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The Impact of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution on Institutional Censorship in Communist Romania

Abstract: The aim of this article is to tackle the evolution of the censorship mechanisms in communist Romania under the impact of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, mainly by examining documents issued by the institutional censorship (DGPT). It attempts to give an accurate picture of the Romanian-Hungarian cultural-political relations mainly after October-November 1956 by analyzing the exchange of publications between Romania and Hungary, the regulations that stipulated the import of books, the subscriptions to periodicals, the press, as well as the dynamics of the circulation of ideas between the two countries, especially between the intellectual milieus, preeminently around 1956.

Keywords: Censorship; Literature; Romanian Hungarians; 1956 Hungarian Revolution; Transylvania's Hungarian Writers; Gheorghiu-Dej Regime; National Minorities.

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The aim of this article is to tackle the evolution of the censorship mechanisms in communist Romania under the impact of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, mainly by examining documents issued by the General Directorate of the Press and Printings (DGPT, *Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor*, in Romanian, the official name of the institutional censorship). The study also uses materials of the Romanian communist *Agitprop* and of the Science and Culture Section of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) Central Committee, as well as oral testimonies, in an attempt to give an accurate picture of the Romanian-Hungarian cultural-political relations mainly after October-November 1956. The analysis focuses on the exchange of publications between Romania and Hungary, the regulations that stipulated the import of books, the subscriptions to periodicals, the press, as well as the dynamics of the circulation of ideas between the two countries, especially between the intellectual milieus, preeminently around 1956-1958. The cases of censored and banned Hungarian authors are approached with a view to highlighting the significant changes assumed by the DGPT leadership regarding the national

question. Finally, the article outlines the priorities of post-1956 censorship with regard to literature written in Hungarian and emphasizes the impact of changes in the official perception on the historical writing in late 1950s and early 1960s Romania.

First of all, the analysis of the documents issued by the communist censorship is quite significant since, according to historian Liliana Corobca, “censorship was the third most important institution, in terms of political relevance, after the party and the *Securitate* (Romanian political police), which contributed in a major way to the establishment and consolidation of the communist regime”¹. The DGPT was created in 1949 and it imitated the Soviet censorship procedures². Secondly, such a topic regarding the impact of the 1956 Hungarian revolution on institutional censorship in Romania has been less discussed so far, the focus generally being either on the political dimension (the Romanian-Hungarian bilateral relations; the student revolts caused by the Hungarian revolution), or on subsequent events related to the 1956 moment (the dissolution of the “János Bolyai” University in 1959³; the 1961 reorganization of the Hungarian Autonomous Region⁴, etc.).

The Exchange of Publications Between Romania and Hungary, 1947-1956

Before dealing with some significant cases of Hungarian speaking writers who were victims of censorship (Samuel Goldenberg, Györe Imre, Mária Tamás, Kelemen Lajos, László Szábedi, László Földes, Bodor Pál⁵), I will address the important topic represented by the exchange of publications between

Romania and Hungary, that is, those regulations that stipulated the import of books, subscriptions, etc., as well as the dynamics of the circulation of ideas between the two countries, mainly between the intellectual milieus, especially around 1956. The examples are much more numerous and the documentation is extensive. We selected only the cases that seemed most relevant in order to depict and emphasize the prominent changes in the post-November 1956 censorship procedures. First of all, regarding this moment, it should be mentioned that in the spring of 1956 Transylvania and Bucharest, in particular, were receiving much information about the cultural-political debates in neighboring Hungary, generated by the Petöfi Circle. The latter was considered either hotbed of ideas preparing the Hungarian Thaw, or one of the main factors leading to the October 1956 Hungarian revolution⁶. Even after Stalin’s death in March 1953, there was a kind of relaxation combined with an expectation that the ideological terror imposed by the state party would be surpassed (in the summer of 1953 the Imre Nagy government in Hungary suggested that it would tolerate certain social categories which had been subjected to discrimination in the past). The growing interest in reforming the communist systems, generated by both the information on the secret report of Nikita Khrushchev read at the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union⁷, and the news about the political unrest in Poland, overlapped with this expectation. The intellectual Szilágyi András declared in June 1956 in front of an *Agitprop* control brigade, which had descended in Cluj, “that he knows many languages and reads the press from several countries [and] that the troubles and discussions that occur among the intellectuals of

Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary are *healthy* and *welcome*"⁸ from a cultural and ideological point of view.

