
BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW. IOAN LĂCĂTUȘU – ROMANIANS IN THE HUNGARIAN MEDIA IN HARGHITA AND COVASNA, SFÂNTU-GHEORGHE, EUROCARPATICA PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2006

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ABSTRACT

*This material is a review of the book written by Ioan Lăcătușu, entitled *Românii din mass-media maghiară din Harghita și Covasna* [Romanians in the Hungarian media in Harghita and Covasna], published in Sfântu Gheorghe by the Eurocarpatica publishing house in 2006. The book has 130 pages and discusses how Romanians are presented in the Hungarian media in Harghita and Covasna, as well as other aspects of community life that are of great importance. The writing and publication of this work is of great public utility, as it demonstrates that Romanians in this area are subject to intense discrimination and assimilation, without the state taking any action in this regard. Consequently, local cultural figures and associations are sounding the alarm, drawing attention to the local, regional, and national geopolitical implications of this phenomenon. We wish to bring this topic back into discussion to remind everyone that when the state is no longer a factor of order in this area, its responsibilities are taken over by the Hungarian state, which is a real threat to national security.*

Keywords: media, Romanians, Hungarians, security, Transylvania.

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION. PUBLICATION OF THE REVIEWED WORK – AN INITIATIVE OF PUBLIC UTILITY AND NATIONAL INTEREST

The reviewed book includes points of view on: The history of Romanians as reflected in the Hungarian-language media; Inaccuracies, omissions, and confusions present in the Atlas of Localities in Covasna County; The issue of Trianon in the Hungarian-language media in Covasna and Harghita counties. This is followed by several articles addressing specific topics such as: the draft law on the status of

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national minorities, the autonomy of the Szeklerland, specific aspects of interculturality, several responses to press articles on interethnic coexistence in Harghita and Covasna counties, a preface to the work by Ilie Șandru on the well-known case of the “Sf. Losif” orphanage in Odorhei, and another to the volume of interviews and reports published in the weekly “Formula AS”, signed by journalist Ion Longin Popescu, with the main theme being the fate of Romanians in Harghita and Covasna²⁰³. The work brings together previously published texts that are already known to the public, with the aim of re-valorization by bringing them together²⁰⁴, so that the public may become aware of the socio-cultural and political aspects that describe the ethnic issues in the Harghita-Covasna area²⁰⁵. The selection of studies and documents shows the dramatic ethnic reality faced by Romanians in this area, to which the authorities in Bucharest remain deaf and unresponsive²⁰⁶. From this point of view, the author warns that:

“In their open and disguised complicity to maintain power at any cost, as well as the privileges that always come with it, the rulers no longer have a homeland or a national spirit, but only interests that can lead, without any concern on their part, to the disintegration of the Romanian unitary national state for which so many generations have sacrificed themselves over the centuries”²⁰⁷.

The way in which Romanians from Harghita and Covasna are presented in the Hungarian-language press in Harghita, Covasna, and Mureș reflects, according to the author:

“a culmination of sufferings, insults, humiliations, and defiance that Romanians in Harghita and Covasna, and not only them, have experienced and continue to experience today from Hungarians simply because they are Romanians”²⁰⁸.

The author of this volume, PhD. Ioan Lăcătușu, raises the alarm about the false way in which the history of Romanians is presented by Hungarians in the Hungarian press, but also about the process of denationalization and marginalization of Romanians promoted by Hungarian leaders, who flagrantly violate the most basic rules of interethnic social conduct, who lack tolerance and understanding regarding the rights of Romanians to preserve their identity²⁰⁹.

²⁰³ Ioan Lăcătușu, *Românii în mass-media maghiară din Harghita și Covasna [Romanians in the Hungarian media in Harghita and Covasna]*, Sfântu-Gheorghe, Eurocarpatica Publishing House, 2006, p. 5.

²⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

²⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

²⁰⁷ „În complicitatea lor deschisă și deghizată totodată, de păstrare a puterii cu orice preț, ca și a privilegiilor cu care aceasta este corelată întotdeauna, guvernării nu mai au patrie, nici suflet național, ci numai interese care pot duce, fără nici o îngrijorare din partea lor, la destrămarea statului național unitar român pentru care atâtea generații s-au jertfit de-a lungul secolelor”, in *Ibidem*.

