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CONFIRMARE

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BETWEEN NATIONAL PASSION AND INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS.
A Possible Interest-Group in Transylvania. 1867-1874*

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Romanian historiography on Transylvania after 1989, being relieved of communist ideological limitations started to focus on new areas of research, including social history and history of elites. In time, contacts with Western historiographical literature have multiplied, resulting in a greater openness of prospects. A series of prosopography studies started to appear, regarding various elite categories: the Romanian clergy,¹ the financial² or commercial³ elite, the military elite,⁴ the political⁵ and cultural⁶ elite. However, unfortunately, the historical analysis of the Romanian elites from Transylvania stopped at this point, nonetheless useful, and difficult to achieve due to the scarcity of primary sources.

Naturally, the next step would be to study these elites from an associative perspective, building on group theory, interest groups and the power relations

* This study was supported by CNCS-UEFSCDI, through the research project PN-II-PCE-2011-3-0040.

¹ Cornel Sigmirean, *Intellectualitatea ecleziastică: preoții Blajului (1806-1948)* [*The Ecclesiastical Intellectuals: the Priests from Blaj (1806-1948)*] (Tîrgu Mureș: Editura Universității "Petru Maior", 2007).

² Vasile Dobrescu, *Funcții și funcționalități în sistemul de credit românesc din Transilvania până la primul război mondial: studiu de caz* [*Functions and Functionalities in the Romanian Credit System from Transylvania until World War I. Case Study*] (Tîrgu Mureș: Editura Universității "Petru Maior", 2006).

³ Ruxandra Moașa Nazare, *Sub semnul lui Hermes și al lui Pallas : educație și societate la negustorii ortodocși din Brașov și Sibiu la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea și începutul secolului al XIX-lea* [*Under the Sign of Hermes and Pallas: Education and Society in Orthodox Merchants of Brașov and Sibiu in the Late Eighteenth Century and Early Nineteenth Century*] (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2010).

⁴ Liviu Maior, *Românii în armata habsburgică: soldați și ofițeri uitați* [*Romanians in the Hapsburg Army: Forgotten Soldiers and Officers*] (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004).

⁵ Vlad Popovici, *Studies on the Romanian Political Elite from Transylvania and Hungary (1861-1918)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2012).

⁶ Lucian Nastasă, *Intellectualii și promovarea socială: (pentru o morfologie a câmpului universitar): [Intellectuals and Social Advancement: In Search of a Morphology of the Academic Field]* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2004); Andreea Oana Dăncilă, "Elite culturale românești în Transilvania în prima perioadă a secolului al XX-lea" ["Romanian Cultural Elites from Transylvania in the First Half of the Twentieth Century"] (PhD diss., Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 2012).

between these. There have been several attempts,⁷ which either raveled in trying to develop a methodological framework or even refused to try. Indeed, such a goal is complicated enough. It is very difficult to construct a methodological framework for the study of associations or interest-groups pertaining the Romanian society from Transylvania in the 19th century. Firstly, this kind of topic requires an approach situated at the border between history, sociology, political science, business, organizational analysis etc. Second, most of the studies regarding associations or interest-groups are concerned with the democratic system of contemporary America. Third, in spite of an impressive corpus of several hundred books and articles a general theory has not yet been developed in order to be universally accepted by various scholars.⁸ As we shall see even for the case of the United States there are at least three traditions of interest-group theories: pluralist, economic and exchange theory. That is why we have to be precautious in using and adapting these theories for the Transylvanian case.

The purpose of this paper is to partly fill in this gap by highlighting and analyzing a particular interest-group which was formed and activated in Sibiu between 1867-1874. Unquestionably we can assert that we are dealing with a group that covers many socio-professional areas and with the stated ambition to enforce upon the Romanian society from Transylvania a certain political (passivism), economical (associative ideas, utilitarianism, the establishment of a free national economy), and cultural (an invigoration of the Romanian cultural process) direction. As it is, after outlining the most important methodological and theoretical aspects, we will pursue the setup of this group, its formatting stages, the main actors, and the interaction between the latter. We also hope to make an assessment in consideration to the decision-making process and the degree of notoriety that this group had in the Transylvanian public sphere.

