CHAPTER 3

HUNGARIAN MINORITIES IN ROMANIA

The largest concentration of Hungarians outside Hungary is in Romania's Transylvanian region. The latest census puts the figure at 1,624,959 by ethnicity or 1,639,135 by mother tongue. Hungarian estimates put the figure at 2 million.\(^1\) This chapter focuses on the contemporary situation and problem of the Hungarians in this area.

Romanian-Hungarian tensions, however, have a long history and though contemporary tensions have contemporary causes (competition over scarce resources for instance) they are often fought and the fight sustained by selective use of history. Before plunging into the relation between Hungarians and Romanians in Romania today we, therefore, retreat (our steps) backwards. Edging our way through medieval Austria-Hungary which helps us to comprehend the importance of Transylvania to both parties we reach the point of Trianon agreement and the beginning of Hungarian minority problem in Romania.

The condition of the Hungarians in Red Romania is then focused on the main problem for the minorities during the communist period emanated from an increasingly nationalist state and closed society. Not only were minority rights sacrificed, the attempt of the state appeared to be one aimed at ruthless destruction of their identity. After the collapse of communism Romanian society embarked on the path of democracy. This chapter addresses questions like - how far Hungarians have benefitted from the transparency of the system? Has it made discussion and acceptance of minority with rights easy? Has the situation of Hungarians altered fundamentally? How far have the Hungarian minorities benefitted from this new transparency? The answer to these question can be attempted only by answering another set of questions - How substantially has the routine of the Romanian state altered to accommodate minorities? Has it made discussion and acceptance of minority with rights easy? What kind of parties dominate Romanian politics? What are their strategies to win popular support from a society which has for decades been unaccustomed in making meaningful choices?

I. AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ROMANIAN-HUNGARIAN RELATION

i) Transylvania - A Bone of Contention

The present and future of every community is guided by
a sense of history, says George Schopflin. The central problem of the history of Transylvania is that there are separate Romanian and Hungarian histories which vigorously compete to justify their attachment to and claim over Transylvania.

The Romanian Nationalist version of the history holds that the inhabitants of the province in first and second centuries A.D., the Dacians, were conquered by the Roman Empire and annexed to it. Thereafter a rapid fusion of the Dacian and Latin cultures took place the result of which was the birth of the Romanian national culture. After the withdrawal of the Romanian legions, the Dacians or Daco-Romans withdrew to their Transylvanian mountains remained there and conserved their Latin language and culture. A series of invaders and conquerors - Avars, Scythians, Turks passed over the region. Finally came the Magyars in 896 A.D. Throughout these years the Romanian substance remained safe protected by the mountainous geography of the province.


This is known as the Daco-Roman continuity theory.4

Hungarian historians reject the Daco-Roman continuity theory and argue that when the Hungarians conquered central Danube basin, Transylvania was 'terra inoccupata' - at best it was sparsely inhabited by Slavonic tribes. The Hungarian kingdom gradually extended its organisation over the region settling in Szeklers and the Saxon colonists to strengthen its economic development. The county system was introduced in certain regions and elsewhere there was local autonomy. The presence of Romanian population in accounted for by immigration. Hungarians argue that nomadic Romanian shepherds, practising transhumance crossed the Carpathians from the thirteenth century onwards and were given the right to settle by the Hungarian rulers of the province.

But Transylvania's special significance is not only in terms of who occupied it first but its autonomous development during the long years of Turkish domination.

4. Subscribed by Andrew Mackenzie and Seton - Watson. Andrew Mackenzie, 'A Journey into the past of Transylvania, (Robert Hale, London 1990), pp. 7-185. Seton-Watson's conclusion was Transylvania stands out as a mountainous island on the physical map of Europe, surrounded in three sides by great plains. What more natural than that it should serve as a refuge during the long centuries of invasion, and that survivors should issue forth into the plains when the tide, of invasion began to subside. quoted in Andrew Mackenzie p. 37.
The years 1526 and 1683 are two dates of immense significance in Romanian, Hungarian and Transylvanian history. In 1526 the Turks crushed the medieval Hungarian monarchy and in 1683 the tide turned against the Turks. The intervening years were years of subjugation and humiliation both for Hungarians and Romanians. For Transylvania, however, it has often been said it be the golden age. Administered by a series of able rulers as Stephen Backsay, Gabriel Bethlen, Francis Rakoszy the Magyars of Transylvania kept the spirit of Hungarian independence alive and burning.

In the late 18th century population of Transylvania reached 1.45 million of this over half or 55 per cent of population were ethnically Romanian, 30 per cent Hungarian and another 10 per cent Saxons. The rest were South Slavs. The policy of Habsburg administration towards Transylvania during the period was openly exploitative. It had its inevitable consequences. In the year 1784-85 for the first time hatred between the Magyars and Romanians flared into open rebellion. The initial Romanian hatred for Hungarian nobility transferred to all Hungarians regardless of class.

From then on Hungarians and Romanians continued to develop a keen sense of national consciousness and in their eagerness to assert national pride often clashed with each other (particularly between 1840-1848). In 1867 by the Ausgleich compromise, Transylvania's separate existence finally came to an end. It became part of Hungary. From then on till 1918 Romanians were subjected to unrelenting Magyarisation policies. In 1918, Hungarian power collapsed and with it began the era of Romanian dominations over Hungarians in Romania.

(ii) 1918 the Beginning of Hungarian Minority Problem in Romania

From virtually the earliest times, the dominant imperative of the Romanian history was to unify the three Romanian lands - Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia. Unification, Romanian historians point out was the objective of every major ruler and it was achieved by Michael the Brave.

7. Between 1860-70 a series of political initiatives were undertaken to re-examine the nationality conflicts of 1848 and resolve the issue in spirit of mutual understanding. Jozsef Botvos, the principal spokesman of national minority rights chaired the Committee assigned to report on the protection of nationality rights in 1861. Botvos report outlined a solution for the protection of nationality rights that was based on the free exercise of personal and political rights within a decentralized constitutional state.
in 1599-1600 for a brief one year. The age old striving was finally crowned with success when in 1918 the kingdom of Hungary collapsed and the representatives of the Romanian people declared the unification of Transylvania with the Regat at Alba Iulia.\footnote{Schöpflin and Poulton, n.2, p. 8.} Baring a gap of four years during Second World War Transylvania has ever since been a part of Romania. World War I altered the fate of Hungarians dramatically. From being part of the ruling majority they became minorities in the states of which they became citizens and had to face strong assimilationist pressures. The tables were turned as it were.