²⁰⁸ „un summum de patimi, jigniri, umilințe, sfidări pe care le-au trăit și le trăiesc și în zilele noastre românii din Harghita și Covasna, și nu numai ei, din partea maghiarilor numai pentru că sunt români”, in *Ibidem*, p. 7.

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

The public utility of this work lies primarily in the fact that it raises awareness of the problems faced by the Romanian minority in Covasna and Harghita over the last 16 years of transition to democracy, which for them has become “unbearable domination, hostility, humiliation, and mockery from the Hungarians”²¹⁰.

This work can equally serve as a guide for government officials, parliamentarians, politicians, and even ordinary Romanians who want to learn about the plight of Romanians in the heart of Romania, who are forced to demand their right to national identity from government officials, just as they did 115 years ago during the time of the Memorandumists²¹¹.

2. SPECIFICALLY, IN SHORT, SOME ASPECTS RELATING TO THE SITUATION OF THE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY

Through this work, the author demonstrates the degrading socio-moral and material status of Romanians in Covasna and Harghita, despite the European context. In other words, instead of our country’s European integration encouraging Hungarians to embrace “European values” of justice, fairness, shared prosperity, and human dignity, they “continue to treat Romanians, in the third millennium, as servants or day laborers for the former Hungarian grophs”²¹². It is vital to learn and remember that Romanians in Covasna and Harghita do not have the funds to preserve and assert their national identity in the face of attempts by Hungarians to “annihilate it”²¹³. At the local level, this situation was made possible by the fact that certain Hungarian local councilors distribute funds predominantly to Hungarians, ignoring the financial and cultural needs of Romanians. In this context, the cultural, scientific, and civic associations of Romanians in the two counties requested assistance from the Presidency, Government, and Parliament of Romania in order to receive

“financial support provided for in a separate section of the central state budget. In this way, it would ensure a minimum of equal treatment with Hungarian cultural, scientific, and civic associations in the area, which are financially supported from local budgets, based on votes cast on ethnic grounds, from Romania’s central budget, as a national minority, and from Hungary’s budget, intended for Hungarians across the border”²¹⁴.

²¹⁰ „o greu suportabilă dominație, ostilitate, umilință și batjocură din partea maghiarilor”, in *Ibidem*, p. 9.

²¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

²¹² *Ibidem*, p. 10.

²¹³ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁴ „un suport financiar prevăzut într-o filă cuprinsă distinct în bugetul central de stat. În acest fel, s-ar asigura o minimă egalitate de tratament cu asociațiile culturale, științifice și civice maghiare din zonă, care sunt susținute financiar din bugetele locale, pe baza votului exprimat pe baze etnice, din bugetul central al României, în calitate de minoritate națională și din bugetul Ungariei, destinat maghiarilor de peste granițe”, in *Ibidem*.

3. HOW IS ROMANIAN HISTORY PORTRAYED IN THE HUNGARIAN MEDIA?

The author observes that

“at the level of common representation in Romania, there is an image handicap for Covasna and Harghita counties, the only counties in Romania where the majority population is numerically inferior. Information from this region of the Intra-Carpathian Arc, varied and distorted, periodically becomes the focus of media attention, and the area is perceived as having specific ‘sensitive’ problems”²¹⁵.

The author points out that what Hungarian leaders are seeking to achieve through this media manipulation is to shape and reinforce, in the collective consciousness of Hungarians, the belief that this area in the heart of Romania must belong to them, not in the sense of tolerance and cohabitation, but in the spirit of medieval, anachronistic customs and practices presented in the projects on the autonomy of the so-called “Szeklerland”²¹⁶.

Hungarian leaders use the Hungarian-language press to manipulate emotions and amplify feelings of interethnic hatred by employing “shock theories” based on the Us-Them dichotomy. On the other hand, the triad of information, misinformation, and informational manipulation strikes hard at the individual’s frame of reference. Summarizing the way Romanians are treated in this area, the author notes that

“in the name and on the altar of the Hungarian community’s interests, editorial offices publish only materials that fit into ethnocentric approaches. There is no trace of plurality of views or opinions. There is practically an obvious censorship”²¹⁷.