One aspect in our approach brings to the fore the power elite theory, advocated by C. Wright Mills. According to him the power elite consist of "those political, economic, and military circles which as an intricate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at least national consequences".⁹ The whole idea revolves around a "triangle of power",¹⁰ which consists of executive politicians, corporate executives and the upper echelons of the military, who form an interlocking directorate. Further on, Mills believed that in the case of post-war

⁷ Valentin Orga, "Grupul neoactivist de la Orăștie. Premise. Constituire. Activitate (1885-1914)" ["The Neoactivist Group from Orăștie. Premises. Constitution. Activity (1885-1914)"] (PhD diss., Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 2002); Vlad Popovici, *Tribunismul (1884-1905)* [*Tribunism (1884-1905)*] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008), 255-272.

⁸ David Knoke, "Associations and Interest Groups," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12 (1986): 2.

⁹ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1999), 18.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

American political system a single elite occupied the “top command posts” and could take the “key decisions” regarding all societal aspects (governmental, military, financial, educational, cultural, social, etc.). Finally, the power elite consists of people who are entitled with “money, power, and prestige”.¹¹ They also have similar origin and education, similar careers and the same life style, which leads to their easy intermingling and a self-conscience of their own.¹²

Even so Mills did not see the power elite as being completely homogenous. He admitted the existence of factions, of policy conflicts and the possibility of opposing personal ambitions.¹³ Still, the internal discipline and its communal interests were much stronger than the probable divisions. Moreover, when he made a distinction between the power elite, the “middle levels of power” and the masses, Mills concurred with a pluralist view. He defined the middle level as “a great scatter of relatively equal balancing units” in the States, in pressure groups and within Congress. Sometimes, some of these competing units needed to be taken into account by the power elite, even if Mills did not regard them as significant units in the great scheme of power politics.¹⁴ Anyhow, as Shirley Zimmerman puts it, interest groups have been an institutional feature of the American political system since its beginnings. In favor of this argument suffice to point to the numerous committees and subcommittees that inhabit the US Congress.¹⁵

In regard to interest groups, there is no general definition accepted by all political science scholars. However, for this study we will use two definitions. Interest groups are “vehicles through which the policy concerns and preferences of citizens can presumably, be articulated in the policy process”.¹⁶ The other definition confines interest groups as “individuals with common goals that form organizations to further their common interests or values”.¹⁷

As we can see the main purpose of interest organizations is generally to act as mediators between the government and various segments of the population. In the specific case of the Transylvanian passivists, their disavowal of the

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

¹² C. Wright Mills, “The Structure of Power in American Society,” *The British Journal of Sociology* vol. 9, no. 1 (Mar., 1958): 34.

¹³ Mills, *The Power Elite*, 283.

¹⁴ “The Three Elites of C. Wright Mills,” last modified June 19, 2013, http://www.mmisi.org/pr/11_01/norton.pdf.

¹⁵ Shirley L. Zimmerman, “Interest group theory, and systems theory,” in *Understanding family policy*, ed. Shirley L. Zimmerman (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 145.

¹⁶ James L. Franke and Douglas Dobson, “Interest Groups: The Problem of Representation,” *The Western Political Quarterly* vol. 38, no. 2 (Jun., 1985): 224.

¹⁷ William C. Mitchell and Michael C. Munger, *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 35, no. 2 (May, 1991): 515.

constitutional establishment from 1867 resulted in a unique phenomenon. The various interest group constructs that inhabited the Romanian political scene mediated rather the relationship between ordinary people and the main ecclesiastical (the two Archbishopries), political (the RNPT - Romanian National Party from Transylvania), financial (the "Albina" bank), and cultural (ASTRA cultural association) institutions. In the absence of a state of their own or one who would recognize their national rights, the above mentioned institutions were the ones which offered public policies to the Romanians. Their function was similar to a sub-government which interceded the relation between the general Romanian population and the Hungarian Government from Pest. In other words, the Romanian interest groups, especially the passivist one, had an indirect role in the political mediation between Romanians and the governing system. There was only one time when the passivist group had the chance to act directly: in 1872, at the special request of Lónyay Menyhért, prime-minister of Hungary, who wanted to reach an agreement with them.¹⁸

One of the most important aspects regarding interest groups is the membership problem. Why do people adhere to this kind of organizations? A first answer comes from the pluralist theories in the 1950's, the most prominent being the "disturbance theory" advocated by David Truman. In short, Truman argued that group formation has two important causes. First, societal change: as society progresses, it becomes more complex and with it interests multiply and become more diversified. A second aspect recognizes the existence of special events (called "disturbances") which disrupt the regular flow of societal change.¹⁹ Truman didn't give an exact definition of what he called disturbances, but for a more accurate description we can turn to other scholars like Jeffrey M. Berry: "any significant event or series of events, other than leadership activity, which directly stimulates the formation of an interest group".²⁰ The pluralist view is essentially a political one, because it states that interest groups are political in nature.²¹

In the 1960's a new theory gradually evolved (the exchange theory) thanks to the contributions of Mancur Olson,²² Rober H. Salisbury²³ and Terry M. Moe.²⁴

¹⁸ "Acte prealabili și memorandumul dela Blasiu 1872," *Transilvania*, February 15, 1875, 41-45.