As discussed in Chapter 2 the First World War ended by signing a great many treaties guaranteeing minority rights. The rights of the national minorities in the areas of Hungary annexed by Romania was guaranteed by the Alba Iulia Resolution issued by the Romanian National Assembly on December 1918 and by Paris Minority Treaty concluded between the Allied Powers and Romania on December 9, 1919.

The provisions of these treaties and the subsequent policies of the Romanian government give us a fair idea of what the Hungarians faced as minorities in Transylvania.
(iii) Minority Treaties and Their Application

Article 1 of the Alba Iulia Resolution proclaimed the union of Romania and Transylvania. Article 2 stated that until the convocation of the constituent assembly the inhabitants of these areas shall possess temporary autonomy and Article 3 guaranteed in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 individual and national rights. Paragraph 1 of that article proclaimed full national freedom for the coexisting peoples. All of the peoples have the right to public education public administration, and the administration of justice in their own languages, provided by individuals chosen from among their own members. All peoples will receive rights of representation in the governing of the country and in the legislature organ in accordance with their members.

Paragraph 2 of Article 3 guaranteed "equal rights and complete religious freedom for all religious faiths." Paragraph 3 - proclaimed the 'unqualified realization of a pure democratic system in every sphere of public life' paragraph 4 guaranteed "unrestricted" freedom of the press association and assembly as well as the possibility for freedom of thought.

9. ibid. p. 87.

In the Minorities Treaty Romania had agreed to guarantee to all the inhabitants of the country complete personal security and full freedom (Article 2); "it acknowledges those persons living in the territory of Romania from the time when the treaty comes into force as citizens possessing full rights" (Article 3); and by article 4 it acknowledged that those who are Austrian or Hungarian citizens but were born in areas which became Romanian as citizens with full rights. Article 3 specified that Austrian and Hungarian citizens could opt for gaining foreign citizenship while at the same retaining ownership of their real estate in Romanian territory; the Romanian government guaranteed, 'the use of the mother tongue without restriction in private and commercial life... or at political meetings... as well as in judicial procedures', (Article 8) the Minorities possessed the right 'to establish, manage, and control charitable, religious and social institutions, as well as teaching or other educational institutions, with the free use of the mother-tongue and the free observance of religion' (Article 9) Article 10 stated that the Romanian government 'guar- 

11. Article 2, 3 and 4 in ibid., p.87.
12. ibid.
13. ibid.
antees facilitation of the use of the nationality vernacular in those towns and districts where nationalities line (Article 10) 14 finally Romania agreed the Transylvanian Szepler and Saxon communities should be permitted local self government in religious and educational matters under the Romanian state (Article 11). 15

The newly established Greater Romania never fulfilled the obligations undertaken by either resolutions. From the point of view of Romanian statutory law the Alba Iulia Resolution had no legal significance since the legislative of the new Romanian state did not incorporate them into the constitution are enact them as law. Of all the articles of the Resolution of Alba Iulia only Article 1 proclaiming the Union of Romania with Transylvania was enacted into law on January 1 1920.

The new constitution of March 28, 1923 was markedly nationalist and statist in character. It declared Romania to be a 'unified indivisible, national state.' although it did guarantee equality before law for every citizen of Romania, it did not incorporate either the Resolution of Alba Iulia, the guarantees in the Minorities Treaty or the

14. ibid.
15. ibid., pp.85-89.
cultural autonomy of Szeklers and of Transylvanian Saxons.\textsuperscript{16}

(a) Education:

Education is an issue especially sensitive for the minorities. The existence of an autonomous education network guarantees for minorities the maintenance of their group identity by renewing its intellectual leaders. Any attempt to strike on education therefore is viewed with suspicion and resistance. Table 3.1 shows the Hungarian Language Schools in operation in Romania between 1919-1920, the first academic year after the annexation of Transylvania.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\hline
Hungarian Schools & Number of Schools \\
\hline
Primary Schools & 1,686 \\
Lower Secondary Schools & 62 \\
and Junior Grammar Schools & \\
Grammar Schools & 65 \\
Teachers Training Colleges & 14 \\
Commercial Colleges & 9 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{3.1}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{16} ibid., pp. 90-91.
Table 3.2 shows the Hungarian language ecclesiastical schools in operation in the same year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungarian Ecclesiastical School</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>1,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary Schools</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Schools</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Training Colleges</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Colleges</td>
<td>7</td>
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In the 1920s a bunch of laws and decrees were passed which had severe repercussions in education, culture and economic life of minorities.

The December 22, 1925 law concerning private education turned national-minority ecclesiastical schools into public (state) institutions, taking away their autonomous rights and introduced the principle of 'name-analysis'. This meant that members of the national minorities who had Romanian sounding names - particularly Hungarians - were declared to
be of Romanian origin. The law further prescribed that even where national - minority teachers had already passed an examination in Romanian, they could be compelled to take further language exams any time and in case of failure loose their teacher certificate. These compulsory exams had devastating effect on minority education in Transylvania.18

(b) Economic Life

The economic position of the national minorities in Transylvania was undermined by the land reform of July 23, 1921. The discriminating nature of the law was evident when the reform aimed at the expropriation of large estates was carried out more strictly in Transylvania where land belonging to large landowners was 10.8 per cent than in Regat where it was 40 per cent. A large portion of the expropriated wealth of the nationality churches also became the property of the Romanian orthodox church. A legislative project for the 'protection of national labour' restricted

17. ibid., p. 161.

