

Trianon in Romania's Contemporary Public Consciousness (1920)

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CRONICA POLITICĂ

Tratatul de pace cu Ungaria. În sfârșit, s'a încheiat pacea și cu Ungaria. Zădărnice au fost toate unelțiile și svârcoțurile oligarției maghiare. Zădărnici toată agitația întreținută atâtă vreme în Elveția, și în timpul din urmă în Italia și Anglia. Zădărnice toate campaniile purtate împotriva noastră în unele consulate și ziare americane. A învins dreptatea. Marele fantaron, *contele Apponyi*, care e unul din politicianii cei mai vinovați ai fostei monarhii austro-ungare, a trebuit să se convingă la adânci bătrânețe, că rabulistica lui nu mai prinde și că întreaga ideologia lor politică a fost un dezastru. La scurtele lui, că în Ungaria independentă nu va mai fi nevoie de o centralizare forțată ca în Ungaria lipită de monarhia austriacă, dusmanul său de vaxcuri, și astfel chestiunea naționalităților se poate deslega bine în cadrele statului maghiar milenar, prezidentul conferenței de pace, d-i *Millerand* a răspuns, că puterile aliate și asociate nu vor uita partea de responsabilitate ce incumbă Ungariei în deslănțuirea războiului mondial și, în general, în politica imperialistă urmată de dubla monarhie. — Ce privește argumentele sale istorice cu frontierele milenare ale statului maghiar, d-i *Millerand* îi spune limpede, că una-i viețea și alta istoria: „O stare de lucruri, ch' ar milenară, nu are drept de existență, dacă e contra justiției”. A întârziat d-i conte și cu plebiacii

litașii nemaghiare se vor mai lăsa anăgite de senele deia Budapesta. Plebiacii acestor naționalități s'a întâmplat în Octomvrie și Noemvrie 1918, când poporește asurpite din dubla monarhie au declarat că se unesc cu frații lor liberi din Italia, România, Cehoslovacia și Jugoslavia. Dispozițiunile tardive ale stăpânirii ungurești n'au putut face să dispară din sulețele convingerora, adânc întemolată pe experiențele politice dureroase, că toate năzuințele politice maghiare erau îndreptate împotriva naționalităților nemaghiare pentru păstrarea situației lor privilegiate, nemeșitate, de pupoi conducător. — S'a tranșat și chestia Ruteniei, alipite la Cehoslovacia, nu la Ungaria, cum speră d-i conte. O asigură nădejde mai poate avea Ungaria, redusă acum la proporțiile ei juste, aceea de a fi primită și ea în societatea naționalităților, dacă va împlini leal obligațiunile impuse de tratatul de pace.

Rezultatul alegerilor parlamentare. Între agitațiunile marșale de obicei au decurs, la stârșitul lui Mai și începutul lui Iunie, noile alegeri parlamentare. Agitațiile erau de proșdăut în momentul când s'a spart solidaritatea și s'a început divizarea pe partide. Cu totul avem până acum 369 deputați, grupăți după partide, precum urmează: Partidul Poporului 214 Federația Democrației Naționale 34 Partidul Național din Ardeal . . . 28 Partidul Tărănăst din Basarabia 23

Transilvania (Sibiu), June 1920.

SOURCE: <http://documente.bcuculuj.ro/web/bibdgit/periodice/transilvania/1920.html>.

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IN THE international scientific literature of the field, one cannot find a study devoted solely to the way the Treaty of Trianon was perceived in the countries located in the vicinity of Hungary.

The initial shock—whether over a relatively short or even somewhat longer term—at what Hungary felt like a “dismemberment” of the country, could be nothing but painful, even acutely so. This reaction must be recognized, accepted and respected with honest lucidity, while perhaps acknowledging a nation’s “right to grieve,” a right that cannot be rejected; however, this kind of right should be accompanied by the mutual acceptance of the principle of the limitations of any right, in conjunction with the rights of the other partners.

These issues did not appear suddenly after the treaty was signed and ratified. The complexity of the negotiations and its clauses, of the internal political evolution of Hungary, including the 1919 communist takeover, came under the intense scrutiny of the public opinion everywhere. The entire period of the preparation and drafting

of the Peace Treaty was accompanied by the preservation of Hungary's last minimal hopes regarding the mitigation of the most sensitive clauses, especially the territorial ones. The necessity of a decisive intervention of the Peace Conference expressed by the well-known "Millerand letter" addressed to Hungary on 6 May 1920, brought about the completion of the process and shattered Hungary's last illusions.

In Romania, on 18 May 1920, an item of information was published regarding the Allies' response to the Hungarian observations on the Peace Treaty, which considered that "the agitated spirits of the Hungarian hornets' nest needed some time to resignedly accept the adamant decisions of the Peace Conference."¹

On 19 May 1920 began the publication of a series of articles and comments on the preparation, content and interpretations of this "Peace with Hungary,"² published by the newspaper *Románul* (The Romanian) in Arad, the most prolific press organ on this topic. The newspaper's permanent foreign correspondent in Budapest sent reports about the street demonstrations and the call of the Hungarian government signed by the champions of Hungarian ultra-chauvinism.