¹⁹ Anthony J. Nownes & Grant Neeley, "Public Interest Group, Entrepreneurship and Theories of Group Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly* vol. 49, no. 1 (Mar., 1996): 122.

²⁰ Jeffrey M. Berry, "On the Origins of Interest Groups: A test of Two Theories," *Polity* vol. 10, no. 3 (Spring, 1978), apud Nownes & Neeley, "Public Interest", 133.

²¹ Zimmerman, "Interest group," 144.

²² Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Harvard University Press: 1965).

²³ Rober H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* vol. 13, no. 1 (Feb., 1969): 1-32.

The Olsonian model of interest groups starts from an economical basis. Individuals join groups not because of disturbances and generally they do not associate when their interests are at risk. Departing from the pluralist idea, Olson believes that group goals are not sufficient in order for members to join, because political group goals are defined as collective goods, meaning that even if they do not participate, individuals will benefit from the actions of a certain interest group (the "free-rider" problem). In order for members to be attracted groups must offer selective material benefits unavailable to free-riders.²⁵ The above explanation is valid mostly for large groups. In regard to small groups, the free-riders disadvantage can be surmounted by cooperative behavior, and by that interests are more likely to find organized political expression.²⁶ Consequently they have better chances in their formative stage and have bigger odds of survival. Besides that, two questions remain to be answered. First, what are those selective benefits? and, second, who is responsible for the exchange of these benefits?

Incentive systems were first conceptualized by Peter B. Clark and James Q. Wilson. They opted for a triadic system of incentives. Usually the most important and most tangible incentives are the material ones – "rewards that have a monetary value or can easily be translated into ones that have".²⁷ In economic interest groups usually these are sufficient. But, there are times when the decision to join a group can be easily shaped by non-economic gains. Clark & Wilson defined them as "solidary" and "purposive" incentives.²⁸ A similar approach is taken by David Knoke who preferred to call them "affective incentives" and "normative appeals", even if their definition is the same.²⁹ Solidary incentives are intangible inducements that derive from friendship, status or social acceptance. Purposive incentives derive mostly from ideological, moral or religious beliefs, and are very close to the Olsonian concept of collective goods. Again, small sized groups tend to be privileged, because solidary and purposive incentives have a better chance to materialize in small organizations.³⁰ A particular aspect is worth mentioning here. At some point in their demonstration Clark and Wilson talk about the "leadership function" which is to create, clarify and promulgate

²⁴ Terry M. Moe, "A Calculus of Group Membership," *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 24, no. 4 (Nov., 1980): 593-632; Idem, "Toward a Broader View of Interest Groups," *The Journal of Politics* vol. 43, no. 2 (May, 1981): 531-543.

²⁵ Nownes & Neeley, "Public Interest," 122-123.

²⁶ Moe, "Toward a Broader," 534.

²⁷ Peter B. Clark & James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly* vol. 6, no. 2 (Sep., 1961): 134.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

²⁹ Knoke, "Associations and Interest," 10.

³⁰ Moe, "Toward a Broader," 536-537.

substantive goals, but also to maintain the integrity of the organization by obtaining and distributing incentives.³¹

The leadership function is the main core in Salisbury's theory of interest groups. In his opinion an exchange implies the existence of a manager ("the group entrepreneur" as he calls it) who is the engine of the enterprise with an important role in its creation and maintenance.³² In short, the exchange is a very simple process: typically the group entrepreneur offers a mix of incentives to members, and states the goals of the group, while he receives a higher status, better material compensations, power, prestige or personal accomplishment.³³

A third paradigm on the formation of interest groups has been promoted by Jack Walker in the 1990's. In short, constructing on the exchange theory, Walker argues that in the formative stage of an association the most important aspect is attracting patronage, not members. Furthermore, he strongly believes that interest organizations start to form at the instigation of a patron, who recruits the group entrepreneur and finances his efforts to attain policy goals.³⁴

From this stand point our objective is to analyze a specific interest-group that gradually grew to become a "power elite", dominating some of the most important institutions that the Romanian society in Transylvania had: the so-called passivist group from Sibiu (1868-1874).