18. New laws and decrees of time within a short space of time, drastically reduced the number of Hungarian schools. Between 1919-1924 the Romanian government either Romanized or closed down 2,070 of 3,025 Hungarian rural elementary schools (68 per cent), 123 of 151 lower grade secondary schools *82 per cent) 46 of 65 secondary schools (70 per cent) 23 of 29 teacher training colleges (78 per cent) and 27 of 29 commercial colleges (93 per cent)., ibid., p. 161.
the economic life of national minorities during the interwar period. It prescribed that at least 75 per cent of the staff and 60 per cent of the management of economic, industrial, commercial and other enterprises with Romanian capital, were to be Romanian, the rest could be filled by members of national minorities. The Industry Act of April 29, 1936 abolished the national minorities chamber of commerce. Already by a law in 1925 public administration was sought to be unified. Every form of local self government was abolished and the period of complete state centralization began. The fiscal policy of the Romanian government was also biased against minorities. According to an official publication of the Romanian Ministry of finance between 1924-26 direct taxation in Transylvania exceeded that in the Regat by 205 million lei. 19

Crampton has argued that the vast increase in size after 1918 'inevitably affected the political life of Romania between the wars. There were the familiar problems of integration. The economic integration was achieved by imposing a common currency - the Romania lei, by 1923 all railways in greater' Romania was using the same gauge, measures were taken to harmonize legal procedures. It was

19. ibid., p.92.
'much less easy' says Crampton to integrate the population of the new territories. Crampton argues even the Romanian population of the new territories were not open to integrating pressures. Tension between Romanian and non-Romanian was expected and constant but at times clashes between Romanians of new territories and old Regat were no less forceful.20

(iv) Repurcussions of World War II on Romanian's Hungarians

Hungary's attempt to regain her lost area and population during second World War ended in disaster. The end of the War had Romania on the winning side and Hungarians and Germans had lost the war. Their position reflected their status, they were made the object of condemnation and collective punishment. By quick and decisive intervention the Soviet military administration succeeded in protecting the Hungarian population. In the process they gained the confidence of the terrorized Hungarian population, thus increasing the camp of Soviet sympathizers.

(a) Groza government and minorities.

1945 marked a new turning point in Romanian internal politics. On 6 March King Michael under Soviet pressure had to dismiss Radescu government and appoint Petru Groza as

Though the Groza government did not live up to the promises it made vis-a-vis minorities, national minorities were not neglected. Important national minority cultural institutions were established, a start was made in organising the literary life of the minorities, minority representatives were elected to the nationality secretariat of state and the Romanian council of state and council of ministers.

On the basis of June 1, 1945 decree the Groza government opened the Hungarian Bolyai university in Cluj. The Csango Hungarians in Moldavia were permitted to have schools with mother tongue instruction. The use of national minorities languages was permitted at the work place, official meetings, party conferences and in the public sector and the flags of the nationalities could be flown side by side the Romanian flag. Visiting professors from Hungary were allowed at the University of Cluj. Hungarian newspapers could

21. Elarh Illyes, n.10, p. 96-97. The key position in Groza government were occupied by communists : Teohari Geogescu, Minister of Interim, Patrascu Minister of Justice, gheorghic Dy. General Secretary of the Communist Party occupied the post of Minister of Labour and Economy.

22. ibid., p.105. The Bolyai University had 13 faculties with Hungarian teachers.
be imported in almost unlimited quantities. Groza government it appeared wanted to create a Transylvania which would be a bridge rather than a barrier between Hungary and Romania.

(b) Hungarians in Communist Romania

The establishment of the people's Republic in Romania following the (forced) abdication of King Michael I in December 1947 altered the political, social and economic structure of Romania. A new constitution was enacted on April 13, 1948. The new constitution guaranteed the rights of all the inhabitants of the country but it did so in a form which subjected them entirely to the goal of building socialism.

The position of the Hungarians in the immediate aftermath of the second World War and early years of communist rule in Transylvania was thus not one of total despair. For months there was no official anti-minority pronouncement and the dominant trend in the treatment of the nationalities was one of tolerance. This was due to the weakness of the Romanian Communist party. In 1944, its approximate 1000

23. See ibid., also Tom Gallagher and George Schopflin.
members were dominated by Jews and Hungarians.\textsuperscript{24} By 1949, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej had firmly consolidated his power and national minority rights were rapidly attacked. According to a decree on August 3, 1948 the national minority ecclesiastical schools were nationalized. Thus the churches which in the interwar period played a significant role in defending and encouraging the development of nationality cultures were undermined.

The first direct attack on the national minorities was in the wake of Rajk trials in Hungary. Dej moved against the Hungarian People's Alliance and had many of its leaders arrested. An area of particular concern to the Hungarians, Schopflin, points out was the way in which the Romanian authorities were determined to keep Hungarian language technical and vocational education to a minimum. The significance of technical education in a rapidly industrializing society is but obvious.\textsuperscript{25}

One of the most harmful feature of Romanian policy from the standpoint of the Hungarians has been the rewriting of

\textsuperscript{24} As mentioned Soviet intervention to stop Hungarian Victimization at the end of World War II gained their sympathy. Considerable number of Hungarians in Transylvania began to join left wing organisation under the guidance of MADO;S (Hungarian National Workers Federation).

\textsuperscript{25} George Schöpflin, n.2, p.
the history of Transylvania in a way as to exclude them completely. In effect the rewritten history of Romania virtually denied the Hungarian presence. The school history textbooks whether in Hungarian or in Romanian were concerned exclusively with the Romanian history of Transylvania. 26

This was coupled with the increasing tendency to eliminate signs of Hungarian presence. Bilingual signs all but disappeared. Whenever urban renewal took place, Hungarian buildings were demolished, 27 Romanians were both targets of police terror but the arrests and deportations of large number of Hungarian intellectuals was a harder blow for the minorities than for majority because of obvious difference in numerical strength. 28

The government tried to balance these attacks by concessions. One such concession was the establishment of the Magyar Autonomous Province consisting of the Szekler coun-

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27. ibid., p. 15. Reports indicate that in cemeteries when tomb stores were given a facelift their deceased Hungarian occupants were turned into Romanians.

28. ibid.
ties in 1952. Citing them as RCP's genuine empathy for national minorities and its sensitivity to their needs, the Hungarian People's Alliance was abolished in 1953. The alliance had become, it was argued, superfluous. In January 1953, Dej claimed that the national question had been solved for good in Romania. This meant that national minority problems and demands could not be discussed or entertained.

A major shift in policy came about after 1956 which was the year of Hungarian revolt against Soviet imposed communist rule. It found strong support in Transylvania. Hungarian and Romanian joint demonstration in Cluj in support of the revolt alarmed the Romanian government. The government responded with a wave of arrests, separate Hungarian educational network was done away with Bolyai University was merged with the Romanian Babes University. Secondary school network was eliminated by joining Hungarian and

29. Schöpflin, ibid, p.10; Elmer Illyes, n., p. 117. The MAR was autonomous only in name. It differed in no way from other 16 provinces of the country. The area comprising MAR was made as small as possible, as far away from Hungarian border, surrounded by countries with majority of Romanian inhabitants. Its existence was used as a pretext for not opening Hungarian cultural facilities elsewhere.

30. ibid.

31. ibid.