3.1. The media campaign to denigrate Romanians – an attempt to undermine national security

The denigration of Romanians in the Hungarian-language media can be considered an attack on national security, as it violates the provisions of the Constitution, which states that our country is a national, sovereign, independent, unitary, and indivisible state. Through press articles, Hungarian leaders are demanding self-determination, community rights, and, ultimately, territorial autonomy. In practice, under the pretext of so-called equality, the Szeklers are calling for the establishment of the autonomous administrative region of “Szeklerland”, in

²¹⁵ „la nivelul reprezentării comune din România, există un handicap de imagine față de județele Covasna și Harghita, singurele județe din România unde populația majoritară este numeric inferioară. Informațiile dinspre această regiune din Arcul Intracarpatic, variate și distorsionate, periodic devin centrul mediatic, iar zona este percepută ca o zonă cu probleme «sensibile» specifice”, in *Ibidem*, p. 15.

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²¹⁷ „în numele și pe altarul interesului comunității maghiare, redacțiile publică doar materialele care se înscriu în abordările etnocentriste. Nici urmă de pluralitate a punctelor de vedere sau a opiniilor. Există practic o cenzură evidentă”, in *Ibidem*.

flagrant violation of constitutional provisions. In this way, ethnic Hungarians are directing, both behind the scenes and openly, through the leaders of the UDMR and Hungarian civic associations, the evolution of Romanian-Hungarian relations and their relationship with the state, as an equal component at the heart of Romania²¹⁸.

3.2. Common themes in Hungarian media discourse

Among the topics that have received a lot of attention from the Hungarian press over time, there have been two main subjects, namely Trianon and the Romanian Orthodox Church²¹⁹. Other topics constantly addressed in the press in Covasna and Harghita refer to: identity tensions, anti-Romanian messages and alarmist scenarios with a “mobilizing” role, the rehabilitation of Horthyist symbols and war criminals, such as Wlassowski. Another direction of Hungarian actions is the development of Szekler monographs that intentionally falsify the past of Romanians²²⁰.

An analysis of articles published in the Hungarian-language media on Romanian history leads to the following conclusions: all articles contest basic themes of Romanian historiography, such as those concerning the continuity, unity, and identity values of the Romanian state²²¹. In most articles, important historical events and moments in shared history are approached from a perspective that is diametrically opposed to Romanian historiography and, implicitly, to historical reality. For example: the revolution led by Horea, Cloșca, and Crișan is presented as a “massacre”²²², December 1 is considered a day of “mourning”²²³, the state is considered, despite the multiple rights and funding granted, a “predatory state”²²⁴ and the examples go on. The Romanian Orthodox Church, respectively the Orthodox Diocese of Covasna and Harghita, is perceived as “the most dangerous enemy of Hungarian interests” in the area, representing “the main instrument for removing other confessions and ethnicities” through “continuous expansion”²²⁵. The subject of Trianon, as mentioned, is another topic that is constantly found in the Hungarian-language press in the two counties, along with: the benefits of having Hungarian citizenship, the importance of obtaining dual citizenship, reluctance to report to state institutions – not controlled by the UDMR –, negative reporting to the Orthodox Church, displaying a certain superiority over Romanians, an attitude that separates Transylvanian Hungarians from Romanians and brings them closer to their “motherland, Hungary”²²⁶.

²¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 11–12.

²¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 12–13.

²²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

²²² *Ibidem*, p. 20.

²²³ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

²²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

²²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 57–58.

3.3. What can we notice?

Opinion leaders in the Hungarian media promote the supremacy, primacy, and antiquity of Hungarians in this area, considering Romanians to be “foreigners” and inferior²²⁷. The author notes that the current situation is unique, at least in Europe. Ioan Lăcătușu states that he knows of no other situation in which the history, culture, spirituality, and traditions of a majority population are so disregarded, distorted, and contested, without those who promote such discourse suffering any consequences²²⁸.

3.4. What is the ultimate goal?

In the author’s opinion, the Hungarian press in Covasna and Harghita counties is “preparing” the Hungarian community for actions through which they will effectively reclaim territories²²⁹.

4. REGARDING INADVERTENT ERRORS, OMISSIONS, AND CONFUSIONS PRESENT IN PRINTED WORKS. A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

4.1. What work are we considering?

In March 2005, SUNCART Publishing House in Cluj-Napoca released the work *Atlas of Localities in Covasna County*, authored by Kisgyorgy Zoltan. The maps in the work were created by Simon Andras, Gali Eniko, Tonk Sandor, Laszlo Tamas, Kurko Ibolya, Kovacs Alpar, and Torok Gergo, the photographs by Toro Attila, Laszlo Tamas, and Papucs Andras, and the translation by Szabo Beata, with SC Ardania Advertising SRL, Simon Krisztina, and Aurelian Maxim mentioned among the contributors. The work comprises 193 pages and contains information in Romanian, Hungarian, and English about two municipalities, three towns, 39 communes, 128 detailed maps, as well as advertisements from the sponsors who contributed to its publication²³⁰.