On 20 May 1920, the same correspondent reported on the statements made by the former Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Andrássy the Younger under the headline "Andrássy about the Magyar Peace,"³ and on the emergence of the propaganda newspaper *Nem, Nem, Soha* (No, No, Never)—freely distributed to the population, concluding that "No-nonsense people are convinced of the impossibility of military resistance."

On 25 May 1920, the press communiqué of the Damian Press Agency announced that Hungary had accepted the peace terms.⁴

An interesting correspondence by the same author, published on 26 May 1920, contained information and comments on the "Attitude of Hungary's Germans" in support of maintaining the integrity of Greater Hungary, a position surprisingly shared by some representatives of the Saxons and Swabians living in Romania.⁵

On 27 May 1920, a communiqué from Odorhei (Székelyudvarhely, Oderhellen) informed about the indictment by the Court Martial of the former Hungarian deputy-prefect of the Trei Scaune (Háromszék, Three Seats) County and of the former commander of the Hungarian gendarmerie, for conspiracy and high treason.⁶ Another similar trial took place at the Court Martial in Cluj (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg), for internal and external actions of slandering the Romanian army, and for treason, against a group of Magyar intellectuals.⁷

In Cluj, the magazine *Új Ember* (The New Man), a "critical and political" weekly of the left-wing opposition in Transylvania and Hungary, published on 30 May 1920 the editorial "Signing and Guaranteeing the Peace."⁸ "By signing the Peace Treaty, Hungary must put an end to all these slogans of 'No, no, never,'

marking the end of the imperialist, irredentist politics and the dawning of an age in which peace will be guaranteed by the *government of the Magyar people*.” The positive significance of this Magyar attitude was highlighted in a comment on it, published by *Renașterea română* (The Romanian Renaissance) in Sibiu (Nagy-szeben, Hermannstadt), on the day when the Treaty of Trianon was signed, in the preliminary campaign initiated as a way to promote its rightfulness.⁹

The first signal, fast and consistent, of the way in which the Romanian public reacted to the Treaty of Trianon appeared less than 24 hours after its signing, on 5 June 1920, in the newspaper editorial published by *Dacia* in Bucharest, “Peace with Hungary,” under the signature of Sextil Pușcariu,¹⁰ one of the leading Romanian academics, thoroughly familiar with the realities of Transylvania and Bukovina. The focus of his analysis was on the future of Romanian-Hungarian relations:

Let us not forget that we have a significant number of Magyar citizens with whom we will have to share our daily lives, away from conflicts . . . our future position towards them will depend first and foremost on how they will deal with the situation instituted in the wake of the Peace Treaty coming into force.

The author did not share the concern of some Romanian analysts or commentators regarding the fact that “we have within the borders of the country an irredentist minority that is just waiting for the moment of revenge.”¹¹ Sextil Pușcariu brought in the full force of his personality when he stated that

In a Romania now made Whole, every citizen should know they are able to enjoy all citizenship rights, as individual language and customs are respected . . . but, in our country, there can be no privileges for anyone and our non-Romanian citizens will have to get used to the thought that the Romanian people must acquire all those rights and institutions they were once deprived of.

Such an approach necessarily required creativity and optimism, as “this can be done without curtailing anyone, without impairing either physical wellbeing or national pride.” In this spirit, a horizon based on trust and cooperation could be shaped. Sextil Pușcariu concluded his analytical demonstration in a meaningful way:

*Let us search for all the points of contact with our Magyar fellow citizens, committing ourselves to the common productive work, without pouring salt onto wounds that have not yet closed. We will find them in the fields of science, art, in mutual economic interest. Former national feuds will fade into oblivion.*¹²

This first, immediate, direct echo of the peace with Hungary became an anthological and programmatic text, published in the capital of the new Greater Romania.

In Transylvania, the impact of the event was of special interest. The first general reaction of this kind appeared under the title “The New State of Hungary: The Signing of the Peace Treaty and its Consequences: The New Horizons of Hungary”¹³ in *Renașterea română*, a publication whose director was Eugen Goga, the brother of poet Octavian Goga. After a few brief references to the signing of the treaty, the (anonymous) author did not hesitate to conclude, rather early, that: “In the current situation, Hungary is pitiful. The conditions of the treaty are harsh, but if the Hungarian people pay no heed to those who want to take them back to the wrong paths, they will manage to organize their country . . . Hungary will be able to overcome the hardships.”

On the same day of 6 June 1920, almost immediately after the event, *Tribuna socialistă* (The Socialist Tribune), the mouthpiece of the Socialist Party of Transylvania, Banat and the Hungarian Counties, which appeared every Sunday in Cluj, announced that “Hungary Has Signed the Peace.”

*The Hungarian delegate, with a shaking hand, signed the Peace Treaty. After 9 months of persecution, hesitation and stubbornness of the white terrorists, it was time to sign the peace in order to appease those who believed that the future of Hungary hang on this signature. In the next issue we will resume the topic and elaborate on the signing of the Peace Treaty.*¹⁴

Probably due to the natural backlog of a weekly publication, the editorial never revisited the subject.

