



# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

2007

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*Volume 21*  
*Numbers 1–2*

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*Mihály Szegedy-Maszák*: The intellectual and Cultural Scene in the Dual Monarchy

*Vilmos Voigt*: Maurice Benyovszky and his "madagascar *Procotolle*" (1772–1776)

# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

a Journal of the International Association for Hungarian Studies  
(Nemzetközi Magyarstudományi Társaság)

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The journal intends to fill a long-felt need in the coverage of Hungarian studies by offering an independent, international forum for original papers of high scholarly standards within all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences (literary history, philology, ethnology, folklore, musicology, art history, philosophy, history, sociology, etc.) pertaining to any aspects of the Hungarian past or present.

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Hungarian Studies is indexed/abstracted in America: History and Life, Historical Abstracts, International Bibliographies IBZ and IBR, and SCOPUS

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## *Editorial address*

H-1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13. II/205–207. Telephone/Fax: (36-1) 321-4407  
Mailing address: H-1250 Budapest, P.O. Box 34, E-mail: [hstudies@iti.mta.hu](mailto:hstudies@iti.mta.hu)  
Homepage: [www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/filo](http://www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/filo)

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*Hungarian Studies* is published by  
AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ

H-1117 Budapest, Prielle Kornélia u. 19.  
[www.akademiai.com](http://www.akademiai.com)

Order should be addressed to AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ,  
H-1519 Budapest, P.O. Box 245, Fax: (36-1) 464-8221, E-mail: [journals@akkrt.hu](mailto:journals@akkrt.hu)

Subscription price for Volume 21 (2007) in 2 issues EUR 174 + VAT, including online access and normal postage; airmail delivery EUR 20.

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Customers are advised to place their orders

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– in Japan at MARUZEN Company, Ltd., Journal Division (P.O. Box 5050, Tokyo International 100-3191)

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HAJDU, Péter

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IMRE, Zoltán

KIDECKEL, David A.

KOCSIS, Károly

LUDANYI, Andrew  
MISKA, John  
NEUMANN, Victor

PÁLFY, Zoltán  
SALAT, Levente

SZEGEDY-MASZÁK, Mihály  
VOIGT, Vilmos

National School of Political and Administrative  
Studies, Bucharest, Romania

East European Institute, Indiana University,  
Bloomington, IN, USA

Szeged University, Hungary

Institute for Literary Studies, HAS, Budapest,  
Hungary

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA

Department of Comparative Literature,

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Anthropology Department, Central

Connecticut State University, New Britain,

CT, USA

Geographical Research Institute, HAS,

Budapest, Hungary

Ohio Northern University, Ada, OH, USA

Szigeti Magyarság, Victoria, B.C., Canada

West University of Timișoara, Timișoara,  
Romania

Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania

Department of Political, Administrative and

Communicational Science, Babeș-Bolyai

University, Cluj, Romania

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Chair of Folklore, Eötvös Loránd University,

Budapest, Hungary

# MULTICULTURALITY AND INTERCULTURALITY: THE CASE OF TIMIȘOARA

VICTOR NEUMANN

West University of Timișoara, Timișoara  
Romania

Geographically situated some 550 kilometers southeast of Vienna and 250 kilometers southeast of Budapest, Timișoara assimilated the influences of the two former imperial capitals relatively quickly. Its European openness was facilitated by the practice of plurilingualism and multiconfessionalism. At the beginning of the 20th century, Timișoara's population spoke five languages, namely Hungarian, German, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian. The main religious affiliations were Roman-Catholic, Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Evangelic-Lutheran, Reformist-Calvinist Churches and Jewish. Interculturality and the intermingling of populations generated a very promising social culture. Analyzed from the behavioral point of view, Timișoara was an example of multi-cultural and intercultural society for two centuries, which made it possible for this center to be integrated into Europe ever since the 19th century and to represent the main link between the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy and the Balkan Peninsula. The multicultural and intercultural dimensions gave consistency to the anti-totalitarian resistance over the course of the 20th century. This was why the intellectuals in the post-Ceaușescu period defined the city's distinctiveness with the expression "the spirit of Timișoara".

**Keywords:** Timișoara, Banat, region, multiculturalism, multi-confessionalism, interculturality, melting-pot, ambivalence, citizen, civic society, 1989 revolt, identity

Geographically situated at 550 km southeast of Vienna and 250 km southeast of Budapest, Timișoara assimilated the influences of the two former imperial capitals relatively quickly. In 1910 the city was home to 72,555 inhabitants; it had two technical institutions of higher education, two episcopates, 62 small and medium sized factories, 132 scientific and professional associations, 7 dailies, 17 printing houses and musical life of a very high standard. Boasting 11,656 pupils and high school students in 1906, Timișoara used to be a real city of education. In 1911 the local authorities were allowed to set up the second technical university in the eastern territories of the Monarchy. After Budapest, Timișoara became one of the most important and modern cities in the eastern part of Austro-Hungary.<sup>1</sup>