The ideological teams sent to Transylvania by the Bucharest-based *Agitprop* noticed the tension within intellectual milieus; the *Agitprop* decided to send more control brigades starting from May-June 1956 in order to investigate the situation at the scene. Therefore, the party activists who came to Transylvania had numerous discussions, mainly in Cluj, with Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals, writers, and artists. Based on these interactions, the ideological brigades drafted reports addressed to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RWP⁹. In addition, the ideological departments of the RWP's Central Committee ordered other specialized reports mainly focused on the situation of the literature written in Hungarian in Romania; in parallel the *Agitprop* alerted the censorship structures, urging them to increase their ideological vigilance.

Secondly, it must be said that a difficult task of the Romanian governments after 6 March 1945 was the reconciliation with Hungary and the relaxation of Romanian-Hungarian relations. In 1947, a bilateral cultural agreement was signed; it was formally adopted in April 1948 at the same time with the ratification of the Cultural Cooperation Convention between Romania and Hungary. The two states were now fully integrated into the Soviet-type political system and assumed at least officially the proletarian internationalism hostile to any form of nationalism. The two governments solemnly declared that they were committed to removing from their cultural, scientific and educational manifestations all aspects which were likely to harm the

dignity of the other people. Another commitment included the mutual support regarding lecturers, journalistic trips, cultural exchanges, involving scientists, artists, technicians, educators, students, scholarships, books, and scientific, literary, or artistic publications. The Cultural convention also stipulated that: "The two countries want to make sure that, in the future, in the textbooks or in any printings, everything that would lead to the distortion or falsification of the reality and that would present in an unfavorable light the other country will be avoided"¹⁰. The convention mentioned the possibility of revision of textbooks and of other printings in order to solve litigious problems. These agreements had to be renewed periodically and it was based on them that the import of books, from Hungary to Romania, functioned. According to several documents, this import had reached considerable proportions in the mid-1950s, including both Hungarian (Russian) translations and cultural or political periodicals.

In 1949, a Romanian cultural top bureaucrat, Mihail Novicov (member of the interwar communist underground), complained at a meeting of the *Agitprop* with the Publishing Houses' representatives that many translations from Russian published in Hungary were brought to Romania and this kind of intra-socialist book circulation was undermining communist Romania's own translation program¹¹.

The Petöfi Circle and the Danger of Ideological Contagion

This problem disturbed again the *Agitprop* officials in February 1956, after the launching of the secret report of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. The Gheorghe

Gheorghiu-Dej regime in Romania was very reluctant to align itself with the process of de-Stalinization and avoided assuming a real cultural-ideological thaw. Even Russian translations, unauthorized by the Bucharest-based *Agitprop* and coming in Romania via Hungary, were considered an ideological danger by the leadership of the RWP. However, throughout 1956, the circulation of ideas was very intense between the two countries and even Romanians who did not know the Hungarian language were informed, through various intermediaries and through translated texts, about the political and cultural developments in Hungary. In particular, the debates generated at the Petöfi Circle meetings came to the knowledge of the Romanian intellectuals and especially the Romanian writers, some texts being translated in the editorial offices of the literary publishing houses and publications, not only from Transylvania, but also from Bucharest. Mihai Şora, former editor-in-chief of the State Publishing House for Literature and Art (ESPLA), recalls that:

The Hungarians, for example, were communists in their own way. See, for example, the publications of the 'Petöfi Circle', which I have received, when I was editor-in-chief at the main publishing house [ESPLA], even in 1956. We translated such publications into Romanian and these subversive papers were circulated inside our publishing house. But they were not commented in public. [...] Those texts provoked a continuous debate among us, but nobody from outside knew about this¹².

However, after Stalin's death, but mainly after Khrushchev's Secret Report,

the Romanian communists surrounding Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej mimicked "democratization", openness, and weakening political censorship, while they suggested an apparent attentive care and protectiveness for the national minorities, especially the Hungarians¹³. Nevertheless, what characterized the effective governmental actions was implementing restrictions on minorities' rights, regarding the access to education (mainly by reducing the number of schools in Hungarian language, for example)¹⁴.