We can assume with certainty that in the chosen time lapse we are dealing with a single elite, in the same manner as Mills did for the post-war US. Professionalization will follow only until late 19th century and early 20th century, with the development of new institutions (political, cultural, educational, financial). Before that it is clear enough that the same people inhabited the few political or cultural institutions (Romanian National Committees of 1861 and 1863, the Transylvanian Diet of Sibiu – 1863/64 and Cluj – 1865, the ASTRA cultural association – 1861).³⁵ These institutions functioned under the strict supervision of Vienna and Pest, the two power centers which pertained to Romanians in Transylvania. We can also notice the existence of some groups within the Romanian elite. Until 1865 the primary division was based on socio-professional categories with goals of their own: civil-servants, freelancers and ecclesiastical administration.

³¹ Clark & Wilson, "Incentive Systems," 134.

³² Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory," 12.

³³ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

³⁴ Nownes & Neeley, "Public Interest," 124, 129.

³⁵ Popovici, *Studies on*, 10-17; Alexandru Onojescu, "Politică și strategii de grup la elita românească din Transilvania (1860-1869)" ["Politics and Group Strategy pertaining the Romanian Elite from Transylvania (1860-1869)"] (PhD diss., Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 2012).

After 1865, the gap was mostly ideological and two major groups evolved: the activists and the passivists. We can already see that Truman's idea of disturbances has a practical application in the case of the passivist group from Sibiu. The creation of the dualist political system, the dissolution of Transylvania's self-government and its assimilation within Hungarian borders, acted as a powerful catalyst in its formative stage. The same can be said for the activist group. Both groups had their center located in Sibiu even if they advocated two different political tactics. The activists wanted to lead a fight inside the new constitutional establishment by sending representatives in the Hungarian Parliament and by holding positions in the administrative and judicial system, regardless of their limited number. The passivists supported a total abstinence from every electoral process, until the old provincial rights of Transylvania were re-enacted. That is why the Romanian political scene from Transylvania took the form of a ceaseless war between these two factions.

From a realistic point of view the group with the best chances to influence the Romanian population was the one who could gather more members, strengthen its financial power, organize better, possess a solid coherence, a strong leadership, and access to decisional factors inside the community.³⁶

From now on we will track the most important steps in the formation, maintenance and activity of the passivist group from Sibiu (1867-1874), from its earlier stages of an association to an interest-group. In this respect we will use Knoke's thesis which states that an association is "a formally organized named group, most of whose members – whether persons or organizations – are not financially recompensed for their participation". From the moment an association tends to influence governmental decisions, the members of the association start acting as an interest-group.³⁷

The Cultural "Directorate"

As far as the warlike relation between the activists (lead by the Orthodox archbishop Andrei Șaguna) and the passivists (lead by Ioan Rațiu and George Bariț) is concerned, the general assembly of ASTRA, from Cluj (August 14/26-16/28, 1867) was a real turning point for two reasons. First, after a powerful public campaign to denigrate Șaguna, the passivists managed to obtain his dismissal as chairman of ASTRA, and, consequently, to delegitimize his position as a national leader. Second, they succeeded to impose a new leadership that would change the stagnant course of this cultural association.

Various sources prove that everything was especially organized to reach these two objectives. For instance, the organizer of the general assembly was Ioan

³⁶ Zimmerman, "Interest group," 143-144.

³⁷ Knoke, "Associations and Interest," 2.

Pamfilie, archpriest of Cluj, a well-known friend and business partner of passivists like Visarion Roman or Ioan Rațiu. Likewise, the president of the assembly (in the absence of Șaguna) was Iacob Bologa, again an ex-civil-servant, who had strong passivist sentiments and who was convinced that his dismissal as counselor at the Transylvanian Supreme Court in Vienna was due to Șaguna's work. But the real masterminds behind everyone else were Ioan Rațiu and George Bariț (*in absentia*) who instilled the idea that the leadership of the cultural association should be changed. After intense backdoor negotiations Rațiu and others promoted the candidacy of Vasile Ladislau Popp, a well-known Romanian civil-servant and an active supporter of passivism. The election being nominal and public, as Rațiu desired, everyone who participated at the consultations voted accordingly. This was a special voting procedure which was not necessarily accepted by the bylaws of the cultural association.³⁸

Șaguna was not the only one who was thrown out of ASTRA's leadership. Likewise Timotei Cipariu lost the vice-presidency in favor of Ioan Hannia, first Orthodox archpriest of Sibiu and Iacob Bologa's brother-in-law. George Bariț kept his office as first secretary, likewise Ioan V. Russu, the Greek-catholic archpriest of Sibiu, kept his post as second secretary. The leadership scheme was completed by persons who one way or another will be related to the passivist group of Sibiu: Ioan Popescu, Paul Dunca de Sajo (a true political moderate), David Urs de Margine or Ilie Măcelariu. In order to assure their control of the association in the next years, some of these people will occupy two positions in ASTRA's Central Committee, thereby restricting the access of others.

