

**BETWEEN ‘FOREIGNERS’ AND ROMANIANIZATION:
THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM
IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD**

By

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Abstract

Established in 1922 under the direct guidance of future King Carol II, the Romanian national football team was composed throughout the interwar period mainly of minority representatives, primarily Hungarians and Germans coming from Transylvanian clubs. The team's status of a national symbol determined an ardent debate around squad's Romanianization, which I followed in the interwar newspapers and in the works of several renowned political and cultural personalities like Nicolae Iorga, Camil Petrescu and Nichifor Crainic. Despite the political framework characterized by integral nationalism, Romanianization and centralization, the football Romanianization eventually failed in the interwar period, irrespective of the State's implication and regulations concerning this issue.

However, the football Romanianization debate marked especially the late interwar years. It showed the solidness of the Austro-Hungarian heritage in Romania after the 1918 Great Union, sharpening the dichotomy between Transylvania and the Old Kingdom. It also led to surprising political consequences, like the development of King Carol II's mass movement *Straja Țării* (The Sentinel of the Motherland) from a governmental office whose initial mission was to control the ethnic composition of the national football team. Finally, it targeted mainly the Hungarian minority of the so-called "irredentist" clubs in Transylvania, leaving the door open to Jews in the national team until the State's late intervention and thus determining the need for a reevaluation of the anti-Semite discourse of the interwar Romanian press.

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Photo 1

1922, Chernivtsi. HRH Prince Carol (future King Carol II, in the left) with the Romanian national football team whose only ethnic Romanian player was its captain Aurel Guga.



Source: *ProSport* (the correct date of the photo is 1922, not 1923).

Photo 2

1940, Rome. The Romanian national football team giving the Fascist salute before the match with Italy.



Source: George Mihalache, *“Il Dio” și “diavolii” din fața porții... Amintirile lui Mircea David, fostul portar al echipei naționale de fotbal* (“Il Dio” and “the Devils” in Front of the Goal... The Memoirs of Mircea David, the Former Goalkeeper of the National Football Team) (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1979).

Introduction

On October the 2nd, 1932, Romania lost 0-5 to Poland in a friendly match played in Bucharest. Though painful, the loss was the perfect opportunity to sharpen the recent debate concerning the Romanianization of the national team, that is, to promote the ethnic criterion instead of the value one when establishing the composition of the line-up, since the Romanian team had been composed from its very beginnings one decade before, mainly of minorities, especially Hungarians, Germans and Jews.

The Romanianization idea also needed a scapegoat for its starting point, and the scapegoat was already there: the goalkeeper István (Ștefan) Czinczer. It did not matter that it was not the ethnic Hungarian in Romania's goal who was guilty of blundering at Poland's first three points in only twenty-five minutes, but an ethnic Romanian goalkeeper, who was replaced immediately afterwards in the game. Czinczer became the symbol of all the "foreigners" (I will explain later why I chose to use this term for "minorities") in the Romanian national team, and there were thirteen such "foreigners" out of the sixteen players used during the match against Poland, who were accused in the press of not fighting to their last breath when playing for the national team, which was seen as a symbol of the Romanian state and nation, as a part of the Romanian national identity. The presence of minority players in the Romanian national team reached such an extent that before some of the international matches like the one above versus Poland, the Romanian anthem could not be sung due to the lack of ethnic Romanians in the squad. This crusade versus the "foreigners" found its most abject form of personal attacks against Czinczer in the newspaper *Curentul* ("The Stream"). Here, Czinczer was called "tramp", "pig", "bastard" or "the hero with

his anus fondled by the Romanian tricolor”, among others, after he supposedly said to some Romanians that “he wipes his a... with their Romania”.¹ *Curentul* even suggested the need for a revolver to avenge the lese-majesty.² Ironically, the player defended himself by neglecting the fact that he could have said those words since he actually did not speak Romanian. Subsequently, the match against Poland was the last for Czinczer in the Romanian national team.

Although *Curentul* was indeed a right-wing, if not already extreme-right, newspaper, the battle for Romanianization in football did not come at all only from the extreme right segment of the political spectrum, as among the names that promoted the Romanianization of the national team or at least mocked its ethnical composition, were rather moderate intellectuals and canonical figures of Romanian culture like Nicolae Iorga and Camil Petrescu, as well as leftist journalists. However, the year of the Romanian national football team’s establishment interestingly coincides with the date of the birth of the so-called ‘1922 generation’, which is connected with the extreme right wing political agitation and with the growth of intransigent nationalism that eventually led to the birth and expansion of the Iron Guard, the academic anti-Semitism and xenophobia, and the anti-Semite laws in the 1930s.

Football indeed had appeared in the Romanian state (the so-called ‘Old Kingdom’) at the beginning of the twentieth century as an “invention” of “true” foreigners, since it was brought and practiced at club level almost exclusively by foreigners (British and Germans mostly), the first national championship taking place in the 1909-1910 season. Eventually, with the emergence of the Romanian national team in 1922, some of these foreign players became Romanian citizens and thus played for the national team. However, one of the most intriguing

¹ Ion Dimitrescu, “După dezastrul ‘național’” (After the ‘National’ Disaster), *Curentul*, October 5, 1932, p. 6.

² Dimitrescu, “Scandalul Czinczer (I)” (The Czinczer Scandal), *Curentul*, October 10, 1932, p. 6.

phenomena in the interwar period was the huge presence of minorities (primarily Hungarians, Germans and Jews, but also Czechs or Poles) in the Romanian national team (see *Annexes 1 and 2*), which was partially a consequence of the 1918 moment of the Great Union, when Transylvania, Banat, Bessarabia and Bukovina became part of the Romanian state. The presence of a large number of minorities in the Romanian national football team, between eight and ten of the eleven players on the football field, became an issue at a time when the Romanian national identity was yet to be achieved as the primary task of the recently enlarged Romanian state, confronted after 1918 with new problems regarding minorities and regionalism, that were to be solved through a policy of Romanianization and centralization in the interwar period. Hence, the Romanianization campaign carried in the press and embraced by the public made the Romanian government and King Carol II himself to intervene in the problems concerning the national football team.

Romanianization in general remained a sensible, if not avoided, subject in Romania well after 1989, in a political context in which the nationalistic discourse and stereotypes prevailed. It was not at all a surprise that books regarding this topic were written by Romanian intellectuals outside rather than inside the country, whether the subject was about the Romanianization policy of the state in the interwar times³ or the widespread ethnically-based eugenics project of creating Romanian national identity in the same period⁴, both dimensions being related to and in the background of my topic. And when other historians in Romania offered alternative visions of the past, they were quickly stigmatized and attacked for anti-nationalism.⁵

³ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁴ Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2002).

⁵ See, for example, the scandal involving Sorin Mitu, history professor at University of Cluj-Napoca, at the moment of the appearance in 1999 of his alternative schoolbook.

Regarding the specific theme of Romanianization in football, it remained equally sensible. Except for a few almost lost-in-space press articles in the sports newspapers and non-academic periodicals, academic literature on this very topic is basically non-existent, and only recently has a young Romanian scholar begun to treat this subject tangentially within his broader interest of sports culture in interwar Romania.⁶

My present study will examine the Romanianization idea of the national football team in the interwar period, explaining its appearance, emphasizing the sharp debate around it, showing its football and political consequences, and finally demonstrating what I evaluate as its surprising failure within the broader political context represented by the state's policy of Romanianization. I will use the term of "foreigners", with quotation marks, not only for the foreign players who eventually became Romanian citizens, but mainly for the minorities who played for the national team, since the term was also utilized with this meaning in the interwar press, as I will show further in my thesis. In that respect, I will use the position of historians who argued on how the word "foreign" was applied in the Balkans to national minorities.⁷ Regarding the term "Romanianization", its application in football represents the wanted implementation of ethnic Romanians in the Romanian national team to the detriment of "foreign" elements. My study suggests that the "foreigners" in Romanian football are subscribed to the myth of alterity, posing questions about their inclusion in or their exclusion from the Romanian national identity.

In a larger context, the study of the Romanianization debate in football can bring new perspectives on the problems that aroused the Romanian society after the 1918 moment of the

⁶ Bogdan Popa, "'Our Team'? Ethnic Prejudices and Football in Interwar Romania", in A. Malz, S. Rohdewald, S. Wiederkehr (eds), *Sport zwischen Ost und West. Beiträage zur Sportgeschichte Osteuropas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2007, pp. 191-203.

⁷ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 135-6; Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 10-11; Lucian Boia, *Romania. Borderland of Europe* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2001), translated by James Christian Brown, p. 193.

Great Union, when the replacement of “foreign” elites with ethnic Romanians was a constant policy of the governments, problems that prolonged themselves well after World War Two, with the notable difference that in football, this idea of Romanianization was first proposed by large segments of the press and embraced by the public, and only then considered, though not necessarily applied, by the officials. The timeline studied in my thesis will be between 1922, the year of Romanian national football team’s establishment, and 1940, the year when Romania entered the Second World War and, thus, the football activities were practically suspended. Within this timeline, some short overviews on other popular sports in Romania in order to see if there were similar movements, as well as on the national football team’s status in neighboring countries, will be given. Among the other sports in Romania, however, football clearly had preeminence: for example, in 1927, from the 160 sports associations registered, 140 were football clubs⁸, while in 1934 the 403 football clubs surpassed by far the second-placed tennis and winter sports, each of them with only 52 associations (See *Annex 3*). I will also refer in my thesis to other Romanianization demands in the press, concerning theater or minor - but representative for the level of such a campaign - issues like boxes of matches, tickets for local transport and post office receipts.

Further in my thesis, when referring to “Transylvania” I will understand this term in its largest sense, which included not only the so-called historical Transylvania, but also the historical regions of Banat (its Romanian part), Crișana and Maramureș. Concerning the transliteration of the cities’ names, I used the English versions where they exist (Bucharest, Chernivtsi) and, in the case of Transylvanian cities and football clubs, I adopted either the Hungarian (if referred before 1918) or Romanian (if referred after 1918) spelling. The players

⁸ Sașa Severeanu, “Adevărata problemă națională” (The Real National Problem), *Comedia*, October 21, 1927, p. 3.

were listed first with their original name, followed by its Romanianized version, like in Dezső Jakobi (Dezideriu Jacobi), György Toth-Bedő (Gheorghe Toth), Béla Dezső (Adalbert Deșu), and so on (See also *Annexes 1 and 2*).

Concerning the methodology, I will do discourse analysis of the interwar newspapers which covered the Romanianization debate, either from the capital Bucharest (*Comedia, Universul, Calendarul, Curentul, Cuvântul, Țara Noastră, Neamul Românesc, Rampa, Buna Vestire, Ecoul Sportiv, Gazeta Sporturilor, Foot-ball*) or local (*Știrea – Arad, Estilap – Oradea, Temesvári Hírlap – Timișoara*), which I consulted in the Library of the Romanian Academy and in the Central University Library, both in Bucharest. The oral history interviews which I took in Budapest with Mister Károly Oroszhegyi, an ethnic Hungarian who played for the Romanian national football team, and in Bucharest with Mister Dumitru Ignat, a former Romanian international player, as well as the personal correspondence with Professor Béla Borsi-Kálmán, another former football player born in Romania, offered me an insightful view on the phenomenon which I study. International player Mircea David's memoirs⁹ and national coach Virgil Economu's interwar book about the Romanian football¹⁰ also proved to be very helpful in regard to the topic of Romanianization in football. For the accurate data of my thesis, the online sources containing the statistics of all the matches of the Romanian national football team, with the names of its players and their club teams will be very helpful.¹¹ My thesis will also constantly refer to Romanian club teams, especially the ones which provided the national squad with players, following their development and symbolic investments within the Romanian-Hungarian

⁹ George Mihalache, "*Il Dio*" și "*diavolii*" din fața porții... *Amintirile lui Mircea David, fostul portar al echipei naționale de fotbal* ("Il Dio" and "The Devils" in Front of the Goal... The Memoirs of Mircea David, the Former Goalkeeper of the National Football Team) (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1979).

¹⁰ Virgil Economu, *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (Football. Documentary and Critical Study) (Bucharest: 1935).

¹¹ The Rec.Sport.Soccer Statistics Foundation, <http://www.rsssf.com/>, and <http://eu-football.info/>, a site which contains the complete archive of matches of all the European national football teams.

and Old Kingdom-Transylvania dichotomies. The study will deal with the men's national team since the Romanian women's team was non-existent and there were no feminine football activities at the time.

My thesis will contain four chapters, including the theoretical one, while the conclusions will comprise the thesis findings. In the theoretical chapter, I will connect the general notions of sport and nationalism, on the one hand, and the Romanian understandings of nation-building and “foreigners” (minorities), on the other hand. The relationship between sport and nationalism has been emphasized by historians like Eric Hobsbawm, and thus I will understand the Romanian national football team as a symbol of the state-nation and as an expression of the national struggle.¹² When this is compared with the specific Romanian realities of nation-building in the interwar period, that is, the ethnic national rivalries in a multi-ethnic state and the antagonism between centralization and regionalism, the problem that arises is that one of the most mass-appealing symbols of the nation, the national football team, was in fact “confiscated” by “foreigners”. Thus, this chapter will contain not only considerations on the Romanian understanding of ‘the nation’ at the time, but also its connections to the political background of the interwar period, characterized mainly by governmental integral nationalism and anti-Semitism.

The second chapter will be entitled “A Multicultural Austro-Hungarian Heritage: the Romanian National Football Team“. Here I will demonstrate that the national team was composed mainly of minorities, especially Hungarians, and mainly of players of the club teams from the big cities of Transylvania like Timișoara, Oradea, Cluj, Târgu Mureș and Brașov. I will

¹² Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 142-3.

explain this unique and apparently bizarre phenomenon by connecting it with the demographic dynamics in post-1918 Romania, as well as with the Austro-Hungarian heritage. In this respect I will emphasize the differences between the sports cultures in Transylvania and the Old Kingdom, that is, between the Austro-Hungarian paradigm and the British one, and I will show how the Austro-Hungarian model gained ground progressively in the Old Kingdom in the interwar period. I will also underline the role of the Romanian Dynasty in the establishment of the Romanian national football team in 1922 and in the efforts made for the sports integration of the new provinces, mainly the personal involvement of Prince Carol, the future King Carol II. The particularity of the football national team will be shown by comparison to the other sports in Romania.

The third chapter, entitled “The Romanianization Debate: Its Climax in the Early 1930s and Models of Nationalization”, will follow the Romanianization idea in football and its proponents with their different visions within the political context of the 1930s, when the extreme right gained ground. I will analyze the discourses of a large range of interwar newspapers, underlining the huge impact of this campaign not only on the public but also on the whole Romanian press, irrespective of its political orientation. I will emphasize the different attitude towards the ethnic Hungarian players of the “irredentist”, as they were called in large segments of the press, clubs of Transylvania, when compared to Germans and the other minorities, including Jews, even in the anti-Semite milieu of interwar Romania. A special mention will concern throughout the thesis the Romanian perception of the Magyarized Jew players in Transylvania as Hungarians, named as such in the press. I will also describe the surprisingly peaceful environment within the Romanian national team and also within the most representative club teams like Venus Bucharest and CA Oradea, insisting on the relationships

between players of different ethnicity. For a comparative approach, I will show how neighbouring countries Poland, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were praised in Romania for their successful campaign of nationalization in football. A peculiar attention will be given to the most prominent among the initiators of the Romanianization campaign, Camil Petrescu, the Romanian modern writer par excellence, present as such in the Romanian canon.

The fourth chapter, entitled “Football Consequences and Political Implications of the Romanianization Campaign and its Failure”, will follow the ambivalent attitude of the official football authority, the Romanian Football Federation, criticized by cultural and political personalities like Nicolae Iorga and Nichifor Crainic, also offering an overview on the hired coaches of the national squad. I will emphasize the surprising political implications and consequences of the football Romanianization issue, involving again the person of King Carol II, who also succeeded in imposing his favourite politicians as presidents of the Romanian Football Federation. I will show that and also explain why, despite a political context marked among others by the anti-Semite laws which I will refer to, the wanted “*numerus valachicus*” within the national team actually remained unachieved, even if some official regulations were made in 1935 in that respect, like the so-called ‘8+3 formula’, an inapplicable rule compelling an ethnic quota of eight ethnic Romanians in the line-up of the national team.

The conclusions of my thesis will comprise the thesis findings, with a look on how the Romanianization prolonged itself after 1940. After some football clubs in Bucharest gradually developed in the interwar period as successful rivals of the “irredentist” Transylvanian clubs, I think it was only in the mid-1950s, during the Communist regime, as a consequence, among others, of the establishment in the late 1940s of the two departmental clubs in Bucharest, Steaua

and Dinamo, that the ethnic Romanians became the majority in the Romanian national football team.

I will also insert a large range of statistics as annexes of my study. The annexes will cover the interwar period and will contain tables with all the international Romanian players and their ethnicity (*Annexes 1 and 2*), the distribution of the football clubs within the sports associations registered (*Annex 3*), the geographical distribution of the football clubs within Greater Romania (*Annexes 4 and 6*), the list of Romanian champion teams (*Annex 5*), as well as an index comprising the political and cultural personalities involved in the football Romanianization campaign.

Chapter 1. The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in which my topic will be embedded deals with two crucial dimensions: the relationship between sport in general and football in particular, and nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century, on the one hand, and the relationship between Romanian nation-building and the ethnic minorities after the Greater Union in 1918, on the other hand. The last part of this chapter comprises the literature review on the subject of Romanianization in football.

Sport, Football and Nationalism

“A nation is one, exactly as a sports team is one.”

Robert Brasillach (1909-1945), French writer
and journalist, in *Notre Avant-Guerre* (1941)

Popular pastimes evolved, through the establishment of rules whose aim was to avoid any injury, in what we call today ‘sports’ in eighteenth century England, when the emergence of sport as a non-violent competition accompanied the political pacification of the upper classes after the civil wars, according to Norbert Elias.¹³ This relationship between sport and politics, present from the birth of the former, continued through the following centuries, growing to the extent that in the twentieth century sport came “to serve as symbolic representations of a non-violent, non-military form of competition between states” and “the growing significance of

¹³ Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement. Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford, UK, and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 18-40.

achievements in sport [was seen] as a status symbols of nations”.¹⁴ Or, in Eric Hobsbawm’s words:

National identification in this era [the apogee of nationalism, 1918-1950] acquired new means of expressing itself in modern, urbanized, high-technology societies. (...) Between the wars sport as a mass spectacle was transformed into (...) contests between persons and teams symbolizing state-nations.¹⁵

Introducing physical education by states mainly after wars went hand-in-hand with the idea of sport as a cure for and salvation of the nation, thus continuing the nationalist ideas of the mass physical exercises from the nineteenth century (German Turner and Slavic Sokol movements being the most representative examples in this sense).¹⁶ At the beginning of the twentieth century, contemporaries saw sport as having “an invigorating effect on the nation as a whole and thereby serve the national interest”.¹⁷ The renowned founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, saw in sport a social therapeutic and a psychic instrument for the crisis of modern civilization¹⁸. In that respect, the country that revitalized this concept in the interwar period was, not at all surprisingly, Fascist Italy, “although the use of sport as a symbol of vigour and for the sake of national representation had been already discussed prior to the Great War in Britain, Germany, France, and some other countries”.¹⁹ For Mussolini, his ‘new man’ as a national symbol was, according to George Mosse, connected with “the emphasis on

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 142-3.

¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914”, p. 300, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 263-307; Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, “Towards a New History of European Sport”, p. 489, in *European Review*, Vol. 19. No. 4, October 2011, pp. 487-507.

¹⁷ John M. Hoberman, “Sport and Political Ideology”, p. 228, in Benjamin Lowe, David B. Kahn, and Andrew Strenk (eds), *Sport and International Relations* (Champaign: Stipes Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 224-40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

¹⁹ Arnd Krüger, “Strength through Joy: The Culture of Consent under Fascism”, p. 76, in James Riordan and Arnd Krüger (eds), *The International Politics of Sport in the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: E&FN Spon, 1999), pp. 67-89.

physical exercise”²⁰, while the international success in sport was meant to have two aims: an internal one – the identification with the nation and the regime, and an external one – the confirmation of Italy as a world power.

Not at all a trademark of the fascist regimes, the same interpretation also functioned in the democratic regimes, and also in the opposite sense: France’s mediocre international sport results in the 1930s were a proof of the alleged physical decline of the Frenchmen, hence of the nation itself.²¹ As one recent work shows, the focus on sport as creator of a sense of community and of national identification characterized “democracies and dictatorships alike in the 1920s and 1930s”.²² National regeneration through sport was one of the trends of the interwar period, and the international results mirrored or had to mirror the nation’s condition. Thus, not only was sport a representation of the national identity, but it even had a role in constructing national identities. Sport as a symbolic fight invested with national feelings is also demonstrated, as shown by Eric Hobsbawm, by the evolution of the international competitions’ meaning:

Initially, ‘international’ contests served to underline the unity of nations or empires [Great Britain, Austro-Hungary] much in the way inter-regional contests did. (...) The first international football match outside the British Isles confronted Austria and Hungary (1902).²³

Furthermore,

Between the wars, however, international sport became, as George Orwell soon recognized, an expression of national struggle, and sportsmen representing their nation or state, primary expressions of their imagined communities. This was the period (...) when the Mitropa Cup set leading teams of the states of Central Europe against each other, when the World Cup was introduced into world football, and, as 1936 demonstrated,

²⁰ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 160-1.

²¹ Joan Tumblety, “La Coupe du Monde de Football de 1938 en France: Emergence du Sport-Spectacle et Indifference de l’Etat”, p. 148, in *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’Histoire*, No. 93, Janvier-Mars 2007, pp. 139-49.

²² Nadine Rossol, *Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany. Sport, Spectacle and Political Symbolism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 9.

²³ Hobsbawm, “Traditions”, p. 301.

when the Olympic Games unmistakably became occasions for competitive national self-assertion. What has made sport so uniquely effective a medium for inculcating national feelings, at all events for males, is the ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation (...).²⁴

Football's high, if not highest, position within an imagined sports hierarchy is not the object of the current thesis. However, I will consider football's evolution, as shown by Eric Hobsbawm²⁵, because this further explains football's relationship with nationalism and politics by adding particular dimensions to the general sport framework presented above. Its evolution by the end of the nineteenth century from middle class (amateur) to working class (professional) representation, following the British pattern, helped football to become not only a social and urban, but also a mass phenomenon in comparison with other sports.

By the early 1920s, football had become a popular form of mass culture. Not only had football firmly ensconced itself in the politics of the day, it had gone beyond the realm of sport and politics and become a mass phenomenon of its own. (...) As an integral part of popular culture, football in the 1930s was largely politically and economically driven. (...) [A]lliances were often made that were entirely politically motivated, such as the exclusion of the Central European clubs and national teams from Allied competition.²⁶

This close relationship between football and nation was not at all fortuitous. As Eric Hobsbawm and Richard Giulianotti argued, football shaped and cemented national identities just like education and the mass media did, in a period "when most nations in Europe and Latin America were negotiating their borders and formulating cultural identities".²⁷ Starting from the late nineteenth century and continuing throughout the interwar period, mass-media intensively covered the international football matches of the national teams, where the presence of politicians became common. Sports or even only football newspapers appeared, while most of the general newspapers and cultural magazines had at least one page dealing with such topics.

²⁴ Hobsbawm, *Nations*, p. 143.

²⁵ Hobsbawm, "Traditions", pp. 288-90; Hobsbawm, *Nations*, pp. 142-3.

²⁶ Matthias Marschik, "Mitropa. Representations of 'Central Europe' in Football", pp. 11, 18, in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 36/1, 2001, pp. 7-23.

²⁷ Richard Giulianotti, *Football. A Sociology of the Global Game*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 23.

Much attention was given at football international matches to the embodiment of the modern nation by symbolic gestures like the wrapping in the national flag or the singing of the national anthems. At the same time, this cultivation of rigid nationalism in the interwar period, characterized by militarization and rising nationalist feelings, determined different forms of segregation and exclusion, as political views were transposed into football. Such an emphasis was more visible in totalitarian regimes like Nazi Germany, where “Jews and Marxists were systematically excluded from the game from 1933 onwards”.²⁸

The national football team was thus the nation itself and it had to obey the ideological ‘rules’ of nation-building. “The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people”, as Eric Hobsbawm put it.²⁹ This brings us to the second crucial dimension to be studied in this chapter, namely the relationship between the Romanian nation-building and the ethnic minorities after the Greater Union in 1918.

²⁸ Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson, *Globalization and Football* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), p. 20.

²⁹ Hobsbawm, *Nations*, p. 143.

The Romanian Nation-Building and the ‘Foreign’ Minorities

“Dans un État dont la vie est normale, équilibrée, la ville est l’expression ethnique d’une région; il y a entre la ville et la région une parfaite identité ethnique.”

Octavian Goga (1881-1938), Romanian poet and politician,
as Minister of the Interior in 1927

“[T]he undesirable ‘aliens’, *străini*, as the Roumanians call the non-Roumanian minorities, must be forced to emigrate.”

Zsombor de Szász, Hungarian author,
in *The Minorities in Roumanian Transylvania* (1927)

After Greater Romania was formed in 1918, when the former Austro-Hungarian provinces of Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina, and the former Russian province of Bessarabia became part of the Romanian state, the percentage of the minorities rose dramatically. According to the official demographic data, while in the Old Kingdom (before 1918) ethnic minorities comprised 8 percent of the population, in Greater Romania (after 1918) the percentage rose to 30, a figure that reached two-thirds in the big cities of the new provinces.³⁰ Moreover, these minority populations, especially Hungarians, Germans and Jews, “were more urban, more schooled, and more modern than the Romanians”³¹, and added themselves to the Old Kingdom-based Jewish community, who already had its bourgeoisie very active in the economic and cultural life of the country. The main effort of the Romanian government was directed towards the integration of new provinces, and especially of Transylvania, since this region had not only the former ruling, well-organized Hungarian and German elites which controlled the land and the business, but also a very politically mature layer of Romanian population which embraced quite late and only

³⁰ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), “Table 2. The Population of Greater Romania, by Ethnicity, 1930” and “Table 3. Percentage of Romanians in General and Urban Populations, by Province, 1930”, p. 10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

under some guarantees the idea of unification with the Romanian state, both categories representing a challenge for the Old Kingdom. As John Breuilly put it,

Transylvania was a completely different society from the Old Kingdom. Its peasantry were more prosperous and better educated. (...) [T]here was a much more developed Rumanian middle class in the professions and commerce. This peasantry and middle class did not welcome 'national unity' without some reservations (...) and the national movement was very late in turning to its Rumanian 'brethren'.³²

Thus, this demographic dynamics and the higher level of economic and cultural development especially in the new province of Transylvania, led to a catching-up effort of the Old Kingdom, on the one hand, and to nationalization (Romanianization) and centralization processes enacted by the government as opposed to regionalism, on the other hand. It was the logical consequence of “the ethnic nationalism endemic in Eastern Europe in the interwar period”³³, when “most of the new states built on the ruins of the old empires, were quite as multinational as the old ‘prisons of nations’ they replaced”, Romania being an example in this sense.³⁴ The Transylvanian case was indeed a big challenge for Bucharest, although the Old Kingdom already had the successful experience of Dobrudja’s Romanianization from 1878 onwards.

In short, Romanianization meant the replacement of ‘foreign’ elites with ethnic Romanians, where ‘foreigner’ must be understood as a representative of the minorities in the particular region of Eastern Europe. Historians like Barbara Jelavich and Irina Livezeanu argued for the use of the words ‘foreign’ and ‘foreigner’ in this sense, thus applied by the national leaderships in the Balkans to minority citizens.³⁵ National identity was by no means equivalent to citizenship, as historian Lucian Boia explained:

³² John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 303.

³³ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. xiii.

³⁴ Hobsbawm, *Nations*, p. 133.

³⁵ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 135-136; Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 10-11.

The member of a minority has tended to be seen first of all as foreign, before being considered a member of the Romanian nation and a Romanian citizen. This confrontation was particularly acute in the inter-war period, when Romania, having doubled its territory, suddenly found itself with an almost endless collection of minorities.³⁶

The fact is that, while the minority laws in Romania were quite impressive on paper following the signing of the post-war special Treaty in 1919 and the drafting of the 1923 Constitution, the gap between the political project of national unity and the social reality of ethnic diversity was huge and had to be resolved:

As in other East Central European countries during the interwar period, in Romania integral nationalism became widely accepted as the ideological framework for politics at large. In order to assimilate the new provinces with their substantial minority populations and regionalized Romanian-speaking populations, the Romanian government initiated cultural and educational policies that resulted in intense national mobilization.³⁷

Through the nationalization of towns, urban elites and cultural institutions, the Romanian state “attempted to displace the ‘foreign’ minorities from their long-held positions”, thus making way for the Romanian peasants “to become educated, to enter the middle class, to move to town, to join the bureaucracy, or to take an industrial, or more often, a commercial job”.³⁸ However, despite the fact that ethnic non-Romanians became the largest group to be excluded from the nation-building, the Romanianization process was requested to the government to be harsher by the extreme right movements, whose

extreme nationalist ideology of the young generation had a fundamental legitimacy in interwar Romania precisely because it was so well suited to the goal of most mainstream politicians: to build a nation of “true” Romanians.³⁹

The mainstream state politics were considered too soft by the representatives of radical nationalism, such as ‘the 1922 generation’ of extreme-right students with their violent requests for ‘*numerus clausus*’, the fascist Iron Guard of Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu, and a large range of

³⁶ Lucian Boia, *Romania. Borderland of Europe*, translated by James Christian Brown (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2001), p. 193.

³⁷ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

young intellectuals in the 1930s who were more or less followers of the nationalist thinkers Nae Ionescu and Nichifor Crainic, and who would later become renowned authorities in different domains (Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Constantin Noica, Mircea Vulcănescu, and others), all these directions finally converging.

“The most elaborated formula of the discourse on Romanianness was offered by the nationalist right of the 1930s”, accordingly to Lucian Boia.⁴⁰ The nation had to be composed mainly, if not only, of ethnic Romanians (the better if they were also Orthodox Christians, since Nae Ionescu excluded from the nation the Greek-Catholic Romanians of Transylvania), and the first targets of segregation were to be the Jews in the Old Kingdom, and the Hungarians in Transylvania, where the Jews were already Magyarized⁴¹ to such an extent that future Transylvanian-born prime-minister Octavian Goga spoke of a Magyar danger he called “Hungarian Semitic”.⁴² On the Romanian perception of the Magyarized Jews in Transylvania as Hungarians I will further detail in the third chapter of my thesis. On the real basis of certain existing revisionist ideas, such psychoses were born, since the internal ‘Other’ “often offers more features of alterity and stimulates much more all sorts of anxieties than the external *other*”⁴³, and “Goga illustrated (...) the metamorphosis of traditional nationalism into a form of *Romanianism*, an ideology of struggle against foreigners”.⁴⁴ The contribution of Transylvanian Romanians to such visions has to be emphasized, since, as historian Sorin Mitu put it,

⁴⁰ Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească* (History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness) (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1997), p. 168.

⁴¹ Ladislau Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania. Destin istoric. The Jews of Transylvania. A Historical Destiny*, translated by Simona Făgărășanu (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român, 2004), p. 103; Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 136, 153.

⁴² Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*, translated from Romanian by Charles Kormos (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1991), p. 43.

⁴³ Boia, *Istorie și mit*, p. 200.

⁴⁴ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology*, p. 42.

[t]his is the source of one defining feature of their self-image, namely its militant nationalism. The Transylvanian Romanians' self-image emerges primarily as a reaction to the damaging images and hostile opinions thrown in their face by others.⁴⁵

(...) The self-image is polemical, offensive, strongly oriented towards the outside, against all those who wrong and jeopardize the Romanian nation; it never starts from the Romanians' own reality but only refers to the adverse perceptions of others.⁴⁶

With the old ethnic rivalries now exacerbated, new 'scientific' ideas such as eugenics were used to underline the need for the exclusion of minorities from the process of nation-building and for Romanianization. The evolution of the eugenics' movement in the 1920s and 1930s is relevant in this respect. "In place of the earlier emphasis on increasing the positive biological potential in Romanian society, eugenicists shifted to a rhetoric of imminent danger that stressed the need to defend the healthy community by purifying it of 'unwanted' populations".⁴⁷ Here also, 'the Other' was either the Jew or the Hungarian, since eugenics' ethnic dimension, although without necessarily being connected to the extreme right, resembled the ideas of Nichifor Crainic, one of the most important ideologists of the Romanian traditionalist, Orthodox and anti-Semitic extreme-right movement.⁴⁸ The fact that most of the eugenicists came from Transylvania had an impact on their emphasis on "the differences between Romanians and Hungarians [described] in biological hereditary terms even when discussing moral or intellectual characteristics".⁴⁹

Following World War One, citizenship was granted to all Jews born in Romania and the new Constitution in 1923 recognized the rights and freedoms for all the citizens regardless of

⁴⁵ Sorin Mitu, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania*, translated by Sorana Corneanu (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁴⁷ Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), p. 148.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 146.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

their ethnicity, language, religion or social class.⁵⁰ However, the political evolution of the country went into a totally different direction, officially justified by some governments as a preventive measure against the Iron Guard's rise to power, and explained by the historian Leon Volovici:

In an extension of its prewar line, the National Liberal Party [the most powerful party in interwar Romania] (...) advocated and applied a nationalist policy of economic protectionism that contained an element of moderate antisemitism. (...) [This was followed by the] Romanian Front, founded by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, who served as prime minister in 1933 and advocated a harsh policy of discrimination directed against national minorities (*numerus valachicus*). (...) Goga was the first prime minister to break with Romanian government's tradition of a "moderate" but effective antisemitic policy that still respected the formal aspects of constitutional principles.⁵¹

Mainly in the second half of the 1930s, new laws regarding the use of Romanian personnel "introduced the ethnic principle as access to jobs in general and to leading positions" in various domains⁵², while the laws concerning the citizenship's revision had clear anti-Semite characteristics, culminating in the racist laws passed in 1940 by the Ion Gigurtu government and inspired by the Nazi Nuremberg Laws rather than connected to eugenics. In consequence, almost 200,000 Transylvanian Magyars, that is one-fifth of the Hungarian population in Transylvania, went to Hungary and resettled there after 1918⁵³, while about 225,000 individuals, that is one-third of the total Jewish population, had been stripped of their citizenship in 1938, following the Octavian Goga government's decree.⁵⁴

In the above explained context of the interwar period, characterized by the official mainstream politics of Romanianization and centralization, and by the rising of the extreme-right

⁵⁰ "Constituțiunea României" (The Constitution of Romania), "Titlul II. Despre drepturile românilor", Articles 5, 7 and 8, in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 282, March 29, 1923.

⁵¹ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology*, pp. 52-3.

⁵² Gyémánt, *Evreii*, p. 121.

⁵³ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 137.

⁵⁴ Zigu Ornea, *Anii treizeci. Extrema dreaptă românească* (The Romanian Extreme-Right: the 1930s) (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1995), p. 392.

movements, the Romanian national football team emerged from 1922 onwards as a striking symbol of the Romanian nation and state, which was composed mainly of representatives of minorities, especially Hungarians from Transylvania and Banat, but also Germans from the same provinces, Jews, Czechs, Poles and so on, sometimes not even having a single ethnic Romanian or Old Kingdom-based player in the starting line-up. In football particularly, the ethnic Hungarian players were treated differently in comparison with the other minorities in the national team: while the former were called agents of irredentism and treated as such in the right and extreme-right newspapers, the latter were considered from time to time in the same newspapers as better suited to represent Romania, and the Jews (but not the Transylvanian Magyarized Jews, who were assimilated and perceived as Hungarians) were included in such projects even in the anti-Semitic milieu of the 1930s. All these intriguing discrepancies and also the search for a solution to resolve them are the subject of the following chapters.