The openness of the city towards Europe was facilitated by the practice of plurilingualism and multi-confessional life. At the beginning of the 20th century the inhabitants of Timișoara spoke five languages, namely: Hungarian, German, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian. The majority of the population was bilingual, speaking Hungarian and German. The use of four to five languages at the same time used to be a badge of cultural pride for those people. Their main religious affiliations were Roman-Catholic, Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Evangelic-Lutheran, Reformist-Calvinist and Jewish. Interculturality and the intermingling of the different populations created a social culture of a high standard. Under those circumstances statistics are, I believe, less relevant. However, I will mention some figures. Analyzed from many viewpoints, such as urban, social, cultural, pedagogical and behavioral, in the year 1910 Timișoara was integrated into Europe and played the role of the “main chain of contact between the Monarchy and the Balkans.” The social culture formed during the dual monarchy proved to be useful throughout the 20th century.<sup>2</sup> This aspect all the more worthy of mention in light of the fact that the multicultural and intercultural character of the city gave consistency to anti-totalitarian resistance. The Romanian press and literature in the post-Ceaușescu period defined the specificity of the city with the expression “the spirit of Timișoara.”

Despite the pressures of the Magyar assimilation process in 1880–1914, the tentative of Serbian annexation during First World War and the politics of Romanian assimilation started in 1919, Timișoara continued to be a cosmopolitan city throughout the 20th century as well. It was remarkable that for a long time the citizens spoke German, Hungarian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian and that the differences based on idiom, ethnography and faith were not defining features like in the Balkans or within the territories under direct German influence. The name of the city was known in all important languages used by its inhabitants: Temeswar, Temeschburg, Temesvár, Temișvaru and Timișoara. The acknowledgement of the diverse historical heritages demanded that the religious practices of each cultural group be recognized. The Romanians were of Orthodox and Greek-Catholic denominations (Victor Neumann 2001);<sup>3</sup> Hungarians were Roman-Catholic and Reformist-Calvinist, and Germans were Roman-Catholics and to lesser extent Evangelist-Lutherans (Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Jacques Le Rider 1996).<sup>4</sup> Jews were both of Ashkenazi and Sephardic denominations, but there were also Reformists or Neologues (Victor Neumann 2006).<sup>5</sup> The cultural heritages were also intermingled, which gave rise to numerous ambivalences and multiple codes assumed by the citizens of Timișoara. All this indicates the multicultural and intercultural character of the city, where mixed families played a vanguard role. As I mentioned previously, the first virtue is to the credit of the Habsburgs.<sup>6</sup> The phenomenon is not unique. In the second half of the 19th century Kakania (the

dual monarchy) had already become an eloquent example of the encounters and intermingling of cultural and religious diversity. Mórítz Csáky has remarked that the state unity of the dual monarchy was stimulated by cultural disparity and by the culture of hybridism. The cohabitation of different traditions led to an ambivalence concerning cultural inheritances, while collective neurosis such as nationalism, chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism (Mórítz Csáky 2000)<sup>7</sup> were born of the crises and ethnic conflicts.

As a consequence of the First World War and the breaking up of the empires and the re-shaping of the map of Europe in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, some of the former regions of Austro-Hungary were transformed into genuine engines of industrialization. The example of Bohemia was not repeated, however, in Banat. Timișoara came under the influence of Bucharest, the capital of Romania, which is to say that both a cultural model and a particular political mentality were imposed on the city, which were quite different in comparison to those inherited from the Habsburg Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. As a consequence, the proximity of and integration with Western civilization was considerably blurred. Called the “Manchester” of Transleithania in 1900–1910 (Szász Zoltán 1999),<sup>8</sup> Timișoara lived for a while through the industrial successes and commercial reputation of its past. In the Romania of 1919–1940 the city gradually lost its independent administrative power and remained without the financial resources necessary to continue its development in accordance with the needs of its population.

The Romanian authoritarian and totalitarian regimes of the 20th century practiced discrimination against various groups of the population based on ethnicity, denomination, or social status. Despite the shortcomings created by the racial laws, Timișoara succeeded in protecting the Jewish population during the war. A special role was played in this respect by the multicultural civic character of its population. The communist regime and national-communist ideology in Romania contributed to the massive emigration of the population to Israel, the USA and France from the 1950s through the 1970s. While in the aftermath of the Second World War the Jewish community of Timișoara numbered 13,000, today it is only 367.<sup>9</sup>