ASTRA fits best in the solidary organizations category, promoted by Clark and Wilson.³⁹ Their true goal was prestige at highest levels. In most cases such goals have to be noncontroversial, and need to be related with some kind of cause, rather than an issue. So, in the case of the passivist group, the real goal had to be associated with a high interest regarding the association and not particularly with Andrei Șaguna's person. That is why the official motive of his dismissal was the inability to launch ASTRA's journal: *Transilvania*,⁴⁰ one of the main purposes of the association written in its founding statute.

Another important aspect worth mentioning is that the passivist group was at that time still in its formatting stage. Its true power and organization

³⁸ Keith Hitchins & Liviu Maior, *Correspondența lui Ioan Rațiu cu George Bariț. 1861-1892* [*The Correspondence of Ioan Rațiu with George Bariț. 1861-1892*] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1970), 151-153.

³⁹ Clark & Wilson, "Incentive Systems," 141-142.

⁴⁰ *George Bariț și contemporanii* [*George Bariț and his Contemporaries*], volume X, ed. Ștefan Pascu (București: Editura Minerva, 1993), 81-82.

capabilities will show only one and a half year later when they'll reach its main political goal: the victory of the passivist tactic.

The Political "Directorate"

The political "directorate" was by far the most important to passivists, their *raison d'être*. Their stated goal was to instill in the minds of the Romanian constituency a total abstinence from whatever sort of election and participation in administration, under the constitutional establishment of the dual monarchy.

Again, based on the political ideological footsteps drawn by Ioan Rațiu and George Bariț, the passivist group from Sibiu, managed in approximately four years to annihilate all activist tendencies in Transylvania. The process had multiple stages: the conference of Miercurea (1869); the private conference from Turda (1870); the ad-hoc committee (1871); the activist conference from Sibiu (1872); the passivist conference from Alba Iulia (1872); and the reconciliation conference from Blaj (1872). Due to editorial limitations we will not describe all phases, we will resume to a case study: the conference of Miercurea and the formation of the Central Electoral Committee.

The conference of Miercurea (March 1869) was by far the most important, because of the way it was organized and its fundamental outcomes. The passivist program, drafted and accepted by a clear majority was to be a landmark for every other important conference. Also, it marked the moment when the passivist-group from Sibiu established its permanent shape.

As sources reveal, again the initiative came from George Bariț and Ioan Rațiu, but this time through the tireless work of Visarion Roman, an entrepreneur and a self-made man. This time, the two did not take an active part in the organization of the conference, even if they were in close touch. After a series of local conferences held in Cluj, Dej, Turda, Rășinari/Sibiu, Miercurea, Abrud, Roșia, came the initiative to summon a general conference with the sole purpose of choosing the political direction that Romanians should take regarding their participation in the electoral process.

A first mention came from Ilie Măcelariu, a well respected ex-civil-servant and an ex-MP, who was inclined to accept activism as a solution for the Romanian problem. Măcelariu was exactly what Roman, Bariț and Rațiu needed as a front man in order to convene a general conference. Gaining notoriety by defending the passivist program in the Hungarian Parliament and having the quality of a political underdog, he was also one of the few who still had a good relation with Andrei Șaguna. So, the group strengthened when Măcelariu accepted a position as acquisitions inspector in the Romanian-Saxon insurance institute "Transilvania", with an annual wage of 1200 fl. Later on, after accepting the job, and after a discussion between him, Visarion Roman and Iacob Bologa (at that time a member of the managing board of "Transilvania"), they had the idea of sending telegrams

to three other persons (Gavril Manu, Ioan Rațiu, George Bariț) for feedbacks in order to muster a general conference. After receiving positive feedbacks, the organizing committee was enlarged by the presence of Ioan Hannia, also a member of the managing board of “Transilvania”.⁴¹

It is not the place or time to insist on all aspects regarding the organization of the conference. We will just state that the true goal of the organizers was to assure a passivist majority in order to reach their ultimate goal: the imposition of the passivist doctrine. Two aspects are fundamental. First, applying the exchange theory, we can fully assess the impact of material selective incentives on Ilie Măcelariu. At first, his core political ideology was activism. Even if he had serious doubts regarding the effectiveness of passivism, he accepted to be the front man, and after that, the president of the Central Electoral Committee of the newly-founded Romanian National Party from Transylvania. It is very clear that his inveigling in the “Transilvania” insurance institute constituted a preamble to his later actions. Măcelariu became a true passivist, and defended it in all his later public statements.

