

# The Political Message of the Electoral Speeches Published in the Hungarian Press of Cluj (1869–1910)

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and not a reality. The Con-  
stitution is an illusion and  
the only reality is the  
omnipotence of Austria.”*

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**T**HE PRESENT paper aims to investigate, within a chronological approach, the political dialogue between political candidates and counter-candidates by analyzing the programs, manifestos and reports (drawn up at the end of their mandate) published in the press of Cluj (Kolozsvár) during dualism.<sup>1</sup> Paraphrasing the famous phrase of Homi K. Bhabha of nation as narration, the present study seeks to decipher the politics of the dualist system as narration and to reflect on the perception and significance of the political event translated into an electoral propaganda speech. The aim of the paper is to study the environment and reception of the political message by analyzing the content and sometimes also the rhetoric and language used by candidates and counter-candidates, former or future representatives. As a rule, only the most important and relevant subjects of the speeches will be

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discussed (those which occur most frequently, of course) without presenting each subject on which representatives dwelt in the texts read or spoken in front of their voters.

The highest number of speeches preserved come from the first electoral year after the ratification of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. The 31 texts published in the newspapers sympathizing with the governing party and the opposition suggests that the majority of the subjects treated in 1869 dealt with the integration of the Hungarian state in the European circuit using the opportunities for development offered by dualism. The idea of progress was popularized by the representatives of the governing party, while the counter discourses of the opposition revolved around the idea of revolution. The leaders of the opposition, counter-candidates and former representatives of the leftist party, regarded integration and the civilizing of the Hungarian nation as a betrayal of the spirit of the Hungarian revolution. The anxiety of the Hungarian society over losing its greatly desired “freedom obtained in 1848, 1861, 1863 and partially confiscated in 1867”<sup>2</sup> appears also in the discourse of the governing party, suggesting that the population was probably worried about a possible subordination of the Hungarians within the dualist system. Curiously, fears regarding the union under the Habsburg crown are related only to Law 1867:12, which even in the perception of the candidates and representatives of the Deák Party was not a final act, but one that in time could be adapted to the Hungarian political demands.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, there are no discussions regarding the status of Transylvania or the union of 1868. There was only one candidate who mentioned how Transylvania was “pushed” into Hungary by Law XLIII, 1868 (József Hosszú). This is all the more surprising if we consider that there were a great number of representatives with speeches published in the press who took an active part in preparing the bill regarding the union, and their correspondence reflects that the elite of Transylvania was preoccupied by the subject of the union.<sup>4</sup> Another topic lacking from the electoral discourse of the time is the Minorities Act, debated in the same period as the legal basis which regulated the union. Although both the members of the Deák Party and the center-left faction made minimal references to “the bleeding wound of the fatherland” (Dezső Bánffy) or to the Romanians who presently “gravitate towards Romania” (Károly Huszár), there is only one candidate who expresses his concern regarding the risks of the implementation of the law (László Tisza). Yet, analyzing the origin of the liberal discourse (József Eötvös’s speech, to be more precise) regarding the idea of progress,<sup>5</sup> the situation seems different. Some of the liberals considered that the civilizing processes or faith in progress were supranational elements, i.e. nationalism had no sense and no chance in a modern civilization, especially since the phenomenon was considered ephemeral.<sup>6</sup> If this type of civilizing discourse featured in most

of the propaganda programs can be interpreted in this manner, then it can be said that the problem of minorities was dealt with, in an indirect manner, also by liberal candidates. However, as we shall see in the following speeches, the Hungarian liberals argued that the problem of minorities was mainly a linguistic one, especially due to the fact that the Minorities Act had many contradictions and left much room for interpretation. The concepts of nation and nationalities were used in speeches in a confusing manner, just like the concept of political nation was mainly used instead of that of ethnic nation. Liberal speeches show that they did not consider minorities a major threat, since the latter were also directly interested in the progress and development of the Hungarians, which served their interests as well.