With regard to the German population, it represented a model of organization and work ethics both for Timișoara’s inhabitants and those of the whole region. The deportation of this community to the USSR and the Bărăgan Fields after the war, and, later, the encouragement of their emigration to Germany and their sale by the Ceaușescu regime to Germany all determined the decrease in their numbers (Reiner Munz, Ohliger Reiner 2001).<sup>10</sup> In 1992 13,206 German speakers lived in Timișoara and there were 26,722 in total in Timiș County. In 2002 their number decreased to 7,157 in Timișoara.<sup>11</sup> These demographical shifts provoked social

and behavioral changes. In 2002, the population of Timișoara reached 317,660 inhabitants,<sup>12</sup> while the proportion of all minorities was 14.48 %. The minority communities decreased enormously in comparison to the past. The examples of the Germans and Jews were followed by Hungarians, who in 1992 numbered 31,785 and in 2002 a only 24,287 in total.<sup>13</sup> The Serbian community, too, is in crises. The latest censuses indicate somewhere above 6,000 persons.<sup>14</sup>

Along with the majority Romanian population (85.52%),<sup>15</sup> Hungarians, Germans, Serbians, Romas, Jews, Slovaks, Czechs, Croatians, Poles, Armenians, Bulgarians, Turks, Lipovans, Greeks, Chinese, Csengős, Tatars and Italians still live in Timișoara today. From the cultural-administrative point of view, some of them live a community life. The most spectacular social-cultural phenomenon in Timișoara and within the whole region in the Eastern part of the continent is represented by the newly formed Italian community. Having settled in Timișoara roughly a decade and a half ago, this community has become one of a reference. The Italians deal with small and larger businesses, own shoe and textile factories, and provide high quality commercial services. They are concerned with buying and renovating historical buildings in the city, a fact that will contribute to saving a part of the neo-Baroque and Jugendstil architectural legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Along with the German and Serbian consulates, an Italian consulate has been set-up, expressing Italy's intentions (particularly those of the region of Veneto) to develop longstanding economic and trade relations with Timișoara.<sup>16</sup>

The Orthodox, Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Reformist-Calvinist, Lutheran-Evangelic and Jewish faiths not only undertake diverse activities but also interfere with one another. Ecumenism is an accepted and developed idea by the representatives of the churches, though this has not led to setting up a faculty with a multi-confessional profile at the university. In addition to the above-mentioned denominations there are also neo-Protestant churches such as Adventist, Christian Evangelist, Baptist, Jehovah and Mormon. Some members of the population (more numerous though than those reflected in official censuses) were attracted by neo-Protestantism, a fact that proves that state policies and the officialization of the majority Orthodox Church did not disrupt the diverse configuration of Timișoara's identity.

### **Mixed Populations: About Timișoara's Melting-pot**

In comparison with other cities of Central and South-Eastern Europe, where the majority culture (either national or ethno-national) has linguistically assimilated that of any minority, Timișoara stands out through its cultural diversity, the



common history resulting from the multiculturalism of its population and its general melting-pot character (Borsi Kálmán Béla 2006).<sup>17</sup> Plurilingualism and multi-confessionalism have represented the dominant note of the city for three centuries, having an influence in the formation of the mentality and functioning of the society. Although the official languages have changed over time (German in the 18th century, Hungarian in the 19th, and Romanian since 1919), there has always been a propensity towards learning more languages in Timișoara. Without being imposed by state institutions, plurilingualism is visible even today among some of the inhabitants of the city. Along with numerous institutions of education in Romanian language, there are schools and high-schools in Timișoara in which teaching is conducted in German (Lenau High School), Hungarian (Béla Bartók High School), Serbian (Dositej Obradovici High School), French (Jean Louis Calderon High School) and English (Shakespeare High School). From this interest in learning languages, a phenomenon quite rare in the cities of modern and contemporary Europe, the aspirations of Timișoara's population to integrate with Europe (and in some cases to emigrate to the West) have emerged. Based on administrative, economical and socio-cultural indicators, Timișoara has the highest degree of European features of all the cities of Romania. Its population has proven its openness to the European Union, the absorption of EU funds, and European integration.<sup>18</sup>

Interference was possible due to the understanding of the inhabitants of the city and their assumption of the idea of diversity. Interference among religions has generated reciprocal borrowings or even new religions, such as Greek-Catholicism, which appeared in Banat in 1747. The Orthodox took over customs and holidays from the Catholic tradition. In the 19th century, under the influence of the same Catholic milieu, the Jews adopted religious reform by becoming Neologues of German or Hungarian mother tongue. The majority of them accepted the introduction of organ music and a choir into the synagogue. Church life was practiced in Hebrew and starting with the 19th century in German and Hungarian as well. The chief rabbi spoke many languages and services were conducted in Hebrew, Romanian and Hungarian. Catholics held services in German, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovakian, Bulgarian and Italian. If in the 19th century there was competition for priority between the German and Hungarian languages, today the Catholic churches serve in many languages, such as German, Romanian, Hungarian, Slovak, Bulgarian, and Italian.<sup>19</sup>

Mixed marriages and conversion from one faith to another are common practices (Victor Neumann 2006),<sup>20</sup> often motivated by social interests and less by the denial or assimilation of religious dogma. One comes across this phenomenon quite often in Timișoara and in Banat ever since the first half of the 19th century. The documents kept in the archive of the Roman-Catholic Episcopate indicate

such a process as being part of the co-habitation of multiple cultures and confessions. The same is true for the documents preserved in the archives of the Timișoara City Hall, from where the rate of mixed marriages can be traced starting from 1895 until today. The diversity of cultural elements generated a way of life and a culture to which each contributed, and the neighbor was seen, first of foremost, as part of civil society.