In the same vein, on 7 June 1920, *România nouă* (The New Romania), the newspaper of the Society for Citizens’ Education, published the article entitled “How do Hungarians React? The Signing of the Peace Treaty, a Day of National Mourning.”¹⁵ It was the first explicit expression of the realistic understanding of the treaty with Romania, written in from the vantage point of civic educational principles. The Hungarian attitude

is most justifiable for the soul of a people. For, no matter how unfair the form of the state had been . . . no matter how guilty Hungary was for the part it played in the outbreak of the World War, one cannot ask a people to merrily celebrate the day when they signed a document of such national import . . . while a tearful protest in the face of such a historical catastrophe might be more dignified than any manifestations of opportunism or even political cowardice.

On 8 June 1920, the conservative organ *L'Indépendance roumaine* published a severe criticism of an article found in the Italian newspaper *L'Idea nazionale* of 23 May 1920, entitled “La schiantu dei magiari” and another, from *Secolo*, for “their unfair and dangerous attitude.” One should mention their position regarding the necessity of a joint Romanian-Hungarian resistance to the Slavic danger. The Bucharest conservative newspaper considered that it was precisely among the Transylvanians that they would find “the best intermediaries between the two peoples.”¹⁶

On the same day, the daily *Adevărul* (The Truth), under the title “About the Treaty with Hungary,”¹⁷ published a commentary on *Secolo*'s dispatch from Vienna, which evoked the discussions held in Switzerland in March 1920 for the restoration of the Habsburgs in Hungary.

Banatul românesc (The Romanian Banat), a national political newspaper whose director was the activist and publicist Avram Imbroane, published on 8 June the editorial article (unsigned) on “Hungary’s Mourning,” a relevant analysis regarding the Hungarian government’s decree that declared the day of 4 June 1920 as a day of national mourning.

*The leaders of the Hungarian people are again deceiving their countrymen with phantasms, instead of telling them the truth. I might understand the meaning of the Hungarian mourning if it involved the acknowledgement of the mistakes and sins committed over a thousand years of their rule, but . . . the myopic soul of the conceited magnates, their attempts to elicit pity from the entire world are simply ridiculous and likely to arouse hatred rather than heartfelt reconciliation. Forgiveness . . . this is something that the Magyar cannot obtain by spreading hatred and seeking revenge and retaliation . . . the wisest thing that can be done by the Magyars is to cast out of their soul the faith and the hope that the subjugation and exploitation of other nations might be still possible . . . For us, the Magyar mourning will be a powerful incentive to close our ranks and strengthen ourselves, whilst for them, this might continue to be a source of future disasters.*¹⁸

In the same vein, *Drapelul* (The Flag) of Lugoj (Lugos, Lugosch) published an article on the “Future Army of Hungary.”¹⁹

“Scotus Viator and Peace with Hungary,” an article published in *Banatul*,²⁰ informed readers about R. W. Seton-Watson’s article published in the *New Europe* magazine about the harmful influence of Hungarian propaganda in England. The editorial staff of the Romanian publication expressed “thanks and gratitude to this friend of the Romanians.”

On 9 June 1920, the newspaper *România* of Cluj, the mouthpiece of the People’s Party, published the article “Peace with Hungary” under the signature

of Constantin Albu.²¹ “Finally, after a few months of dithering, on Friday, 4 June, the Hungarians signed the peace . . . All their attempts, therefore, were thwarted and with their heads down, the Hungarians signed the peace that gave to the peoples the right to the lands they were entitled to.” In the same issue of the newspaper, under the title “Two Worlds, Bucharest–Budapest,”²² there appeared a comment and an update from the “Notes of a Passerby,” written by Octavian Goga in 1911.

Another illustrative text for the contemporary perception of the treaty in Romania appeared on 9 June 1920, unsigned, in the same *România* newspaper, under the title “A Day of Mourning for Hungary.”²³ His author was a knowledgeable person, fully familiar with the topic.

The treaty will weigh heavy on the history of this people . . . This day is rightly considered as a day of national mourning throughout Hungary . . . Of course, we will respect the solemnity of this sad day in Hungary. We are a people who endured too much not to know the pain of defeat and the supreme balm of consolation. But we think that this treaty . . . is merely the fulfillment of a historical sanction. We think that the nationalities of Hungary have experienced harsher times . . .

However, in his considerations, the editor attempted to turn to the present days and to future prospects.

By revisiting these painful memories, on this sad day for Hungary, we cannot refrain from suggesting to our neighbors a little bit of wisdom in the days to come. The experience of the past was too painful to be easily forgotten. History does not forgive any of the sins of the past and the sins of arrogant Hungary are too many and too old to be atoned for and allow them to once again foster the hope of mad and futile revenge.

Indeed, from the immediate perspective of the Treaty of Trianon, such a conclusion seemed acceptable and plausible but, unfortunately, the retrospective of the treaty only a few decades later invalidated it.