4.2. Context and justification for an imperative response

The author points out striking errors that demand a correction. Moreover, in the context in which the following statement was made on the inside cover of the volume: “We apologize for any errors. Please send us your comments”, Ioan Lăcătușu follows the suggestion and makes a series of observations, hoping that they will be considered in a possible republication of the work, or in another way²³¹.

²²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

²²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 33–34.

²²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

²³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

²³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

4.3. General problems

The work contains numerous inaccuracies, omissions, and confusions regarding the history of the county in general and, in particular, of the Romanians in the area. Added to this is an unnatural imbalance between the images that depict Hungarian history, culture, and civilization and those relating to Romanian history, symbols, and cultural heritage²³². Below, we mention only a few of the general problems identified by the author of the work, in order to demonstrate to the reader, the usefulness of Ioan Lăcătușu's approach and the seriousness of the issues raised:

1. the Szeklers are presented as "native", while the Romanians are presented as "foreigners" who were brought in to work on the estates of large Hungarian landowners²³³ – nothing could be further from the truth;
2. all the monuments of the "Millennium" and those of the 1848 revolution are mentioned, but not a word is said about the heroes' cemeteries in Dobolii de Jos, Araci, or Brețcu. Moreover, the work presents images of nine Hungarian monuments, and none referring to Romanian ones²³⁴;
3. a multitude of archaeological remains and fortresses belonging to the Szekler population are mentioned, but nothing is said about the Dacian settlements²³⁵;
4. the former Orthodox or Greek Catholic churches are not mentioned²³⁶;
5. although a multitude of Hungarian kings and princes are mentioned, the name of Mihai Viteazul, with whom the Szeklers had close ties, is completely omitted²³⁷;
6. the names of schools teaching in Hungarian are given, but many Romanian educational institutions are omitted²³⁸;
7. photographs of 21 Roman Catholic, Reformed, and Unitarian churches are presented, and only two Orthodox churches, in order to give the reader, the false impression that only Romanians live there; likewise, wooden funerary monuments are presented, but no Orthodox roadside monuments are shown²³⁹;

The examples we have listed are only a small part of the multitude of issues raised by Ioan Lăcătușu, which reinforce the idea that a thorough analysis of all irregularities was necessary, in the spirit of historical truth.

²³² *Ibidem*, pp. 35–36.

²³³ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

²³⁴ *Ibidem*.

²³⁵ *Ibidem*.

²³⁶ *Ibidem*.

²³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

²³⁸ *Ibidem*.

²³⁹ *Ibidem*.

4.4. Specific problems, by locality

Below we list a few problems in Covasna County, noting that these are just a few examples from the multitude of omissions identified with remarkable accuracy by Ioan Lăcătușu:

1. the passes and mountain passes connecting the county with neighboring regions and counties are listed, without mentioning their role in ensuring economic, social, cultural, and human relations between Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia²⁴⁰;
2. the sheep farming sector around Covasna is mentioned, but without specifying that this activity continues the tradition of transhumant herding of the famous shepherds (bârsani) in the area²⁴¹;
3. the Orthodox monasteries in Valea Mare and Sita Buzăului, which are particularly popular with visitors, are not mentioned²⁴²;
4. of the nine images accompanying the text on the general presentation of Covasna County, none refer to Romanian culture²⁴³.

The author has also identified errors, omissions, or inconsistencies for Sfântu Gheorghe, Târgu Secuiesc, Baraolt, the city of Covasna, and Întorsura Buzăului, with examples of this kind continuing over several pages.

5. VIEWPOINTS REGARDING THE DRAFT LAW ON THE STATUS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Regarding the draft law on the status of national minorities, the author points out that:

- the draft places a strong emphasis on what separates Hungarians from Romanians²⁴⁴;
- the draft does not aim to protect national minorities, but rather to grant privileges to Hungarians, to the detriment of Romanians²⁴⁵;
- the draft covers only the rights, not the obligations, that Hungarians have in relation to the majority population and the state²⁴⁶;
- in the chapter on the use of the mother tongue, the formulation from the Framework Convention was not included, which, if respected, would mean

²⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 39.