### **The Opposition of Minorities, the Solidarity of the Citizens of Timișoara and the Anti-Totalitarian Revolt of December 1989**

A *sensus communis* revealed in the tense moments of the history dominated in the city. The way in which the citizens cooperated during the revolt of December 1989 was exemplary, and it is worth mentioning this in order to understand why Timișoara's role was important in the 1990s. The great demonstration in Timișoara in December 1989 is closely linked to the multicultural and multi-confessional physiognomy of the city (Victor Neumann 2006).<sup>21</sup> Both the political idea directed against Ceaușescu and the anti-communist demonstrations were closely linked to Pastor László Tőkés's protest against the destruction of the Hungarian villages in Transylvania. The protest was positively received not only in Western Europe, but, first and foremost, by the inhabitants of the city (Miodrag Milin 1990).<sup>22</sup>

Despite intimidation and the launch of an ideological anti-Magyar campaign by the officials of the Ceaușescu regime, the protest of the Hungarian Reformist group was welcomed and joined by a large part of the population. The citizens unconditionally made common cause with László Tőkés when the question of his removal from his home was raised. Among the slogans one saw on December 16th in Timișoara, many marked the ideology of the revolt: "Down with Ceaușescu!", "Down with the tyrant!" Initially presented as a Hungarian group, the demonstrators for solidarity in front of the Pastor's house shortly attracted thousands of people. The plans of Ceaușescu's Securitate (secret police) to provoke a Romanian-Hungarian conflict were baffled by the demonstrators, who proved to be a real *societas civilis* animated by the ideal of liberation from the totalitarian regime rather than supporting an obsolete historical misunderstanding (Victor Neumann 2006).<sup>23</sup>

In December 17th, 1989 Radio Budapest (Miodrag Milin 1999)<sup>24</sup> announced that the Militia had dispersed the demonstration organized in order to defend László Tőkés, though it "was transformed into a protest against Ceaușescu." In its edition of December 18th, 1989 *Die Welt* wrote that about 4,000 demonstrators had gathered at the Calvinist-Reformist church in Timișoara in order to impede

Pastor László Tőkés's removal (Miodrag Milin 1999).<sup>25</sup> On the same day *Die Welt* announced that violent confrontations had taken place between the population and the militia and that the entire population of the city had joined the anti-Ceaușescu demonstrations (Miodrag Milin 1999).<sup>26</sup> The Romanian-Hungarian cooperation functioned, the population understanding very well that Ceaușescu's regime relied on a nationalist maneuver as an ultimate means of justifying its remaining in power. In fact, the Timișoara revolt in December did not have an ethnic character. Rather, it reflected the civic and multicultural spirit of the city, which was relatively well preserved at the time and had decisively contributed to the initiation of the political changes of 1989.

### **How Can the Multicultural and Intercultural Phenomena of Timișoara and Banat be Explained? A Few Comparisons with Transylvania**

- Multiple cohabitations from the Middle Ages to the present.
- Unlike Transylvania, the nobles of Banat had no numerical weight when the region was under Habsburg occupation, hence the absence of social discrepancies.
- With all the interest manifested on behalf of some families, the recovery of the nobler condition in Banat in the 18th and 19th centuries is irrelevant from social, cultural and economic points of view.<sup>27</sup>
- The policies of colonization of the Swabs, French, Spanish, Slovaks, Bulgarians and Boehms in the 18th and 19th centuries were planned and organized by the Office of the Habsburg Empire. They created a rare demographic dynamic in Europe at the time, creating notable differences in comparison with Transylvania, more conservative, yet more stable as far as the social hierarchies were concerned.
- In comparison with Transylvania, Timișoara and Banat accepted and immediately put into practice the mercantilism of the House of Habsburg, resulting in economic competition.
- By the end of the 18th century there already existed a local bourgeoisie, earlier than in the neighboring regions.
- The reorganization of the region and the city of Timișoara in the 18th century along the lines of European administrative criteria was possible against the background of the complete retreat of the Ottoman Empire from the Banat and in the context of the absence of medieval constitutions such as those that existed in Transylvania.
- The emergence of manufacturers and new trade companies.