In the same vein of general analyses or comments, the *Dacia* newspaper in Bucharest published on 9 June 1920 an interesting editorial signed with the initials A. B., probably those of writer Ion Al. Brătescu-Voinești, entitled “Hungarian Innocence.”²⁴ The author challenged the political theory that ascribed all misfortunes to the old regimes and created the illusion that the new regimes would be sufficient guarantees for the future. “The wave of humanitarianism, beautiful but belated, which has engulfed us, makes us take a superficial look at this false argument . . .” The author referred more explicitly to “Béla Kun’s Hungary and Horthy’s Hungary,” noting that “in today’s grim flying of flags in

Budapest, we see only the agitation of the same thoughts and mindsets of former Hungarian regimes. Will there ever be a real change in the political institution of this state? That remains to be seen. Until then, we cannot be moved . . . ”

Another lengthy but unsigned editorial, entitled “Hungary Signed the Peace,” also appeared on 9 June 1920 in the newspaper *Patria* (The Homeland) of Cluj, the organ of the Romanian National Party, whose director was the writer Ion Agârbiceanu.

The conscience of humanity could not accept that the war that spelt such a horrible reality might beget a peace that is not derived from reality . . . We were so convinced of the legitimacy of our rights . . . that we started to settle down the way one does at home, with no intention of upsetting the Hungarians who live with us, but because we felt responsible for the government of a country we knew to be henceforth our own.

In contrast to this, “instead of recognizing from the beginning that another era begins . . . and join at the right time the ranks of the peoples who understand that rivers never flow back to their sources, the Hungarians thought they could make time stand still.”²⁵ There was still enough hope that

*today, after the signing of the peace, maybe they will open their eyes wider and will see the reality . . . they will see that the nation living by their side is not their enemy, but a people that have been oppressed for centuries. The historical decisions made by the Romanians will convince the Hungarians about our true feelings and principles of life . . . neither shall we rejoice, nor shall we toll the bells . . . We declare in all sincerity and with heartfelt affection for our fellow citizens of a different nationality that the time of national oppression is gone! Join us in the common work for the progress of the homeland and the wellbeing of all its citizens.*²⁶

The greatest Romanian historian and one of the emblematic cultural-political figures militating for Romanian national unity, the “apostle of the nation,” Nicolae Iorga, authored the editorial entitled “Peace with Hungary,” published on 9 June 1920 in *Neamul românesc* (The Romanian People), the newsletter of the Nationalist-Democratic Party, the mouthpiece of the Union for National Democracy, whose director he was. The territory of old Hungary

has been reduced strictly to its national boundaries set in keeping with the principles of justice . . . and with the new spirit that reigns in international life. Instead, Hungary is offered the formal assurance that the League of Nations . . . will be able to ensure that any former Hungarian national compelled today by the fatal result

of old conquests and impositions to live in the shadow of another flag, will be provided with whatever he might need to carry on with living undisturbed according to the traditions of his people, whose ethos he might fully cherish.²⁷

Iorga also expressed his disagreement with the disproportionate Hungarian attitude that went as far as demanding “the reconquest of the old borders.”

I do not speak as a Romanian, but as a man imbued with ethical principles, aware of the material needs of our time, and I can dispassionately state—as I am fully acquainted with the beautiful past and the ambitious culture of the Hungarian people and I am saddened by any undeserved blow dealt to any human being—that the Hungarian people have to do something quite different from recapturing their external borders, namely: restore their inner soul . . . and they will understand that a people does not map out the extent of a territory which they cannot fill and their energy goes well beyond state borders. The Hungarians from Transylvania, from Bačka and from Slovakia can be kept in contact with their origin through an influx of civilization . . . which demands a peace of mind supported by the conscience of what is right for oneself and for others. And then, in the interest of the greater human civilization, we shall be able to understand each other quite well.²⁸

Universul, the Bucharest daily, also underlined, on 10 June 1920, the significance of the fact that

instead of the artificial state that existed until 1918, we are left with a Hungary that reflects the number and significance of the Hungarian people, that is, a national state that will be able to live and will be able to develop quietly, if the people called upon to lead it realize the new kind of European establishment, which will be able to make up for the shortages and be capable to lead the Hungarian people onto the paths of the true European civilization . . . Will the Hungarians take this path? So far, there are not many encouraging signs . . .

In such a situation, the optimistic outlook was encouraged by the new realities of international law and international relations.

We cannot fail to realize the state of mind of the Magyar people, who are now paying for big and burdensome mistakes. It takes some time until spirits are completely appeased, no doubt. We believe, however, that Hungary, which no earlier than last year tested its might against us, did not come out of this without having drawn any useful conclusions.²⁹

România nouă (The New Romania) resumed the debate on these problems in the issue of 10 June 1920. In a first article, referring to “Our Neighbors,” the mouthpiece of the Society for Citizens’ Education commented—of course critically—on the emergence of incidents at the Romanian-Hungarian and the Romanian-Bulgarian borders. The delay in the signing of the Peace Treaties was erroneously attributed by the newspaper to some of the Allied Powers, including England and France.³⁰ An article whose tone was more scathing with respect to Hungary appeared in the Bucharest daily *Adevărul* on 10 June 1920.³¹