32. ibid., p.12.
Romanian schools and the creation of Hungarian language sections enabled the authorities to exercise greater control over them.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1960 the MAR was renamed Mures - Hungarian Autonomous Region and reorganised in a way that it lost its overwhelmingly Hungarian inhabited territories by addition of purely Romanian ones. In 1968 it was abolished completely.\textsuperscript{34}

(c) Ceausescu and Hungarian Minorities

The enforced university merger in Cluj proved to be the starting point in the rise of Nicolae Ceausescu. In March 1965 he succeeded Dej. From the outset it became clear that nationalism would be encouraged as it motivated people to put in their best and gave them strength to withstand austerity.\textsuperscript{35}

The 1968 Prague Spring and Soviet intervention had its impact on Romanians and her minority policy. By this time there was growing dissatisfaction among the minorities and the Romanian leadership feared that Soviet Union would use this as a pretext to intervene in Romanian affairs. There-

\textsuperscript{33} ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} ibid.

\textsuperscript{35} This was the period when Romania's link with Moscow was severed.
after Romania's policy towards minorities became one of subtle repression. The essence of the revised policy as Schopflin put it was to make concessions as far as possible in areas of secondary importance and to withdraw them subsequently. This, Schopflin argues, had an added advantage of creating a climate of uncertainty in which the Hungarians could be persuaded that by co-operating with the regime they stood to gain.

The setting up of the Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality was according to Schopflin a typical measure of this kind. It was a body to represent Hungarian interests, but in practice a body devoid of any power.36 Again in 1967-68 the publication network was reorganised and several new Hungarian language newspapers were launched. In 1974 using the pretext of paper shortage both Romanian and Hungarian papers were cut in size and circulation. The Romanian papers were later restored the Hungarians were not.

With the heightening of nationalist fervour the situation of ethnic Hungarians deteriorated drastically under Nicolae Ceausescu. Trond Gilberg has pointed out that as Romanian nationalism turned to chauvinism - Romanians no longer stopped at extolling the virtues of their own history

- and they did so at the expense of others. The nationalist spirit no longer meant 'I will try to be different from rest, but I will try to sweep away others.' 37

The Hungarians were particularly hard hit by Ceausescu's ambitious resettlement plan. 38 Under the scheme officially known as 'systematisation' about 7,000 villages throughout Romania were to be razed by the year 2000 and 2 million people moved into apartments. The aim according to Romanian officials was to clear land for more farm production. Although 'systematisation' threatened rural inhabitants irrespective of ethnic origin the minorities it has been rightly 'pointed out were put at a greater disadvantage. 39 As the ethnic populations transferred from largely homogeneous village communities to large urban centres dominated by the country's 20 million Romanian inhabitants they would find it difficult to resist assimilation pressures. Systematization led to large flight of Hungarians from Romania into Hungary. In 1989 Hungarian Minister of the Interior Istvan Horvath acknowledged 14,013 refugees.


38. ibid., pp. 237-238.

from Romania.\textsuperscript{40} 

Though the Romanian governments efforts to assimilate Magyar minorities began from the day Romania came to possess Transylvania the process accelerated in the mid 1980s. A growing number of Hungarian intellectuals came to feel that the Romanian state without complete assimilation would take no respite. Intellectuals within Romania began to speak out ignoring personal dangers.\textsuperscript{41}

The situation was well summarized by Geza Szocs. According to him, the governments policy of forced assimilation manifested in the following ways: 1) the use of population transfers into and out of Hungarian regions in order to change the ethnic composition of Hungarian areas; 2) the "restriction and elimination" of Hungarian - language education 3) the "banishment" of the Hungarian language from public life; 4) the "liquidation of cultural institutions and the harassment of minority churches; and 5) a campaign designed to create in Hungarians a sense of shame toward their own history and to denigrate their feeling of identi-

\textsuperscript{40} Romanian Refugees Problem for Hungary, \textit{New Strait Times}. Kuala Lampur, 5 April 1989. The article reported that several organisations appeared in Hungary to help and advise the new arrivals - one such Committee for Granting Asylum was founded by Gaspar Miklos Tamas.

\textsuperscript{41} Protest letters by Karoly Kiraly, Lajos Takacs, Lazar Memorandum all fall in this category.
II. HUNGARIANS IN DEMOCRATIC ROMANIA

(i) Assessing The Nature of Romanian State

In the 1980s Romania's economic performance nose dived. It was the beginning of the period of unrelieved austerity and deprivation for the majority of the Romanians. The ethnic Romanians gradually became too downtrodden too cynical to believe in the nationalist slogans of the regime. This perhaps explains the sudden spontaneous alignment of the disgruntled and openly discriminated Hungarian minority and the disillusioned Romanian majority which swept away the communist regime in the winter of 1989.

This was followed immediately by major changes in Romania which had great positive impact on daily life of one and all. Freedom of press, the right to assemble and form political parties and other interest group, the opportunity to travel all signaled the beginning of a new era of freedom and transparency. The following section proposes to look into the fate of the Hungarian Minorities in the new scenario. Have the new political parties that dot the Romanian

42. This statement by Geza Szocs before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe May 5, 1987 at hearings on Hungarian Minorities in Romania and Czechoslovakia was reproduced in A Helsinki Watch Report February, 1989 'Destroying Ethnic Identity.'
political scene truly done away with the nationalist slogans and policies? Has the vote for democracy meant greater tolerance and respect for differences? Do the political actors display willingness to cooperate, bargain and compromise? What meaningful difference has the new Romanian Constitution and government policies brought in the life of the Hungarians? How successfully have the organised themselves to realise their demands? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this section.

(a) National Salvation Front and the Hungarians:

In the sudden turmoil of December 1989 a range of political insiders who initially called themselves moderate communists formed the National Salvation Front, which placed itself at the head of the revolutionary movement. The 39 member strong NSF Council included army officers, students and intellectuals who participated in the revolt but the hard core committed of people who had been communists right until the regime-collapse - Ion, Iliescu, Petre Roman, Silvia Brucan, Corneliu Manescu, General Victor Stanculuscu, Alexander Birladeanu and Dan Martian. 43

The NSF ten point programme issued on 22 December stipulated the introduction of a democratic, pluralist form

of government and the abolition of the leading role of a single party; holding of free elections; the separation of powers; the elimination of centralized economic management and the promotion of initiative and skills in all economic sectors; the restructuring of agriculture and the promotion of small-scale production; the reorganisation of education; the observance of the rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities. The reorganisation of trade and the halting of food exports and the conduct of foreign policy in the interest of the people. 44

On 5 January 1990, the NSF issued a declaration on the status of Romania's national minorities which raised hopes that concrete steps would be taken to deal with minority concerns and undo much of the damage of the Ceausescu period.