The Hungarian minority (preeminently the intellectual milieu) received attention in May-June 1956, when contradictory cultural-ideological discussions in neighboring Hungary were evident. Some Party activists had begun blaming the Hungarian intellectual elite for unjustified dissatisfaction related both to the shortage of textbooks, the danger of reducing the language teaching in Hungarian¹⁵, and unreasonable claims regarding the solving of the national problem from a Marxist-Leninist point of view. In order to receive the most complete information and to evaluate the reactions of the Hungarian elite in Romania, high dignitaries and heads of ideological sectors such as Miron Constantinescu, Leonte Răutu, Janos Fazekas, Constanţa Beşcu went to Transylvania in order to attend the assemblies organized by the Hungarian intellectuals. But, more importantly, they had to control the Cluj-based Hungarian minority's cultural and educational institutions¹⁶.

Blaming the Hungarian "Irredentism"

The Romanian communist officials' suspicions about the existence in Hungary and among the Hungarian elite

of attitudes instigating to inter-ethnic tensions and irredentism peaked at the end of October 1956. The reluctance and even the hostility towards the national minorities, especially towards the Hungarians, reached its climax in October-November 1956. First, even after 4 November 1956, the communist regime in Bucharest considered the Romanians and Hungarians in Romania less ideologically, culturally and politically prepared to read and have access to a potentially explosive and subversive literature for the political system (even the literature approved by the communist authorities of the János Kádár regime). As a consequence, the political censorship was guided to act as such. Therefore, Romanian communist censors banned several works and books addressing the issue of the 1956 revolution, although they had been approved by the Kádár regime. There were also exceptions, see for example: *The Role of Counter-revolutionary Forces in the October 1956 events in Hungary*, Vol. I-II, edited by the Information Office of the Council of Ministers of the Hungarian People's Republic, Bucharest, State Publishing House for Political Literature, 1957. However, the Romanian edition adapted some passages: for example, about one of the communist 'martyrs', Fodor Pál, it was said that "he was born in 1925 in Măgheruș commune in Transylvania"¹⁷. From this moment on DGPT censors decided to impose the obligation of accurate identification of some localities, preeminently from Transylvania and Banat, when they were cited in Hungarian language publications brought to Romania.

One can presume that the Romanian communist elite surrounding Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej did not forget the complicated

past of Janos Kádár; the successor of Imre Nagy was considered "compromised" by his initial association with the "counter-revolutionary" camp. In addition, Bucharest was fed up by its emissaries in revolutionary Hungary with information about alleged territorial claims formulated by the officials in Budapest between 23 October 1956 and 4 November 1956. Therefore, we must take into account, while talking about the post-November 1956 events, the fear of the Romanian communist leadership facing both the danger of ideological contagion, and the threat of Hungarian "irredentism". Cluj-based historian Stelian Mândruț spoke in the 1990s about a selective repression against the Hungarian university intellectuals between 1953 and 1955. This repression was motivated by the communists' suspicion that these persons were ideologically contaminated due to contacts with foreigners (mainly Hungarians from Hungary who were supporters of reforms). In fact, there was a danger that came from two directions: the ideological contagion with (counter) revolutionary ideas, Marxist-Leninist revisionists, which in one form or another could spread in an insidious way due to the tolerance of the Hungarian Kádárist authorities; and, finally, the danger of penetrating and extending the national irredentist ideas in Romania, more precisely in Transylvania, in the areas inhabited by the ethnic Hungarians, a reality that would question the integration of Transylvania and Banat in the Romanian People's Republic.

The Bucharest officials decided to firmly combat this double danger of contagion; the censorship was alerted from the outset on the issue, which became urgent after the events in Budapest on 23 October

1956 (the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution). Protocol no. 54 of the Politburo of the RWP from 24 October 1954 is very useful as a historical source; the meeting was chaired by Gheorghe Apostol (in the absence of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who was in a meeting with Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito). On the political agenda was a briefing on the situation in Hungary, and among the measures envisaged in connection with these events it was mentioned that: “[Some] measures will be taken to censor all correspondence that comes from the Hungarian People’s Republic [HPR] or goes to the HPR, keeping [for us] the correspondence considered subversive”. Moreover, the document also specified that the DGPT: “will carefully check all publications coming from the HPR and will inform the RWP Secretariat about those publications whose distribution it considers inappropriate for public circulation”¹⁸.