The other subjects dealt with in the electoral campaign of 1869 concentrated on the subordination of the army, on higher taxes (demanded by dualism) or on the judicial and education reform, subjects that appear only in the discourse of the opposition (with one exception). It seems that a certain balance is kept only when debating the parties and the political system, namely, subjects like religious rights, freedom of the press, etc., which appear with the same frequency in the speeches of the members of both parties. Curiously, in most cases the texts published in the newspaper sympathizing with the opposition do not contain local elements—candidates rarely reflect on the actual needs of the communities they would be representing. This could be interpreted either as a lack of experience, as most of the leftists had not had the opportunity to represent a community in the government, or as the strategy specific to this political party, since the opposition promoted more universal values of common interest. They had mobile candidates who were not related to the communities they would represent, but were looking merely for an electoral victory (even though one of the objections they raised against the Deák Party was precisely their opportunistic behavior).

In the next electoral year (1872) the pieces of information regarding political life in Parliament double in number and the representatives of the opposition emphasize in each and every speech they deliver the corruption of the governing system of the Deák Party, describing the way “the voting machine” was actually “buying souls.”<sup>7</sup> A decrease in the number of speeches dealing with the revolutionary or the civilizing spirit can be observed, even though these rhetorical elements will never completely disappear, proving that what was once considered a mere period of transition became a certainty by 1872. It seems that the idea promoted by the representatives of the governing party regarding the civilizing role of the Compromise and of a Hungarian state integrated in Europe became deeply embedded in collective thought. In vain did the opposition attempt to continue to use the image of the free and revolutionary spirit of the Hungarian peasant, as this cliché seemed to be overcome by the image of the entrepreneur-

ial bourgeois who sought to improve his life, his job and his community, at European standards. This might also be the explanation for the increase in information regarding the industry. The discourse of the candidates and of former deputies concentrate on modernity, on the need for economic reform. Education also appears in this discourse, in a mercantile vein, even though in Gábor Ugron's speech it is pointed out that, in spite of the much promoted "achievements," "we remained weak and reluctant among the civilized societies," since "the schools continue to educate young people for the Middle Ages instead of the Modern Era."<sup>8</sup> Texts drawn up by the liberals suggest the idea that the entire society tended to modify and relinquish its values for the greater economic good. In their view, once the Hungarian state had embarked upon the road to progress, it became an important factor in European politics. Irony is also present in these debates. According to László Tisza, the new dualist system "was far from offering concerts of European diplomacy" on the European military stage, suggesting that the monarchy should have remained neutral in the conflict between France and Germany.

One can also perceive a change of attitude in the discourse of the leftist candidates: if they avoided to use local information in their speeches in the electoral campaign of 1869, starting with 1872 their discourse became more direct, addressing a particular audience, applying the universal problems on a lower scale, that of the community to which they spoke. They dwelt on subjects like industry, the financial sacrifices it needed, taxes, the national bank, and civil marriages. This seems to be the year when the subject of Transylvania enters the political dialog, candidates requiring that it should be treated differently than Hungary, many of them considering that Transylvania had a less developed infrastructure and mentality than Hungary.<sup>9</sup> Besides these inequalities there were also breaches from the interior regarding the minorities, also described in the speech of Ferenc Salamon held at Turda.<sup>10</sup> He fiercely criticized the lack of enthusiasm and the poor moral attitude of the Romanians toward work, considering them inferior both materially and intellectually to the Hungarians of Transylvania. Nevertheless, this liberal speech is an optimistic one stating that "Transylvania should not fear, for it will not have the same fate as Ireland,"<sup>11</sup> Hungary being interested in the development and prosperity of this region. Yet, the opposition is much more reserved. There are debates on the need for an administrative reform in Transylvania, on rethinking the counties (and implicitly the electoral system), but especially on judicial reform. The reform of 1871 is presented by the elite of the governing party as one of the greatest achievements of the government. But it is criticized by the leftists, Tisza, Orbán and Bakcsi underlining in their programs the lack of realism in these changes.