Literature Review

Unfortunately, the academic literature on the very topic of Romanianization in football is almost non-existent. The fact is that, like Romanianization itself, this topic is still a sensible one even in today's Romania, and only recently has a young scholar, Bogdan Popa, begun to treat the subject, but only tangentially within his broader interest in sports culture in interwar Romania, reflected in his Ph. D. dissertation.⁵⁵ Although useful, Popa's work lacks any statistical references, does not follow the different visions concerning the football Romanianization and ignores the role of the Romanian Dynasty in the establishment of the national team. Still, there are some articles concerning similar features in interwar Central and Eastern European football,

⁵⁵ The article which is closest to my topic is Bogdan Popa, "‘Our Team’? Ethnic Prejudices and Football in Interwar Romania", in A. Malz, S. Rohdewald, S. Wiederkehr (eds), *Sport zwischen Ost und West. Beiträe zur Sportgeschichte Osteuropas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2007, pp. 191-203.

features related to Romanian football's realities. However, as I will show in the next chapters, the Romanian football represented the most extreme case when speaking of the gap between the nation's representation and the nation-building process. In this sense of comparative work, and also for emphasizing the link of Romanian football to the Austro-Hungarian heritage, I will use the studies on football published in the book *Emancipation through Muscles. Jews and Sports in Europe*⁵⁶, Matthias Marschik's already cited article *Mitropa. Representations of 'Central Europe' in Football*, and Michael John's study about Austro-Hungarian football in a volume published by Central European University and edited by Susan Zimmermann.⁵⁷ A recent volume of the journal *European Review*, with the focus on sports, provided me with works about the new approaches in Central and Eastern European sport's historiography, already cited above, and about football in the multi-ethnic Polish territories.⁵⁸ Not only related to my topic, but also very useful from a methodological point of view, will be Viktor Karády's articles about anti-Semitism in Hungarian football⁵⁹ and Béla Borsi-Kálmán's book on the Hungarian "Golden Team" of the 1950s.⁶⁰ Károly Oroszhegyi's book about Iosif Petschowsky (József Perényi)⁶¹ is probably the only biography of a Romanian-Hungarian football player, who is described by Professor Béla

⁵⁶ Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (eds), *Emancipation through Muscles. Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

⁵⁷ Michael John, "Sports in Austrian Society 1890s - 1930s: The Example of Viennese Football", in Susan Zimmermann (ed.), *Urban Space and Identity in the European City 1890-1930s* (Budapest: Central European University, 1995), pp. 133-50.

⁵⁸ Tomlinson and Young, "Towards a New History"; Anke Hilbrenner and Britta Lenz, "Looking at European Sports from an Eastern European Perspective: Football in the Multi-ethnic Polish Territories", in *European Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2011, pp. 595-610.

⁵⁹ Viktor Karády and Miklós Hadas, "Soccer and Antisemitism in Hungary", in Brenner and Reuveni (eds), *Emancipation through Muscles*, pp. 213-34, originally appeared as "Football et antisemitisme en Hongrie", in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 103 (June 1994), pp. 90-101.

⁶⁰ Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Az Aranycsapat és a Kapitánya* (Budapest: Kortárs Kiadó, 2008).

⁶¹ Károly Oroszhegyi, *Csala, a Szöke Csoda. Pecsovszky József Életrajza* (Pecs: JK Typo-Studio, 2000).

Borsi-Kálmán as “Slovakian from his father’s side, Swabian from his mother’s side, ‘Hungarian’ by will and sentiments, ‘Romanian’ by citizenship”.⁶²

The encyclopedia-type books on Romanian football published by various journalists in the 1980s, as well as the very few press articles in the Romanian sports newspapers or non-academic periodicals in the 2000s, provided me with useful data on the level of public reception of my topic. Ironically, although written by two representatives of minorities, Chiriac Manușaride and Chevorc Ghemigean, a book published in the late Communist years about the Romanian football and entitled *Aproape totul despre fotbal* (Almost Everything about Football), did not mention a single word about the particular situation of the interwar national football team⁶³, while two other contemporary works by the same author, Mihai Ionescu, pompously entitled *Fotbal de la A la Z* (Football from A to Z)⁶⁴, took no notice of it either and used Romanianizing “tricks” when presenting the representatives of minorities who played for the national team. This is not surprising at all, since the books were published in the 1980s, a period when the national(ist) Communism, the ideological viewpoint in Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Romania, reached demential dimensions even in football: Romanian players of Hungarian origin had their names Romanianized in the official documents and in the press: Musznay became Mujnai, Kulcsár became Culcear, László Nagy was even translated as Vasile Mare, Székely became... Dan Daniel, and so on. Ending with a joke, even the ethnic Romanians could not escape this trend: the player Gheorghe Ceașilă always had his name being printed as C. Gheorghe, since his family name “Ceașilă” could have been interpreted as a pejorative term for “Ceaușescu”.

⁶² Personal correspondence via e-mail with Béla Borsi-Kálmán, February 26, 2012.

⁶³ Chiriac Manușaride and Chevorc Ghemigean, *Aproape totul despre fotbal* (Almost Everything about Football), 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1986).

⁶⁴ Mihai Ionescu, Mircea Tudoran, *Fotbal de la A la Z. Fotbalul românesc de-a lungul anilor* (Football from A to Z. Romanian Football Along the Years) (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1984); Mihai Ionescu, *Fotbal de la A la Z. Fotbalul mondial de-a lungul anilor* (Football from A to Z. World Football Along the Years) (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1988), with an addenda on Romanian football to his previous book.

Chapter 2. A Multicultural Austro-Hungarian Heritage: the Romanian National Football Team

Adalbert Ritter, Alois Szilágy, Elemér Hirsch, Dezső Jakobi, Nicolae Hönigsberg, Francisc Zimmermann, Aurel Guga, Carol Frech, Paul Schiller, Ferenc Rónay, and János Auer. One look at this first ever Romanian national football team⁶⁵ in history poses a legitimate question for anyone familiar at least with the anthroponyms in Central and Eastern Europe: ‘Was this the *Romanian* national team?’. This question is indeed legitimate, since only one of the above mentioned eleven players present on the football pitch on June 8, 1922, the debut date of Romania in international football (2-1 in the match with Yugoslavia), had a Romanian name and was an ethnic Romanian, the captain Aurel Guga (See *Annex 1*). When looking further at the football clubs of these eleven players – Chinezul Timișoara (with three players), CA Oradea (with two players), MTK Târgu Mureș, CA Cluj, Haggibor Cluj, CA Timișoara, Universitatea Cluj, and AMEFA Arad (each of them with one player)⁶⁶ – another question naturally arises: ‘Was this perhaps a Transylvanian representative?’.

Hoping that a look at the second international match of Romania (1-1 with Poland, on September 3, 1922) might help us in answering the two questions, the picture only becomes more complicated: the new names (Alexandru Szatmári, József Bartha, Sándor Kozovits, Emil Rigolo Koch, Stanislas Micinski, Adalbert Ströck, and Zoltán Drescher) and clubs (Stăruința Oradea, Unirea Timișoara, and Polonia *Chernivtsi*) that appeared⁶⁷ pose in fact a new question if

⁶⁵ “Romania National Team 1922-1929 – Details”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/roem-intres20.html> (the official site of Rec. Sport. Soccer Statistics Foundation), accessed April 5, 2012.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

we pretend to forget what had happened four years before, that is the demise of the Austro-Hungarian state: ‘Was this perhaps an Austro-Hungarian team?’.

My attempt in the current chapter is to analyze this peculiar aspect of the Romanian national football team, understood as one of the symbols of the Romanian nation as I explained in the theoretical chapter, which was composed mainly of minority players (primarily Hungarians, Germans and Jews, on whose position I will detail later) from its very beginnings in the 1920s and thereafter during all the interwar period, by emphasizing two of its crucial dimensions. The first dimension comes from the past – the multicultural Austro-Hungarian heritage, while the second deals with the political realities of Romania in the 1920s – the relationship between the national minorities and Romanian nation-building whose key notions at the time were the official policies of Romanianization and centralization, as I also argued in the theoretical chapter. Between these two dimensions, the role of the Romanian Dynasty and future King Carol II in the establishment of the national football team will also be taken into consideration. With football overwhelming the other sports already in the 1920s, as I will demonstrate using several interwar statistics (see also *Annex 3*), I will emphasize the particularity of the football national team by comparison to the other sports.

The Establishment of the Team in 1922
within the Austro-Hungarian Football Paradigm

“One went in for sport [in the Austro-Hungarian Empire],

but not in madly Anglo-Saxon fashion.”

Robert Musil (1880-1942), Austrian writer

born in a family coming from Timișoara,

in *The Man Without Qualities* (1930)

Why did the Romanian national team emerge in 1922 as a team composed mainly of minority players, especially from Transylvania? To find the answer to this question, a regional approach is required, beyond the paradigm of the national framework, due to the particularities of Central and Eastern Europe after 1918, when new states appeared and existing states re-established themselves on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As recent research has shown⁶⁸, such an approach which emphasizes “the importance of regional and cross-national flows and influence” and which is meant “to capture the complexity of the area’s trans-national and multi-ethnic communities and structures”⁶⁹ needs to be taken into account in parallel with the already established approach of the nation state for a better understanding of sports history in the special configuration of post-1918 Central and Eastern Europe.

Following the Great Union in 1918, the former Austro-Hungarian provinces of Transylvania (including Banat) and Bukovina, and the former Russian province of Bessarabia became part of the Romanian state, which had to deal from then on with previous, different sports models in order to integrate them into one, national sports culture. This was a common feature of the states in the region, and Poland is a good comparison in this sense, with its sports

⁶⁸ Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, “Towards a New History of European Sport”, in *European Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2011, pp. 487-507.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

development within the distinct frameworks of the Habsburg, German and Russian empires.⁷⁰ However, when looking at Romania, there were huge differences between these models. The most striking difference, and also the one which helps us further explain the establishment of the Romanian national football team, was the contrast between Transylvania's and the Old Kingdom's models of football development, that is the contrast between the Austro-Hungarian and British paradigms, which I will explain below.

As I mentioned before, when referring to "Transylvania" in this chapter, and further in the thesis, I will understand this term in its largest sense, which included not only the so-called historical Transylvania, but also the historical regions of Banat (its Romanian part), Crișana and Maramureș. Thus, the Transylvanian football developed within the Austro-Hungarian framework from the late nineteenth century. In 1902, when "[t]he first international football match outside the British Isles confronted Austria and Hungary", such "'international' contests [initially] served to underline the unity of nations or empires in the way inter-regional contests did", as Eric Hobsbawm put it.⁷¹ In the same year, 1902, the first football club in Transylvania appeared under the name Temesvári FC (FC Timișoara, later CA Timișoara)⁷², soon followed by dozens of football clubs in the region. Thus, clubs from Temesvár (Timișoara), Kolozsvár (Cluj), Arad and Nagyvárad (Oradea) were playing at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Budapest-dominated Hungarian championship, some of them winning the title of regional champions:

⁷⁰ Anke Hilbrenner and Britta Lenz, "Looking at European Sports from an Eastern European Perspective: Football in the Multi-ethnic Polish Territories", pp. 598-9, in *European Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2011, pp. 595-610.

⁷¹ Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914", p. 301, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 263-307.

⁷² Mihai Ionescu, Mircea Tudoran, *Fotbal de la A la Z. Fotbalul românesc de-a lungul anilor* (Football from A to Z. Romanian Football along the Years) (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1984), p. 13.

Kolozsvári KASK (CA Cluj), Aradi AC (CA Arad), Kolozsvári TC (TC Cluj), Nagyvárad AC (CA Oradea), and Temesvári Kinizsi (Chinezul Timișoara).⁷³

After 1918, the Transylvanian club teams continued “their traditional contacts with their former competitors from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy”, preferring “encounters with Hungarian, Yugoslavian or Austrian teams rather than the quite modest ones from the other Romanian provinces”⁷⁴, frequently visiting Hungary or being visited by Hungarian teams through the practice of tournaments, and being coached by Hungarian or Austrian trainers in almost every football season. Moreover, there were also cases of players who represented both Romanian and Hungarian national teams in the 1920s and 1930s, like Zoltán Szaniszló, Pál Teleky (Pavel Teleki), Károly (Iuliu Alexandru) Fuhrmann, Mihai Tănzer (Mihály Táncos), István Avar (Ștefan Auer), Gyula (Iuliu) Barátky, Rudolf Wetzler or Adalbert Ströck (Albert Török) (See also *Annexes 1 and 2*).⁷⁵ An urban phenomenon par excellence, football was practiced mainly by Hungarians, Germans and Jews, the latter being already Magyarized in Transylvania⁷⁶, that is the specific population of multicultural Transylvanian cities, in which the Romanians were a small minority. With the representatives of these communities becoming Romanian citizens after 1918, it was precisely from the above mentioned clubs that the international players of Romania were to be drafted in the national team (See also *Annex 1*). A

⁷³ “Hungary – List of Final Tables 1901-1910”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tablesh/honghist1900.html>, accessed April 7, 2012; “Hungary – List of Final Tables 1911-1920”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tablesh/honghist1910.html>, accessed April 7, 2012.

⁷⁴ Bogdan Popa, “‘Our Team’? Ethnic Prejudices and Football in Interwar Romania”, p. 195, in A. Malz, S. Rohdewald, S. Wiederkehr (eds), *Sport zwischen Ost und West. Beitrage zur Sportgeschichte Osteuropas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2007, pp. 191-203.

⁷⁵ “Players for both Hungary and Romania”, <http://www.rsssf.com/miscellaneous/roemhong-recintlp.html>, accessed April 7, 2012. However, the list is incomplete.

⁷⁶ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 136, 153; Ladislau Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania. Destin istoric. The Jews of Transylvania. A Historical Destiny*, translated by Simona Făgărășanu (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român, 2004), p. 103.

further look at the different development of football in the Old Kingdom will explain this preeminence of the Transylvanian model in Greater Romania.

Football appeared abruptly in the Old Kingdom at the beginning of the twentieth century, as an “invention” brought by foreigners who were working in Romania as industrial or financial functionaries.⁷⁷ It was the classical British pattern of football diffusion present almost elsewhere in Europe and South America. When the first Romanian championship took place in the 1909-1910 season, only three clubs competed: the champion, Colentina Bucharest, was composed almost exclusively of English and Scottish players, having no Romanians in the team; United Ploiești had only English, Scottish, American and Dutch players, with no Romanians; Olympia Bucharest was also a multinational team, and was the only one who had, alongside Englishmen, a few Romanians.⁷⁸ Representatively for the nationalizing discourse maintained through the entire twentieth century, the “Romanian” team Olympia Bucharest was incorrectly credited until the late 1990s as the first Romanian champions, despite the fact that former football officials like

Lazăr Breyer, who still was alive in the 1990s and who played for SC Olimpia (Bucharest) in the early 20th century, gave IFFHS [International Federation of Football History and Statistics] documents and his own eyewitness account that this was not so, but that the champions were local rivals CA Colentina.⁷⁹

The foreigners continued to be at the core of every team in the Old Kingdom, and from 1918 onwards this foreign dimension of the Old Kingdom football clubs advanced in the sense of bringing professional players and coaches, especially from Austria and Hungary, who did not

⁷⁷ Virgil Economu, *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (Football. Documentary and Critical Study) (Bucharest: 1935), p. 17; Chiriac Manușaride, Chevorc Ghemigean, *Aproape totul despre fotbal* (Almost Everything about Football), 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1986), p. 127.

⁷⁸ Ionescu, Tudoran, *Fotbal de la A la Z*, p. 15.

⁷⁹ International Federation of Football History and Statistics, “1909 Season. România”, <http://www.iffhs.de/?a81bf8e00f88f02e9d8156b8ac43ece003e0c003c5fdcdc3bfc0aec70aeedb4a3ecf03394b4039080a>, accessed May 19, 2012.

have Romanian citizenship. Moreover, as future national coach Virgil Economu wrote in the 1930s,

some cities in the Old Kingdom, beginning with Bucharest, reached to a satisfactory technical level of soccer, due to the close contact they had with Transylvania. (...) [Romanian football] is struggling between the influences of the Hungarian soccer and the adaptation to our Latin temperament.⁸⁰

Thus, the Austro-Hungarian paradigm progressively gained ground also in the Old Kingdom part of Romania, to the detriment of the British paradigm, in the interwar period, when

Calcio Danubiano, the specific football system played by the national teams and clubs from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, (...) [was among] the most admired football cultures in Europe, challenging even the traditionally leading position of English soccer.⁸¹

After the national championship of Greater Romania included in 1921 the teams of the new provinces (however, the regional preliminary phase was still kept until the early 1930s), the Old Kingdom clubs had no chance to win the title or playing the finals, which became the quasi-exclusivity of Transylvanian clubs like *Chinezul Timișoara*, champion in 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, and 1927, *Victoria Cluj*, *CA Oradea* and *Colțea Brașov*⁸² (see also *Annex 5*), that is, “the distinguished teams which imitated the Hungarians and especially the Austrians”.⁸³ The old Kingdom basically lacked a football culture, since even in the 1920s

[in Bucharest] the rules of the game were only approximately known. Many believed that three corner kicks meant a goal scored etc. There were no players’ registrations. (...) The players and the referee changed their clothes near the pitch, and behind every goal there was a pile of clothes.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Economu, *Football*, pp. 72, 132.

⁸¹ Matthias Marschik, “Mitropa. Representations of ‘Central Europe’ in Football”, p. 7, in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 36/1, 2001, pp. 7-23.

⁸² Ionescu, *Fotbal de la A la Z*, p. 482.

⁸³ Economu, *Football*, p. 133.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

During the 1920s, only twice did the Old Kingdom clubs manage to play the finals: Juventus Bucharest lost in 1926, while Venus Bucharest won the title in 1929⁸⁵, both teams having Hungarian and Austrian players and coaches throughout the interwar period – for example, György Hlaway, László Csillay, Gyula Feldmann (future coach of Internazionale Milano) at Juventus, Ferenc Platko (former and future coach of FC Barcelona), József Pozsár, Béla Jánosy (former coach of Újpest Budapest), Károly Weszter at Venus. Moreover, the Old Kingdom clubs sometimes provided the national team with eventually naturalized foreigners like the Greek Konstandinos ‘Kostas’ Humis (Venus Bucharest), the Swiss Charles Kohler (Unirea Tricolor Bucharest), and the Serb Svetozar ‘Kika’ Popović (Juventus Bucharest).⁸⁶

Thus it can be inferred that even after Greater Romania was formed in 1918, “the old [Austro-Hungarian] networks still persisted” and “[t]here was also a lively exchange of players, trainers and other experts”⁸⁷, as anywhere in the states built on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, since “[s]porting relations between Vienna, Budapest and Prague were hardly affected by the demise of the monarchy”.⁸⁸ Given this multicultural Austro-Hungarian heritage and also due to the previously emphasized weak presence of ethnic Romanians both in the Old Kingdom and Transylvanian football, the composition of the Romanian national football team from its establishment in 1922 onwards no longer seems too surprising.

⁸⁵ Ionescu, Tudoran, *Fotbal de la A la Z*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ Ionescu, *Fotbal de la A la Z*, pp. 608, 611.

⁸⁷ Hilbrenner and Lenz, “Looking at European Sports”, p. 601.

⁸⁸ Marschik, “Mitropa”, p. 9.

The Role of the Romanian Dynasty.

The Personal Involvement of Future King Carol II

“HRH Prince Carol is almost always present at all these sports manifestations, and he is often seen among the [football] players.”