The Hungarian question in Romania had become a matter of national security which required the hermetic closure of the borders. After November 1956 Romanian communist authorities continued to evoke periodically the danger posed by the counter-revolution and the Imre Nagy supporters. There were calls for strengthening the cooperation between various propaganda structures, in order to combat the internal reaction as well possible acts of solidarity with the Hungarian revolutionaries or with Marxist revisionists. All this happened in the context in which Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej and his political entourage came to suspect the entire Hungarian minority of lack of loyalty to the Romanian state and therefore labeled very easily as “nationalistic” every Hungarian in Romania who for a reason or another was undesirable¹⁹.

The Role of Censorship

There was already a well-welded relationship between the ideological couple Leonte Răutu and Paul Niculescu-Mizil (who represented the Propaganda and Culture Department of the RWP) and the leadership of the DGPT (general director Iosif Ardeleanu; H. Panaitescu, Raia Vidrașcu, deputy directors). Between the two ideological structures there was an intense, permanent communication on sensitive issues, concerning the national question, with serious political implications. The censorship often sent the more complicated editorial problems to the RWP’s Central Committee, to the ideological departments (to the Propaganda and Agitation Section), in order to receive an order or an indication regarding the appropriate procedure to be applied, regarding books printed in Romania, but also publications coming from neighboring Hungary (in the form of subscriptions, for instance). From this point of view, November 1956 was an important turning point both in the history of Romanian censorship and in the Romanian-Hungarian bilateral relations. This happened for at least two reasons. After November 1956 the Romanian practice of censoring publications from Hungary was generalized (whether one thinks of subscriptions, imports, or any other source). The publications considered undesirable for various reasons (allegedly promoting Hungarian nationalism and instigating to irredentism) were stopped at the borders by the customs services or blocked at the post offices.

The main victims of the new censorship’s procedures were those Hungarian language publications containing references to cities, localities, names of places in

Romania rendered only with the Hungarian name (without specifying the Romanian name and the fact that the locality is currently in the territory of neighboring Romania, a “fraternal” socialist state). Secondly, after November 1956 the censorship had focused, in analyzing various publications, on the need to highlight the Romanian element in the case of the different historical, literary, artistic descriptions (although there were objective cases when the presence of the Romanian element was insignificant or non-existent – see, for example, the monographs of some historical monuments, places of worship which belonged to Hungarian Roman Catholic, Reformed, Calvinist, Unitarian churches). Such a case was revealed by a DGPT report from 3 November 1958, on the work entitled *Studies and Articles on Art History*, written by Kelemen Lajos in Hungarian. The report stated that: “Throughout the 644 pages of manuscripts in which the author deals extensively with many historical monuments, churches, feudal castles, dwelling houses, old defensive walls of Transylvania – especially from the Cluj region and [from] Szeklersland – there is a complete ignorance of the Romanian element”²⁰. The censors’ conclusion was that “the publication of such a work would not contribute at all to the strengthening of brotherly relations between the Romanian people and the Hungarian nationality in our country”²¹.

The same kind of objections was also found in the case of historian Samuel Goldenberg, a research fellow at the Institute of History and Archeology in Cluj/Kolozsvár. In a DGPT note from 23 December 1958, it was emphasized that the work of Samuel Goldenberg, *The Town of Cluj in the Sixteenth Century*, had ‘great deficiencies’; specifically,

in the aforementioned book: “the Romanian element and its contribution to the economic life of the city are almost completely overlooked” (with reference to Chapter I *Cluj from Castrum to Civitas City Hall*). The censors gave some other examples, only highlighting the Hungarian contribution to the development of the city. An aggravating circumstance was that the author used for his documentation “a number of foreign [mostly Hungarian] books (authored by [László] Makkay, Treiber, Kiss, Raica, etc.) published between 1940 and 1943 [during Miklos Horthy’s pro-Nazi dictatorship]”. The aforementioned books were, from the censors’ perspective, ethnically biased and nationalistic (an example was László Makkay, with his work entitled *1000 years of a Hungarian City: Kolozsvár/Cluj*). In conclusion, the DGPT censor stated that: “using a lot of works of such authors, and not combating enough denigrating, nationalist statements, regarding the Romanian element, the volume in question becomes in fact the bearer of such ideas”²². However, Samuel Goldenberg’s book came out at the end of 1958²³, probably after the author assumed censorial ‘suggestions’ and after he received predictable political support of important cultural institutions and personalities from Cluj which lobbied for Goldenberg.