1875 is an electoral year of explanations. Most of the speeches dwell on Ferenc Deák's fall and the need to create another unity government. Texts have a mainly conciliatory tone, in spite of the fact that once the tensions between right and left disappear in the government, personal tensions between the candidates come to the fore.<sup>12</sup> Changes of the political system, just as the premises that lead to the formation of the Liberal Party, are largely dealt with. The emblematic figure of this reconciliation was Kálmán Tisza, whose "inherent talents of leadership" and patriotism are mentioned in every text. His political and diplomatic abilities are often emphasized. Debates dealing with the need to understand Transylvania's social and geographical realities intensify, and there is also an increasing number of discourses dealing with the adjustment of the electoral districts.<sup>13</sup> Judicial reform is a recurrent topic (especially its incompatibility with Transylvanian realities) as well as the trade and customs treaty between Austria and Hungary. The idea of economic progress, largely popularized in the previous years, is now reinterpreted, speeches dwelling mainly on the inadequate monetary policy, the great debt of the Hungarian state considered to be a consequence of "our rush towards progress" (Lajos Lészai). Industrialization seemed to favor only some social categories, the wealthy tradesmen and the bourgeoisie, but not the peasants or the officers of the Transylvanian public domain. Therefore, a change in the taxation system is recommended, with solutions that should reestablish the monetary balance (Sándor Dézsi). The Hungarian industry, considered quite scanty, needed to be reinvigorated by a favorable monetary policy, by crediting, which meant establishing a new bank, preferably a Hungarian one. So it seems that for the first time in the political propaganda appears the idea that the Austro-Hungarian trade and customs treaty needed to be revised, and also the idea of monetary autonomy sustained by a national bank.

**I**N 1881 the radical opposition shows up again and speeches polarize once more. The classic conflicts between parties can be seen and also discussed is the old problem of the buying of votes, of the corrupt system in which, as Ugron puts it, "a representative is like a chimney sweeper: the higher he climbs, the dirtier he gets."<sup>14</sup> The discourse regarding the independence of the state becomes fierier and international problems such as the Oriental issue start to be debated. In this context, in the campaigns of the opposition, countries like Serbia and Romania are set as worthy examples in terms of their foreign policy. Although they are perceived as "uncivilized" and "Oriental" countries, they seem to be admired by the opposition for preserving a certain degree of independence in their relationship to the West. The Independence Party considers that compared to these states "Hungary is a mere concept and not a reality. The Constitution is an illusion and the only reality is the omnipotence of Austria."<sup>15</sup>

Conventional topics like an independent army, the national bank, the revision of the trade and customs treaty, or the state budget/deficit continue to be present. Moreover, these elements become the tools of the opposition in its verbal struggle against the governing party. Also, the image of the highly celebrated Tisza starts to be reinterpreted. The ruling party will be in full campaign promoting its positive perception, introducing in the discourse Kálmán Széll and his monetary policy. However, this was not enough, and according to the radicals Tisza remained dangerous because he was “betraying the national interest.” Hence a new appeal to revolution, but this time not through aggression (as the governing party interpreted it), but by way of spiritual and moral change. In this newborn world, the only relation between Austria and Hungary should have been the monarch. Therefore, in the electoral speeches of the opposition, the Austro-Hungarian Compromise was meant to become a mere personal union.

Another important and recurrent subject is the question of minorities, characterized by Béla Bánffy as a “tickling” issue. This candidate also addressed the Romanian voters, whom he assured of his help and support, because “it is all the same in what language a mother talks to her child or in what language she says her prayers, that voice needs to be the voice of the country.”<sup>16</sup> Kálmán Tisza made the same assertion: “Forced nationalization is a bad omen, none of those who do not have Hungarian as their mother tongue should be forced to become Hungarian, for nowhere in the world can we see such a thing. However those who live here must work in the interest of their homeland, they must feel, believe and consider themselves Hungarian citizens.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, in the contemporary perception of the Hungarian political elite, there was only one nation which consisted of several ethnic groups, differentiated by their languages.