²⁴³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

²⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

that not all names of institutions in the field of state administration must be written in the language of the respective minority, but only the main ones²⁴⁷. Furthermore, in the section on education, formulations such as facilitating contacts between Romanian and Hungarian students and teachers, equal access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities²⁴⁸ and others like these were not included in the Framework Convention. In practice, most of the wording referring to cohabitation and peaceful coexistence was not included. Nor was the wording stating that providing education in minority languages “does not affect the learning of the official language or education in that language” included²⁴⁹;

- as a whole, the draft places excessive emphasis on the collective rights of national minorities, proposing a series of concepts and institutions such as “cultural autonomy”, “National Council for Cultural Autonomy”, etc., which go far beyond international regulations on the matter, some of them even being unconstitutional²⁵⁰;
- at the same time, contrary to the provisions of the convention, the draft law legalizes:
 - the establishment of the National Council for Cultural Autonomy, which would have its own apparatus, financed from the state budget, which would mean that it would be like a “state within a state”²⁵¹;
 - the recognition of collective rights for national minorities²⁵²;
 - educational, cultural, and civic separatism, contributing to the creation of communication barriers between Romanians and Hungarians, with destructive effects²⁵³;
 - “the obligation to consult the legitimate representatives of persons belonging to national minorities when making decisions concerning their identity interests, but this obligation does not apply to public authorities in localities and counties where Romanians are in the majority”²⁵⁴;

In conclusion, the author notes that the draft law on minorities does not provide for protective measures, whether regulatory or administrative, to ensure the preservation and development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of persons belonging to the national majority in localities where they are numerically

²⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 62.

²⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

²⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

²⁵² *Ibidem*.

²⁵³ *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁴ „obligativitatea consultării reprezentanților legitimi ai persoanelor aparținând minorităților naționale, în luarea unor decizii ce privesc interesele lor identitare, dar nu prevede această obligativitate și pentru autoritățile publice din localitățile și județele unde românii sunt numeric majoritari”, in *Ibidem*.

in the minority, which is the situation of Romanians in the counties of Covasna and Harghita²⁵⁵. Beyond these general aspects, the author examines, over several pages, a whole series of specific issues that he insists must be revisited in order to be corrected. In conclusion, Ioan Lăcătușu states that in the case of Covasna and Harghita counties, “cultural autonomy”, together with a large part of the other provisions of the draft law on national minorities, actually represents the achievement of territorial autonomy based on ethnic criteria, which they so fiercely demand and which, as I have already said, is unconstitutional²⁵⁶.

6. CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE AUTONOMY STATUS OF THE SO-CALLED “SZEKLERLAND”

Over time, representatives of Romanians in Covasna and Harghita counties have disapproved of efforts to obtain territorial autonomy and legislate an ethnic enclave in the middle of Romania. Ioan Lăcătușu states that autonomy based on ethnic criteria already exists “de facto” in Covasna and Harghita, and that there is a desire to institutionalize it “de jure”. Ethnic Hungarians in the area dominate politically, economically, and culturally, which is why there is no need for their legal protection. Moreover, he reaffirms that those who need protection to safeguard their national identity are, in fact, the Romanians in the area. Last but not least, the author states that it is not the lack of rights that prompts Hungarian leaders to demand autonomy on ethnic grounds, but the fear of a decline in the ethnic Hungarian population in the area, caused by entirely different factors, such as negative population growth, emigration to Hungary, high suicide rates etc²⁵⁷.

Perhaps the most serious aspect noted by Ioan Lăcătușu refers to the fact that the issue of ethnic, collective, and territorial autonomy, as provided for in the Statute of Autonomy of the Szeklerland, is equivalent to a process of advancing and building a new border. In other words, in the case of Romania, we can talk about a process of establishing an internal Hungarian border, a situation with significant geostrategic and geopolitical implications. Last but not least, the expert warns that

“At the beginning of the third millennium, anachronistic forms of community organization cannot be revived, as they remind Romanians of a time when they were deprived of their most basic civil rights and subjected to harsh processes of denationalization. Very attentive to their own ethnic, cultural, and linguistic sensitivities, the authors of the draft Statute of Autonomy for the Szeklerland completely disregard the sensitivities of the Romanian population in the area and throughout the country. They do not realize the ‘boomerang effect’ that their

²⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

²⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

initiative will have on how the ‘citizens of the Szeklerland’ will be treated in other counties of Romania and what the effects will be on the Hungarian minority in other localities of Transylvania”²⁵⁸.

7. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE MANIFESTATION OF INTERCULTURALITY IN EASTERN TRANSYLVANIA

Regarding how interculturality manifests itself in eastern Transylvania, Ioan Lăcătușu states that there is a symbolic struggle between the two communities, Romanian and Hungarian. The cultural life of the two communities is conflictual, each feeling threatened by the other ethnic group. However, it is actually the Romanians who are undergoing an intense process of assimilation, being discriminated against culturally, politically, economically, administratively, etc. In this context, the author notes that:

“We talk about coexistence, but in fact, we have lived and continue to live – in Covasna and Harghita – side by side without coexisting – we live in parallel, each using the same space separately. The main concern of post-December local leaders has been to build walls between Romanians and Hungarians, rather than bridges between the two populations. In most localities in Covasna and Harghita counties, Romanian communities have been assimilated, their numbers drastically reduced, representing today only ‘leftovers’ of what they once were. Under these circumstances, the problems related to preserving the identity heritage inherited from their ancestors exceed the material possibilities of these communities”²⁵⁹.

Local public authorities and cultural institutions chronically underfund Romanian cultural projects, in many cases even showing reluctance, blocking the financing of Romanian cultural projects. The cultural assimilation of Romanians is aggressive, accelerated, and long-lasting. An eloquent example of this is the fact that after 1989, all county and local museums in the two counties were transformed into

²⁵⁸ „La începutul mileniului III, nu mai pot fi înviate forme anacronice de organizare comunitară, care amintesc românilor de vremea când ei erau lipsiți de cele mai elementare drepturi cetățenești și supuși unor procese dure de deznaționalizare. Foarte atenți cu propriile sensibilități etnice, culturale și lingvistice, autorii proiectului Statutului autonomiei Ținutului Secuiesc, nesocotesc total sensibilitățile populației românești, din zonă și din întreaga țară. Ei nu realizează «efectul de bumerang» pe care îl produce demersul lor, asupra modului cum vor fi tratați «cetățenii Ținutului Secuiesc» în celelalte județe ale României și care vor fi efectele asupra minorității maghiare, din celelalte localități ale Transilvaniei”, in *Ibidem*, p. 68.

²⁵⁹ „Vorbim de conviețuire, dar de fapt, am trăit și trăim – în Covasna și Harghita – unii lângă alții fără să conviețuim – trăim paralel, folosind fiecare separat, același spațiu. Principala preocupare a liderilor locali postdecembriști a fost aceea de a înălța ziduri între români și maghiari, și nu de a construi punți între cele două populații. În majoritatea localităților județelor Covasna și Harghita, comunitățile românești au fost asimilate, numărul lor fiind drastic diminuat, ele reprezentând astăzi doar niște «resturi» din ceea ce au fost odinioară. În aceste condiții problemele referitoare la păstrarea patrimoniului identitar moștenit de la înaintași depășesc posibilitățile materiale ale acestor comunități”, in *Ibidem*, p. 71.

Szekler museums (changing not only their name, but also the structure of their heritage, staff, and research programs), institutions that are no longer concerned with the heritage of the Romanian community. Under these circumstances, it is very clear why we can say, without mistake, that we are witnessing an obvious “symbolic aggression” through a negative attitude towards everything that the monuments and cultural heritage of the Romanian community symbolise. The reason why Romanian heritage is under so much pressure is that it is considered an obstacle to the perception of the area as an exclusively mono-ethnic and mono-cultural Hungarian one, which is clearly not true²⁶⁰.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The work of Ioan Lăcătușu entitled *Romanians in the Hungarian media in Harghita, and Covasna* shows, once again, the extent and aggressiveness of the assimilation process to which Romanians in the two counties in the heart of Romania are subjected. The phenomenon has important geopolitical implications and is of national importance. This review proves to be of public utility as it brings back into discussion particularly important issues which, although they were reported some 20 years ago, have remained unresolved and, not only have they remained unresolved, but have worsened in the meantime.

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²⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 72.