Daily *Rampa*, June 14, 1922

Austro-Hungarian multiculturalism was indeed the framework in which the Romanian national football team emerged with its composition of minority representatives from the former Austro-Hungarian provinces. Since “[b]y the early 1920s, football had become a popular form of mass culture (...) [that] firmly ensconced itself in the politics of the day”⁸⁹ and “[b]etween the wars (...) international sport became, as George Orwell soon recognized, an expression of national struggle, and sportsmen representing their nation or state, primary expressions of their imagined communities”⁹⁰, the establishment of the Romanian national football team was strongly connected with the Romanian Dynasty of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

The first international match in history for Romania took place on the occasion of and even on the same day (June 8, 1922, in Belgrade) as the royal wedding between Alexander I, the King of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and future King of Yugoslavia, and the Romanian princess Maria, daughter of Ferdinand I, the King of Romania.⁹¹ As the contemporary press remarked, “during the last years, due to the fact that the heir to the throne, HRH Prince Carol, is the head of the physical education movement, the development of almost all forms of sports greatly

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹⁰ Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions”, p. 143.

⁹¹ “Nunta regală dela Belgrad. Serbări în onoarea Familiei Regale Române” (The Royal Wedding in Belgrade. Festivities in Honour of the Romanian Royal Family), *Universul*, June 10, 1922, p. 1.

flourished”.⁹² Prince Carol, the future King Carol II, declared the following shortly after the match with Yugoslavia in one of the most popular Romanian newspapers in the interwar period, *Universul* (“The Universe”), emphasizing the superior development of Transylvanian football when compared to the Old Kingdom:

The sport which became the most popular in our country is football. I was pleased with the occasion of the football match [in Belgrade] (...). Transylvania brought us a considerable contribution in sport. There are sport societies [in Transylvania] whose teams successfully fought with teams from the Occident that have world fame. (...) My dream is to have a stadium. We have cities in Greater Romania that have a stadium, while Bucharest does not.⁹³

Prince Carol indeed closely oversaw the establishment of the Romanian national football team in the crucial year of 1922 (see also *Photo 1*), when his father, Ferdinand I, was officially crowned King of Greater Romania in a sumptuous ceremony held in the Transylvanian town of Alba Iulia. Following the same efforts of integrating the new Romanian provinces, Carol chose the “Maccabi” arena in Chernivtsi, Bukovina to host the second international football match of Romania, 1-1 with Poland on September 3, 1922, a game which the Prince also attended.⁹⁴ In the following years, Carol continued to supervise the development of the national team by being present at different test games or attending several club matches in Transylvania in order for Romania to have a competitive team at the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924.⁹⁵ However, Romania’s presence at the Olympic Games will mark not only other discrepancies between Transylvania and the Old Kingdom, but also the problems arising from Romania’s international representation of minorities, as I will show below.

⁹² C. A. Orășianu, “A. S. R. Principele Carol vorbește „Universului” în chestia educației fizice” (HRH Prince Carol Speaks in “Universul” on the Issue of Physical Education), *Universul*, June 14, 1922, p. 1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “Serbările sportive din Cernăuți” (Sports Festivities in Chernivtsi), *Universul*, September 8, 1922, p. 2.

⁹⁵ “Echipa reprezentativă București bate echipa națională cu 2-1 (2-0). Principele Carol asistă la match” (The Representative Team of Bucharest Beats the National Team with 2-1 (2-0). Prince Carol Attends the Match), *Universul*, May 10, 1924, p. 2; “Vizita A. S. R. Principelui Carol la Oradea Mare” (The Visit of HRH Prince Carol to Oradea), *Universul*, May 22, 1924, p. 2.

The close relationship between the Royal Family and the national team will continue over the years. When Romania organized and won the 1933 Balkan Cup, an episode which I will discuss together with the political implications of Romanianization in the fourth chapter of my thesis, the King Carol II and his son Mihai were present at Romania's matches.⁹⁶ After Romania's success, Carol II himself decorated the entire team.⁹⁷ Moreover, both Kings Ferdinand I and Carol II were the presidents of the Romanian Sports Federations Union, while Carol, first as heir to the throne and then as King, was also the president of the Romanian Olympic Committee.⁹⁸

A Symbol of the Nation Composed of Minority Players and its Problems

“In our times it is not possible for a sports conception to be without a national character, because sport is identical to the people's soul and strength.”

Daily *Comedia*, October 21, 1927

As I have already shown in the theoretical chapter, after the 1918 moment of the Great Union, the replacement of “foreign” elites with ethnic Romanians was a constant policy of the governments as part of the conflict between regionalism and minorities, on the one hand, and centralization and Romanianization, on the other hand⁹⁹, and “in Romania integral nationalism became widely accepted as the ideological framework for politics at large”.¹⁰⁰ One of the most intriguing sport phenomena in interwar Romania was the huge presence of minorities in the football national team. Due to the fact that football in Romania was practically “invented” by

⁹⁶ Vladimir Boantă, “România-Grecia 1-0 (1-0)”, *Calendarul*, June 11, 1933, p. 3.

⁹⁷ “O serbare epocală” (A Memorable Celebration), *Gazeta Sporturilor*, June 14, 1933, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Principele Radu al României, “Sportul românesc și Casa Regală” (The Romanian Sport and the Royal House), Prince Radu of Romania's official blog, entry posted October 20, 2008, <http://www.princeradublog.ro/jurnal/sportul-romanesc-si-casa-regala/>, accessed May 16, 2012.

⁹⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 14, 18-19.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

foreigners and then almost “confiscated” by minorities, there was a problem with the Romanian national team as part of the national identity, because of the weak representation of the ethnic Romanian element in football in general and in the national team in particular.

Going back to the examples shown at the beginning of this chapter, in 1922, in the first two international matches in history, among the eleven players there was only one ethnic Romanian. The matches were Yugoslavia – Romania 1-2 (in Belgrade, on June 8, 1922) and Romania – Poland 1-1 (in Chernivtsi, on September 3, 1922), and these were the two Romanian line-ups, with the eleven players and their club teams:

Adalbert Ritter (Chinezul Timișoara) – Alois Szilágy (MTK Târgu Mureș), Elemér Hirsch (CA Cluj) – Dezső Jakobi (Haggibor Cluj), Nicolae Hönigsberg (CA Oradea), Francisc Zimmermann (CA Timișoara) – Aurel Guga (Universitatea Cluj), Carol Frech (Chinezul Timișoara), Paul Schiller (Chinezul Timișoara), Ferenc Rónay (CA Oradea), János Auer (AMEFA Arad), and

Alexandru Szatmári (CA Cluj) – József Bartha (Stăruința Oradea), Elemér Hirsch (CA Cluj) – Sándor Kozovits (Unirea Timișoara), Nicolae Hönigsberg (CA Oradea), Emil Rigolo Koch (MTK Târgu Mureș) – Stanislas Micinski (Polonia Chernivtsi), Aurel Guga (Universitatea Cluj), Adalbert Ströck (Stăruința Oradea), Ferenc Rónay (CA Oradea), Zoltán Drescher (CA Oradea), respectively.¹⁰¹

As one can see, *all* the players came from club teams of the new Romanian provinces of Transylvania and Bukovina, there were no Old Kingdom – based players, and *the only* ethnic Romanian was the captain Aurel Guga (See *Annex 1*). Two years later, Romania went to play at the Olympic Games in Paris with a squad composed of twenty-two players, of which only one (an ethnic Greek) came from an Old Kingdom club and only four were ethnic Romanians (all from Transylvanian clubs):

Lazăr Pompei (Universitatea Cluj), Adalbert Ritter (Chinezul Timișoara), István Ströck (CA Oradea) – József Bartha (Stăruința Oradea), Elemér Hirsch (Universitatea Cluj), Attila Molnár (Mureșul Târgu Mureș), Atanasie Protopopescu (Tricolor Bucharest) –

¹⁰¹ “Romania National Team 1922-1929 – Details”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/roem-intres20.html>, accessed April 5, 2012.

Nicolae Hönigsberg (CA Oradea), Dezső Jakobi (Haggibor Cluj), Sándor Kozovits (CA Timișoara), Radu Niculescu (Mureșul Târgu Mureș), Leopold Tritsch (Brașovia Brașov), Francisc Zimmermann (CA Timișoara) – Nicolae Bonciocat (Universitatea Cluj), Carol Frech (Chinezul Timișoara), Aurel Guga (Universitatea Cluj), Iacob Alexandru Holz (Unirea Timișoara), Ferenc Rónay (CA Timișoara), Gustav Semler (Chinezul Timișoara), Adalbert Ströck (Stăruința Oradea), Mihai Tănzer (Chinezul Timișoara), Rudolf Wetzer (Unirea Timișoara).¹⁰²

Despite Prince Carol's personal involvement in the development of the national team, Romania's participation at the Olympic Games in the summer of 1924 was a disaster: the team lost its first and last game, 0-6 with the Netherlands, thus being eliminated from the competition, the most important at the time since both the Balkan Cup and the World Cup were yet to be established. The apocalypse followed: the captain Aurel Guga accused the minority players of deliberate sabotage¹⁰³, the half-German, half-Hungarian forward Adalbert Ströck accused the Old Kingdom-based officials and coaches of lack of professionalism and of "boozing" while the players had to think over the match tactics and even to procure the food themselves¹⁰⁴, and the press began to question the selection of minority players and to advocate the Romanianization of the team, like in the following two examples from the Bucharest daily *Comedia* ("The Comedy"):

[At the Olympic Games in 1924,] when our national team entered the arena, the following recommendation was heard from all the corners of the stadium: *Hungarian team from the territories stolen by Romania*. (...) We already have plenty of unofficial enemies, then why should we send sports deputations abroad to deny even those few good things (...) about the Romanian country?¹⁰⁵

and

¹⁰² "Men's Olympic Football Tournament – Paris 1924 – Romania", <http://www.fifa.com/tournaments/archive/tournament=512/edition=197020/teams/team=43964.html> (the official site of FIFA, the International Federation of Association Football), accessed April 6, 2012.

¹⁰³ "De vorbă cu un fost "as" al football-ului românesc" (Talking to a Former "Ace" of Romanian Football), *Sportul Național*, July 8, 1935, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ "Cum am devenit stea... Cariera lui Strök [sic!] Albi, povestită de el însuși (12)" (How I Became a Star... Strök Albi's Career Related by Himself), *Rampa*, September 23, 1928, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Sașa Severeanu, "Turneurile <<Chinezului>>" (The Tournaments of "Chinezul" [Timișoara]), *Comedia. Teatru, muzică, sport, film*, October 17, 1927, p. 4.

The fact that our nation is rapidly degenerating physically is certain. (...) We should reflect if we can still remain in that passivity because of which we must send to the Olympic Games minority players who are making a fool of ourselves.¹⁰⁶

The disaster was completed in the autumn of 1924 by the death of one player, Dezső Jakobi, following an untreated injury suffered during a friendly match played right before the Olympic Games¹⁰⁷.

During the 1920s, rumours about Hungarians who were playing for the Romanian national team without having the Romanian citizenship were often covered by the press¹⁰⁸, some foreign newspapers, like *L'Echo des Sports* from France, pointed out that “the Romanian national team is composed entirely of Hungarian players”¹⁰⁹, while minority players like Wetzler were named in the press “felons” and “foreign elements, undesirable for our safety”.¹¹⁰ Right before the next Olympic Games in 1928 in Amsterdam, there were two directions embraced in respect to the Romanian national football team, expressed for example in the same daily *Comedia*. On the one hand, the newspaper deplored the fact that some of the best Romanian players of Magyar origin left for Hungary to play there, as I showed above, not only for club teams but also for the Hungarian national team:

This is too bad, (...) otherwise we would have had a football team to go to Amsterdam. We could have transformed Peter [Péter, the Hungarian name] into Petrescu [the Romanian name] and sent him to the Netherlands.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Sever Slătineanu, “Sportul universitar” (The University Sport), *Comedia*, October 19, 1927, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Bogdan Popa, “Un proiect eşuat: „Românizarea” fotbalului interbelic” (A Failed Project: Interwar Football’s Romanianization), http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/un-proiect-esuat-romanizarea-fotbalului-interbelic, accessed May 10, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Petre N. Bolintineanu, “A cui e vina?” (Who Is to Blame?), *Comedia*, September 11, 1927, p. 3; S.A.S., “În jurul echipei naționale. Precizări pentru <<L’echo des sports>>” (Concerning the National Team. Explanations for “L’Echo des Sports”), *Comedia*, October 29, 1927, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ “Foot-ball-ul și politica. Un articol din <<L’Echo desSports>>” (Football and Politics. One Article from “L’Echo des Sports”), *Comedia*, October 16, 1927, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ S.A.S., “În jurul echipei naționale”, p. 3.

¹¹¹ M. Moldovanu, “Carnetul meu” (My Notebook), *Comedia*, November 27, 1927, p. 4.

On the other hand, the same newspaper asked itself “Do we have a Romanian sport?” and challenged especially the Transylvanian clubs, emphasizing also the particularity of football in comparison with the other sports and thus concluding:

We do not have a real Romanian sport. In regard to football, the answer is negative; in regard to rugby, tennis, ski, fencing, shooting, the answer is positive. (...) The other sports are insignificant. But quantitatively speaking – because from the 160 clubs in Romania, 140 are football clubs – our sport does not live in its Transylvanian half for our ideals, thus it is not a Romanian sport.¹¹²

In the end, the predictions of the press (“the national team would not be able to form itself because of the departures of some players to Hungary”¹¹³) became reality, and Romania was not able to participate in the Olympic Games in Amsterdam. Thus, the multicultural pattern coming from the Austro-Hungarian heritage began to fade, making way for a football discourse of Romanianization, in concordance with the official policy of the state in domains like economy or education and also taking into account the rise of the extreme-right movements with their emphasis on the Romanian ethnicity, both dimensions reaching their peak in the 1930s.

However, football was not the only domain in which the Romanianization discourse was embraced by the press. For example, Romanianization through theater in Chernivtsi, Chişinău and Cluj was requested in leading articles in the late 1920s¹¹⁴, while *Universul* (“The Universe”), one of the most popular interwar newspapers, criticized also in leading articles in the mid 1920s “relics” of the pre-1918 past like tram tickets still printed in Russian and post office receipts issued in Hungarian.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Severeanu, “Adevărata problemă națională” (The Real National Problem), *Comedia*, October 21, 1927, p. 3.

¹¹³ “Ancheta noastră. Reorganizarea football-ului românesc” (Our Inquiry. The Reorganization of the Romanian Football), *Comedia*, November 30, 1927, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ It., “Cum trebuie să fie teatrul românesc, în centrele minoritare” (How the Romanian Theatre Should Be in the Minority Centers), *Comedia*, October 22, 1927, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ “În România, după şase ani dela unire” (In Romania, Six Years after the Union), *Universul*, June 13, 1924, p. 1.

In such a context of the interwar period, characterized by the official mainstream politics of Romanianization and centralization, and by the rise of the extreme-right movements, the Romanian national football team emerged from 1922 onwards as a striking symbol of the Romanian nation and state, which was counterintuitively composed mainly of representatives of minorities, especially Hungarians from Transylvania, but also Germans from the same province, Jews, Czechs, Poles and so on (see *Annexes 1 and 2*), sometimes not even having a single ethnic Romanian or Old Kingdom-based player in the starting line-up. With the Romanian national football team being established coincidentally in the same year 1922 as the appearance of the Romanian extreme-right movement called ‘the 1922 generation’, it was in the extreme-right framework of the 1930s when the Romanianization campaign materialized, reached to its peak and eventually achieved paroxysmal dimensions, as I will show in the next chapter.

Chapter 3. The Romanianization Debate:

Its Climax in the Early 1930s and Models of Nationalization

Following the chapters in which I connected the minorities issue after the 1918 moment of the Great Union with the emergence of the Romanian national football team, my attempt in the current chapter is to examine the relationship between football and national identity by analyzing the idea of the Romanianization of the “cosmopolitan” Romanian national football team, an idea that was ardently debated in the press in the beginnings of the 1930s by canonical figures like Camil Petrescu and Nicolae Iorga, among others. I will further explain when and why the Romanianization idea appeared and I will underline the main positions regarding the debate around it, within the ideological context of the 1930s. The chapter will comprise the discourse analysis of a large range of interwar newspapers, since Romanianization was embraced not only by extreme-right and right journals, but even by some leftist ones. I will also describe the surprisingly peaceful atmosphere within the national team and also within the most representative club teams like Venus Bucharest and CA Oradea, insisting on the relationships between players of different ethnicity. A special subchapter will concern the “crusade” for Romanianization in football promoted by Camil Petrescu, whose anti-modernist stances as a journalist contrast his image of a modernist writer. Then, after a short parallel survey on the nationalization process in football in some of the neighbouring countries like Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Poland, I will show in the next chapter the consequences of this debate in Romania.

The Climax of the Romanianization Debate
after the 1932 Disaster, Romania – Poland 0-5

“The national team carries its sin which is inherent to the
[Hungarian] race and to the centrifugal tendencies of the majority
of the players, who have their interest beyond the Romanian borders.”