The main detailed informative account on the solemnity of the signing of the Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary, held in the afternoon of Friday, 4 June 1920, in the small Trianon Palace in Versailles, appeared on 11 June 1920 in the *Dacia* newspaper in Bucharest under the title “At Versailles: The Treaty with Hungary: Impressions: From Our Special Envoy,” signed by Gabriel Dichter.³² This comprehensive description of the event was then taken over in different forms—synthetically, partially and so on—by other Bucharest news outlets as well as throughout the country. The author outlined the sharp contrast between the atmosphere of huge general interest, the crowds, the high officials and the press, which all required special organizing measures on the occasion of the signing of the first and most important of all peace treaties at Versailles, the one with Germany on 28 June 1918, and the much lower interest in the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. The informative value of the account written by Romania’s special envoy lay in the enumeration of several dozen personalities, representatives, newspapers and public figures who came especially from Romania, France and other areas to attend the event. Equally interesting was the description of the venue chosen for this event, from an architectural, decorative and ceremonial point of view, as well as the impressions referring to the Hungarian signatories of the treaty, and the somewhat nervous attitudes of some Magyar members of the public. The report showed, of course, the author’s subjective perception, and some impressions may be questionable, but he generally provided a conclusive picture of the facts reported. For the purposes of our study, this report is circumstantial in nature, since it took a while after the signing for the Treaty of Trianon to pervade the public consciousness of contemporary Romanians. The rational, deeper perception was particularly influenced by the possibility of a textual analysis of the treaty, after its official publication, in the autumn of 1920, and by its corroboration it with similar or corresponding aspects from other countries, especially from Hungary.

On 12 June 1920, the liberal weekly *Glasul Bihorului* (The Voice of Bihor) from Oradea (Nagyvárad, Großwardein) published the article “Peace Signed with Hungary” authored by Teodor Popa, who, underlining the importance of

the act, declared: “Let us thank the Heavenly Throne, let us be humble in our souls and full of brotherly love for the nations living by our side.”³³

On the same day, under the signature of Ion Pescariu,³⁴ the *Turda* Sunday popular gazette also highlighted the major historical significance of the treaty for contemporary world history.

The popular leaflet *Libertatea* (Liberty) of Orăștie (Szászváros, Broos)³⁵ made clear its position on the event by choosing to publish a mock obituary.

The Hungarian country stuck a cross at the head . . . of its own grave, dug during its more than 1000 years-old illness. After its godmother Germany and its god-daughter Bulgaria tried in vain to keep her on her feet, to prop her up during the Great War, there came the great doctors, Romania’s soldiers, and closed her lids forever! Now she has signed her peace, like a lock to the door of a grave from which she will never rise again. Dust to heavy dust, for her sins were great.

On 13 June 1920, the special Budapest correspondent of the Arad newspaper *Românul* reported on the news publicized by the Viennese press. The news referred to the discovery made by the Austrian security organs regarding a monarchist plot organized by Magyar officers who were preparing a memo addressed to the Peace Conference, as a “Protest against Hungary’s dismemberment,” in the hope of reuniting Vienna and Budapest “under the glorious scepter of the Habsburg family” though a real coup d’état.³⁶

Also on 13 June 1920, *Gazeta poporului* (The People’s Gazette), a political-cultural leaflet from Sibiu, founded by Nicolae Bălan, Silviu Dragomir and Ion Broșu, published a comprehensive editorial entitled “Romanians and Hungarians,” stating:

*We Romanians, as good Christians, do not want the death of sinners, nor do we rejoice in their plight. We will not treat them the way they used to treat us when they were our masters. We will not begrudge them, we will not prevent them from following the path to honest and diligent living. Neither their language, nor their faith in God. Let us refrain from repeating the errors lying on Hungary’s grave.*³⁷

In *Tribuna* (The Tribune) of Oradea, whose owner and manager was the publicist Gh. Tulbure, there appeared an unsigned article, titled “Peace with Hungary,” which outlined the more delicate issues of the Romanian-Hungarian relations of that time.

Of course, we all realize the overwhelming reluctance with which Hungary had to comply with the ruling . . . The dejection of our former enemies moves us . . . we

*could have boasted, gloated, celebrated with great frenzy . . . the way they did when the Treaty of Bucharest was concluded. However, we did not do it . . . , we were just happy to enjoy this peace . . . Let them be the usurpers they are, we must show respect for their mourning.*³⁸

In its turn, *Unirea* (The Union) gazette of Blaj (Balázsfalva, Blasendorf) published on 15 June 1920 an article called “Peace with Hungary,” underlining the idea that this act “banishes the sorrows of the past and opens the broad prospects of the future . . . [when] we are called upon to write a new story in complete freedom.” The article expressed gratitude towards the ancestors who made the historical act possible. In this respect, it was natural for *Unirea* to state “that in preparing today’s joy, our Greek Catholic Church and especially our town of Blaj have their good share, from Inochentie Micu to the present day.”³⁹

The newspaper *Románul* published the essential excerpts⁴⁰ from the official text of the Trianon Peace Treaty with Hungary regarding Romania, i.e. articles 45 and 46, which regulated the territorial and border issues, as well as article 47 regarding the financial obligations incumbent on Romania. Of special significance was the publication of Title VI of the treaty, concerning the protection of minorities (Articles 54, 55, 56 and 59).