A key passage read:

The revolution in Romania, an historic act of the entire people, of the Romanian nation and of the national minorities attests to the unity and solidarity of all the homeland's sons who have wished freedom and authentic democracy. The bloodshed in common has shown that the policy of national hate - mongering based on a chauvinistic policy of forced assimilation as well as the successive attempts to defame neighbouring

44. ibid., The programme encouraged Hungary to recognize the new Romanian government on 23 December 1989, the first country to do so.
Hungary and the Hungarians in Romania could not succeed in breaking the confidence, friendship and unity between the Romanian people and the national minorities.

The National Salvation Front solemnly declares that it shall achieve and guarantee the individual and collective rights and liberties of all the national minorities.45

It was a promise from which the NSF would soon deviate.

On January 4, 1990 a decree law on local government had laid down that in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, decisions of the local government would be made known to citizens in their own language as well as in Romanian. Broadcasting in Hungarian and German curtailed in the 1980s was resumed. Radio stations in Bucharest and in the main Transylvanian cities started devoting twelve hours a week to transmissions in Hungarian. The government's readiness to allow the Hungarian minority to be active in state affairs was confirmed by the appointment of well-known Hungarians to prominent official positions. Karoly Kiraly was given a top post in NSF's National Council. On 23 December it had been announced that Laszlo Tokes and Geza Domokos would be part of the unelected parliament.46

45. SWB EB/0657 B/11, 9 January 1990.
46. Tom Gallagher, n.43, p. 76-77.
The easy relationship of DAHR and NSF continued till no other political actor emerged in scene. By January 1990 new political parties began to register officially with the authorities. In early February 1990, Vatra Romaneasca came into being. Attempting to safeguard Romanian culture from unspecified foreign attack, it actually offered a nationalist outlet for the frustrations of the Romanian majority. More significantly, it became an organization consisting largely of former nomenklatura who hoped to gain and hold power by stirring anti-Hungarian sentiments. As NSF faced competition for power it fell back increasingly on the old nationalist card to reform its position. Subsequent events reveal that Iliescu found it difficult to abandon the long-standing state tradition of using nationalism in order to win popular backing.

The first crack in the majority-minority relation appeared over the decision to reintroduce Hungarian-language teaching and split schools in 1990 and it has widened ever since. Attila Palfalvi, having taken the decision, sought to implement it speedily. Cluj witnessed protest against the measure. Similar protests also took place in Tirgu Mures, where events took a violent turn. Tension was fuelled by the Hungarian celebration on March 15 of the anniversary of the 1848 revolution in which they fought.
against among others, the Romanians. On 19 March, 1990 a strike began by Hungarian school children in support of students demands. Reports filed by foreign journalists indicate that serious violence occurred the same day when a Vatra Romaneascacl demonstration turned into a siege of the DAHR offices.

The sharply contrasting reactions to the Tirgu Mures violence opened up a gulf between ethnic Romanians and Hungarians. Perceptions of what had happened and who was responsible were totally at variance. Ion Iliescu even before any official report was out singled out Hungarian pressure for educational change their insistence and haste.

47. Reports indicate that the celebrations were quiet and orderly at places with ethnic. But Romanian extremists went about tearing Hungarian wreathes and ribbons and replacing them with Romanian flags. In the weekend rallies at universities across the country were held in which Romanian students showed solidarity with their colleagues in Tirgu Mures. ... On 19 March ... a small but increasingly bad tempered demonstration in the main square by Vatra supporters was joined in Mid-afternoon by hordes of angry Romanian peasants who had been transported in from surrounding villages and given money and drink. Ethnic clashes in Tirgu Murs, Julins Strauss a British student living in Transylvania East European Reporter Vol.4, No.2. Spring/summer 1990. p.41.

48. Hungarian writer Andras Suto was badly beaten up by the Romanian crowd. SWB/EE/0731B/9, 5 April 1990. The hostile crowd was reinforced by Romanian villagers from Hodac and Ibanests fifty kilometres north of the city. In a region where public transport is even more inadequate than in other parts of the country, villagers were bused in and out of the city on two consecutive days. Tom Gallagher, n.43, p.88.
for igniting the spark.

Once the NSF decided to actively contest for power in the May 1990 elections, it showed readiness to deal on favourable terms with any group that did not threaten it and which posed problems for its opponents.49

The NSF thus was ready to play the nationalist card. Iliescu never criticised Vatra leaders for their role in Tirgu Mures. Well publicized meetings with Iliescu and Roman in fact helped to transform Vatra from a marginal provincial group into a nationalist political player. During the election campaign allegations were made that leading opposition figures had non-Romanian, i.e., Hungarian ancestry and that opposition parties were willing to permit the dismemberment of Romania by returning Transylvania to Hungary.

The hopes of December 1989 thus all but evaporated. The Hungarian card was once again used to create a sense of insecurity among the Romanian population in the difficult years of transition. The Romanian government in fact went out of its way to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of

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49. On 6 February 1990 the NSF registered as a political party and Ion Iliescu announced his candidacy for the post of Romanian President. ibid, n.43, p.82.
Vienna Accord.⁵⁰ Speaking on the occasion Iliescu stressed the need for continuing vigilance to prevent something similar happening in future. None of the government spokesmen sought to dissociate the present day Transylvanian Hungarians from the events of 1940-44. Romania was also gifted a new national day - December 1, the day Transylvania was united with Romania in 1918.⁵¹

The rise of ultra nationalist parties and the use of the nationalist card by other parties without hesitation does not augur well for the minorities or Romania at large. It appears that the biggest threat to Romania comes from within.

In July 1990 Petre Roman replaced Mayors who had been appointed at the beginning of the year with individuals clearly loyal to the NSF.⁵² For the overwhelmingly Hungarian country of Covasna and Harghita Roman's choice fell on two ethnic Romanians. This led to mass protests. Prime Minister Stolojan paid a fact finding visit to the region and upon his return announced that a pair of Romanians and

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⁵⁰ By this accord Romania had to cede northern Transylvania to Hungary on 30 August 1940.

⁵¹ It replaced 23 August 1944 when Romania broke free of the Axis Alliance and allied with Soviet Communist system.

⁵² The prefect was the highest authority in each romanian county and directly answerable to the Prime Minister in Bucharest.