Daily *Cuvântul*, October 14, 1932

One decade after the debut of the Romanian national football team, its ethnic composition was basically the same, though two or three ethnic Romanians or players from Bucharest clubs (not necessarily ethnic Romanians) constantly appeared in the line-ups (see also *Annex 2*). This was the time when the tradition of selecting minorities or “foreigners” for the national team began to be considered an error, and when the Romanianization idea, which, as I showed above in the previous chapter, already appeared in the mid 1920s¹¹⁶, was ardently debated in the press, as three defeats of Romania in the same year, 0-2 against Bulgaria (in Belgrade, on June 26, 1932), 1-3 against Yugoslavia (in Belgrade, on July 3, 1932) and, most of all, 0-5 against Poland (in Bucharest, on October 2, 1932), were mainly considered the fault of the “foreign” players within the national team. The players used in these three games were:

against Bulgaria - István Czinczer (CA Oradea) - Rudolf Bürger (Ripensia Timișoara), Gheorghe Albu (Gloria Arad) - Corneliu Robe (Olympia Bucharest), Petre Steinbach (Unirea Tricolor Bucharest), László Raffinsky (Ripensia Timișoara) - Andrei Glanzmann (CA Oradea), Alexandru Schwartz (Ripensia Timișoara), Rudolf Wetzler (Ripensia Timișoara), Gyula Bodola (CA Oradea), Elemér Kocsis (CA Oradea);

against Yugoslavia - Jean Lăpușneanu (Venus Bucharest) - Rudolf Bürger (Ripensia Timișoara), Gheorghe Albu (Gloria Arad) - Corneliu Robe (Olympia Bucharest), Petre Steinbach (Unirea Tricolor Bucharest), László Raffinsky (Ripensia Timișoara) - Andrei Glanzmann (CA Oradea), Miklós Kóvacs (CA Oradea), Grațian Sepi (Universitatea Cluj), Gyula Bodola (CA Oradea), István Dobay (Ripensia Timișoara);

¹¹⁶ Bogdan Popa, ““Our Team”? Ethnic Prejudices and Football in Interwar Romania”, in A. Malz, S. Rohdewald, S. Wiederkehr (eds), *Sport zwischen Ost und West. Beitrage zur Sportgeschichte Osteuropas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2007, pp. 191-203.

and against Poland - Jean Lăpușneanu (Venus Bucharest), replaced in the 26th minute by István Czinczer (CA Oradea) - Rudolf Bürger (Ripensia Timișoara), Gheorghe Albu (Gloria Arad) - Corneliu Robe (Unirea Tricolor Bucharest), Petre Steinbach (Unirea Tricolor Bucharest), replaced in the 36th minute by Imre Vogl (Juventus Bucharest), Eugen Lakatos (Ripensia Timișoara), replaced in the 46th minute by Iosif Morawetz (RGM Timișoara) - Andrei Glanzmann (CA Oradea), Alexandru Schwartz (Ripensia Timișoara), replaced in the 28th minute by Miklós Kóvacs (CA Oradea), Grațian Sepi (Universitatea Cluj), replaced in the 79th minute by Ferenc Rónay (CA Oradea), Gyula Bodola (CA Oradea), István Dobay (Ripensia Timișoara).¹¹⁷

The Romanian press considered the defeat against Poland a catastrophe: “The ugliest page of the Romanian sport. The most miserable demonstration ever made by our football” in *Țara Noastră*¹¹⁸, “quite a shame” and “the most painful act in the sport history of Romania” in *Cuvântul*¹¹⁹, “the national disaster” in *Curentul*¹²⁰, “the disaster of the 2nd of October” in *Rampa*.¹²¹ Moreover, as the Oradea daily *Estilap* put it, “the royal anthem was not sung [before the match], for the simple reason that the Romanian team had only two Romanians!”.¹²² Thus, on the background represented by unsatisfactory sport results, appeared the idea that the minority players did not fight to their last breath when playing for the Romanian national team, which was seen as a symbol of the Romanian state and nation, as a part of the national identity. The solution proposed in the press of the 1930s was the Romanianization of the national team, that is, the preeminence of the ethnic criterion instead of the value criterion in establishing the composition of the line-up. The debate came mostly within the nationalist segment of the press, while the other newspapers either embraced the Romanianization trend or just simply ignored the subject, as I will show in the lines below.

¹¹⁷ “Romania National Team 1930-1939 – Details”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/roem-intres30.html>, accessed December 19, 2011.

¹¹⁸ “După matchul Polonia – România” (After the Poland-Romania Match), *Țara Noastră*, October 5, 1932, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ “Echipa României a suferit cea mai grea înfrângere din carieră” (The Romanian Team Suffered its Biggest Defeat in History), *Cuvântul*, October 5, 1932, p. 4.

¹²⁰ Ion Dimitrescu, “După dezastrul <<național>>” (After the ‘National’ Disaster), *Curentul*, October 5, 1932, p. 6.

¹²¹ R. Berceanu, “Vox populi, vox Dei!”, *Rampa*, October 14, 1932, p. 2.

¹²² In “Presa străină și echipa națională” (The Foreign Press and the National Team), *Cuvântul*, October 10, 1932, p. 4.

After the 0-5 defeat with Poland, Octavian Goga's daily *Țara Noastră* ("Our Country") mentioned as the first reason the lack of the basis of any national team: the love for the country, "a spiritual reason found in none of the players from our national squad".¹²³ The same newspaper militated for the nationalization of football, precisely for the exclusion of *all* "the minority elements"¹²⁴, using the term "purge".¹²⁵ The clear distinction between the "'Romanians' [the sense here is pseudo-Romanians] Wetzer, Schwarz, Rafinsky and... many others" and "the true Romanians"¹²⁶ was made even before the match with Poland. In the same newspaper, Romanianization was also fiercely promoted by the founder of the modern Romanian novel, the writer Camil Petrescu, whose journalistic activity I will detail in the last part of this chapter.

More politically involved, still radical, but also more realistic was *Cuvântul* ("The Word"), the newspaper published by Nae Ionescu, philosopher and influential figure of the nationalist and far right movement. On the one hand, it claimed that the Romanianization of the team is an "absurdity" due to the technical inferiority of the Romanian players.¹²⁷ On the other hand, it proposed a different view of the nationalization, in which the minorities should be included in accordance with the governmental policies and taking into account not the minorities' football qualities, but their Romanianness:

When in all our activities after the war, the nationalization of all that is Romanian manifestation was wanted, isn't it logical that Romanian sport should also be represented by verified elements, with spiritual liaisons with the true Romanian sport's aspirations and ideology? (...) Romanian soul is needed for the representatives of Romanian

¹²³ "După matchul Polonia – România", p. 2.

¹²⁴ Vasnic, "Venus", *Țara Noastră*, July 15, 1932, p. 2.

¹²⁵ "Foot-ball. Venus – CAO (Oradea) 6-0 (3-0)", *Țara Noastră*, October 25, 1932, p. 2.

¹²⁶ N. Sy., "Luați aminte, d-lor oficiali" (Pay Attention, Senior Officials), *Țara Noastră*, July 1, 1932, p. 2.

¹²⁷ "Echipa României", 4; N. Albescu, "Între Linz și Viena. Matchul câștigat este o înfrângere, jocul egal o mare victorie" (Between Linz and Vienna. The Match Won Is a Defeat, the Draw Is a Big Victory), *Cuvântul*, October 23, 1932, p. 4.

football. This Romanian soul can only be found in Romanians and in minorities that don't have interests abroad (...) and who know and speak Romanian.¹²⁸

Players were requested to have “pure Romanian feelings”, irrespective of their ethnic origins¹²⁹, but the eclectic vision of *Cuvântul* was visible when the same author N. Albescu in the same newspaper wrote about Hungarians and about “the inherent sin of their race”.¹³⁰ The Romanian national team was often called the team of the “irredentists in Transylvania”¹³¹, a reference to clubs like CA Oradea and Ripensia Timișoara.

The most radical, if not dirty, language of all the newspapers was that of *Curentul* (“The Stream”), founded by Pamfil Șeicaru. The national team was a “bunch” of the same “irredentist clubs in Transylvania”¹³², and “the majority of players wear the Romanian tricolour with the same emotion felt when they took off their last dirty shirt”.¹³³ The Romanianization of the team was requested through the exclusion of the Hungarian players “who do not speak and feel Romanian”¹³⁴, the term used being “purification”¹³⁵, and a distinction between Hungarians, on the one hand, and Germans or even Jews, on the other hand, was clearly made: while the former were “intruders who have the provoking insolence of despising the language, the pride and the feelings of the country that they represent by mystification”¹³⁶ and “dirty the honour of a whole

¹²⁸ Albescu, “Cum trebuie selecționată echipa națională” (How to Draft the National Team), *Cuvântul*, October 14, 1932, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Ibid.; “Ne trebuie o echipă națională nouă?” (Do We Need a New National Team?), *Cuvântul*, October 10, 1932, p. 4; Albescu, “Vrem o adevărată echipă națională” (We Want a Real National Team), *Cuvântul*, October 15, 1932, p. 4.

¹³⁰ Albescu, “Cum trebuie selecționată”, p. 4.

¹³¹ Albescu, “Galantarul dela Linz” (The Linz Shop Window), *Cuvântul*, October 18, 1932, p. 2; “În șapte zile” (In Seven Days), *Cuvântul*, October 20, 1932, p. 4.

¹³² Dimitrescu, “Huiduiți-i!” (Boo Them!), *Curentul*, October 4, 1932, p. 2; Dimitrescu, “După dezastrul <<național>>”, p. 6; Dimitrescu, “La cheremul primadonelor venale” (At the Mercy of the Venal Primadonnas), *Curentul*, October 15, 1932, p. 6; Dimitrescu, “<<Elita țării>>... sau pleava Ardealului?” (‘Country’s Elite’... or Transylvania’s Rubbish?), *Curentul*, October 21, 1932, p. 6.

¹³³ Virgil Economu, “Un vicleim <<național>>” (A National Vicleim [A Romanian custom]), *Curentul*, October 3, 1932, p. 6.

¹³⁴ V. Firoiu, “Moment decisiv” (Decisive Moment), *Curentul*, October 14, 1932, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Firoiu, “Demoralizatorii neamului” (The Demoralizers of the Nation), *Curentul*, October 9, 1932, p. 6.

¹³⁶ Dimitrescu, “Huiduiți-i!”, p. 2.

country”¹³⁷, the latter were called “loyal and admirable members of the team like Steinbach, Bürger or Vogl [although Vogl actually was an ethnic Hungarian], whose sentiments and characters truly fraternize them with our national aspirations”.¹³⁸ The “crusade” of *Curentul* versus the Hungarians also took the form of personal attacks against Czinczer, the goalkeeper of the national team and of CA Oradea, who was called “tramp”, “pig”, “bastard” or “the hero with his anus fondled by the Romanian tricolor”¹³⁹, while the ethnic Hungarian players were considered “intruders” (*venetici*).¹⁴⁰

The three newspapers, *Țara Noastră*, *Cuvântul* and *Curentul*, always referred to the Romanian team using the variants “‘national’ team” or “national (?) team”, and emphasized how the players were talking in Hungarian while playing international matches for Romania, the newspapers thus claiming that no defeat in football could be a defeat of Romania.¹⁴¹ In Transylvania, a part of the Magyar press even wrote that the day of the 0-5 defeat against Poland “was a very sad day for Romanian and Hungarian football” (*Estilap*, a daily in Oradea)¹⁴², while some of the Romanian newspapers demanded “insistently a team formed only by elements of our race” (*Știrea*, from Arad).¹⁴³

The impact of such a virulent campaign carried out in the press was huge on the Romanian public, as not only the right and extreme right wing newspapers, but even the leftist *Rampa* (“The Footlights”), a cultural and democratic newspaper founded by Socialist N. D.

¹³⁷ Economu, “Un vicleim”, p. 6.

¹³⁸ Dimitrescu, “La cheremul”, p. 6.

¹³⁹ Dimitrescu, “După dezastrul ‘național’”, p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Dimitrescu, “Huiduiți-i!”, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ “După matchul Polonia – România”, p. 2; Dimitrescu, “Huiduiți-i!”, p. 2; Dimitrescu, “După dezastrul ‘național’”, p. 6.

¹⁴² Dimitrescu, “La cheremul”, p. 6.

¹⁴³ Dimitrescu, “După dezastrul ‘național’”, p. 6.

Coea, noted.¹⁴⁴ In fact, *Rampa* embraced the Romanianization idea: “We have to bow in front of this popular trend”.¹⁴⁵ Other nationalistic newspapers, like *Neamul Românesc* (“The Romanian Nation”) of Nicolae Iorga and *Universul* (“The Universe”) of Stelian Popescu, ignored the subject and avoided the debate, but anyhow they rarely wrote about football.

Despite the virulence of the Romanianization campaign, it has to be noted the silent atmosphere inside the national team throughout the interwar period, that is, the good relationships and the lack of any important conflict between the players, with the exception described in the second chapter and following the 1924 Olympic Games. Former international Mircea David emphasized in his memoirs the peaceful multicultural environment of two of the teams he played for in the 1930s, CA Oradea – where he was the only ethnic Romanian – and Venus Bucharest. These two clubs were in the 1930s, alongside Ripensia Timișoara, the main providers of players for the Romanian national team (See *Annex 2*). This is how David commented on the multiethnic and multiregional composition of Venus Bucharest:

Here, at Venus, players from all over the country gathered. Me, Bodola, Juhasz and Orza came from Oradea, Ploșteanu, Sfera and Gain arrived from Cluj, Albu from Arad, Demetrovici from Timișoara, Fredy Fieraru from Chernivtsi, Iordăchescu and Lupaș from Ploiești, Humis and Beffa from Greece. There also were the Vâlcov brothers’ “clan” (Petea, Colea and Volodea) and the Bucharest true-born Andrei Bărbulescu, Gorgorin and Traian Iordache. These people with different features and temperaments formed, although it is hardly believable, a single family. There were never any disputes, frictions or animosities between the players. (...) Venus was and remained for years a united family. There were no Bucharest or Oradea “clans”, it was only “our team”.¹⁴⁶

From the nineteen Venus players mentioned above by Mircea David, seventeen also played for the Romanian national team (see also *Annexes 1 and 2*). Concerning CA Oradea, another former

¹⁴⁴ Berceanu, “Vox populi”, 2; Berceanu, “România-Austria amatori. În loc de avant-cronică” (Romania-Austria Amateurs. Instead of Avant-Chronique), *Rampa*, October 18, 1932, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Berceanu, “Vox populi”, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ George Mihalache, “*Il Dio*” și “*diavoli*” din fața porții... Amintirile lui Mircea David, fostul portar al echipei naționale de fotbal (“Il Dio” and “The Devils” in Front of the Goal... The Memoirs of Mircea David, the Former Goalkeeper of the National Football Team) (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1979), pp. 72, 79.

international player, Augustin Juhász, described the relationship between the only ethnic Romanian in the squad and his ethnic Hungarian colleagues, many of whom also played for the national team:

CAO was a big family for all of us. Mircea [David] did not know Hungarian (...). An extraordinary thing happened then. Mircea [David] began to learn Hungarian in order to make us [the ethnic Hungarians] a surprise, while we asked him to improve our Romanian language so that we could speak it correctly... When people love each other, the language (*graiul*) is not an impediment...¹⁴⁷

It was not only in Transylvanian clubs that the ethnic Romanians had to learn Hungarian for their integration in the Hungarian-speaking milieu represented by the football team. They applied the same strategies even in Bucharest clubs like Venus and Rapid, which hired Romanian international players of Magyar origin. This feature, which prolonged up to the early 1950s, was confirmed to me by two interviewees, both former Romanian international players, Károly Oroszhegyi and Dumitru Ignat.¹⁴⁸ Thus, it seemed that the football players did not pay too much attention to what Romanianization implied. Moreover, I did not find any ethnically-based scandal between the Romanian international players covered in the press. However, this stance has to be further analyzed.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁴⁸ Oral history interview with Károly Oroszhegyi, Budapest, March 20, 2012; oral history interview with Dumitru Ignat, Bucharest, April 15, 2012.

The Bulgarian, Yugoslav and Polish Models of Football Nationalization

“We want A REAL NATIONAL TEAM because
the Hungarian players who monopolized our
national squad (...) mocked the Romanian football.”

Daily *Cuvântul*, October 15, 1932

Not only did Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Poland defeat Romania, but they were also considered models of nationalization in football. These three neighbouring countries of Romania were praised in the Bucharest press for their successful campaign of implementing the ethnic criterion within their national teams. “How did the Bulgarians manage to conquest the Balkan Cup?... Through total nationalization of a well-trained and drastically-selected team”, *Curentul* explained after the match Bulgaria – Romania 2-0.¹⁴⁹ And after the Polish disaster, the same newspaper demanded:

The nationalization of the team has to be done immediately. (...) This is what the Yugoslavs, the Polish and the Bulgarians did: the method of nationalization was more favourable to them than were the tactics of fraud and imposture to us.¹⁵⁰

Another newspaper, *Cuvântul*, also pointed to the Bulgarian and Polish models of nationalization¹⁵¹, while *Calendarul* proposed the Yugoslav one in the following year.¹⁵² Still, we have to underline that neither Bulgaria, nor Yugoslavia or Poland had any similar demographic dynamics of minorities as Romania had after the Great Union in 1918, as I showed above. Indeed, this is seen in the line-ups of Bulgarian, Yugoslav and Polish national teams during the decade of their establishment - the 1920s.¹⁵³ If the period of time is the same with the

¹⁴⁹ Dimitrescu, “Pentru ce ne-am dezgustat definitiv de <<vedete>> minoritare și de echipe mercenare” (Why We Are Definitively Disgusted by Minority ‘Stars’ and Mercenary Teams), *Curentul*, October 8, 1932, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Dimitrescu, “La startul debutanților” (At the Debutants’ Start), *Curentul*, October 22, 1932, p. 6.

¹⁵¹ “Defecțiuni principiale în conducere” (Principal Problems in Management), *Cuvântul*, October 20, 1932, p. 4.

¹⁵² Gama, “De vorbă cu oaspeții” (Talking to Our Guests), *Calendarul*, June 5, 1933, p. 2.

¹⁵³ “Yugoslavia National Team List of Results 1920-1929”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/j/joeg-intres20.html>, accessed December 28, 2011 (matches of Poland and Bulgaria are also included).

one when Romania's national team was established, the ethnic distribution within the three teams listed above is by no means similar to the Romanian case. Moreover, if we take the Yugoslav case at the beginnings of the 1930s, the mission of nationalization was not only facilitated, but even pushed to the extreme by the Croatians' boycott of the Yugoslav national team, which thus became composed only of Serbian players, after a conflict regarding the move of the Yugoslav Football Federation's headquarters from Zagreb to Belgrade.¹⁵⁴ Also, the Polish national team comprised ethnic Germans during the 1920s and 1930s, most of them from the German-minority club 1.FC Katowice, but their number was very limited in comparison with the Romanian-Hungarian distribution within the Romanian national team.

Other European models were also considered, the most praised being Switzerland and Italy.¹⁵⁵ While the Swiss agreed upon "some heroic measures" (appreciated as such in *Curentul*) against the foreigners in football, in Fascist Italy Mussolini successfully used sport in general and football in particular in order to construct an imagined national community.¹⁵⁶ The Romanian case was still so far away:

If the sport indeed has for a Nation the regenerative virtues that we all recognize, (...) the Romanian race does not gather today but insults and infamous insinuations; all the uses of our sport movement accumulate themselves in the treasuries of the minority clubs.¹⁵⁷

Moreover, football was seen by some authors as a safeguard for the country itself, as in the Hungarian and German models:

Football, the shield of the country (...). Sport and football contribute to the security of borders. The defeated countries [in World War One], which nourish revanchist thoughts,

¹⁵⁴ "The Background and the Circumstances", montevideoproject.com/engleski/?page_id=192, accessed December 28, 2011.