- The reformist policies of Maria Theresa and Joseph II came into force earlier in Banat than in Transylvania because the inhabitants of Timișoara and Banat did not oppose them.
- Direct subordination, either military or civil, of the region of Banat to Vienna facilitated the colonization of various groups of populations, as well as imposing the cultural and educational model of the Empire.
- In the middle of the 18th century the local population was already responsive to the elimination of illiteracy among the masses.
- The formation of professional elites and the establishment of an outstanding infrastructure in the region started in 1850 with the measures of Austrian neo-liberalism.
- The separate administrative organization of Banat took place in the 19th century (1850–1860) through formation of an autonomous region under the name Timiș Banat and Serbian Vojvodina, with its capital in Timișoara.
- The interest in innovations and the refusal of the communities to isolate themselves.
- The propagation of confessional and cultural-linguistic diversity and the construction of mixed villages (Germans and Serbs, Germans and Romanians, Serbs, Germans and Romanians) helped better to exploit the richness of the soil and subsoil.
- The formation of a civil society similar to those prevailing in the developed regions of Central Europe.
- The exchange of cultural values and the early appearance of intercultural phenomena constituted another difference in comparison with Transylvania; the representatives of the religions and cultures of the city accepted and cultivated the values of the Other.
- The ecumenical ideal was assumed by higher representatives of the Church in the previous centuries.
- Exclusivist tendencies were blurred by raising awareness among the individuals about the spiritual pluralist life; an individualist culture more palpable and efficient than that of Transylvania was affirmed.
- Cultivation of an ambivalent cultural code proposed by Vienna during the Enlightenment period by its transmission in the family from one generation to another.
- Minimization of the diversity role through linguistic, ethnic and religious criteria imposed by the romantic identity ideologies of the 19th century.

### **Remarks About the Centralist System in Romania**

Today the population of Timișoara is very different from that of 1989, the year in which the political changes started. The new demographic structure of the city has not created visible cultural and confessional conflicts, yet quite often there have been problems of adaptation of newcomers from other regions or from rural areas. As for shared common values, they have not been integrated into the old model of Timișoara. In exchange, they claimed and wished to impose cultural-identity based values of the regions from which they came. In other words, there are incompatibilities from the viewpoint of the orientation of the social segments that populate Timișoara today. Theoretically, Romania has manifested an openness toward minorities throughout the country, yet the country lacks the knowledge necessary to manage cultural and confessional pluralism and does not possess the theory and the necessary instruments to decentralize. People of culture, writers, political scientists, historians, sociologists, university professors in various fields, all practice either a nationalist or a civic discourse, but only rarely in relation to the social-cultural and administrative phenomena typical of the region or the problems of minority communities. The local peculiarities have thus been avoided. Public and private television broadcasts, newspapers and cultural institutions in Romania contribute to the perpetuation of this situation.

Where do the origins of a policy so poor from a social and economic point of view lie, and how can this policy be explained? The role of Bucharest as the capital city of Romania means that the intermingling of Oriental and Occidental features has been proposed for the entire country. Inspired by Ottoman Turkey and Phanariot rule on the one hand and by French and Prussian intellectual sources on the other, the cultural model of Bucharest was imposed over the regions and cities after the Romanian state was founded in 1918. In the first phase the goal was the consolidation of the newly formed Romanian state. The fear of neighbors and possible territorial claims meant that the nationalist principle became the most popular Romanian political doctrine. Romanian communism itself was inspired by this doctrine, confiscating relevant parts of interwar ethno-nationalism in favor of its own policy. Professional promotion in institutional hierarchies was based on ethno-cultural criteria, a condition in which the majority has always had the last word.

The idea of decentralization has troubled those who have been used to decisions coming from the center. Beyond affable declarations and demagogy, the local socio-cultural configurations have been ignored. But we know that administrative decentralization allows for better conservation, not merely placing value on the multiple patrimonies of the city but also attracting development on the basis of its own capabilities. Access to financial resources and to the decisions of the Local Council and the Timișoara Mayorality could contribute to the development

of the city's own administrative policies. Thus, for example, the impressive old architecture of Timișoara could be renovated.

Through an artificial division between the capital city and the provinces, centralism inculcated a form of exclusion from the public matters of the region. Situated at the European crossroads linking Hamburg to Athens and Istanbul and Vienna to Bucharest, Timișoara is in close proximity to Hungary and Serbia. From the point of view of social life and living conditions, it was regarded as a city bearing high-standards for a long time. Timișoara adapted itself only with considerable difficulty to the style proposed by Bucharest because its multicultural physiognomy and the critical attitude inherited from the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy contributed to the manifestation of a permanent opposition toward centralist and authoritarian policies. This fact is to be seen even today in the intellectual criticism practiced by the local media, in sports disputes, or in the interpretation of recent history, as well as in the ways in which the messages of the revolt of December 1989 are understood.<sup>28</sup> The model of the Central-European city seems to remain more attractive to the inhabitants of Timișoara than the Balkan ones, hence the resistance to the identity-based standardization of the region.<sup>29</sup>

Today Timișoara is in search of a new formula for social-identity. Many of the ancient families that gave an unmistakably distinctive note to the character of the city have emigrated. Engineers, workers, builders and handicraftsmen have emigrated in alarming numbers. From the point of view of plurilingualism, today's Romanian speakers do not know other regional languages. German is learned and spoken by a small number of students thanks to the survival of the German schools (such as the Nikolaus Lenau High School) and the Democratic German Forum, the German Cultural Centre and the German Chair of the Faculty of Letters, History and Theology within the West University of Timișoara. Members of the younger generation who choose to learn a second language prefer English and more recently Italian.