According to all indications, the censors were well aware of the unfolding of the Hungarian revolution and were able to detect the subtlest literary references to the events of 1956. Several Hungarian authors in Romania tried to evoke the human drama following the Soviet military intervention in Hungary: that is, emigration to Austria, in particular, of over 200,000 people. The literary images that suggested such an exodus were hunted down by the DGPT

censors: for example, a DGPT Note from 13 December 1958 considered the publication of the poem *Pouring yourself, human brook!*, by Györe Imre, in the Bucharest based literary magazine *Luceafărul*, no. 11, p. 12 as inappropriate, due to the fact that the author dated his poem *October–November 1957*. The censors believed that such a note was as a kind of tribute to the 1956 events, a sort of an anniversary message²⁴.

The DGPT censors watched carefully even the children's books which could contain political allegories, parables or other figures of speech evoking the 1956 events in Hungary. A DGPT note dated 4 November 1958 analyzed the volume entitled *The Wildfire (Focul din pădure)* by writer Mária Tamás. It was a story for children, in Hungarian, which featured as main characters birds and animals that populated a forest overwhelmed by a huge fire. The volume was proposed to come out at ESPLA Publishing House, where deputy editor-in-chief was the well-known writer of Hungarian origin Meliusz József. Seemingly, the book was an allegory describing in fact the political events which happened during the 1956 revolution (the *wildfire*) and afterwards. The DGPT note stated that:

Some episodes of this story remind us of the events that took place in 1956 in neighboring Hungary. Given the way these events are presented, they can be interpreted in a politically hostile manner. Thus, particularly inappropriate is the choice of the storm, an element from the *outside* [USSR], for extinguishing the fire. The swallow, in its efforts, is not supported by internal forces, nor is there any internal effort to do so²⁵.

Obviously, the storm could suggest the Soviet military invasion; the swallow – probably embodied the post-Imre Nagy political power which tried to re-establish the order within *forest* [Hungary]. After the launch of the call *whoever wants, can return*, “the forest is populated again with the inhabitants who had fled [elsewhere]. But life cannot be carried on normally, because negative elements, such as the eagle, the oil, the owl, the cuttlefish – characters with a prominent public profile – continue to oppress and exploit the weak”. Probably Mária Tamás suggested that the Kádár regime together with dogmatic Djilas-type “new class” (the eagle, the oil, the owl, the cuttlefish) prolonged the oppression against 1956 revolutionaries. The censor's conclusion was that the author “creates confusion and gives the possibility of hostile interpretations”. Therefore, “the manuscript was sent back to the Publishing House without the official approval for print (*bun de tipar*)”²⁶. It must be said that the entire Romanian literature and editorial production was also affected by the new type of censorship applied after the Hungarian revolution; for example, the well known Romanian writer Eugen Barbu's novel, *The North Road* (Șoseaua nordului), otherwise politically conformist, came to be carefully investigated by the institutional censorship; the censors were intrigued by the use of both insurrectionary situations and words such as “revolution”, “pistols”, “guns”, which reminded the readers of the unfolding of the Hungarian revolution²⁷.

In late 1950s the DGPT guided itself in Hungarian matters by a document issued on 14 July 1958, more precisely by a Plan which included measures for the withdrawal from circulation of printed texts referring

to the so called “anti-party and anti-state persons”. It is important to note that the materials referring to these pariahs and outcasts had to be withdrawn immediately from the public circuit. Several categories of undesirables were listed here (Romanian communists purged on the occasion of the 9-13 June 1958 Plenum of the RWP’s Central Committee (Constantin Doncea, Grigore Răceanu *et al.*); in the second category there were the political opponents of Nikita S. Khrushchev; and finally, in the last category, the most numerous were the leaders of the Hungarian revolution and their associates²⁸. In fact, four subgroups were included in this last category: 1. works, brochures, etc. of the Hungarian “traitors” group and the “counter-revolutionary” writers such as: Imre Nagy, Géza Losonczy, Ferenc Donáth, Miklós Gimes, József Szilágyi, Zoltán Tildy, Pál Maléter and others (27 people in total); 2. Works about them or in which they were referred to; 3. The works of the former leaders of the Hungarian Workers’ Party: Rákosi Mátyás; Ernő Gerő, Farkas Mihály; 4. Works about them or in which they were referred to. The document also included East German and French Communists, accused of ideological heresies or counter-revolutionary attitudes²⁹.