¹⁵⁵ Dimitrescu, "Scandalul Czinczer" (The Czinczer Scandal) (II), *Curentul*, October 12, 1932, p. 6; V. Firoiu, "Fascia și Sportul" (Fascism and Sport), *Curentul*, October 31, 1932, p. 6.

¹⁵⁶ Simon Martin, *Football and Fascism: the National Game under Mussolini* (Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 2004), pp. 1-3.

¹⁵⁷ Dimitrescu, "Scandalul Czinczer" (II), p. 6.

- Germany and Hungary - managed to have an army formidably trained morally and physically only through the organization of sports societies.¹⁵⁸

In Europe, some newspapers were writing about the Romanian national team as “the second Hungarian national team”.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, not only that the Magyar minorities were the majority in the Romanian team, but there also were players who represented both Romanian and Hungarian national teams in the 1920s and 1930s, like Zoltán Szaniszló, Pál Teleky (Pavel Teleki), Károly (Iuliu Alexandru) Fuhrmann, Mihai Tănzer (Mihály Táncos), István Avar (Ștefan Auer), Gyula (Iuliu) Barátky, Rudolf Wetzter or Adalbert Ströck (Albert Török) (See also *Annexes 1 and 2*).¹⁶⁰ Many of them were part of the exodus after 1918, when almost 200,000 Transylvanian Magyars, that is, one-fifth of the Hungarian population in Transylvania, went to Hungary and resettled there.¹⁶¹

The Anti-Modernist Stances of a Modernist Writer:

Camil Petrescu's Crusade for Romanianization

“Let us hope, as they [the Romanian Football Federation's officials] promised, that they will give us a Romanian team.”

Camil Petrescu, in *Foot-ball*, 1937

The most prominent among the initiators of the Romanianization campaign was Camil Petrescu, the modernist Romanian writer par excellence, present in the Romanian canon as founder of the modern novel, whose anti-modernist vision both on politics and football is still lesser-known even today. He also was the typical ambiguous intellectual of the interwar period, going, as historian Leon Volovici underlined, from his “well known (...) anti-xenophobic

¹⁵⁸ Virgil Economu, *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (Football. Documentary and Critical Study) (Bucharest: 1935), p. 35.

¹⁵⁹ Dimitrescu, “Pentru ce ne-am dezgustat”, p. 6.

¹⁶⁰ „Players for both Hungary and Romania”, <http://www.rsssf.com/miscellaneous/roemhong-recintlp.html>, accessed December 19, 2011 (the list is incomplete).

¹⁶¹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 137.

attitudes” and “consistent rejection of extreme nationalism”¹⁶² to pure anti-Semitism.¹⁶³ The peculiar anti-modernist stance of Petrescu’s political views in the interwar period, that is, a ‘third way’ between democracy and totalitarianism in the vein of the French Non-Conformism movement, mainly its Personalist current with its literary magazine *Esprit*, led to a more radical anti-modernist discourse in his activity as football journalist, where his obsessive plea for Romanianization was accompanied by attitudes versus the minorities and also by the display of Nazi Germany as international football model.

In interwar Romania, literary personalities like writer Cezar Petrescu and critic Tudor Vianu deplored the rise of sport to the detriment of culture and education.¹⁶⁴ The intellectual Camil Petrescu also observed with a certain sadness the transition from the theatre culture of the nineteenth century to a sports culture in the twentieth century, the former losing its dimension as a social phenomenon to the advantage of the latter.¹⁶⁵ But at the same time, he encouraged sport, and especially football, by writing articles on this topic and even publishing two magazines, *Football național* (“National Football”) (1933) and *Foot-ball* (1937). His main idea as a sport journalist was the Romanianization of the football national team, Camil Petrescu being in fact the most prominent name among the initiators of this campaign.

Although initially he was intellectually influenced by Europeanists like Eugen Lovinescu and Socialists like N. D. Cocea, publishing in their modernist *Sburătorul* (literally translated as “The Flying Man”, but representing the equivalent of the *Incubus* in the Romanian mythology)

¹⁶² Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s* (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1991), p. 179.

¹⁶³ See Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal: 1935-1944* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1996).

¹⁶⁴ Cezar Petrescu, “Degenerare sportivă” (Sports Degeneration), *Gândirea* (“The Thinking”), II, No. 9, December 5, 1922, p. 87; Tudor Vianu, “Valoarea sportului” (The Value of Sport), *Gândirea*, XI, No. 5, May, 1931, pp. 230-232.

¹⁶⁵ Camil Petrescu, “Sportul și teatrul” (The Sport and the Theatre), in Camil Petrescu, *Teze și antiteze* (Theses and Antitheses) (Bucharest: Editura ‘Cultura Națională’, 1936), pp. 378-81.

and leftist *Facla* (“The Flame”) respectively, in 1932 Petrescu was in fact a journalist, under the pseudonym “Grămătic”, for the daily *Țara Noastră* (“Our Country”), a newspaper founded by Octavian Goga, poet, member of the Academy, virulent anti-Semite and extreme right politician, and future prime-minister. Thus, Petrescu was writing, even before the 1932 defeats described above, about “the Romanian representative (not national) team”¹⁶⁶, on how “it is exaggerated when a team like this is saluted with the Romanian national anthem”¹⁶⁷ or on how “shameful” it is to shout ‘Go Romania!’ during the team’s matches.¹⁶⁸ His solution was a more ‘fair’ ethnic distribution within the team:

Poor *Ștefan cel Mare* [Stephen the Great, Prince of medieval Moldavia, 1457-1504] would feel so bad winning with <<Kotormany>> [Rudolf Kotormány, Romanian international player of Hungarian origin]. Even more so since we can form a Romanian team, where the minorities should also be well-represented, (Vogl, Glanzmann, Dobay, Steinbach, etc.) and which should have great chances of victory. We believe that Lăpușneanu, Albu, Robe, Ciolac, Sepi, eventually Chiroiu, if not Ghermelie and Baciuc also should not be missing from our national team. It is more honourable to lose with them [the Romanian players] than to win with the others [the minority players].¹⁶⁹

If this kind of opinion might suggest Camil Petrescu’s compromise in order to satisfy the well-known anti-Hungarian stance of the patron Octavian Goga, the later texts in *Foot-ball*, magazine published in 1937 by Petrescu himself, leave no doubt on his sincere embracement of the Romanianization cause. *Foot-ball. Revistă săptămânală pentru deprinderea „jocului curat” în sport, artă, literatură, viața socială* (“Football. Weekly Magazine for the Practice of ‘Fair-Play’ in Sport, Art, Literature, Social Life”), as the name shows, dealt only half with football, while the other half included pages of ‘pure’ culture. Of the eight pages, the first two contained Camil Petrescu’s comments on the national team and the national championship, the next two

¹⁶⁶ Grămătic, “Cronica sportivă. Bocskay-Venus 2-1; Bocskay – Unirea-Tricolor 1-0” (Sports Chronicle), *Țara Noastră*, May 6, 1932, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Grămătic, “Formarea echipei naționale pentru matchul cu Franța” (The National Team’s Establishment for the Match Against France), *Țara Noastră*, June 12, 1932, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Grămătic, “Echipa românească bate echipa Franței cu 6-3” (The Romanian Team Beats France 6-3), *Țara Noastră*, June 15, 1932, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ Grămătic, “Formarea echipei naționale”, p. 2.

were composed of international football news and relevant quotes from the Romanian press, while the last four dealt mainly with theatre, literature and literary critique, as well as with Petrescu's harsh polemics with his adversaries, who called him "Cămilă" (meaning 'camel') and were in return insulted as "greasy", "viscous", "stupid", "imbecile", "louse", "ox", and so on.

Following his goal of Romanianization in football, Petrescu often made a clear difference between the ethnic Hungarians and the ethnic Romanians, like in the next example:

In the international matches (...), Baratki (as well as Bodola, another great expert) [Gyula Barátky and Gyula Bodola, Romanian international players of Hungarian origin] IS CHEATING... (...) Instead, Bogdan the bulldog [Ionică Bogdan, Romanian international player of Romanian origin] (...) played honestly as usual and won the match.¹⁷⁰

Furthermore, the relevant quotes from the other newspapers were carefully selected and published to sustain the same goal of Romanianization: they were full of praise for the Romanian players of different club teams, and many quotes came from the right and extreme-right press: the Iron Guard newspaper *Buna Vestire* ("The Annunciation"), where Camil Petrescu himself was writing at the time, Pamfil Șeicaru's *Curentul* ("The Stream"), Stelian Popescu's *Universul* ("The Universe") and so on. When an experimental team, entitled Romania B and composed only of ethnic Romanians, was formed for a match against the youth team of Hungary, Petrescu wrote that "this squad has one great merit, that is, it is Romanian".¹⁷¹ And with Romania B losing 0-3 against the Hungarian youth team, the writer was further explaining:

How can one explain the fact that the Romanians of the B team, and the Romanian debutants in the national team in general, always play badly? The answer can only be that they are terrorized by a responsibility which is never imposed upon the minority elements... The men enter the field paralyzed by emotion...¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ N. Grămătic, "Comentarii" (Comments), p. 2, *Foot-ball*, I, No. 1, October 14, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷¹ N. Grămătic, "Comentarii", p. 2, *Foot-ball*, I, No. 2, October 21, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷² N. Grămătic, "Comentarii", *Foot-ball*, I, No. 4, November 4, 1937, p. 1.

Under different pseudonyms (N. Grămătic, Ion Răscoală), Camil Petrescu was writing almost the whole magazine himself, helped by an avant-garde poet in the vein of Sașa Pană, Teodor Scarlat. In this young follower's case, Romanianization acquired demential dimensions. Scarlat ardently advocated the replacement of the German lithographies represented on the boxes of matches with Romanian paintings:

[T]he Romanian (?) Anonymous Society which is manufacturing the matches is simply mocking us all. (...) Why are the small boxes of matches illustrated with pictures that do not have anything in common with the yesterday and today life of this people? Why?¹⁷³

If the targets of the Romanianization campaign were mainly the ethnic Hungarian players of the Transylvanian clubs, the addressees were the officials of the Romanian Football Federation, mainly its politically imposed presidents Aurel Leucuția and Viorel Tilea. Both were the nephews of the National-Peasantist leader and Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu, and I will detail their activity in the next chapter. In 1932, when president was Aurel Leucuția, Camil Petrescu was disavowing his policy:

Still we cannot accept what the Football Federation's commission is preparing for us. We cannot, under no circumstances, oppose our former allies [France's national team] a team composed of Csincser [sic!], Hocksari, Burger, Beke, Rafinsky, Hreclus, Kotormany, Kocsis, Schwarz, Dobay (...) ¹⁷⁴,

and the article continued with Petrescu's suggestions for the Federation's officials. In 1937, the situation was similar. The president of the Federation was Viorel Tilea, and Camil Petrescu was again critical:

The Federation once announced, somehow semi-officially, that it would prefer in the future Bucharest players in the national team, because these ones give more satisfaction at least in Bucharest. (...) Sunday, this Federation introduced in the [national] team two players from Cluj (...). Both of them were catastrophic, they were the direct cause of the

¹⁷³ Teodor Scarlat, "Puncte bune, puncte rele" (Good Points, Bad Points), pp. 7-8, *Foot-ball*, I, No. 5, November 11, 1937, pp. 6-8.

¹⁷⁴ Grămătic, "Formarea", p. 2.

defeat. “Relatively” de-Magyarized, the Federation remained fiercely regionalist. Sometimes it flings the hatchet, like on this Sunday.¹⁷⁵

Even when the Federation’s experimental team Romania B was composed of ethnic Romanians, Petrescu’s discourse remained critical, embracing now an anti-regionalist, centralist view by advocating the exclusive presence of Bucharest players in the national team. Before the 1938 World Cup qualifying match against Egypt, the writer bitterly noted that “[t]he selected team is composed – with the exception of Dragomirescu and Brandabura [players from Bucharest clubs] – of the same players of the Federation’s ‘old guard’ [players from Transylvanian clubs, mainly minorities]”.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, from the beginning of the 1930s Camil Petrescu had been a keen supporter of Venus Bucharest¹⁷⁷, the main rival of the Transylvanian clubs in the national championship. In fact, Venus was one of the few Old Kingdom clubs which managed to win the title in the interwar period (see *Annex 5*), and, as I showed above, it did so by hiring Hungarian players and coaches like Ferenc Platko (former and future coach of FC Barcelona), József Pozsár, Béla Jánosy (former coach of Újpest Budapest) or Károly Weszter, and also by bringing foreign players eventually naturalized as Romanians for the national team, like the Greek Konstandinos ‘Kostas’ Humis.

With the majority of the proponents of Romanianization praising the Fascist Italian model and Mussolini’s successful use of sport in general and football in particular in order to construct an imagined national community¹⁷⁸, Camil Petrescu’s football model seemed to be Nazi

¹⁷⁵ N. Grămătic, “Comentarii”, p. 1, *Foot-ball*, I, No. 3, October 28, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷⁶ “Venus – România”, *Foot-ball*, I, No. 6, November 18, 1937, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ N. Grămătic, “Comentarii”, p. 1, *Foot-ball*, I, No. 7, November 27, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ Martin, *Football and Fascism*, pp. 1-3.

Germany, where football was developing “in the general note” of the Nazi state’s development, as he wrote in the international football pages of his magazine.¹⁷⁹

Interestingly, although not starting like the extreme-right ideologists Nichifor Crainic and Nae Ionescu from autochthony and traditionalism, in fact rejecting both of them in his political writings, Camil Petrescu eventually reached the same stances and displayed certain levels of ethnicity and anti-Semitism in his political discourse. However, Camil Petrescu’s dream of having the Romanian national football team composed mainly of ethnic Romanians would not soon become reality.

As I already showed, even the newspapers disapproving extreme nationalism had to obey the trend already in the early 1930s. Directed by the Jewish Scarlat Froda (Solomon Weitzendorf), the leftist daily *Rampa* supported directly the extreme-right *Curentul*’s Romanianization campaign, underlining “the beautiful ideal which sits at its basis”¹⁸⁰ and writing in 1932:

The request of those who want the integral Romanianization of the national team (...) received the adhesion of the large mass of our ardent football fans. Facing this torrent, the officials have to accept to satisfy the displeased mass.¹⁸¹

The non-political, sports newspaper *Gazeta Sporturilor* (“The Sports’ Journal”) even had in the 1930s a daily supplement, *Sportul Zilnic* (“Daily Sport”), whose reason was

the fight for assuring the preponderance of the Romanian elements in all official and sports manifestations, and for preventing through sport any associations and manifestations of minority demands which are pernicious to the Romanian State.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Ion Răscoală, “Internațională” (Internationals), *Foot-ball*, I, No. 7, November 27, 1937, pp. 2-3.

¹⁸⁰ R. Berceanu, “Cazul Czinczer” (The Czinczer Case), *Rampa*, October 25, 1932, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ Berceanu, “România-Austria amatori”, p. 2.

¹⁸² In *Gazeta Sporturilor* (The Sports’ Journal), January 4, 1935, p. 1.

A special mention should be given in the end of this chapter to the already emphasized above Romanian perception of the Magyarized Jew players in Transylvania mainly as Hungarians. In this respect, the Romanian sports press did not make any difference between the ethnic Hungarian players and the Magyarized Jew ones, both being associated with the “Hungarian” and “irredentist” clubs of Transylvanian towns. Although

[l]inguistically, urban Jews were largely assimilated to Magyar, thus enhancing the Hungarian aspect of Transylvania’s towns, except in Banat where Jews were more assimilated to German, the prevalent urban tongue there¹⁸³,

and despite the fact that “[t]he Romanians thus viewed Transylvanian Jews as subversives, as an insidious group of ‘hidden Magyars’, ‘worse’ than the Magyars themselves”¹⁸⁴, anti-Semitism lacked in the football Romanianization discourse of the 1920s and early 1930s interwar press, whose attitude was predominantly anti-Hungarian. The profile of ‘The Other’ meant primarily “the representatives of those national minorities coming from ‘races constituted as national states’, characterized generally by revisionist tendencies”¹⁸⁵.

The level of the Romanianization campaign in the press and its huge impact on the Romanian public, always emphasized by the newspapers claiming that they are in fact the echo of the public opinion, made the Romanian Football Federation and even the Romanian State itself intervene. With what success, we shall see in the following chapter.

¹⁸³ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 136.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁸⁵ Cristian Sandache, *Doctrina național-creștină în România* (The National-Christian Doctrine in Romania) (Bucharest: Editura Paideia, 1997), p. 70.

Chapter 4. Football Consequences and Political Implications of the Romanianization Campaign and its Failure

This chapter will follow the first Romanianization measures taken by the Romanian Football Federation, as well as the surprising political implications of the issue concerning the national football team. I will also emphasize the political connections of the Romanian Football Federations' presidents, showing how King Carol II succeeded in imposing his favourite politicians. After some hesitating dispositions of the Federation, the critique towards the minority players continued, as seen in the articles signed by, among others, Nicolae Iorga, Nichifor Crainic and, as I already showed, Camil Petrescu. It was the Romanian State itself which had to intervene in the mid 1930s in the national team's question, initiating state control on the team's composition and eventually imposing anti-Semitic measures in football, as part of the larger anti-Semitic legislation which I will refer to. The chapter will contain a short overview on the national coaches, while the late 1930s milieu will be exemplified through the representative case of Virgil Economu, a champion of Romanianization, who became national coach but was dismissed in 1940 because of his Jewish origin.

First Consequences. Nicolae Iorga's and Nichifor Crainic's Reactions

“We will ignore (...) [t]he venom used by these two university professors
[Nicolae Iorga and Nichifor Crainic] who tried to spoil our joy,
the whole people's joy of the sports triumph.”

Gazeta Sporturilor, June 16, 1933,
after Romania's success at the 1933 Balkan Cup

If the targets of the Romanianization campaign were “foreign” players, the addressees of the campaign were the Romanian Football Federation's officials. “Nationalism is not admitted in sport”, Aurel Leucuția, one of the leaders of the National Peasants' Party and the president of the federation, told *Temesvári Hírlap* (Hungarian newspaper in Timișoara) right after the above mentioned defeat versus Poland.¹⁸⁶ But things actually appeared to change gradually very soon after the October 1932 disaster. In the same month, in an Austrian tournament, the Romanian national team, again composed mainly of minority players, won 1-0 against the amateur side of Austria, while a more experimental national team, also constituted by the Romanian Football Federation, called *Liga de Nord* (“The Northern League”) and composed mainly of Romanian players, obtained a draw, 2-2 with the professional club team of Hakoah Wien. “The match won is a defeat, the draw is a great victory”, *Cuvântul* wrote after these two matches, explaining further:

The match in Wien praises the team composed of six Romanians. (...) Even if we consider them significantly inferior [from the technical qualities point of view, in comparison to the minority players], they showed superior psychic qualities, because they played with all their heart and soul for the fame of Romanian football.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ In *Curentul*, October 25, 1932, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ Albescu, “Între Linz și Viena. Matchul câștigat este o înfrângere, jocul egal o mare victorie” (Between Linz and Vienna. The Match Won Is a Defeat, the Draw Is a Big Victory), *Cuvântul*, October 23, 1932, p. 4.