Second, it is very interesting to analyze the composition of the Central Electoral Committee. There were 25 members of this Committee who can be divided according to their confession and socio-professional status in several groups. The first group is the organizing committee: Iacob Bologa, Ioan Hannia, Visarion Roman and Ilie Măcelariu. They were the decisional core of the passivist group. All four were Orthodox and they all had a good relationship with Andrei Șaguna, which deteriorated over time. Thus, beyond ideological incentives, another perceptible connection between them was anti-șagunism. Suffice to say that the first two were brothers in law, being married with the daughters of Petru Bădilă, archpriest of Miercurea. Also, Miercurea is the place of origin of Măcelariu, where he was a well-known leader. One last aspect worthy of note is that at that time all four occupied functions within the insurance bank “Transilvania”.

The next group is represented by the socio-professional category of entrepreneurs or traders: Ioan Axente Sever, Demetriu Iuga și Ioan G. Ioan. The first was a well-known character from the 1848 Revolution, and he had strong economic ties with Ioan Pamfilie, Ioan Micu Moldovan, Ioan Rațiu, Nicolae Stoia (also a member of CEC) and Visarion Roman. The latter two represented Brașov and were included in the Committee as a result of a strategy designed to ensure

⁴¹ Vasile Netea, *Noi contribuții la cunoașterea vieții și activității lui Visarion Roman. Corespondența sa cu George Barițiu și Iosif Hodoș* [New Contributions regarding the Life and Activity of Visarion Roman. His Correspondence with George Barițiu and Iosif Hodoș] (Sibiu: Editura “Revistei Economice,” 1942), 9-23; Bujor Surdu, “Corespondența dintre George Bariț și Visarion Roman (1867-1879)” [“The Correspondence between George Bariț and Visarion Roman (1867-1879)”], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca* V (1962): 317-322.

the loyalty of the city towards passivism: the Braşov area was a highly disputed region between activists and passivists.

Next, follows the compact group of Greek-catholic clerics: Ioan Antonelli, Ioan V. Russu, Ioan Pamfilie, Simion Balint, Ioan Micu Moldovan and Ilie Vlassa. Most of them developed their ecclesiastic career in the national radical atmosphere of Blaj in the liberal period (1860-1865), having strong ties with the Bariţ-Raţiu dyad. Also, some of them developed strong economic connections with other members of CEC.

The last compact group is comprised only of Orthodox members: a cleric (Nicolae Popea), two former officials (Nicolae Găetan and Ioan Bran de Lemény), and two lawyers (Avram Tincu şi Ioan Nemeş). Their presence in a passivist Committee is at least bizarre. All of them were close to Şaguna, but one way or another they joined the CEC. For example, the two officials may have had an anti-şagunist orientation because they were not supported by the Orthodox leader when they were dismissed. Their participation gave them a chance of revenge. As far as the other Moe's theory that solidary incentives may also derive from social pressure could apply. Failure to join could cost them (ostracism, loss of status) more than their participation, even if they were not totally in agreement with the passivist tactic.⁴²

As a result we can clearly see that in the case of CEC all kinds of incentives were available for the members in order to join: kinship, friendship, professional relationships, economic ties, prestige and status development, and ideological goals were all combined in order to assure a coherent institution with the sole purpose to guide the Romanian constituency.

The Financial "Directorate"

As already mentioned an important fact in the success of any interest group is its financial strength. We've already explained why it was necessary for the Romanian elite to create their own institutions in order to provide themselves with status and financial security. That is why beginning with 1868 we find some of the most notorious Romanian figures leading or working in various financial institutions. The "Transilvania" insurance institute, a Romanian-Saxon joint venture, is one example. Iacob Bologa, Ioan Hannia, David Urs de Margine were some of the members of the managing board. Likewise Visarion Roman and Ilie Măcelariu functioned as acquisitions inspectors.