The campaign of 1887 concentrated on the subject of economic development. The references to industrial investments, to the need for effective production and to profit from Hungary’s favorable agricultural status became more frequent. Rhetorical motifs such the envy of the Austrians and the sympathy of the monarch are introduced in the discourse, implying that Hungary was accepted and integrated into the European, Western circuit, completely turning away from the Orient.<sup>18</sup> In this context, in the liberal speeches appears the image of Britain<sup>19</sup> as the symbol of economic prosperity and political success, suggesting that increasing levies and taxes could finally lead Hungary—although “at a high price”—to reach the achievements of the British. As a matter of fact, the motif of the British achievements is a popular element both in the rhetoric of the governmental elite and with the opposition, a topic that already appeared in speeches of 1872.<sup>20</sup> The presence of the British model is not accidental and it should not be interpreted strictly in an economic context. It was the separation of the symbolical sphere from the political one that appealed in the British

model, to both the opposition and the governing parties. Since 1688 the British monarchy had become a less and less visible player in the national political arena, even though after the American War of Independence and after the French Revolution the monarchy had been seen as a symbol of national unity.<sup>21</sup> The king became indispensable to the nation, but he did not intervene and did not play a significant part in government. The symbol of the detached monarch was an image that suited both political sides and they used it in a manner that shall be later discussed.

In this electoral year the interest of the public seems to be directed more and more towards matters of foreign policy, especially as the occupation of Bosnia raised heated debates among the members of the political elite. The material and human sacrifices made to satisfy this “Habsburg desire” were difficult to swallow for the Hungarians. Emil Ábrányi even emphasizes in his program that Hungarians have decayed and became humble servants to the Austrians, an idea that was taken over and developed by Ugron: “We are the servants of servants,” which was an allusion to the fact that in their opinion the foreign policy of the empire was in fact decided by Bismarck.<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned, however, that the image of Germany was not unanimously positive, even with the candidates of the Liberal Party. The ruling party attempted in vain to demonstrate the need to pursue the common good, through a joint army and a common foreign policy. They also highlighted the importance of “heading from East to West and not in the opposite direction” (Sándor Hegedüs), while the opposition continued to believe in the path taken by Romania, Greece and Serbia, that of independence. From this year onwards, we also witness a concretization of the polemical exchanges. For example, the two candidates for Cluj, Hegedüs and Ugron (“I entered the campaign so that Hegedüs should not run unopposed”) commented on the issues raised in the other candidate’s discourse (attempting, of course, to discredit it), each speech becoming thus a counter-speech.

1892 was a very tense electoral year, marked by the idea of autonomy and nationalism. Beside the by now customary mentions of the corruption of the candidates, the members of the opposition revived the eternal subject of the union of 1867. The members of the governing party tried to change the negative image promoted by the press sympathizing with the opposition by involving charismatic political figures like Gábor Baross, and also drew the attention to the hypothetical nationalism used by those opposing the Habsburg rule for their egotistical purposes, generally adverse to the Hungarian nation.<sup>23</sup> If the ruling party revered Gábor Baross, the opposition revived the spirit of Bethlen, Bocscai, Rákóczi and Thököly, and invoked even Kossuth—all anti-Habsburg revolutionaries—pointing at the “tragic present” which, in their opinion, was more dangerous than the situation in 1848. The discourse on autonomy inten-

sified. Candidates like Gusztáv Groisz or Miklós Bartha<sup>24</sup> employ harsh words and incite to struggle, at least at the ideological level. In Bartha's opinion, the Hungarian government is a Mameluke of unprecedented intellectual depravity: "Human beings are superior to animals due to their capacity to think and discern, capacities that seem to be lacking in the politicians of the governing party." One of his most radical assertions refers to the monarch: "The king is not a ruler appointed by the will of God, but by the will of the people" and his place is in Budapest. Groisz is just as fiery in his criticism, defining the Austro-Hungarian citizen as being non-existent, since in his opinion "there are Hungarians and Austrians, but there is no such thing as Austro-Hungarians," just as "there is no Austro-Hungarian border, but provinces with borderlines." In his conception the status of the army is also problematic, since it is not only a joint army, but one that kills Hungarian nationalism, since "for as long as military education is provided by the Austrians there will be no Hungarian patriots." These types of aggressive speeches give the impression of firm convictions but, as is often the case, the reality was quite different. Groisz's case is a suggestive one: in the next electoral year he was elected as a member of the Liberal Party. On the other hand, liberal candidates, lead by Hegedüs, would mock the imaginary tragedies presented by the Independence Party, deconstructing line by line the arguments presented by their opponents. As mentioned earlier, during these years a new form of political dialogue seems to be taking shape on the electoral stage.