The emigration of the German community, the loss of the Jewish community and the move of an important part of the Hungarian cultural and artistic elite to Budapest has provoked a change in the cultural and behavioral model. The inhabitants who lived in the region before 1989 represented to a great extent the urban layer par excellence or a segment of the population that permitted assimilation to the urban area, maintaining the multicultural traditions of Timișoara and the Banat. The reasons for mass emigration were not merely economic, but also political and due to cultural discrimination. Despite some notable renewals, the laws designed to support private initiative and secure and restore private property came very late. The empty places left behind by those who emigrated have been gradually fulfilled by a population coming from the villages and small towns of the

Banat, and especially from Moldova, Oltenia and Maramureș. It is unquestionable that the identity balance of Timișoara has been dramatically changed.

Sociological studies reveal that after 1989 Timișoara does not have the necessary resources to assimilate newcomers, as happened during the interwar period or during the decades following the Second World War, i.e., within the context of other radical political changes. The set of values professed by the middle layer of the population, the one which gave the city its distinct personality, has dissolved itself under the pressure of a very rapid demographic mutation. The attraction exerted by Timișoara during the previous fifteen years could be explained on the one hand through the fact that it was here that the first important step to overturn dictatorship was taken and on the other that many Romanian citizens, even if they could not emigrate to Western Europe, at least were tempted to reach Timișoara in the western part of the country. It is equally true that political pressures to change the social structure of the city could be seized.

Cultural discontinuities with regard to the previous decades are visible in manifestations of chauvinism, including racist discourse and swastikas painted on some of the walls of the central buildings in the city and on statues, in parks, and even inside a few cultural institutions. In 2007 the Local City Council proposed and approved to grant the title of honorary citizen of the city to a person who denies the Holocaust. Such things reveal a new face of contemporary Timișoara. The quick Romanian assimilation within the recent few years has been of a political nature. Occasionally interest in preserving the patrimonial values of the minorities and a multicultural pedagogy at the level of the masses has been promoted. In general, and especially due to the governance of the former nomenclature of the Romanian Communist Party and the preservation of the old curricula and textbooks, Ceaușescu's nationalist ideology has survived. With different accents from one party or another, nationalism has remained manifest within all Romanian political groups. After the elections of 2004 Timișoara is represented in the Romanian Parliament by (among others) persons belonging to the extremist and chauvinist Greater Romanian Party. Even the politicians belonging to the Democratic Party in government from 2004 until April 2006 (whose leader, Traian Băsescu, used to be the President of Romania) have as their main representative of Timișoara the former leader of the xenophobic cultural-political group *Vatra Românească*. He opposes the Law of national minorities, a law that has been initiated by the Democratic Union of Hungarians and the other minority groups of Romania.

I have identified the phenomenon of Romanian assimilation, analyzing the history and literature curricula in high schools and universities.<sup>30</sup> They are uniform on a national scale and lacking in information about the region and the city that could particularize their historical and cultural existence. The names of schools,

publications and monuments reflect the propagation of a type of memory with an ideological background in which the nationalist dimension prevails. The monuments erected after 1918 commemorate primarily the history of the Romanians. A number of examples that fragmentarily evoke realities of the past have survived, however. This is the case of encyclopaedist Francesco Grisellini, of Governor Claudiu Florimond Merci, of mathematician János Bolyai, of writer Adam Müller Guttenbrunn, and of the bishop Augustin Pacha, who still figure on the frontispieces of some buildings or as names of centrally-situated streets. What could be emphasized as meritorious is that Timișoara's historical symbols did not provoke disputes like those concerning the Statue of Liberty in Arad.