Among those who received reports from the DGPT regarding the removal of those books from libraries (school libraries, university libraries, etc.) was Mihai Gere (Gerő Mihaly), an important communist activist of Hungarian origin, deputy head of the Propaganda and Agitation Section (between October 1957 and June 1964)³⁰, which in 1961 was also responsible for the censorship applied against undesirable literature written in Hungarian in Romania. However, among the books that survived

over a decade in some school libraries were also works by Imre Nagy, probably as proof of the administration’s negligence. Seemingly, the political conformity of Mihai Gere also explains the subsequent political ascent, which was obvious especially during Nicolae Ceaușescu’s national Stalinist leadership. It is worth mentioning here that the 1959 unification of the two Romanian and Hungarian universities in Cluj (in fact the suppression of the Hungarian language Bolyai University), was supervised by a commission headed by N. Ceaușescu (then the head of the Organizational Department within the RWP’s Central Committee) who already assumed a nationalistic trend.

The censorship also reported the cases of several professors from the Hungarian “Bolyai” University in Cluj, including László Szábedi, who had allegedly made nationalistic, hostile statements in various publications, undermining the national policy of the Romanian communist government. The DGPT actions were not limited only to reporting such situations, but called on the higher ideological bodies and suggested the sanctioning of those who had committed the alleged ideological slippages. In this context one should mention that the Cluj-based Professor László Szábedi and the Rector of Bolyai University Zoltán Csendes committed suicide also because of the political pressure they were subjected to³¹. In 1958 another professor, historian and literary critic László Földes (editor-in-chief of *Utunk*) was purged. Most likely the *Agitprop* used incriminating documents against him, provided by the DGPT censorship. After November 1956 the writer Bodor Pál was also a favorite target of the DGPT, many of his poems being banned, because they evoked in some way or another – more

or less Aesopian – the drama of Soviet-occupied Hungary. Perhaps this special attention targeting the poet was not accidental: in June 1956, when he was editor of the cultural magazine *Utunk*, Bodor “demanded that literary magazines no longer be controlled by the DGPT”³².

There is an important aspect that has to be investigated: the extent to which the Hungarian revolution of 1956, cases of individual resistance against the Romanian communist regime and the main narrative regarding recent history contributed to the 1959 decision to abolish the ‘Bolyai’ University of Cluj, by unifying it with the ‘Victor Babeș’ Romanian University.

Conclusions

Finally, I will try to sketch out a kind of epilogue and some concluding remarks. In 1963, there was a difference of emphasis in censorship practices. While in the immediate aftermath of 1956 the DGPT did not have any problems with the strong references to the suppression of the Hungarian revolution with Soviet military aid, in 1963 there was a turning point. A DGPT note from 19 June 1963 concluded that some fragments in the economic geography textbook focused on the countries of people’s democracy in the Soviet bloc (author: Constantin Blaj) inappropriately talked about recent political problems, that is, about the causes of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, as well as about the request for help formulated by the revolutionary labor-peasant government led by János Kádár, “who asked the government of the Soviet Union to send military units for the liquidation of the fascist rebellion”³³. In 1963 – when the

spirit of the April 1964 Declaration on the “independence” of the RWP vis-à-vis the CPSU was already visible – the reference to the fraternal aid “requested” by communist Hungarian leader János Kádár at the beginning of November 1956 was no longer relevant. It was considered too controversial. The references to Soviet military aid were now avoided and deemed to be inadequate. The geography textbook was consequently remanded by the censors to the upper echelons of the ideological bodies, together with the indication that the volume should be re-written. Historian Liliána Corobca, an author very familiar with the topic of Romanian censorship, writes that “1956, the year of the great changes in the communist bloc, did not have the same impact for the institution of censorship in Romania”³⁴. However, one can notice that there were significant changes concerning issues circumscribed to national question. One of the notable features of the DGPT, Corobca says, was “its deeply conservative character (without changes, disturbances, purges, significant resignations)”; conservatism – I will add – in the sense that this censorship’s behavior was perfectly congruent with the nature of the political regime, a system that had not experienced real de-Stalinization. In the Romanian case it was more about de-Sovietization; some historians have even claimed that the post-1956 Romanian communist regime championed a form of anti-Soviet Stalinism³⁵. Compared with Romania, at the beginning of Kádár’s government, around 1957-1963, there was also a period of cultural relaxation besides the terrible excesses perpetrated against some leaders of the revolutionary movement. Some authors had their works republished, without

an institution of censorship, since it was now down to the editors and publishers to examine those texts³⁶.