Until 1896, the debate seems to have been less fierce. The press sympathizing with the opposition published only one speech and the speeches of the governing party return to the industrial sphere, most ideas revolving around monetary policy, trade and customs, economy and reforms. But industrial reforms generated a wave of anti-Semitism, pointed out in detail in his speech by Hegedüs, the representative of Cluj<sup>25</sup> who seemed to find a relation between the criticism of entrepreneurship personified by the Jewish moneylenders, and the inability of the wealthy farmers to adapt to industrial change.<sup>26</sup> Some programs of the candidates also emphasized Hungary as a producer and supplier of raw materials, a reason why the revision of the trade and customs treaty with Austria became a delicate question, whose discussion needed to be postponed even for supporters of economic independence like Groisz or Béla Lukács. In this context of economic development we also find the image of the monarch, which must be interpreted by also taking into consideration the symbolic conjunction of the millennial exhibition. The central image on which the success of the millennium is built is precisely the image of the king who "needs to be protected" (Dezső Bánffy) and certainly "should not be puzzled with a dilemma" (Hegedüs).<sup>27</sup> Some representatives of the Liberal Party aimed to make the population aware of the importance of the gestures of Francis Joseph at the millennium celebra-

tion and of their significance for the political and cultural integration of the Hungarians among other civilized states. It is curious, though, how the exhibition is unanimously perceived as a real success, in spite of the extremely real conflicts generated by this historical romanticism, which was far from stirring unconditioned admiration among the minorities, especially among Romanians and Serbs.<sup>28</sup> In the opinion of the “newly converted” Groisz, this was due to the provisions of the Minorities Act (1868), which was “too generous to minorities” in Hungary. In his opinion, the Romanians and the Serbs, instead of adhering to the great Hungarian nation, had started to plot against the Hungarians, and “their dangerous ideas” were promoted especially by their intellectual elite, in their schools. In Groisz’s opinion, for example, Hungarian should be a compulsory subject in Romanian schools, giving students direct access to the Hungarian culture and making them more aware of their responsibility to the empire.<sup>29</sup> Although Groisz does not come to the same radical conclusions as Beksics, who denies even the legitimacy of the Romanian national high-schools on the territory of the Hungarian state,<sup>30</sup> he identifies and restricts the source of danger to the Romanian and Serbian elites.

The utopia of the Independence Party continued also in the campaign of 1901, when Ugron ended (apparently only at the level of the discourse) his political carrier in front of his many voters in Șimleul Silvaniei by urging a war of independence against the newly established dualist system which, according to him, was a hybrid creation where “the past cannot die and the future cannot be born.”<sup>31</sup> The fusion of the parties was hard to accept by fighters like Ugron. In contradiction to such a profoundly pessimistic discourse, the electoral campaign of the governing party was far more positive. Kálmán Széll appears again on the political stage, undertaking the symbolic function of the model politician fulfilled until then by Baross or Tisza. As the program of Széll (considered to be a successor of Deák) was built on “righteousness, justice and truth,” these ideas will be also taken up in the political speeches of the representatives.<sup>32</sup> The subject of Hungary’s economy and monetary policy is resumed, on a bleaker note, with the already familiar antithesis between agricultural and industrial or “agrarianism and mercantilism” (Arthur Feilitzsch), but this time a new character is introduced in these battles, namely, the worker. If the speeches of the ’90s meant to civilize the Transylvanian peasant by instructing him economically, the factory worker now surfaces in the programs of the candidates of the Liberal Party. He was presented as a person who needed to be protected and especially educated in order to develop intellectually and morally.<sup>33</sup> The need to create more factories was also mentioned, in order to stop the emigration of the labor force. Our readings suggest that the metamorphosis of the mainly agricultural Hungarian society into an industrial society was neither a simple, nor a necessarily popular process.