The above-mentioned tried their best in order to assure a Romanian majority in both managing board and shareholding, but they failed in doing so. They didn't have the financial strength and they had to deal with numerous vexations from the Saxon counterpart. Even if Iacob Bologa or Ioan Hannia

⁴² Moe, "A Calculus," 617.

remained in the managing board until the bylaws of “Albina” institute were to be accepted by the government, Visarion Roman and Ilie Măcelariu left the enterprise earlier. This was the first phase of their attempt to procure for themselves a financial and insurance institute. In this case, just like in the other one below, the initiative came from Visarion Roman.

In this case we can once again see how an economic enterprise is discussed in closed circles. In June 1869, Roman mentioned to Bariț the existence of a draft for the statutes of a pure Romanian financial institute. The second person who learned about the idea was Iacob Bologa. On Romans demand his role was to read the draft and give it personally to others designated by the author.⁴³

We can assume that the designated persons were the same who took part in the Founding Committee: Ioan Hannia, Iacob Bologa, David Urs de Margine, Paul Dunca, Ilie Măcelariu and Visarion Roman. Suffice to say that 5 of them worked for “Transilvania” or were still members of its managing board. A few months later Alexandru Mocsonyi, Anton Mocsonyi and Timotei Cipariu were also included. The first two were to make sure that the bylaws of “Albina” will be approved by the Hungarian authorities. After the official approval came the subscribing process. Again a supervising committee was elected with Alexandru Mocsonyi as president, Paul Dunca as vice-president, Ioan Hannia as cashier, and Visarion Roman as interim director.

Unfortunately, the subscribing process coincided with the political disputes between activists and passivists regarding the ad-hoc committee.⁴⁴ That is why important socio-economical groups from Brașov or Sibiu did not contribute as shareholders in the foundation of “Albina” bank. Instead the Romanians from Banat proved to be extremely confident, replacing the representation deficit of the above-mentioned activists. The collectors from this area were also the most fruitful: Aurel Maniu and Simeon Manguica from Lugoj, respectively Oravița amassed the largest number of shares (434; 414). The next on the list was Ilie Măcelariu, who gathered from the Sibiu area just 160 subscriptions. Also, above the limit of 100 subscriptions we register an additional two locals from Banat: Nicolae Filimon from Pecica-Română and Ștefan Antonescu from Bocșa-Montană (108; 103). Thus,

⁴³ On the history of “Albina” financial institute see: Mihai D. Drecin, *Banca “Albina” din Sibiu, instituție națională a românilor transilvăneni (1871-1918)* [“Albina” Bank from Sibiu. National Institution of the Romanians from Transylvania (1871-1918)] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1982), 31-50; Bujor Surdu, *Visarion Roman (1833-1885)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008), 114-140.

⁴⁴ Dumitru Suciu, “Activitatea politică a lui Ilie Măcelariu după conferința de la Miercurea” [“The Political Activity of Ilie Măcelariu after the Conference of Miercurea”], *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Series Historia* 2 (1977): 49-51.

from the total of 3000 necessary shares, people from Banat subscribed only through 4 collectors 1059 shares (35.3%).⁴⁵

After some difficulties the subscription process has ended, all shares being counted for. The next step was the convening of the general assembly (March, 14 1872). Its role was to take into consideration that the bank could operate at normal and legal standards. The general assembly also had to fill in the 5 gaps in the managing board. Thus, the members of the managing board were: Alexandru Mocsonyi, Anton Mocsonyi, Paul Dunca, Iacob Bologa, Ioan Hannia, David Urs de Margine, Timotei Cipariu, Gregoriu Matei, Ilie Măcelariu, archbishop Ioan Vancea, dr. Aureliu Maniu and Ioan Popescu.

On the same day the first meeting of the new managing board was held. Alexandru Mocsonyi was elected chairman of the board, Iacob Bologa and David Urs de Margine as vice-presidents. The second day Visarion Roman was appointed as managing director (still interim) and Ilie Măcelariu as representative for the managing board to the directorial council. Few months later, the directorial council was completed with the election of Iacob Bologa. After that the passivist group from Sibiu, represented by Bologa, Roman and Măcelariu, coordinated the executive branch of "Albina". In a short while they also succeeded to gain full control in the managing board.