### **In Place of Conclusions or About the Role of Multicultural and Intercultural Physiognomy**

Communitarian sectarianism did not concur with the political orientation of the city for long. Due to the relatively close social and material cohabitation of the majority of the inhabitants, as well as a mixing of families of diverse origins, Timișoara has defeated the assimilating tendencies, ethno-nationalism and the doctrinaire and religious excesses. Cultural ambivalences of Timișoara have generated a state of civilization that has contributed to the attraction for technical inventions and trade. The social and civic culture of Timișoara has generated an identity peculiar in comparison with those of the other cities of Transylvania, in which ethnic differences have been obvious. Unlike those cities, Timișoara has placed itself at an equal distance from Herder's and Fichte's *Volksgeist*, the German Romanticist *Kulturnation* and the mystic of the *Völkische Kultur* fantasies of discrete ethnographic identities (Victor Neumann 2004, 2005).<sup>31</sup> Under the influence of the Enlightenment cultural code imposed by the Habsburg Empire, Timișoara has remained for a long time now very restrained towards (not to mention opposed to) the above-mentioned key-concepts of the German Romantics and the ethnicity ideologies they developed. Most probably, the multicultural and multi-confessional character of Timișoara will play a role in social dynamics in the case of decentralization of the administrative system, renewal of the educational programs and political maturity of the new citizens. Irrespective of short-term local evolution, the future is open to any alternative. I state this because in an era of globalization the new colonists will find acceptable support for economic development or innovation in a city with serious multicultural traces and legacies.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Gusztáv Thirring (Ed.), *A magyar városok statisztikai évkönyve* [Statistical Yearly of the Hungarian Cities] (Budapest, 1912) 525–526. For further contextual information see Ilona Sármany-Parsons, “Die Rahmenbedingungen für ‘die Moderne’ in den ungarischen Provinzstädten um die Jahrhundertwende”, in Andrei Corbea-Hoişie – Jacques Le Rider (Hrsg.), *Metropole und Provinzen in Altösterreich* (Iaşi: Polirom-Böhlau, 1996), 201, note 50. The author offers a comparative description of the evolution of cities under Hungarian administration before the First World War, cities that aside from economic development, social emancipation, and cultural and civic recognition also had to confront the sensitive issue of nationalities. Even in the cities with mixed populations the tendencies of Magyar assimilation were obvious, while the promotion of language was the mission of associations created for this purpose in Bratislava or Timişoara. See also Zoltán Szász’s article “Manchester-ul ungar. Dezvoltarea Timişoarei moderne” [The Hungarian Manchester. Development of Modern Timişoara] in *Transilvania văzută în publicistica istorică maghiară. Momente din istoria Transilvaniei* [Transilvania in Hungarian Historic Writing. Moments from the History of Transylvania] in *História* (Miercurea Ciuc: Pro Print, 1999), 249.
- <sup>2</sup> According to Zoltán Szász, op. cit., 250. For further study of social and cultural details, refer to Victor Neumann, *Identités multiples dans l’Europe des Regions. L’Interculturalité du Banat*, Traduit du roumain par Maria Ţenchea (Timişoara: Hestia, 1997), 23–32 and 33–40. Some colleagues compared Timişoara of that epoch with Trieste, Krakow, Lvov, Kosice. See Adriana Babeţi, “Timişoara–Bucureşti. Culturi complementare. De ce versus?” [Timişoara–Bucureşti. Complementary cultures. Why Versus?], presented at the public debate organized by “Evenimentul Zilei. Ediţia de Vest” under the title: “Axa Timişoara–Bucureşti”, Expovest, Timişoara, 16 December 2005.
- <sup>3</sup> Victor Neumann, *Ideologie şi fantasmagorie. Perspective comparative asupra istoriei gândirii politice în Europa est-centrală* [Ideology and Phantasmagory. Comparative Perspectives on the History of Political Thought in East-Central Europe] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2001); see the chapter “Confessional Divergences. Greek-Catholics and Orthodox in Contemporary Romania (1948–1999)”, 134–148, in which I argue that even today Timişoara shows better cohabitation and more tolerance among denominations than other regions of Romania.
- <sup>4</sup> Apud Ilona Sármany-Parsons, “Die Rahmenbedingungen für ‘die Moderne’ in den ungarischen Provinzstädten um die Jahrhundertwende”, in Andrei Corbea-Hoişie – Jacques Le Rider (Hrsg.), *Metropole und Provinzen in Altösterreich* (Iaşi–Wien: Polirom-Böhlau, 1996), 201.
- <sup>5</sup> Victor Neumann, *The End of a History. The Jews of Banat from the Beginning to Nowadays* (Bucharest University Press, 2006). See also Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Öt nemzedék és ami előtte következik... A Temesvári Levente Pör 1919–1920* [Five Generations and What Came Before... The Levente Trial of Timişoara 1919–1920] (Budapest, 2006), the chapter “Zsidók Temesvárott” [The Jews of Timişoara], 217–223.
- <sup>6</sup> The text was published in Idem, *Between Words and Reality. On the Politics of Recognition and Political Changes in Contemporary Romania*, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> Mórítz Csáky, “Ambivalenz des kulturellen Erbes: Zentraleuropa”, in Mórítz Csáky – Klaus Zeyringer (Hrsg.), *Ambivalenz des kulturellen Erbes. Vielfachcodierung des historischen Gedächtnisses. Paradigma Österreich* (Innsbruck–Wien–München: Studien Verlag, 2000), 27–49.
- <sup>8</sup> According to Zoltán Szász, op. cit.