Under the title “The Fate of Hungary: Peace with Hungary: The Hungarian Opposition: Their Attempts so Far: What the Future Holds,” the morning newspaper *Románimea* (The Romanian Nation) reproduced “almost entirely an extremely interesting article” published in the Italian newspaper *L’Idea nazionale*, from which we shall quote here the warning placed at the end of the text.

*With one hand Hungary signs the peace and with the other spins the tale of a great reactionary plot that aims to engulf the whole of Europe, initially forming a kind of ante bellum status quo in the Danube countries. Let’s pay attention to this threat. Not only are the fruits of victory at stake, but the victory itself.*⁴¹

The sparkling Italian wit evoked the desperate attempts made by Hungarians so that

*either through Bolshevism or through flirtation with the Entente Powers, in the guise of mock Francophiles, then mock Anglophiles, or mock Italianophiles, they might obtain the continuation of the Magyar chauvinist regime. They even advocated an individual union with Romania, a merger with Yugoslavia, an alliance with Poland, with the devil or with God, with the West or with the East, anything that might keep the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen intact.*⁴²

On 20 June 1920, *România nouă*, the newspaper of the Society for Citizen Education, featured a headline printed in large bold type: “The Triumph of Justice: Hungary in its True Borders: How the Treaty was Signed.” The article presented the new map of Central Europe and reproduced the text of the article belonging to “Stephen Lausanne, one of the journalists who in the war years supported the Romanian cause, who gives an account of what happened on the occasion of the signing.”⁴³ This was a useful informative text to supplement the one published in *Dacia* on 11 June 1920⁴⁴ with additional information received in the meantime.

On 23 June 1920, the newspaper *Românul* of Arad denounced the “Persecution against Romanians in Hungary” which, in the context of the Treaty of Trianon, was a harbinger of an acutely felt concern—considering the perspective of future Romanian-Hungarian relations—a concern that has endured, in some respects, up to this day. The Romanians living in Hungary started to be inoculated with the spurious theory that after the union of Transylvania with Romania they were severed from the other Transylvanian Romanians with whom they had lived together until 1918. As for the persecutions, stringently topical, they were particularly serious, including

repeated interventions of the Allied Mission in Budapest addressed to the Hungarian government, resulting in harsher provisions and systematic persecutions against all Romanians. This state of affairs accounted for the permanent increase in the number of Romanian refugees coming from Hungary . . . The prisons are packed with inmates, hungry and beaten, in handcuffs, shackled to walls like cattle.

After 4–5 weeks of such detention the prisoners would be taken to be interrogated, sorted, while

the Romanian and Slovak politicians are being court martialled in Szeged or Debrecen. The executions are daily and public . . . all the Slovak priests—the story goes—were taken to jail, in chains and beaten. The Romanian churches are closed. The Romanian denominational schools were closed down by the gendarmerie. The children of the Romanians were left without books this year. The Romanian population from the Bichiş [Békés] County is still looking forward to the return of the Romanian army.⁴⁵

The same newspaper issue reported on “Agitations for the Re-attachment of the Ruthenian Plateau.” The Budapest correspondent of the newspaper *Közélet* of Satu Mare (Szatmárnémeti, Sathmar) described “the great agitation in the Hungarian capital for the re-annexation by Hungary of the Romanian Maramureş

County and of the Czechoslovak counties of Bereg, Ung, and Zemplén,” for which the Hungarian government set up a General Secretariat ranked as a ministry and led by a certain Miklós Kutkafalvy, an alleged Ruthenian, who was also the president of the League for the Territorial Integrity of Hungary. The *Közélet* text was reprinted in the newspaper *Új Világ* (New World) of Cluj, which sparked off the Romanian puzzlement that the press censorship officially in force in Romania according to the internal and external norms of the time had not done its duty in this case. The critical commentary of the Romanian newspaper was a clear statement in favor of respecting the legal rights of minorities, within the general framework of the national interests of the Romanian state.⁴⁶

Under these circumstances, some Hungarian newspapers in Cluj called for the Hungarians in Transylvania to stay put and not leave for Hungary, which—in the subtext—could also be considered as expressing a hope in the return of the Hungarian rule in Transylvania. The *Libertatea* gazette mentioned this interpretation, emphasizing the Romanian-Hungarian compatibility towards a coexistence in Transylvania, which was not a sign of Romanian weakness. The title “Have a Good Stay!” expressed the positive attitude of the Romanians.⁴⁷ Of interest is also the reproduction of Stephen Lausanne’s article in the *Turda* newspaper, under the title “Peace with Hungary,” which the editorial staff explained as follows: “Some of our members do not believe that the peace has been signed and now they are devising all sorts of theories. To reassure these skeptics, we shall reproduce an article published by a French newspaper.”⁴⁸