In the beginning, in terms of geographical extraction, the ratio was as follows: 3 from Banat, 2 from Blaj, 7 from Sibiu. However, the bank's statute clearly stated that at least 5 members of the board had to reside in Sibiu. The first to resign their office were Ioan Vancea and David Urs de Margine. The latter changed his mind and came back being well received by its colleagues. Again, he will resign once and for all in September 1874. He was replaced with Ioan Mețianu, the Orthodox Curate from Oradea-Mare in both posts as member and vice-president of the managing board. Another resignation, somewhat expected because of his age, was that of Timotei Cipariu. In his place the managing board recruited Vinčențiu Babeș, a representative from Banat, and the right-hand of Alexandru Mocsonyi. After these, and before Alexandru Mocsonyi's resignation the membership ratio was as follows: 4 from Banat, 7 from Sibiu, 1 from Făgăraș. But, the member from Făgăraș, needed to move to Sibiu, because of his appointment as an attorney for the bank. That meant that the ratio was 1 to 3 in favor of the passivist group from Sibiu. Since it was difficult for the members from Banat to travel to Sibiu, the ones who resided in Sibiu were the ones who participated to the decisional process. It was obvious that there was a clear disproportion between the contribution of the

⁴⁵ Nicolae Petra-Petrescu, *Monografia institutului de credit și economii „Albina”. 1872-1897* [The Monograph of the Credit and Economy institute "Albina". 1872-1897] (Sibiu: Editura Institutului „Albina”, 1897), 104-106.

members from Banat as shareholders and their access to the decision-making processes.

We believe that the above mentioned reality was a very powerful argument for Alexandru Mocsonyi's resignation. Another argument was the dissolution of the credit reunions from Banat. However the trigger argument was the fact that the managing board decided to buy a house to turn it into a bank office. Mocsonyi was upset because he felt like he was excluded from the decision, and that was because he wouldn't agree.⁴⁶ Mocsonyi's resignation led to the election of Iacob Bologa as chairman of the board. As a result, the passivist group from Sibiu had total control of the bank.

Conclusions

Following the presentation of the formation and principal actions of the passivist group from Sibiu in the period 1867-1874, we can finally come to some conclusions. First, with regard to the entire geographical area of Transylvania, the group behaved like a power elite, forestalling some of the major Romanian institutions: the ASTRA cultural society, the Romanian National Party from Transylvania and "Albina" financial institute. Their domination would last until 1881, when other groups started to make their presence felt by questioning the passivists authority.

Second, we've seen how some interest group theories suggest the importance of the leader in the formation and maintenance of groups. Moreover, some scholars suggest also that the existence of patrons is also important. None of them are available for our group. We can speak of patronage only to the extent of a spiritual-ideological patronage: behind many passivist actions stood George Bariț and his political ideas. But, he never contributed financially to the formation of the group. Likewise, our group didn't have a recognized leader as were Andrei Șaguna for the Transylvanian activists, or Alexandru Mocsonyi for Banat. Instead we can accept the idea of a front man, delegated characters who would fill the position of a "group entrepreneur": Ioan Hannia and Iacob Bologa for ASTRA; Ilie Măcelariu for RNPT; and Visarion Roman for "Albina". Nevertheless decisions were taken by a closed circle (4 to 5 maximum), which is why the group had an oligarchic character.⁴⁷ Such a feature is even more evident if we consider the secrecy in which goals were covered.

Third, another feature of the passivist group is the existence of "large members": members whose contribution can cause a change in objectives. Some of these can remain in the group, indifferent of their approval of group goals, as long as selective incentives continue to be supplied, or they can leave jeopardizing the

⁴⁶ The Sibiu County Archive Service, Fund *Banca "Albina,"* Minutes of the Administrative Board, files 101-122.

⁴⁷ Knoke, "Associations and Interest," 11.

organization.⁴⁸ For example, Paul Dunca Sajo sau David Urs de Margine, were inclined to accept the activist political ideology, but they supported the foundation of "Albina". We can place Alexandru Mocsony in a similar taxonomy: his retreat from the administrative board could have led to the break-up of "Albina".

Fourth, the passivist success has been due to both its decision-making coherence (being a small group), and the organization incoherence of the activist group from Sibiu. That is because in most cases, activism has been advocated by members who held public offices or were MPs, few of them being self-employed. It was only in 1872 for a short time that they were able to take the lead in the national movement.

Finally, nonetheless, it is a clear feature that all initiatives taken by the passivist group from Sibiu had a single goal: ensuring an autonomy (cultural, political, economical) in relation with the Hungarian state. As such, beyond material and solidary interests, there was always a higher and ultimate purposive goal, political in nature, that marked all its actions.

⁴⁸ Moe, "Towards a Broader," 535; Franke Dobson, "Interest Groups," 226.