The interval 1956-1959 marked a decisive moment, a slow transition (which had actually started in 1952) regarding the political authorities' perception of the nationalist danger – in the public space, in the literary-artistic milieu. Until the late 1950s, the virulent official criticism mainly focused on and targeted the Romanian nationalistic danger, being well illustrated by the political speeches that incriminated the intellectuals, the literary reviewers who tolerated manifestations of nationalism in poetry and prose and so on. After the late 1950s, the critical focus shifted to the danger of ethnic minority nationalism (Hungarian, German, Jewish, etc.). In parallel, in the case of most Romanian-Hungarian bilateral meetings, either at high level or at the level of ideological leaders, the Romanian camp always treated with suspicion the exchanges of books and other cultural products, suspecting the Hungarian communist peers of “revisionist tendencies” or “irredentist” intentions³⁷ (although Kádár's Hungary had been publicly committed since 1958 to respect the Hungarian borders established after 1946-1947).

The role of the 1956 events in Hungary was major and it changed both the profile of communist censorship and Romanian historiography, for at least two

reasons: first, there was a lasting crisis of trust between Gheorghiu-Dej's Romania and post-October 1956 Hungary, both Imre Nagy's and János Kádár's Hungary (for reasons of alleged Hungarian nationalistic irredentism targeting Transylvania). Secondly, the communist authorities in Bucharest were more and more convinced that the elite of the Hungarian minority in Romania was disloyal, that it did not genuinely disavow the 1956 “counter-revolutionary putsch” in Budapest and, moreover, that it tried to persuade ethnic Hungarians and Transylvanian Romanians to rebel against the communist system. It should be said that the number of arrests, denunciation rituals, purges etc. significantly grew after November 1956, among the Hungarian intellectual elite in Transylvania and the Banat. The dissolution of the ‘Janos Bolyai’ Hungarian University took place in 1959. The importance of the Hungarian Autonomous Region was diminished in 1961 (it was abolished in 1968). There would also be historiographical consequences (especially after 1958): the decrease of official enthusiasm about Béla Kun's Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919. One could also notice the official decision of the ideological bodies to contradict the 1950s thesis of the so-called “imperialist nature of bourgeois Romania's participation in the First World War”.