In its latest references to the atmosphere and the situation of those days, the newspaper *Românul* of Arad published “A Response to ‘Új Világ,’” which advocated for “bringing the two peoples closer together,”⁴⁹ as well as the note entitled “Take Ionescu about Hungary,” which stated that “until the Peace Treaty with Hungary is ratified, one cannot resume the diplomatic relations with Budapest.”⁵⁰

Last but not least, we should mention the unsigned “Political Chronicle” published by *Transilvania*, the venerable magazine of the Astra Association of Transylvanian Romanians, in the issue of June 1920, with the very title “The Peace Treaty with Hungary.” The text did not intend to analyze and comment on the complexity of the Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary signed at Trianon. The article referred to Hungarian agitations in Switzerland, Italy, England, the USA, and to Count Albert Apponyi’s complete failure in invoking historical arguments, firmly rejected by Millerand. As to the question of “the plebiscite, this happened in October and November 1918, when the peoples oppressed by the dual monarchy declared that they were united with their free brothers from Italy, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.”⁵¹ After presenting the details, the text brought to the fore the con-

sequences of the Treaty of Trianon. “Hungary, now reduced to its just size, has only one hope left, that of being received in the League of Nations, if it loyally fulfills the obligations imposed by the Peace Treaty.”⁵²

It is not by chance that this idea represented the essence of the general, historical and political conclusion expressed in the most valuable Romanian cultural-scientific journal in Transylvania, one of the most representative publications in the whole of Greater Romania. It can also be considered as a credible reflection of the contemporary Romanian perception of the Treaty of Trianon.

On 4 July 1920, *Gazeta poporului* of Sibiu announced the publication of a booklet whose author was Ion I. Lapedatu, which was dedicated to some financial provisions found in the Treaty of Trianon (regulating the takeover of Hungarian public debts, conversion, guarantees, etc.).⁵³

FOR THE entry into force of the Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary, the signatory states had to ratify it, after which the Treaty was to be implemented. The ratification was considered to have been accomplished from the moment when the ratification instruments were submitted by Hungary and several signatory states; after this procedure, the other signatory states could carry out the ratifications without any further procedural delays. Ratification by Hungary, which was the subject of the Treaty of Trianon, was the main condition of the general ratification.

Romania ratified the three main Peace Treaties (with Germany, Austria, and Hungary) in a single extraordinary session of the two Houses of Parliament, in August 1920. The debate on the Peace Treaty with Austria, in whose drafting Romania had a contribution of its own, and the debate on the Peace Treaty with Hungary were more extensive than that on the Treaty with Germany, both in duration and in substance, due to their territorial implications regarding Romania (Bukovina, Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, Maramureș, respectively). The Treaty of Trianon sparked a heated debate that brought forth even some threats of rejection (on account of such issues like the whole of the Banat county, the Romanian-Hungarian border line, historical Maramureș), which placed the very concept of ratification at risk. In that delicate situation, the government and the opposition pledged to act together for the much needed national political clarification which elevated the two leaders, Take Ionescu and Iuliu Maniu, to the status of true men of state rather than mere politicians. Thus, the superior *raison d'état* and the supreme imperative of international peace were recognized, which made the ratification mandatory, above and beyond the “shady parts” of the treaty.⁵⁴

As expected, the ratification by Hungary of the Treaty of Trianon was the most difficult, dragging on until 26 July 1921, which thus became the official

date of the effective, general ratification. In order to fulfill this mandatory objective, particularly consistent political and diplomatic, domestic and international efforts were required, down to the individual level of those involved, including pressures of the Allied Powers, procedural concessions, apparent adjustments, to “package” the vote with that on other laws.⁵⁵

One of the significant consequences of the Treaty of Trianon was revealed after a necessary interval, on 9 June 1921, by the literary-scientific journal *Avântul* (The Impetus) of Buzău, in its inspired collaboration with poet Emil Isac from Cluj, an undisputed, hands-on connoisseur of the new Transylvanian realities, which he encapsulated in the slogan that in Greater Romania “Magyars will remain Magyars,” and there can be no talk about a “Pan-Romanian” orientation at the expense of the Magyars.⁵⁶

The Peace Conference and the Peace Treaties drawn up at that time were contemporary with the emergence in world history of the new communist political regime and of the Third Communist International (Comintern). In this context, the Treaty of Trianon was tangential in principle with the Comintern, but directly intersected the political communist policy regarding Romania, declared a quasi-imperialistic country that annexed foreign territories. Soviet Russia claimed Bessarabia, challenging its union with Romania, while the Comintern extended its political orientation against Romania to all the Romanian historical provinces reunited in 1918, actively campaigning for the “right to self-determination of the oppressed people of Romania,” especially those in Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania, Dobruja, and the Quadrilateral. Romania would be targeted by the revisionist policy of Hungary, the USSR, and Bulgaria, which led to its territorial losses of 1940. Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, Horthy Hungary, communist USSR and an ambivalent Bulgaria (leaning towards both the USSR and Germany) tried to overthrow the international system established in 1919. The most dangerous enemy of Romania was the Comintern, which maintained its orientation through its internal instrument, the Romanian Communist Party.