The same conclusion was shared by *Rampa* and *Curentul*.¹⁸⁸ Over the next years, a “Romania B” national team, mostly composed of young ethnic Romanian players, would be drafted, although irregularly, by the Romanian Football Federation. However, this experimental team never reached the level to replace the “official” national team and played irregularly mainly against club teams and not against other national squads.

Step by step, the Romanianization idea began to be embraced by the officials of the Romanian Football Federation. This was the case with the prosecutor Nicolae Birăescu, member of the national team’s selection committee and the president of *Liga de Nord* (“The Northern League”), one of the five preliminary regional championships organized by the Romanian Football Federation before the unification in one national championship in 1932. This is what Birăescu declared in October 1932 in an interview for *Cuvântul*, going as far as to use the expression “purification campaign”:

My opinion (...) is: Romanian team. I am not an extremist, God forbid! But what I understand as a Romanian team is that team composed of at least 8 Romanian players and 2-3 minority players. This is the idea that I always proposed in the selection committee. (...) The staff’s purification campaign is an old demand of the Romanian sportsmen in Cluj.¹⁸⁹

The next matches of Romania, played for the 1933 edition of the Balkan Cup, saw a slightly changed national team, as its ethnic distribution was different, with four or five ethnic Romanian players in its composition instead of the usual formula comprising only one or two.¹⁹⁰ However, the press continued its Romanianization campaign. For example, *Calendarul* (“The

¹⁸⁸ “După expediția din Austria” (After the Austrian Expedition), *Rampa*, October 22, 1932, p. 2; “Matchul dela Viena. Combinata română – Hakoah 2-2” (The Vienna Match. The Romanian Combo – Hakoah 2-2), *Curentul*, October 22, 1932, p. 6.

¹⁸⁹ Șt. Mareș, “Cazul Czinczer și naționalizarea echipei României privite de d. procuror Birăescu” (The Czinczer Case and the Nationalization of the Romanian Team Seen by Mr. Prosecutor Birăescu), *Cuvântul*, October 31, 1932, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ “Romania National Team 1930-1939 – Details”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/r/roem-intres30.html>, accessed December 19, 2011.

Calendar”), a newspaper recently founded by Nichifor Crainic, one of the most influential ideologists of the Romanian extreme right, quickly embraced the cause. *Calendarul* deplored the fact that the ethnic Hungarians were still part of the team, like it was the case with “the Hungarian Lakatos, who suddenly became the Romanian Lăcătuș”, and praised “the Vâlcov brothers, (...) the triplet which is a pride of the Romanian football”.¹⁹¹ The journalists seemed not to know, or maybe deliberately ignored, the fact that the three Vâlcov brothers were actually ethnic Gagauzes born in Bolgrad, in the former Russian Empire. Nevertheless, the most important thing was, of course, that the Vâlcov brothers were not Hungarian. Moreover, they were playing for Venus Bucharest, which was seen at the time as the Romanian team par excellence and the main rival of the powerful Transylvanian clubs: “the most sympathized and powerful Romanian football team (...), the squad which employs the most specific Romanian style in football”, as *Calendarul* put it.¹⁹²

An interview with the president of Venus Bucharest, Ion Leoveanu, which appeared in the same newspaper before the 1933 Balkan Cup, shows us a singular, original opinion regarding the criteria for the Romanian national team’s composition. Not pleased, among others, with the fact that only one of his club’s players was drafted for the national team, Leoveanu stated:

My opinion is that the national team should be composed either only of the players over the mountains (*de peste munți* [that is, the Old Kingdom expression for Transylvania]), or only of Bucharest players. I underline the fact that the old story of the antagonism between the Old Kingdom players and the ones from the annexed (*alipite*) territories – and I am talking here about representatives of minorities - is repeating itself.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Alfa, “Echipa națională s’a format!” (The National Team Has Been Established!), *Calendarul*, June 1, 1933, p. 3.

¹⁹² Beta, “Interview luat d-lui Leoveanu” (Interview with Mr. Leoveanu), *Calendarul*, June 3, 1933, p. 2.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

He further advocated the need for a “spiritual unification” between the two categories of players, which was yet to be achieved, hence the contemporary error – in his vision - of setting up such a “mixed” team.¹⁹⁴

In the same year 1933, Aurel Leucuția, the president of the Romanian Football Federation, radically changed his discourse and admitted for the first time the need for Romanianization. Right before the 1933 Balkan Cup, he made an appeal in the press “for the removal of any divergences and excessive passions”, stating the following:

Our preoccupations of having a more Romanian team received an impetus from the press, which put the problem to the discussion of public opinion. It is our joy to see how things are resolving on a natural way. The Romanian element is in a great advancement today and we will soon see our dream completely fulfilled. (...) [T]oday, this cause is the cause of the whole country.¹⁹⁵

In fact, the 1933 edition of the Balkan Cup, played in Bucharest, was a great success for Romanian football, as the national team won the trophy after three victories in the three matches: 7-0 with Bulgaria, 1-0 with Greece and 5-0 with Yugoslavia. Still, a strong voice like that of the historian and former prime-minister Nicolae Iorga was very critical in a leading article in his newspaper, *Neamul Românesc*:

Above all, I do not understand where is the proof of the bravery, even in this brutal, childish and inferior domain, of the tricoloured team at the head of which we mostly find very honourable minorities, at least by origin, like Mr. Dobay, Kotormany and Morawetz.¹⁹⁶

In this respect, he was accompanied by Nichifor Crainic, who criticized, also in a leading article of his newspaper, *Calendarul*, not only the ethnic composition of the national team, but also the “decadence” of sport itself, giving in this respect the negative example of Imre (Emeric)

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ “Dr. Aurel Leucuția [sic!] Președintele Federației de Football, Un apel” (An Appeal), *Gazeta Sporturilor*, May 31, 1933, p. 3.

¹⁹⁶ N. Iorga, “După <<victorie>>” (After ‘the Victory’), *Neamul Românesc*, June 15, 1933, p. 1.

Vogl, an ethnic Hungarian who was Romania's captain at the time, and placing sport in the same category as pornography:

Romania's team is composed of eight minority players and four Romanians. (...) The soul of the youth is obsessed with sports stars, cinema stars and pornographic readings. (...) Nobody can convince us that the horrible cinema buffoons Laurel and Hardy, or (...) Emeric Vogl are agents of mental cultivation or spiritual education.¹⁹⁷

Following the director's vision, Crainic's newspaper continued its plea for Romanianization despite the national team's success in the Balkan Cup. Underlining "the Romanianization trend (who could have been even stronger) of our national team", *Calendarul* proposed measures such as the replacement of the half-Czech, half-Hungarian József Moravetz, a player coming from RGM Timișoara, with Andrei Bărbulescu, an ethnic Romanian playing for Venus Bucharest, on the ground that "the latter is just as good and more Romanian than the former".¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the newspaper criticized the "conspiracy" meant to promote the Transylvanian minority players to the detriment of the Bucharest club teams, and proposed that the future national team should be based on players coming from "the Romanian team" Venus Bucharest, two or maximum three representatives of minorities being considered acceptable.¹⁹⁹ Soon, this quota will be officialized by the Romanian Football Federation, this measure marking in fact the first step of institutionalized Romanianization, as I will explain below.

¹⁹⁷ Nichifor Crainic, "Diversiunea sportivă" (The Sports Diversion), *Calendarul*, June 15, 1933, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ Vladimir Boantă, "România sdrobește Jugoslavia 5-0 (5-0). Echipa Țării a câștigat Cupa Balcanică" (Romania Crushes Yugoslavia 5-0 (5-0). The National Team Wins the Balkan Cup), *Calendarul*, June 14, 1933, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

***Politics Come Into the Scene: The Measures Taken
by the Romanian State and the Football Federation***

“The government studied and will put immediately
into practice the establishment of a permanent
office destined to control the teams and the
sportsmen who represent the country abroad.”

Daily Gazeta Sporturilor, January 13, 1935

The Romanian Football Federation was founded in 1930, managing the football business previously covered by the activity of the Romanian Sports Federations Union, whose presidents were the Kings Ferdinand I and Carol II, as I previously showed in the subchapter dedicated to the role of the Romanian Dynasty. From the first moments of its establishment, the Romanian Football Federation was integrated in the politics of the day, and each of the three interwar presidents was politically imposed.

Aurel Leucuția (president during 1930-1933) was the nephew of Iuliu Maniu (Prime Minister at the time) and future National-Peasantist minister, later imprisoned by Communists with his uncle. Seen as an adversary of the royal camarilla and named “imbecile” by King Carol II in his memoirs²⁰⁰, he was replaced by another nephew of Iuliu Maniu, the more cooperative Viorel Virgil Tilea (1933-1936), who was also grandson of Ioan Rațiu, leader of the Transylvanian Memorandum in 1892. Tilea, future ambassador in London and one of the closest collaborators of Prime Minister Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, was the National-Peasantist equivalent of the Liberal Gheorghe Brătianu within King Carol II’s policy of disintegrating the

²⁰⁰ *Regele Carol al II-lea al României. Însemnări zilnice. 1937-1951* (King Carol II of Romania. Daily Notes), Vol. III 15 decembrie 1939-7septembrie 1940, edited by Nicolae Rauș (Bucharest: Editura Scripta, 1998), p. 28.

traditional political parties, as shown in the memoirs of both politicians Grigore Gafencu²⁰¹ and Mihail Manoilescu.²⁰² As stated by Gafencu, Tilea was the “new man” meant to replace “the old” Maniu according to “the doctrine for Transylvania”, which Nae Ionescu prepared for the King (...) and sustained in *Cuvântul* [Nae Ionescu’s newspaper] after the first clashes between the King and Maniu”.²⁰³ Future leader in Vaida-Voevod’s extreme right party *Frontul Românesc* (“The Romanian Front”), Tilea was named by King Carol II in the late 1930s Romania’s minister in London. The last interwar president of the Romanian Football Federation was General Gabriel Marinescu (1936-1940), who was also at the time the president of Venus Bucharest. Member of the so-called ‘royal camarilla’, Marinescu was nicknamed “The Emperor” due to his power as prefect of the Bucharest Police and Minister of the Interior during Carol’s reign. He died in 1940, after the proclamation of the Romanian National Legionary State, assassinated by the Legionary death squads in the Jilava prison in the same night (November 26-27, 1940) as Nicolae Iorga, Virgil Madgearu and other former political leaders.

The already emphasized Romanianization campaign, carried on in the press and embraced by the Romanian public, was taken into consideration by all the three interwar presidents of the Romanian Football Federation, while the government’s implication in football also became consistent, as I will explain below. Starting from the 1930s, both Romanianization and centralization became the Romanian Football Federation’s aims and were institutionalized to a certain extent. In that respect, the early 1930s marked the transition from several local championships (Arad, Bucharest, Braşov, Chernivtsi, Chişinău, Cluj, Craiova, Galaţi, Iaşi,

²⁰¹ Grigore Gafencu, *Însemnări politice 1929-1939* (Political Notes 1929-1939), edited by Stelian Neagoe (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991), pp. 172-3.

²⁰² Mihail Manoilescu, *Memorii* (Memoirs), II, edited by Valeriu Dinu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), p. 311.

²⁰³ Gafencu, *Însemnări*, p. 172.

Oradea, Sibiu, Târgu Mureş and Timișoara) to five regional championships (Eastern, Southern, Central, Western and Northern), and finally in 1932 to a single national championship, *Divizia A* (“A Division”).²⁰⁴ However, the Transylvanian clubs always outnumbered the Old Kingdom clubs in *Divizia A*, the quota being 2:1 during almost all the interwar period (See *Annex 6*). Moreover, a second centralizing competition entitled *Cupa României* (“The Romanian Cup”) was established in 1933. But all these measures were not enough to assure the much wanted football dominance of Bucharest. From the early 1930s, the conflict between regionalism and centralization was transferred in the competition between the club teams Ripensia Timișoara and Venus Bucharest, the only two clubs to win the national championship between 1931 and 1940 (see *Annex 5*). I have already shown how Venus Bucharest was considered “the Romanian team”, despite its numerous Hungarian and Austrian coaches and minority players, as opposed to the “irredentist” Ripensia Timișoara. It was exactly this distorted image that made Venus not only the most popular Romanian team, but also the club that primarily benefited from the centralization policy, especially with its protector and president Gabriel Marinescu becoming president of the Romanian Football Federation.

Returning to the national team, it was its disastrous participation in the 1934-1935 Balkan Cup that made the authorities initiate their first Romanianization measures. Holder of the trophy following the 1933 edition, Romania finished only third in the 1934-1935 competition after a last game in which the team, again displaying a majority of minority players, lost 0-4 to

²⁰⁴ Chiriac Manușaride, Chevorc Ghemigean, *Aproape totul despre fotbal* (Almost Everything about Football), 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1986), p. 137.

Yugoslavia.²⁰⁵ The first reaction came from the Romanian government itself, as the daily *Gazeta Sporturilor* recorded:

The government was affected by the way in which the Romanian football team presented itself on the occasion of the [1934-1935] Balkan Cup held in Athens and which (...) did not represent at all propaganda for the prestige of our country. (...) ²⁰⁶

The issue discussed was if the sending of such national team did not do positive propaganda and did in fact a bad service to our country's prestige abroad. ²⁰⁷

In consequence, *Oficiul de Educație a Tineretului Român* ("The Office for the Romanian Youth's Education") was founded in 1935 by King Carol II, and the new sports organization's role was to decide "if the ones who compose the teams really are elements worthy and able to represent vigorously the interests of Romanian sport outside the country." ²⁰⁸ Eventually, the Office for the Romanian Youth's Education evolved in a youth organization meant to sustain King Carol II's royal regime against the growing influence of the extreme right Iron Guard, and was renamed *Straja Țării* ("The Sentinel of the Motherland") in 1937 ²⁰⁹, a few months before the instauration of the royal dictatorship, when the movement was re-organized in order to serve King's personality cult and became compulsory for both young girls and boys. Thus, Carol II tried to copy the youth movements in the totalitarian states, "for which the big sports spectacles represented nothing more than a way to make propaganda." ²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ "Romania National Team 1930-1939 – Details", <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/r/roem-intres30.html>, accessed May 17, 2012.

²⁰⁶ "O senzațională măsură a guvernului" (A Sensational Disposition of the Government), *Gazeta Sporturilor*, January 13, 1935, p. 1.

²⁰⁷ I. S., "În ce condițiuni pot pleca în străinătate echipele românești" (In Which Conditions Can the Romanian Teams Go Abroad), *Gazeta Sporturilor*, February 28, 1935, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ *Enciclopedia României* (The Romanian Encyclopedia), Vol. I (Bucharest: 1938), p. 486.

²¹⁰ Bogdan Popa, *Educație fizică, sport și societate în România interbelică - rezumatul tezei de doctorat* (Physical Education, Sport and Society in Interwar Romania – Abstract of the Doctoral Thesis), p. 1.

This royal disposition made the Romanian Football Federation more receptive to the Romanianization idea and in March 1935 the so-called ‘8+3 rule’ was imposed for the Romanian national team:

One fact was decided precisely and also in unanimity. In the national team that will represent Romania in the [1935] Balkan Cup held in Sofia at least eight [ethnic] Romanian players should be present.²¹¹

The consequences were again disastrous, as Romania did not win any game in the 1935 Balkan Cup, so the ‘8+3 rule’, although officially maintained, became in fact inapplicable. Instead of having eight ethnic Romanians and three minority players in the composition of the national team, the Romanian squad quickly became again the ‘appanage’ of the minorities (actually there were very often seven or eight minority players, most of them Hungarians, in the national team in the late 1930s), a situation which remained unchanged until 1940, although the Bucharest clubs began to supply the national team with more players²¹² (see also *Annex 2*), as in the next two examples of Romania’s matches against Yugoslavia (on September 8, 1937, 1-2 in Belgrade) and Latvia (May 18, 1939, 4-0 in Bucharest):

Robert Sadowsky (AMEFA Arad) – Lazăr Sfera (Venus Bucharest), Iacob Felecan (Victoria Cluj), Vintilă Cossini (Rapid Bucharest), Augustin Juhász (CA Oradea), László Raffinsky (Rapid Bucharest), Silviu Bindea (Ripensia Timișoara), Alexandru Schwarz (Ripensia Timișoara), Gyula Barátky (Rapid Bucharest), Gyula Bodola (Venus Bucharest), István Dobay (Ripensia Timișoara), and

Dumitru Pavlovici (Ripensia Timișoara) – Rudolf Bürger (Ripensia Timișoara), Lazăr Sfera (Venus Bucharest), Vintilă Cossini (Rapid Bucharest), Augustin Juhász (CA Oradea), Rudolf Demetrovici (Venus Bucharest), Cornel Orza (Venus Bucharest), Nicolae Reuter (CAM Timișoara), Gyula Bodola (Venus Bucharest), Adalbert Marksteiner (Ripensia Timișoara), István Dobay (Ripensia Timișoara), respectively.²¹³

²¹¹ “Consiliul federal s’a întrunit aseară” (The Federal Council Was Held Last Night), *Gazeta Sporturilor*, April 1, 1935, pp. 1, 3.

²¹² “Romania National Team 1930-1939 – Details”, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/roem-intres30.html>, accessed May 17, 2012.

²¹³ Ibid.

As one can see from the issues addressed above in my thesis, Romanianization was taken into consideration mainly around Romania's participation in the Balkan Cups, either before or after the competition. Although the national team played in the 1924 Olympic Games (in fact, Romania's only participation in the interwar period in the Olympic Games) and then in the first three World Cups in 1930, 1934 and 1938, it was the Balkan Cup that triggered the discussions concerning squad composition due to Romania's constant claims for the trophy and desire to be recognized as a regional football power. While the Romanian national team won the Balkan Cup three times (1931, 1933 and 1936), the squad was always eliminated in the first round of the Olympic Games or the World Cup.