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NOTES

1. Liliana Corobca is one of few historians who have written several works on the DGPT and the political control it exerted on Romanian literature; Liliana Corobca, *Controlul cărții. Cenzura literaturii în regimul comunist din România*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 2014, p. 13.
2. Cf Martin Dewhirst and Robert Farrell (eds.), *The Soviet Censorship*, Metuchen, N.J., The Scarecrow Press, 1973.
3. Stelian Mândruț, “Între ‘culpabilizare’ și ‘compromis’. Intelectualitatea universitară maghiară din Cluj ‘ante’ și ‘post’ 1956”, in Romulus Rusan (ed.), *Anii 1954-1960. Fluxurile și refluxurile stalinismului*, București, Fundația Academia Civică, 2000, p. 790-820; Rafael-Dorian Chelaru, “Crearea Universității Babeș-Bolyai și reforma învățământului în limba minorităților. Cazul Janos Fazekas”, in Romulus Rusan (ed.), *Anii 1954-1960...*, pp. 821-835; Ionuț Țene, “Unificarea celor două universități clujene, ‘V. Babeș’ și ‘J. Bolyai’”, in memoria studentească (1959)”, in *Biografii universitare clujene (1959-1989)*, Cluj Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2013, p. 44-67.
4. Stefano Bottoni, *Stalin's Legacy in Romania: The Hungarian Autonomous Region, 1952-1960*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-London, Lexington Books, 2018.
5. Cristian Vasile, “Impactul evenimentelor din Ungaria anului 1956 asupra cenzurii din România”, in *Din modernitate spre contemporaneitate. Studii istorice dedicate lui George Cipăianu la vârsta de 75 de ani*, edited by: Virgiliu Țărău, Ottmar Trașcă, Liviu Țărău, Valentin Orga, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Argonaut, 2017, p. 707-720.
6. William E. Griffith, “Petrofi Circle Ferment in the Hungarian Thaw”, in *Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. 2, No. 1, 25 January 1962, p. 15-31.
7. For the impact of the Khrushchev’s Secret report, see William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2004, p. 270-299.
8. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (ANIC), fond CC al PCR – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 58/1956, fila 3. [ANIC/CHNA/Central Historical National Archives, Bucharest, Fond Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party – Department for Propaganda and Agitation, File no. 58/1956, p. 3]
9. ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 58/1956, f. 1.
10. Monitorul Oficial, partea I-A, anul CXVI, nr. 94, miercuri, 21 aprilie 1948, pp. 3.653-3.654; see also Cristian Vasile, *Literatura și artele în România comunistă, 1948-1953*, București, Editura Humanitas, 2010, p. 63-64.
11. ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 20/1949, f. 18.
12. Mihai Șora, “Leonte Răutu era o legendă...”, in Vladimir Tismăneanu, Cristian Vasile, *Perfectul acrobat. Leonte Răutu, măștile răului*, București, Editura Humanitas, 2008, p. 146.
13. Ileana Ioanid, “Studiu introductiv”, in Nagy Imre, *Însemnări de la Snagov. Corespondență, rapoarte, convorbiri*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2004, p. 10.
14. Ioana Boca, *1956 – Un an de ruptură. România între internaționalismul proletar și stalinismul antisovietic*, București, Fundația Academia Civică, 2001, p. 86.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 87-88; ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 58/1956, ff. 1-7.
17. *The Role of Counter-revolutionary Forces in the October 1956 events in Hungary*, vol. II, edited by the Information Office of the Council of Ministers of the Hungarian People’s Republic, Bucharest, State Publishing House for Political Literature, 1957, p. 163.
18. Corneliu Mihai Lungu and Mihai Retegan (eds.), *1956. Explozia. Percepții române, iugoslave și sovietice asupra evenimentelor din Polonia și Ungaria*, afterward by Florin Constantiniu, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1996, p. 74-75.
19. Stelian Mândruț, *op. cit.*, p. 808; Rafael-Dorian Chelaru, *op. cit.*, p. 830, n. 12.
20. ANIC, fond Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri, 1949-1977, dosar nr. 4/1958, f. 53. [ANIC/CHNA/Central Historical National Archives, Bucharest, Fond Committee for Press and Printing, 1949-1977, File no. 4/1958, p. 53]

21. *Ibid.*, f. 54.
22. ANIC, fond Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri, 1949-1977, dosar nr. 4/1958, ff. 15-16.
23. S. Goldenberg, *Clujul în secolul al XVI-lea. Producția și schimbul de mărfuri*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1958.
24. ANIC, fond Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri, 1949-1977, dosar nr. 4/1958, ff. 18-19.
25. ANIC, fond Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri, 1949-1977, dosar nr. 4/1958, ff. 51-52.
26. *Ibid.*
27. ANIC, fond Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri, 1949-1977, dosar nr. 4/1958, f. 56.
28. Liliana Corobca, *Controlul cărții. Cenzura literaturii în regimul comunist din România*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 2014, p. 63.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
30. Florica Dobre (ed.) et al., *Membrii CC al PCR 1945-1989. Dicționar*, foreword by Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, București, CNSAS-Editura Enciclopedică, 2004, p. 288.
31. Vladimir Tismăneanu, Dorin Dobrinu, Cristian Vasile (eds.), *Raport final*, București, Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România-Editura Humanitas, 2007, p. 345.
32. ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 58/1956, f. 5.
33. *Ibidem*, fond Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri, 1949-1977, dosar nr. 26/1957, ff. 17-21.
34. Liliana Corobca, *Controlul cărții...*, p. 51.
35. Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014, p. 18.
36. Liliana Corobca (ed.), *Instituția cenzurii comuniste în România, 1949-1977*, vol. I, Oradea, Editura Ratio et Revelatio, 2014, p. 57.
37. Vladimir Tismăneanu, Dorin Dobrinu, Cristian Vasile (eds.), *Raport final*, p. 340.