In such a general framework, the Romanian national political consciousness regarding the historical function of the Treaty of Trianon had an active, specific, special significance. All these data and aspects give us a comprehensive picture of the first historical phase of Trianon’s memory,⁵⁷ the immediate, direct one (1920), with all the interconnections it generated.

Until this very day, each of the ensuing phases of Trianon’s memory (1938, 1945, 1966, 1990) have added their own specificity, including inherently contradictory aspects.



Notes

1. *Banatul* (Timișoara) 2, 55 (18 May 1920): 3
2. *Românul* (Arad) 9, 104 (19 May 1920): 2.
3. *Ibid.*, 9, 105 (20 May 1920): 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 9, 108 (25 May 1920): 1.
5. *Ibid.*, 9, 109 (26 May 1920): 1.
6. *Ibid.*, 9, 110 (27 May 1920): 2.
7. *Ibid.*, 9, 112 (29 May 1920): 3.
8. *Új Ember* (Cluj) 1, 10 (30 May 1920): 2–3.
9. *Renașterea română* (Sibiu) 2, 385 (4 June 1920): 1.
10. *Dacia* (Bucharest) 2, 145 (5 June 1920): 1.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Renașterea română* 2, 386 (6 June 1920): 3.
14. *Tribuna socialistă* (Cluj) 16, 23 (6 June 1920): 2.
15. *România nouă* (Bucharest) 1, 93 (7 June 1920): 1.
16. *L'Indépendance roumaine* (Bucharest) 44, 13531 (8 June 1920): 1.
17. *Adevărul* (Bucharest) 33, 11090 (8 June 1920): 1.
18. *Banatul românesc* (Timișoara) 2, 57 (8 June 1920): 1.
19. *Drapelul* (Lugoj) 20, 170 (8 June 1920): 2.
20. *Banatul* 2, 74 (9 June 1920): 1–2.
21. *România* (Cluj) 1, 37 (9 June 1920): 1.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Dacia* (Bucharest) 2, 148 (9 June 1920): 1.
25. *Patria* (Cluj) 2, 121 (9 June 1920): 1.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Neamul românesc* (Bucharest) 15, 118 (9 June 1920): 1.
28. *Ibid.*
29. “Pacea cu Ungaria,” *Universul* (Bucharest) 38, 142 (10 June 1920): 1.
30. *România nouă* 1, 95 (10 June 1920): 1.
31. *Adevărul* 33, 11101 (10 June 1920): 1.
32. *Dacia* 2, 150 (11 June 1920): 1.
33. *Glasul Bihorului* (Oradea) 1, 24 (12 June 1920): 1.
34. *Turda* 2, 23 (12 June 1920): 1.
35. *Libertatea* (Orăștie) 18, 22 (10 June 1920): 3.
36. *Românul* 9, 123 (13 June 1920): 1–2.
37. *Gazeta poporului* (Sibiu) 3, 23 (13 June 1920): 1.
38. *Tribuna* (Oradea) 2, 28 (13 June 1920): 2.
39. *Unirea* (Blaj) 30, 43 (15 June 1920): 2.
40. *Românul* 9, 125 (16 June 1920): 3.
41. *Românimea* (Bucharest) 3, 455 (18 June 1920): 1.
42. *Ibid.*

43. *România nouă* 1, 104 (20 June 1920): 1–2.
44. See note 32 above.
45. *Românul* 9, 131 (23 June 1920): 1.
46. *Ibid.*, 3.
47. *Libertatea* 18, 24 (24 June 1920): 1.
48. *Turda* 2, 25 (27 June 1920): 1–2.
49. *Românul* 9, 134 (26 June 1920): 1.
50. *Ibid.*, 9, 139 (2 July 1920): 2.
51. *Transilvania* (Sibiu) 6, 6 (June 1920): 254.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Gazeta poporului* 2, 26 (4 July 1920): 3.
54. Alexandru Porțeanu, “Ratificările Tratatului de la Trianon.” *Academica* (Bucharest) 23, 6 (272) (June 2013): 81–84.
55. *Ibid.* It is generally considered that the historiography on the ratification of peace treaties is insufficiently developed.
56. *Avântul* (Buzău) 1, 1 (9 June 1921): 3.
57. Alexandru Porțeanu, “Fazele istorice ale memoriei Trianonului,” *Academica* 29, 4–5 (342–343) (April–May 2019): 100–103.

Abstract

Trianon in Romania’s Contemporary Public Consciousness (1920)

After the attention paid to the drawing up of the Peace Treaty with Hungary, the first pieces of information on its signing reached Romania less than 24 hours after the event, followed by the publication of the articles in the treaty related to Romania. Analyses and commentaries were published in numerous press organs and were signed by outstanding personalities. They stressed the justness and importance of the treaty for Romania, showing a concern for the promotion of positive Romanian-Hungarian relations, without neglecting certain less favorable Hungarian manifestations in relation to those prospects.

Keywords

Peace Treaty of Trianon, Romanian press, Transylvania, Hungary, minority rights