maior,” Ms. 6011, Proces-verbal, 18 April 1923.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 26 April 1923.
52. Ibid., 1 May 1923.
53. Ibid., Ms. 5851, “Adresă către Rector” (2 May 1923).
54. Ibid.
55. NACCD, Fond Universitatea din Cluj, Ședințele Senatului Universitar, file 4, p. 98 v (meeting of 3 May 1923).

Abstract

Changes in the Leadership of the Petru Maior Student Center of Cluj (Spring 1923)

The paper discusses a rather unusual change of leadership that took place at the Petru Maior Student Center of Cluj between 26 April and 1 May 1923, in the absence of any statutory elections. The change was related to the student unrest triggered by the anti-Semitic incidents occurred in late November of 1922 in the laboratories of the Medical School, which expanded rapidly, eventually paralyzing all activities at Cluj University and in other similar institutions throughout the country. The student movement quickly acquired a political dimension, largely due to the involvement and activity of Ion I. Moța and Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu.

Keywords

anti-Semitism, Cluj University, interwar period, student unrest, numerus clausus, Ion I. Moța, Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu

46/6
 Casca
 Chitanța
 Nr. 327 (trei sute două
 zeci și șapte) primit de
 D. Dr. Crăciunaru - critic
 urmat de cele materiale
 pentru confecționarea șape-
 lelor :
 1 m. saten negru 120 lei
 1 m. saten alb 39
 12 m. tricolor 130
 3 m. m. ață 48
 Total 327
 19/II 1923 Cluj. Elena Ilinoiu

923
 Casca
 Chitanța
 Nr. 600 (șase sute) au primit de la
 D. Crăciunaru pentru confecționarea șee-
 gurilor, din care s'a cheltuit pentru
 următoarele articole :
 19.75 m. tricolor 197.50
 5 m. saten negru 275.00
 2 m. saten alb 70.00
 Total: 542.50 lei
 Elena Ilinoiu

Receipts signed by Elena Ilinoiu: the one on the left is dated 19 February 1923, the one on the right bears no date (CUL-CN, Fond "Petru Maior," Ms. 5988)

CENTRUL STUDENTESC
 "PETRU MAIOR"
 CLUJ - UNIVERSITATE
 No 42 -
 Fraților !
 Cluj, la 11 Februarie 1923.
 Retenuta cu plata
 Dr. W. Berling

Centrul Studentesc "Petru Maior" din Cluj cu onoare Va
 aduce la cunoștința constituirea comitetului său pe anul școlar în curs,
 după cum urmează :
 Președinte : Corne Alexa, student în drept.
 Vice pres. : Alexandru Borda, student în medicina.
 Secr. general : Victor I. Julaș, student în drept.
 Secreți soditate : Nicolai Brîgmaru, student în medicina.
 Asistent : Ionel Căpășan, stud. farmacie.
 Casier : Traian Brăduț, student în litere.
 Controlor : Ioan Trifan, student în medicina.
 Bibliotecar : Coara Anghina Iltian, stud. în litere
 Vice bibliotecar : Ioan Precup, student în drept.
 Membri în comitet : Ghimpu Biseriu, stud. în medicina.
 Avram Birca, stud. în științe.
 Va rugăm și cu această ocazie, să țineți viu contactul cu noi
 informându-ne de cele ce se petrec la Dvoastră.
 Noi deocamdată trebuie să va aducem la cunoștință, ca dărare or-
 ganale superioare de învățământ și conducători politici li-au întales
 lupta noastră și în loc de a sana raul înopriva caruia ne-am ridicat,
 a luat masuri excepționale de rămorose pentru înabusirea manifestatiilor
 noastre.
 Printre altele au suprimat toate organele noastre de publicitate
 "Dacia" "Oua" în Cluj și "Cuvantul Studentesc"
 în București, iar pe mulți din conducătorii studentimii li-a închis. Mai
 mult chiar Senatul Universitar din Cluj prin o hotărâre a decis dizolvarea
 Centrului nostru și trecerea averii și a arhivelor în administrația
 Universității. Această instituție atât de veche - ceată funcționat la Buda-
 peșta 57 ani - și ramunită, nu va înceta însă să existe tomăi în momente
 gâni în toată țara se da o luptă pentru apararea celor mai vitale intere-
 se de neam.
 Când Va aducem aceste la cunoștință nu ne îndoiem căsuti de puțin
 ca și Dvoastră din toate partile, în inima carora trăește tradiția acestui
 Centru, nu veți întârria să ne dați tot concursul în înepărării în cari
 ne măm pentru salvarea Centrului și asocieriale instituții, ce servesc
 aceleasi scop.
 Cu dragoste colegială :
 Secretar general j. Julaș
 Președinte Corne Alexa
 Către Direcția studentilor din Berlin

Notice to the Romanian Students' Association in Berlin, announcing the new committee of the Center, 11 February 1923 (CUL-CN, Fond "Petru Maior," Ms. 5551)