In 1905 the subject of the opportunism of the governing party and the corrupt system lead by István Tisza are revived. As a matter of fact, as the present analysis also shows, reflections on corruption or political immorality are constantly present in the opposition's campaign. Although the negative coverage was not necessarily meant to reveal hidden truths or to unveil some plotting, the discourse on corruption became "an essential part of the political battle."<sup>34</sup> In the press of Cluj are published, in most cases, reflections on the cases of abuse of power (especially during electoral campaigns) or on monetary corruption, but mainly on fraud in the infrastructure projects. We must be aware here of the powerful influence of the press in shaping the public opinion. One could understand that the freedom of the press, an objective formulated already in the first electoral speeches, was of major importance for the columnists of the Modern Era, since the media of that time was not necessarily defined by detachment and the impartial presentation of an event.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the image we have on the campaign of 1905 leaves room for interpretation, considering the fact that the discourses we have read were all published in the newspaper of the opposition, the *Ellenzék*. We have thus only indirect access to the electoral discourse of the ruling party. This time we also find a characterization of the candidates. The bitterest attributes are dedicated to Feilitzsch, who was considered an orator without talent, and was liked neither by the opposition, nor, it seems, by the supporters of the Liberal Party. A survey of these elements indicates that the texts published in the press reflect the fact that those in power continued to promote subjects like industry, trade and customs, the army, and they even claim merit for the repatriation of Rákóczi. But neither economic progress, nor romantic nationalism could explain Tisza's lack of sensitivity and his alleged incompatibility and incapacity to govern. In the context of Tisza's government appears also the image of Francis Joseph, constantly presented by Piszatory (The New Party) as a martyr, a victim: "The king himself listens to the advice of Tisza, who is the greatest enemy of the country."<sup>36</sup> Although the parties of the opposition were by any means not very keen on maintaining a political balance, they did not venture to directly attack the monarch. Obstruction seemed to be their only chance to paralyze the moves of the liberals, but of course, the boycott against the government was perceived differently by the political elite. While for candidate Samu Papp this was necessary, because the government in power was "an offence to the constitution . . . fatal to the nation and to freedom,"<sup>37</sup> for Hegedüs this was an irresponsible, reckless act, which led to the government's "inability to work."

"We swept Tisza off the nation's path" said Gyula Justh in the beginning of his speech held in Cluj in 1910 at the meeting of the Independence Party.<sup>38</sup> There was nothing new in seeing Tisza as the embodiment of the greatest political evil, but his demonization most certainly reached a climax in this campaign.

Tisza, Dezső Perczel and Károly Khuen-Héderváry were presented as masters of corruption and electoral aggression, “executioners of the national interest” (Ferenc Wesselényi). And since any image needs a counter image, the image of the monarch continued to improve from the earlier campaigns. He was presented again as a ruler surrounded by incompetents and gravediggers of the nation, a pawn who would have otherwise supported reforms like the national bank and the revision of the trade and customs treaty proposed by the Independence Party. All this in spite of the fact that one decade earlier there had been serious tensions between the members of the Liberal Party and the Independence Party based precisely on a different interpretation of the role of the monarch. While the government made efforts to avoid disturbing the monarch’s peace of mind and to protect the compromise between the Hungarian elite and the king, the opposition raised his voice for a total independence from the Habsburgs and considered the largely popularized Compromise as “national suicide.”<sup>39</sup> The most sensational element of the leftist discourse was clearly the justification of the alliance with the radical Serbian nationalists from an earlier mandate. The Radical Serbian Party started to collaborate with the Independence Party precisely because it also claimed the independence of its own people from Habsburg rule. For deputies like Justh or Wesselényi, this did not present any danger for the Hungarian nation, even though “they are among the fiercest nations,” because they considered that the only difference between the Serbian radicals and the Hungarian nationalists was the language they spoke.

**W**E HOPE that the present article has highlighted the main subjects of the political speeches of the Hungarian representatives of Transylvania at the time of the dualist system. These texts reveal in fact the general—but not necessarily the official—views on the political system in the period following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. It seems that the central idea around which all electoral speeches revolved was the process of civilizational development. The agricultural character of Hungarian society (not only in Transylvania), the basic element of the national self-image, was intensely criticized by the representatives of the governing party, advocates of (industrial) development. Later on this led to a negative image of the concept of civilization (artfully used by the opposition), modernization acquiring some derogatory connotations.<sup>40</sup> In the view of the leftist parties who supported the dualist system or especially in the programs of the extremist parties, the Hungarian nationality was irreconcilable with the Western civilizing factor.<sup>41</sup> Speeches became polarized around this central idea, around the development and the sacrifices it involved either through political subordination (given the system of representation) or through giving up some national institutions like the national bank and the army, or free