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Hungarians would act as joint prefects until the autumn elections. What is interesting in this case is the willingness to take local feelings into account and to revise government decision on its basis. This is the spirit of democracy, but in the case of Romania such instances are few and far. Thus when after the local elections in February 1992 Gheorghe Funar, the PRNU candidate was elected mayor of Cluj and embarked on a series of controversial decisions, President Iliescu pleaded his helplessness arguing that he had no personal control over local authorities.

The increasing dependence of the government on nationalist parties, on PRNU and GRP after the September 1992 elections dictated its minority policies. When in February 1993 Iliescu acknowledged the DAHR as the legitimate organisation of the Hungarians in Romania he also made overtures times to ultra-nationalists. Paul Everac, a writer known for his anti-semitic and anti-western views was appointed head of the Romanian television. Iliescu also sent a

53. Tom Gallagher, n.43, p. 124

54. Due to the splitting of votes between NSF and PRNU, the chances of Democratic Convention candidate Litiu improved. But in the end PRNU campaign couched in terms of 'Brother Romanians' and 'wake up Romanians' struck an emotional chord and Funar was elected. ibid., pp.166-170.

55. ibid., p.129.
cordial message to the leader of Great Romanian Party on the occasion of its first Congress in March 1993. Earlier Romanian Mare, the influential weekly of the GRP had urged its reader to support Iliescu in the presidential elections. In March 1993 when the government faced the parliamentary vote of no confidence, GRP supported the government. 56

To keep the Romanian state in favourable international light the government announced the setting up of the Council of National Minorities. Interestingly in setting up the council the government did not think it fit to consult any of the minority organisations. The DAHR read about its formation in the press. Varujan Vosganian, a parliamentary deputy for the Union of Armenians deplored the lack of consultation. 57

Romania was, however, not without movements against strong current of nationalism. Mention must be made of the Timisoara society and civic alliance.

(b) Timisoara Society and Civil Alliance

Timisoara society was formed in January 1990 by young writers and journalists in the city, keen to promote human rights and democracy. On 11 March 1990 they issued a state-

56. ibid., p.129.
57. ibid., p.130.
ment known as the Timisoara Declaration. Timisoara the framers argued was 'a European city whose people have refused and are still refusing to accept nationalism. In a bold departure they invited 'all the country's chauvinists' - whether Romanians Hungarians' or German - to come to Timisoara to take a course in tolerance and mutual respect the only principle that will rule in the future European house.'\textsuperscript{58} Timisoara declarations open advocation of economic and administrative decentralization infuriated nationalists who were for strong centralized government.

Formed in the autumn of 1990, Civic Alliance was a movement determined to prevent the memory of the 1989 revolution being hi-jacked for nationalist ends. It advocated a self limiting state based on the rule of law. In 1991 an important segment argued that its goals could only be realised if it contested. A Civic Alliance Party was created in July 1991. After the 1993 election in which CAP secured 16 parliamentary seats, it split.

When it came to responding to ultra nationalists the historic parties appeared more cautious than these informal democratic opposition, perhaps because they felt they had more to loose. Although the democratic opposition became

\textsuperscript{58} ibid., pp. 150-151.
increasingly aware of the readiness of the NSF and several of its satellites to use nationalism to deflect criticism of its economic policies and cast doubts on the patriotic credentials of opponents no counter strategy was elaborated. Live broadcasts of Romanian parliament proceedings made evident the Romanian democrats reluctance or failure to join their Hungarian colleagues to defy nationalist clamour. Ardas Suto, Romania's foremost Hungarian writer had it seemed rightly warned decades will be needed before the wounds are healed and the nationalism fostered by the dictatorship is buried in the common soil. The States inability to get rid of nationalist bias was evident from the new constitution adopted in 1992.

(c) The Romanian Constitution of 1992

Gallagher has remarked that, "the Romanian constitution drawn up by parliament and placed before the electorate for approval on 9 December 1991 embodied the centralising ethos that had been at the heart of state formation in Eastern


60. The following discussion is based on Tom Gallagher, Jausz Bugajski, Rights of the Persons Belonging to National Minorities, Human Rights in Romania, Bucharest, 1993, the Romanian Institute for Human Rights. The DAHR Documents 1, Cluj 1994, pp. 20-25. Nation State and the Minority Question in Romania Bela Marko, President of DAHR.
Europe for over a century. 61 Article 1 (1) stated - 'Romania is a sovereign and independent, unitary and indivisible National State.' Article 4 (1) stated - "The state foundation is laid on the unity of the Romanian people and article 13 enforced the states uni-national character stating that in Romania, the official language is Romanian. The definition of Romanian state as a 'national state' was considered an anomaly by DAHR in a state which had fourteen recognised national minorities. Though Article 4 (2) declared Romania to be 'the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens without any discrimination on account of race nationality, ethnic origin, language religion, sex, opinion, political adherence property or social origin and by Article 6 (1) 'the state recognized and guaranteed' the right of persons belonging to national minorities to the preservation, development and expression of their ethnic cultural, linguistic and religious identity the thrust of the constitution appears to learn in favour of the ethnic majority placing the minorities at a disadvantage. Article 32 (2) of the constitution specified, 'education of all grades shall be' in Romanian. Article 32 (3) granted persons belonging to national minorities right to learn their

61. Tom Gallagher, n.43, p.120.
mother tongue, be educated in their mother tongue but it did not determine the degree to which such education would be allowed leaving the detail to laws. Article 42 unambiguously stated that Romania's history and geography would be taught in Romanian. It was, however, not clear whether Romania's history had any place for national minorities. At no administrative level, were members of a national minority allowed to use their mother tongue, not even in areas where they formed a majority. The verbal usage was permitted but in written communication official translation of the application has to be appended. This means an additional expense and waste of time. Judicial proceedings are to be conducted in Romanian, for national minorities and persons who do not understand and speak Romanian an interpreter is allowed for criminal cases only (Article 127 (1), 127 (2). The constitution thus does not make the task of maintaining national identity of minorities any easy. Article 148 (1) prohibits any revision and modification of dispositions concerning the prerogatives of the Romanian nation. It states - (Article 148 (1)) "The provisions of the constitution with regard to the national independent unitary, and indivisible character of the Romanian state, to the Republican form of government territorial integrity, independence of the judiciary, political pluralism and official language
shall not be subject to revision." The protecting measures taken by the Romanian state for the preservation development and expression of identity of the persons belonging to national minorities shall conform to the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relation to the other Romanian citizens.' It thus clearly rules out any positive discrimination of minorities which have been recommended by international documents. Interestingly, Article 20 stated where any inconsistencies exist between the covenants and treaties on fundamental human rights Romania is a party to, and internal laws, the international regulations shall take precedence. International covenants as pointed out in Chapter 2 are often couched in terms that leave a lot of discretion with the state and its laws. All in all, therefore, unless the state itself has the political will to rectify the situation of the minorities international pressure alone will not go far in providing relief. Apart from the discussed provisions of the new constitution policies with undisguised bias for the Romanian majority continue to trouble minority minds.