- <sup>9</sup> Apud *Recensămîntul populației României pe anul 2002* [Census of the Population of Romania in 2002].
- <sup>10</sup> Munz, Reiner, Reiner Ohliger, “Immigration of German People to Germany: Shedding Light on the German Concept of Identity”. *The International Scope*, Vol. 3, 2001.
- <sup>11</sup> According to *Recensămîntul populației României pe anul 2002* [Census of the Population of Romania in 2002].
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> *Recensămîntul populației României pe anii 1992 și 2002* [Census of the Population of Romania in 1992 and 2002].
- <sup>14</sup> *Recensămîntul populației României pe anul 1992* [Census of the Population of Romania in 1992].
- <sup>15</sup> *Recensămîntul populației României pe anul 2002* [Census of the Population of Romania in 2002].
- <sup>16</sup> If the nationalist policies and state centralism of Romania are overcome and the above-mentioned relationship with the Italians in Timișoara nurtured, a possible model of European social and cultural integration will develop for the regions and countries of the Balkans.
- <sup>17</sup> Béla Borsi-Kálmán, “Temesvári társadalom történet és emlékiratok tükrében” in *Öt nemzedék és ami előtte következik... A Temesvári Levente Pör 1919–1920* [Five Generations and What Came Before... The Levente Trial of Timișoara 1919–1920] (Budapest, 2006) 223–240.
- <sup>18</sup> About today’s Timișoara according to: [www.administratie.ro](http://www.administratie.ro)
- <sup>19</sup> In 2002, there were 32,274 Roman-Catholic parishioners in Timișoara according to *Recensămîntul populației României pe anul 2002* [The Census of Romania’s Population in 2002]. According to *Schematismus Dioeceseos Timisoaraensis pro Anno Domini 2005–2006* (Timișoara: Mirton, 2005), the percentage of parishioners on the basis of the mother tongue was the following: 54.29% Hungarians; 15.39% Germans; 10.5% Romanians; 5.87% Bulgarians; 5.76 % Croats; 3.93% Roma, 1.6% Slovaks; 0.26% other.
- <sup>20</sup> Victor Neumann, “Schimbările politice din 1989. Timișoara revoluționară” [Political Changes in 1989. Revolutionary Timișoara]. *Orizont* 1 (2006).
- <sup>21</sup> Victor Neumann, “Schimbările politice din 1989. Timișoara revoluționară” [Political Changes of 1989. Revolutionary Timișoara]. *Orizont* 1 (2006).
- <sup>22</sup> Miodrag Milin, *Timișoara 15–21 decembrie 1989* [Timișoara, 15–21 December 1989] (Timișoara: Author’s Press, 1990) 11–35.
- <sup>23</sup> Victor Neumann, op. cit.
- <sup>24</sup> Miodrag Milin (Coord.), *Timișoara în arhivele Europei Libere, 17–20 decembrie 1989* [Timișoara in the Archives of Free Europe, 17–20 December 1989] (Bucharest: Fundația Academia Civică, 1999) 55–56.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, “Human Chain Protecting Clergyman Turns into Mass Protest” 60–61.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, “White House Condemns Romanian Use of Force”, 151–152 and 154–155.
- <sup>27</sup> The roots of the local and regional nobility were not in Banat, but in Transylvania. A part of the nobility came to Banat after the region fell under the rule of the Habsburg Empire. See also Béla Borsi-Kálmán, the chapter “A nemesi model és a magyar utópia” [The Noble Model and Hungarian Utopia] in *Öt nemzedék és ami előtte következik... A Temesvári Levente Pör 1919–1920* [Five Generations and What Came Before... The Levente Trial in Timișoara 1919–1920] (Budapest, 2006), 208–217.
- <sup>28</sup> See, for example, the interpretations given for ideological and political purposes by Ion Iliescu in *Revoluție și reformă* [Revolution and Reform] (București: Enciclopedică, 1994) and Idem, *Revoluția română* [Romanian Revolution] (București: Presa națională, 2001).

- <sup>29</sup> In recent years the supporters of the local football team increased and become more radical, very often displaying a very hostile attitude toward the Bucharest teams.
- <sup>30</sup> See Victor Neumann, *The Alternative Textbooks on the History of Romania as Places of Memory* in the volume: *Umbruch im östlichen Europa. Die nationale Wende und das kollektive Gedächtnis*, Edited by Andrei Corbea-Hoisie – Rudolf Jaworski – Monika Sommer, Studien Verlag, Innsbruck, Wien, München, Bozen, 2004, 137–149.
- <sup>31</sup> Victor Neumann, the chapter “*Volk și Sprache în gândirea lui Herder. Teoria speculativă a etnonațiunii*” [*Volk and Sprache in Herder’s Understanding. Speculative Theory of the Ethno-Nation*] in *Neam, Popor sau Națiune. Despre identitățile politice europene* [Neam, People or Nation. On European Political Identities] (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2005), 47–84. See also, *Conceptually Mystified. East-Central Europe Torn Between Ethno-nationalism and Multiple Identities* (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 2004), 81–110.

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