trade and customs. On the one hand there is a national frustration, the restriction of the revolutionary spirit, on the other, neglect and underappreciation of the problem of the minorities, an inability to have a dialogue. All in all, the presence of two competing and antagonistic views on the past and on the present is discernible here. One was supported by the opposition, who considered that it represented the majority of the people (the nation), and the other by the ruling liberal political elite, who definitely represented only a part of Hungarian society. In the view of the former, the highly idealized past of revolutionary battles was in complete contradiction with the industrial present, supranational and liberal. Although there were always common subjects like the judicial, educational and administrative reform, or religious freedom and freedom of the press, the great shift felt at the level of the entire electorate was in fact the interpretation of the Revolution of 1848 in relation to the legislative changes of 1867. □

## Notes

1. Our analysis is based on 104 newspaper articles from 1869–1910 published in the following newspapers: *Kolozsvári Közlöny*, *Székely Hírmondó*, *Magyar Polgár/Kolozsvár*, *Ellenzék*.
2. The program of the opposition candidate Sándor Elek, presented to voters in Alba de Jos county, in *Magyar Polgár* 3, 33 (17 March 1869).
3. The open letter containing the program of Mór Szentkirályi, *Kolozsvári Közlöny* 13, 14, 19, 24, 25 (1869); József Hosszú to the voters in Moeciu, *ibid.*, 25–26 (27 February–2 March 1869).
4. Judit Pál, *Unió vagy “unificáltatás”? Erdély uniója és a királyi biztos működése (1867–1872)* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 2010), 205–222.
5. Attila Demeter, “Conceptiile despre naționalitate ale lui József Eötvös în *Ideile dominante*,” in *140 de ani de legislație minoritară în Europa Centrală și de Est*, eds. Attila Gidó, István Horváth, and Judit Pál (Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Institutului pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, Kriterion, 2010), 49–62.
6. *Ibid.*, 53–54.
7. Balázs Orbán to the voters of the seat of Arieș, *Magyar Polgár* 6, 116 (23 May 1872).
8. The program of Gábor Ugron of Odorhei, *Magyar Polgár* 6, 128–129 (7–8 June 1872).
9. Ferenc Salamon’s speech, *Székely Hírmondó* (Târgu Secuiesc) 4, 52 (3 July 1872).
10. The program of Ferenc Salamon presented to the voters of the Lower Circle of Turda county, *Székely Hírmondó* 4, 48 (22 June 1872), 52 (3 July 1872).
11. The program of Manó Péchy, the candidate for Cluj, *Kolozsvári Közlöny* 16, 143 (25 June 1872).
12. Sándor Bereczki’s open letter to the voters of Mureș county, *Magyar Polgár* 9, 139 (20 June 1875).