(d) The Romanian Law on Education

On 28 June 1995 the Romanian Chamber of Deputies and Senate adopted a new Law on Education.
According to the report of the minority protection association though at first glance the rather vague and often contradictory minority education related components of the Law do not make it impossible for a person belonging to a national minority to receive instruction in his or her mother tongue, the law obviously does degrade and restrain the qualifications that could be obtained in such education to strictly defined areas excluding from among them certain subjects that offer the most flexibility in modern societies e.g., economics, engineering and law. The contradictions and conflicts found between the different articles give away clearly the intention of creating an unstable legal situation in minority education enabling the managing bodies of public education to have wide possibilities for intervention and by obligations imposed on minority students forcing their parents to "voluntarily" withdraw them from the minority language educational establishments and bring them into the majority education system allegedly in their best interest.\textsuperscript{62}

The law on Education was considered by the DAHR as 'second in importance only to the constitution for it was

\textsuperscript{62} The Romanian Law on Education - a critical approach from the viewpoint of Minorities Minority Protection Series 2 Minority Protection Association Printed by the Press of Kossuths. Publishing and Trading Company Ltd.
education that helped them ... and sustain their district identity. The main objections of the DAHR were:

1) the omission of the right to instruction in mother tongue at all levels of public education, from primary school through high school and university.

2) the omission of the right to instruction in the mother tongue in vocational schools;

3) its failure to reinstate government financing of education in minority Church schools;

4) its specification that even in schools instructing in the language of national minority courses in history, geography, and civic education would be conducted solely in Romanian. Chapter XII entitled 'Education for persons belonging to national Minorities', is on the whole restrictive. Article 118 (4) provided that in junior secondary education, thus shall be provided, upon request as a subject of study, the history and traditions of the respective national minority, taught in the mother tongue. The curricula and textbooks for this subject are approved by the Ministry of Education. As noted earlier history is a particularly sensitive issue in Romania's relation with her Hungarians. The involvement of the minority in formulating the curricula and text books would have strengthened mutual trust and confidence. A particularly harmful effect on
minorities is the requirement that admission and graduation exams be taken in Romanian. This places the minorities educated in their mother tongue at a disadvantage. The DAHR formulated elaborate amendments to the draft education bill and tried to persuade the opposition parties to extend their support. The democratic convention of Romania agreed to provide such support. The DAHR also contacted the party of Social Democracy in Romania (PSDR) and met president Iliescu. President Iliescu given the difficulties he was facing appeared to relent. On 16 June 1994 Iliescu summoned the PSDR deputies and urged them to accommodate the DAHR as far as possible. PSDR leader, Dan Martian proposed several amendments even if they fell short of DAHR demands. However the PSDR education minister Liviu Maior spoke out emphatically against the amendments. Gheorge Funar was of the opinion that the Law on Education was too liberal. The main blow to the DAHR came from the DCR. Disregarding the Steering Committee decision the bulk of DCR (National Peasant Party Christian Democratic) voted in favour of the

63. He was facing impeachment from his parliamentary opposition. He was, therefore, eager to prevent the DAHR from joining the initiative.

64. Liviu Maior joined the government initially as an independent then joined PSDR. He was a member of the extreme nationalist movement Vatra Romanesca and close sympathizer of PRNU.
unmended provisions on national minority education in the draft law. The end effect was the DAHR despite an all out efforts managed to effect minor changes in the draft law. As Michael Shafir rightly points out 'the fact that attitudes' towards the rights of national minorities once again cut across party lines and obliterated divisions between government and opposition revealing the depth of the problem in Romania.65

(ii) Speaking on Behalf of Hungarians - Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR).

The interests of Romania's Hungarians are looked after by DAHR, formed in December 1989.66 The DAHR is a conglomorate of 16 different parties and associations. Though its membership was open to all Romanians it was principally a Hungarian movement. It included the Hungarian Christian Democratic Party of Romania, the Party of Hungarian Farmers in Romania, the Independent Hungarian Party of Romania and the Union of Hungarian Democratic Youth. Each party preserved its independent status inside the union. DAHR mem-

66. The DAHR emerged on 25 December 1989. It was set up by Geza Domokos, the director of the Kriterim publishing company; Tom Gallagher, n.43, p.85.
bership was organized in a loose structure of local chapters that were in turn grouped into autonomous county branches. The unions statutes granted territorial organisations discretion in local decision making. The main policy making body was the Council of Delegates whose members were elected at the federations congress. The DAHR's executive body consisted of a presidium with eleven members, elected by Congress. In 1992 twelve groups of experts were set up to deal with various issues - political, cultural and economic. 67

(a) Demands

Among its demands were: The immediate development of an educational system which guarantees the opportunity for minority language instruction at every level. The re-establishment of the independent Hungarian University in Kolozsvár (Cluj), the establishment of independent Hungarian schools of engineering, agriculture, medicine and pharmacology, teaching and fine arts, and the reopening of the centuries-old Hungarian high schools.

The introduction of mandatory bilingualism in Transylvania with administrative and judicial proceedings conducted in the Romanian and Hungarian languages.

67. ibid.
The right of local government by democratically elected officials and the restoration of the Hungarian autonomous towns, regions and countries where the majority of the population is Hungarian.

The establishment of a Ministry of Nationalities and the convening of a Hungarian Nationality Congress...68

(b) The autonomy concept of the DAHR

Right for its formation the DAHR has been concerned with the lack of legal status of the Hungarians in Romania. From 1992 the DAHR began developing its detailed legislative proposals concerning the legal situation of the Hungarians. In October 1992 the Cluj/Kolozsvár Declaration formulated the principle of limited internal self-determination for the Hungarian Minority Community. In January 1993, the Brasov Congress of the DAHR stated that the limited internal self determination of the Hungarians in Romania should be based on local and regional self administration and on personal and cultural autonomy. In December 1993, the alliance submitted to the Romanian Parliament its Draft law on minorities. The Bill proposed by the DAHR provides a general legal framework which could suitably settle the legal posi-

68. Schopflin, n.2, p. 20.
tion of each of the national minorities living in Romania.  

Taking into consideration the geographical location of various national minorities i.e. whether they are dispersed or live in one or more blocks, the bill distinguishes three types of autonomy (a) personal autonomy (b) local self government of special status and c) regional autonomy.  