13. Lajos Lészai to his voters in Gilău, *Magyar Polgár* 9, 137–138 (18–19 June 1875).
14. Gábor Ugron's speech, *Ellenzék* 2, 156 (11 July 1881).
15. *Ibid.*, 133 (13 June 1881).
16. Candidate Béla Bánffy's program presented in front of the voters of Gilău, *Magyar Polgár* 15, 136 (18 June 1881).
17. Kálmán Tisza's speech at Sfântu Gheorghe, *Magyar Polgár* 15, 163 (20 July 1881).
18. The speeches of Dezső Sigmond and Sándor Hegedüs, *Kolozsvár* 1, 132 (6 June 1887).
19. Gábor Kemény addressing the voters of Târgu Secuiesc, *Kolozsvár* 1, 144 (21 June 1887).
20. Nándor Éber to the voters of Sic, *Kolozsvári Közlöny* 17, 121–122 (29–30 May 1872). Besides Britain, there is a reference in 1869 to Benjamin Franklin and an entire passage regarding France on the subject of the extension of suffrage: "Since it extended its suffrage France became more capricious" "no good came out of it," meaning that the representative of Cluj believed the electoral system in place at the time in Hungary was a suitable one (Hegedüs, 1896).
21. Raphael Utz, "Nations, Nation-Building, and Cultural Intervention: A Social Science Perspective," *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law* 9 (2005): 636.
22. The program of candidate Gábor Ugron presented to the voters of Cluj, *Ellenzék* 8, 131 (13 June 1887). The program of candidate Emil Ábrányi, *ibid.*, 113 (20 May 1887).
23. Dezső Sigmond's report, *Kolozsvár* 6, 8 (11 January 1892).
24. Miklós Bartha's speech at Cluj, *Ellenzék* 13, 13 (16 January 1892). Gusztáv Groisz's speech at Cluj, *ibid.*, 14–15 (19–20 January 1892).
25. Sándor Hegedüs's speech, *Kolozsvár* 10, 232 (12 October 1896).
26. On the image of the Jew in the '90s see Péter Hanák, "A másokról alkotott kép," in *A Kertésa Műhely* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1988), 101–111.
27. Dezső Bánffy's speech in front of the voters of Șimleul Silvaniei, *Kolozsvár* 10, 239 (20 October 1896). Sándor Hegedüs's speech, *ibid.*, 232 (12 October 1896).
28. Bálint Varga-Kuun, "A millennium és a nemzetiségek," *Magyar Kisebbség* (Oradea) 14, 51–52 (2009): 101–104.
29. Gusztáv Groisz's speech, *Kolozsvár* 10, 232 (12 October 1896).
30. Gusztáv Beksics, *Közigazgatásunk reformja és nemzeti politikánk* (Budapest: Grill, 1881), quoted in András Cieger, "Liberalizmus és hatalmi érdek: A szabadságjogokra vonatkozó politikai dilemmák a dualizmuskori Magyarországon," *Magyar Kisebbség* 14, 51–52 (2009): 92.
31. Gábor Ugron's speech in front of the voters of Șimleul Silvaniei, *Ellenzék* 22 (11 September 1901).
32. Candidate Révai, in his campaign at Sic took over entire parts of Széll's program in his propaganda speech, *Magyar Polgár* 35, 211 (17 September 1901).
33. The program of Arthur Feilitzsch, *Magyar Polgár* 35, 208 (13 September 1901).
34. András Cieger, "A mi politikánkban egyik bortány a másikat követi: A korrupciós ügyek szerepe a Magyar politikai életben (1903–1913)," *Múltunk* (Budapest) 1 (2008): 5.

35. Moreover, as shown in the aforementioned study by Cieger, the press was often subordinated to the interests of those in power and the greatly desired freedom of the journalists was often restricted in various manners, by threats or by bribery. *Ibid.*, 13.
36. The program of Mór Pisztorý presented to the voters of Cluj, *Ellenzék* 26, 14 (16 January 1905).
37. The open letter of Samu Papp to the voters of Turda, *Ellenzék* 26, 10 (13 January 1905).
38. Gyula Justh's speech, *Ellenzék* 31, 96 (28 April 1910).
39. Ferenc Wesselényi's speech to the voters of Cluj, *Ellenzék* 31, 111 (17 May 1910).
40. Hanák, "A másokról alkotott kép," 110.
41. The analysis of the press gives us a very polarized image, but in reality not even the political elite of the Independence Party or the members of the radical-left faction had a uniform discourse. They were aggressive and revolutionary in the speeches published in the press, while in their official discourse they professed their loyalty to the crown. Péter Hanák, "1898: A nemzeti és az állampatrióta értékrend frontális ütközése a monarchiában," in *A Kertésa Műhely*, 118.

### **Abstract**

The Political Message of the Electoral Speeches Published in the Hungarian Press of Cluj (1869–1910)

The paper analyzes changes in the electoral discourse in Transylvania in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More precisely, it reveals the general and not the official opinion related to the perception of the political system installed after the ratification of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. Writings published in the newspapers sympathizing with various parties suggest that the basic concept most frequently used by the representatives of the governing party was that of (industrial) development, while the opposition meant to emphasize the agricultural character of Hungarian society, presenting the shortcomings of a hasty adaptation to the civilizing trends coming from the West. The present analysis suggests that there was a passionate political dialogue between the two political groups, even though their speeches in the electoral campaigns do not always reflect the attitudes of the politicians as indicated by the personal or archive sources of that time.

### **Keywords**

electoral discourse, Hungarian press, political parties, 19<sup>th</sup> century