Personal Autonomy - In the frame work of personal autonomy persons belonging to a national minority are entitled to exercise their minority rights and to develop their institutions irrespective of residence. (For instance, such an institution can be the supreme decision making body of the given community in the case of Hungarians in Romania the body is the Council of Representatives. Similarly an independent school system, cultural institutions are to be developed among other things for each national minority) 

In the framework of the local self-government of special status the national minority which lives concentrated in one area is entitled to administrative functions in addition to the right to preserve its ethnic, cultural and religious identity. The dispositions regulating the local   

69. According to the latest 1992 census the 15 ethnic minorities constitute 12 per cent of Romania's population. And they have different traditions, past history, relationship to the state proportion of the population and degree of organisation.  

70. The DAHR Documents 1, Cluj 1994, p.35.
self government of special status are complemented by the relevant provisions of the Law on local administration. Therefore, the local self government of special status is not a parallel administration but a local government which has special decision making powers in the questions directly affecting the community in question. Among the entitlements following from this special status is for instance, that in the local self governments of such special status the language of the national minority which constitutes the majority population in the area has to be used as an official language in addition to the language of the state.

The association of the local self-governments of special status will result in the establishment of the regional autonomies system of institutions.71

The DAHR Programme uses different term to refer to the Hungarian community in Romania - nation, people, autonomous national community and national minority. This leads to considerable confusion especially with reference to international documents and also provides the Romanians with ammunition to prove Hungarians guilty of separatist activity. However, a careful reading of the DAHR programme reveals that DAHR is suggesting a choice for a state founded on

71. DAHR Documents 1 Cluj 1994, pp. 35-36.
civil society and bestowing on national minorities increased possibilities to make the decisions about issues concerning their national identity.72

(c) DAHR Methods

The DAHR initially saw itself as 'one of the grass roots branches of the National Salvation Front' and was 'subordinate to the NSF'73 and stated that it was not a political party but would field candidates in the forthcoming National Assembly elections.74 By March 1990 the NSF - DAHR honeymoon was over and DAHR switched to direct protests as organising school strikes, marches and demonstration, collection of signatures to mount pressure on Romanian government to fulfill their demands. The DAHR also sought to publicise the grievances of the minorities and the Romanian governments poor record in this respect in international forums. For instance in a letter addressed to the CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Mr Max van der Stoel dated July 15, 1994, Csaba Takacs managing president and Barna Bodo political vice-president of DAHR, complained


73. SWB EE/0650B/8, 4 January 1990.

74. SWB EE/0686B/13, 12 February 1990.
that Romania's obligation to Council of Europe on grant of membership remain unfulfilled. And new discriminating measures further endanger minority identity. The same year in November another letter was addressed to the High Commissioner by Bela Marko, President of the DAHR drawing his attention to the increasing ultra nationalist policies of Romanian government. Changing political scenario in Romania and its impact on the Hungarians.

(iii) November 1996 Elections - A Ray of Hope for Hungarians?

Romania's third national parliamentary and presidential elections since 1989 took place on 3 November, 1996. There were sixteen candidates in the race for the post of President. The competition was, however, mainly between Emil Constantinescu (DCR), Ion Ilescu (PSDR) and Pedtre Roman (SDU). The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians fielded their own candidate - Gyorgy Frunda. None of the candidates achieved the required majority of over 50 per cent in the first round. Therefore, run-off elections were held on 17 November. The turn out was high: 76.01 per cent in the first round of parliamentary and presidential elections, and 75.6 per cent in the presidential run off. Through mean-

ingful political participation, the Romanian citizens chose to change the leaders of the central political institutions. Earlier in the year they had elected a majority of DCR representatives in the local elections. Presiden Iliescu in his campaign speeches repeatedly tried to mislead the electorate about the policy plans of the opposition candidate Emil Constantinescu.

Iliescu for instance repeatedly warned that Constantinescu would grant territorial autonomy to Hungarian and break the unity of Romanian state. For a society accustomed to be fed on rumours, Romanian electorate on the whole ignored them in the last elections.

The Hungarian Democratic Union welcomed the prospect of change and called on its electorate to vote for Emil Constantinescu in the second round. On assuming office, Constantinescu pointed out most Romanian political forces supported the basic treaty with Hungarians. He described the former government's domestic policy as being deliberately ridden with induced tension. Constantinescu declared, "no democratic state can be built by maintaining or even provoking tensions of this kind, that have at times escalated into overt conflicts, as in Tirgu Mures in March 1990 or
during the Bucharest miner's strike.\textsuperscript{76}

The President, however, made it clear that DCR opposed the idea of ethnically based territorial autonomy and collective rights as demanded by the Hungarians. He said that both these demands contradicted with the Romanian constitution and international documents. He, however, stressed the need for administrative decentralization for all citizens of Romania.\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{III. CONCLUSION}

The discussion reveals that despite over 1000 years of cohabitation Romanians and Hungarians have yet to learn to live in peace and harmony. Communism may be a thing of the past but the intolerance for difference it had encouraged still persists. Democracy is not a item on the western shelf that can be bought at ease. Though democracy is definitely a majoritarian concept it has an element of compromise. The Romanian leaders who guided the revolution of 1989 were soon singing the same nationalist tune that was the hallmark of N. Ceasescu. The Romanians especially the leaders must realise that Hungarians have not migrated to

\textsuperscript{76} SWB EE/2773 /7-8, 19 November, 1996.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
Romania nor were they consulted when made part of the Romanian state. They are being part of Romania owed much of great power politics.

The election of Emil Constantinescu and a new parliament was welcomed by the Hungarians in Romania and across the border. But, the President soon made it clear that the DCR would not entertain any demand for ethnicity based territorial autonomy and collective rights. However, the present governments' commitment to reduce artificially created tensions between majority and minority hope for a better future for minorities remain alive.
Percentage of ethnic Hungarians (1991)

- 50.0%
- 20.0-49.9%
- 10.0-19.9%
- (or at least 1000 persons)

State border (1994)

Percentage of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia (1991)