Institutionalized Anti-Semitism and the 1940 Case of Virgil Economu

“It is not a certain football player who scores
or who plays well, but the nation itself.”

Virgil Economu, future coach of the Romanian national team,
in *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (1935)

The only successful Romanianization disposition was released by the Romanian Football Federation's president Viorel Tilea in September 1936 and concerned Jewish players, eliminated not only from the national team, but also from the club teams in *Divizia A*. The decision was part of the anti-Semite legislation of the late 1930s in Romania, discussed in the historical background presented in the theoretical chapter of my thesis and to which I will refer again below, and was covered by the European press, including the Jewish newspapers, like in the following example of the Viennese daily *Die Stimme. Jüdische Zeitung*:

Viorel Tillea [sic], anti-Semitic leader and newly-elected president of the Romanian Football Federation, announced that “only teams of true Romanians will be permitted to

play in matches for the national title.” Many of the foremost Romanian soccer teams included Jewish players on their rosters.²¹⁴

Returning to the Romanian anti-Semite legislation of the mid and late 1930s, it was noted that

[i]f until then, the anti-Semite violence and propaganda were promoted by organizations outside the official political framework, in the last years of the interwar period elements containing restrictions in regard to Jews’ rights appeared also in the governmental policy.²¹⁵

The 1935-1937 laws regarding the use of ethnic Romanian personnel in various domains like industry, commerce, finance, law, public services and administration, preceded the anti-Semite legislation of the Goga-Cuza government in 1938, which was continued during the royal dictatorship of King Carol II. As stated by historian Leon Volovici,

[b]y 1937, even before the government led by Octavian Goga came to power, excluding Jewish intellectuals from professional associations had become a general process. This was followed by measures to prevent qualified Jews from entering any of the ‘free’ professions.²¹⁶

The Goga government’s anti-Semite measures, such as “the suspension of Jewish press, (...) the dismissal of Jewish employees in state’s institutions”²¹⁷, as well as the revision of the citizenship, already referred to in the theoretical chapter, were praised, among others, by Eugen Hațieganu²¹⁸, member of the football selection committee of the national team and brother of both prominent politician Emil Hațieganu and eugenicist doctor Iuliu Hațieganu. The Jews’ sport and football exclusion in Romania resembled similar contemporary measures taken in Nazi Germany

²¹⁴ “Juden aus den rumänischen Fußball-Teams ausgeschlossen?”, *Die Stimme. Jüdische Zeitung*, September 25, 1936, p. 8.

²¹⁵ Ladislau Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania. Destin istoric. The Jews of Transylvania. A Historical Destiny*, translated by Simona Făgărășanu (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român, 2004), p. 121.

²¹⁶ Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*, translated from Romanian by Charles Kormos (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1991), p. 176.

²¹⁷ Cristian Sandache, *Doctrina național-creștină în România* (The National-Christian Doctrine in Romania) (Bucharest: Editura Paideia, 1997), p. 54.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

(including Austria) and Hungary.²¹⁹ In the end, the Romanian anti-Semite legislation aligned to the Nazi pattern through Ion Gigurtu's government's passing in August 1940 of the racial laws, the Romanian equivalent of the Nuremberg Laws. According to them, "the Jews from the first and third category [the ones coming in Romania after 1918 and the beneficiaries of peace treaties after World War One, respectively] (...) could not be: (...) managers, members and players in the national sport associations".²²⁰

Ironically, among the victims of the institutionalized Romanianization was one of the most passionate promoters of this idea, Virgil Economu, organizer of the early Bucharest football activities, coach of the Romanian national team in 1939-1940 (his first tenure) and the most important theoretician and tactician of the interwar Romanian football, whose activity I will detail below. Virgil Economu was the only interwar Romanian national coach guided by the ideas of football Romanianization and centralization, already embraced during his activity as journalist and football author in the early 1930s.

Before analyzing Economu's ideas, a short overview on the coaches of the Romanian national team is required. The Romanian Sports Federations Union and, after 1930, the Romanian Football Federation always promoted ethnic Romanians as national managers, preferably from the Old Kingdom: Teofil Moraru, Costel Rădulescu, Adrian Suciu, Liviu Iuga, and Alexandru (Țane) Săvulescu. In an attempt to modernize the Romanian football, the Federation sometimes hired foreign coaches: Austrians Josef Uridill (1934) and Karl Wanna (1935), Scotsman Peter Farmer (1934-1935), and Hungarian Konrád Kálmán (1936-1937).

²¹⁹ Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the End of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941", in Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (eds), *Emancipation through Muscles. Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), pp. 156-68.

²²⁰ Lucian T. Butnaru, *Rasism românesc. Componenta rasială a discursului antisemit din România, până la Al Doilea Război Mondial* (Romanian Racism. The Racial Component of the anti-Semite Discourse in Romania until World War Two) (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2000), pp. 298-9.

However, each of these foreign coaches was always “doubled” by a Romanian manager from the ones mentioned above. In other cases, the Federation preferred a selection committee composed of five or six members, all ethnic Romanians, the oscillations between the sole coach and the selection committee being one of the most common features of interwar Romanian football, each change of vision being taken after a series of bad results of the national team.

When Economu was named sole coach of the Romanian team in 1939, his main program was the Romanianization of the team, in concordance with his previous ideas expressed in the early 1930s in the right-wing newspaper *Curentul* and also in his 1935 book *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (Football. Documentary and Critical Study):

I do not intend to hurt the most basic Romanian feelings by calling the [Romanian] team “national”. (...) We cannot say that the team is Romanian: the joy or the sadness after the final result will be revealed either with satisfaction or with excuses by the minority newspapers in Transylvania. And they really have a reason for doing this, because the team belongs to them, and it belongs to them entirely.²²¹

Since today the fight between the nations takes place on the sports ground, the time has come for the Romanian nation (*neam*) to be represented by its true sons in the international matches. One cannot conceive a Romanian representative team unless it is composed of elements whose integral spiritual education was conducted in the framework of a true Romanianism.²²²

Another stance of his activity regarded his Bucharest-centered vision of the Romanian football and national team. Initially, Economu kept the minority players within the squad. However, between March and July 1940 the national team achieved “the most Romanian” formula in the interwar years, with the majority of players being ethnic Romanians and coming from Bucharest clubs. Economu’s experiments at the helm of the national team ended with a shameful defeat versus Germany in a friendly match played in July 1940 and meant to express the alliance

²²¹ Virgil Economu, “Un vicleim ‘național’” (A ‘National’ Vicleim [Romanian Custom]), *Curentul*, October 3, 1932, p. 6.

²²² Virgil Economu, *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (Football. Documentary and Critical Study) (Bucharest: 1935), p. 36.

between Romania and Nazi Germany. The coach did not draft the ‘old guard’ of the minority players, the official motivation being tactical reasons, preferring instead to select several inexperienced ethnic Romanian players coming from Bucharest clubs, and the final result was disastrous: 3-9. “The game was imposed by Berlin. Hence, we had to obey. That was the thing back then. We arrived in Frankfurt [where the game took place] in the very middle of the English bombing”, Economu later explained.²²³ He was dismissed immediately, and soon afterwards lost both his job (he was an agronomist by profession) and his position within the Romanian Army because of his Jewish origins (while his father was a Greek who came to Romania from Greece, his mother was Jewish), as part of the anti-Semite legislation during the National-Legionary State and Ion Antonescu’s dictatorship. Thus, the promoter of Romanianization became the victim of his own ideas, which proved to be disastrous in football. Regarding Economu’s experiment and the frequent oscillations between the Romanian formula and the minority one, Mircea David, a former player in the national team at the time, noted:

[In 1938] a big turmoil was reigning at the Football Federation. Nobody knew what formula should be pulled off from the conjurer’s hat. In the end, after fiery discussions, it was decided that the national team should return to its old “pattern” [to be composed mainly of minority players]. (...)

[In the match against Germany in 1940,] we had the unfortunate inspiration to renounce the team forged in the fire of the [previous] fiery fights (...).²²⁴

First promoted by the Romanian press and then embraced by the public in the early 1930s, Romanianization in football became institutionalized at the end of the 1930s, in the political context characterized by official anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism. However, the regulations were hardly respected and, in fact, they were abandoned because of the negative

²²³ George Mihalache, “*Il Dio*” și “*diavolii*” din fața porții... *Amintirile lui Mircea David, fostul portar al echipei naționale de fotbal* (“Il Dio” and “The Devils” in Front of the Goal... The Memoirs of Mircea David, the Former Goalkeeper of the National Football Team) (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1979), p. 150.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 149-50.

results of the national team. At the beginning of the 1940s, Romanianization in football gained a delusive impetus through the unwanted political and territorial changes which took place in the summer and autumn of 1940, when Romania also entered World War Two, which I will detail below.

Conclusions. Thesis Findings and Towards a Communist Formula of Football Romanianization

I have shown in my thesis why and how the idea of football Romanianization appeared, developed and eventually failed in the interwar period, starting from the argued basis that the Romanian football national team symbolized from its very beginnings the nation itself in a political framework characterized by the replacement of “foreign” elites with ethnic Romanians, as part of the big issue of unifying the nation. I have also traced the conflict between the nation-building project and the ‘cosmopolitan’, if not Romanianless, entity of the national football team as it was expressed by prominent politicians and culture personalities like King Carol II, Nicolae Iorga, Camil Petrescu and Nichifor Crainic.

The above-mentioned relations of exclusion and inclusion emphasized by the discourse analysis of interwar newspapers are power relations, or reproductions of the sociopolitical domination in interwar Romania within the nation conceived mainly as an ethnic entity. “The Romanianization” (*românizarea*) of the national football team was demanded by reference to the larger framework of the official policy in which this was the trend. Any other scenario meant “fraud”, “imposture”, “mystification” and even “danger” for the Romanian state itself, hence the need either for “purge” and “purification”, or at least for a more fair ethnic distribution within the team. Not only was the press the guardian of an endangered Romanian state, but it also presented itself as the echo of public opinion. The criteria for exclusion or inclusion dealt with racist issues (“the sin inherent to the Hungarian race” opposed to “elements of our race” and “the Romanian race”) and with the level of the minorities’ commitment to Romanianness and

Romanian State (the ones with “centrifugal tendencies”, “who have interests abroad”, “the irredentists in Transylvania” opposed to the ones who possess a “verified”, “spiritual” Romanianness and “the Romanian Soul”, that is, “intruders” and “foreigners” in contrast with “loyal” ones), or in short, with the opposition between the pseudo-Romanians (“Romanians” ironically written between scare quotes or with a question mark) and “true Romanians” (primarily ethnic Romanians). Usually, neither the victories nor the defeats of the national team were Romanian due to squad’s ethnic composition, and a Romanian loss was more “honourable” than a minority victory, as Camil Petrescu decreed. In the few occasions when the team was “Romanian”, the discourse shifted to anti-regionalism and Bucharest centralism and maintained its critical stances.

On the one hand, the case study of the Romanian national football team is representative for the Romanian interwar understanding of the nation-building. On the other hand, this case study is a peculiar one due to its failed Romanianization and centralization, which were the official policies in Romania after the 1918 Great Union. Connected with the nation-building were the issues of national representation, modernization, homogenization and ethnic cleansing. Ideally, national representation had to have ethnicity as the main criterion. However, the special conditions in Romanian football led to certain strategies for achieving a more “equitable” formula of ethnic Romanians’ representation in the national team. With Transylvania being more urban and industrialized and having a solid sports culture, it was not only the Old Kingdom’s effort of catching-up to be underlined, but also the Old Kingdom’s benefits in terms of modernization. Under the direct surveillance of the Romanian Dynasty, the Romanian national team was built mainly on Transylvanian basis in terms of football clubs and players, while the shift to Old Kingdom (Bucharest) and Romanian ethnicity representation was a permanent

struggle. The Romanianization of the minority players' names and a set of restrictive laws and regulations were meant to homogenize the ethnic diversity of the national team and to attenuate the transnational image of the squad. At times, the consequences were dramatic: with a huge number of ethnic Hungarian players leaving to Hungary as part of the exodus in the 1920s, the national team could no longer be constituted. However, compromise and ambiguity were the key words in Romanian interwar football, irrespective of the criticism in the press. The cleavage between the personal national identities of players as Hungarians, Germans and so on, and the collective national identity of the team as Romanian was blurred by the players themselves, too little interested in such issues.

My thesis findings, when seen as part of a larger framework, concern four issues: 1) the Austro-Hungarian heritage within Greater Romania, 2) the lesser-known Romanianization discourse of some of the canonical figures of Romanian culture, 3) the surprising political implications of the football Romanianization campaign, involving King Carol II, and 4) the need for a reevaluation of the anti-Semite discourse of the interwar Romanian press.

As far as the first point is concerned, interwar football offered one of the clearest proofs of a solid Austro-Hungarian heritage within Greater Romania through the composition of the Romanian national football team, thus being part of the dichotomy between the Old Kingdom/ethnic Romanians and Transylvania/ethnic minorities. I have demonstrated how and explained why the national team was composed mainly of minority representatives (especially Hungarians and Germans) coming from the Transylvanian clubs throughout the interwar period, following Romanian football's development in the framework of the Austro-Hungarian paradigm. Statistically, there were only 25% ethnic Romanian players and also only 25% players from Old Kingdom (mainly Bucharest) clubs in the Romanian national team in the 1920s (see

Annex 1). Of the new players that were drafted for the national team in the 1930s, around half were ethnic Romanians and again around half were from Old Kingdom (mainly Bucharest) clubs (see *Annex 2*), figures which can be explained by the late centralizing and Romanianizing measures taken by the Romanian State and Romanian Football Federation in the 1930s. However, with most of the ethnic Romanian and Old Kingdom players having only meteoric international appearances, it was always the ‘old guard’ represented by minority players in Transylvania who composed the interwar national team, as shown in the examples throughout my thesis. The solidness of the Austro-Hungarian heritage in football can further be sustained by the failed interwar Romanianization, on the one hand, and by its late extension until the mid 1950s, on the other hand, as I will explain in the end of the conclusions.

The second point is that football Romanianization was embraced and promoted by large segments of the press, irrespective of their political standings. My research into interwar newspapers revealed the lesser-known stances of football Romanianization sustained by canonical figures of Romanian culture like Nicolae Iorga and Camil Petrescu.

The third point is about the surprising political implications of the football Romanianization campaign which involved King Carol II, who directly supervised the establishment and development of the national football team. As Prince Heir to the throne in the 1920s, he was interested in the new Romanian provinces’ integration into a national sports culture. As king in the 1930s however, he was involved in activities of football centralization and nationalization, and imposed his favourite politicians at the head of the Romanian Football Federation. One of the most surprising findings concerns King Carol II’s mass movement *Straja Țării*’s development from a governmental office whose initial mission was to control the ethnic

composition of the Romanian national football team representing the country abroad, a topic which needs to be further studied.

Fourthly, the level of the anti-Semite discourse of the Romanian interwar press has to be reevaluated because none of the newspapers which covered the football Romanianization debate targeted the Jewish players. Even the virulent anti-Semite newspapers directed by Octavian Goga, Nichifor Crainic or Nae Ionescu made no anti-Semite references when writing about football and the national team, despite the international Romanian players of Jewish origin (see *Annexes 1 and 2*). It was only the specific legislation of the mid and late 1930s which eventually influenced similar anti-Semite measures in football. This shows that the main target of the press in its Romanianization campaign was not the whole range of minorities, but only ethnic Hungarians coming from the Transylvanian “irredentist” clubs. On the one hand, Magyarized Jews were seen as Hungarian and treated as such, but the anti-Hungarian stance in football never had any anti-Semite dimension. On the other hand, the fierce anti-Hungarian standpoint can be explained by the specificities of the interwar political framework, namely the Romanian psychosis built on a real basis of Hungarian revisionist and irredentist ideas.

Romanianization in football would have been the logical consequence of the constant policy of interwar governments, but the Romanian national football team remained one of the last, if not the last national symbol in which Romanianization did not succeed. Despite the general view of the nation not as a civic reality, irrespective of the constitutional stipulations, but as an ethnic project in practice, Romanianization in football remained an issue never fully achieved throughout the interwar period.

A brief view on the post-1940 evolution of Romanian football will strengthen my conclusions. The August 1940 Vienna Dictate drastically changed Romania's borders and one of the consequences of the loss of Northern Transylvania to Hungary was that teams like CA Oradea (Nagyvárad AC) and CA Cluj (Kolozsvár AC) played in the Hungarian championship, where the former won the title in the 1943-1944 season and was the runner-up in the 1942-1943 season, while the latter obtained the third place in the 1943-1944 season. At the same time, their players, some of them already Romanian internationals, were drafted for the Hungarian national team (see also *Annexes 1 and 2*). Thus, the Romanian national team lost an important part of its Transylvanian basis, receiving instead a delusive impetus of Romanianization in the few matches played after Romania entered World War Two following its joining of the Axis Powers in autumn 1940, when the Romanian national championship was suspended. Composed mainly of ethnic Romanians coming from Bucharest clubs, the national team played only six friendly matches in five years, and only against Germany (losing again, 1-4 and 0-7) and its satellites Slovakia and Croatia. After the post-war territorial changes, with Northern Transylvania coming back to Romania, the national team instantly became again the 'appanage' of Transylvanian minorities and clubs from 1945 onwards. For example, Romania aligned the following team in its first match during the Communist People's Republic, 0-1 with Albania in Bucharest in 1948:

Robert Sadowsky (Ciocanul Bucharest), replaced during the match by Alexandru Marky (IT Arad) - Moise Vass (IT Arad), Zoltán Farmati (IT Arad) - Gheorghe Băcuț (IT Arad), Adalbert Páll (IT Arad), Iosif Petschowsky (IT Arad) - Adalbert Kovács (IT Arad), Bazil Marian (CFR Bucharest), László Bonyhádi (IT Arad), Iosif Stibinger (IT Arad), Petre Bădeanțu (CFR Timișoara).²²⁵

It was only in the mid-1950s that ethnic Romanians became the majority in the Romanian football national team. I think that the late accomplishment of Romanianization during the

²²⁵ "Romania National Team 1940-1949 - Details", <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/roem-intres40.html>, accessed May 15, 2012.

Communists' reign is strongly connected with the establishment of the two departmental clubs in the capital Bucharest, Steaua (associated with the Ministry of National Defense) and Dinamo (associated with the Ministry of the Interior), which permitted the decisive shift from Hungarian to Romanian players and from provincial to Bucharest clubs, as providers of the national team. The Communists' grass-roots policies, investments, and encouragement in football also played a decisive role. However, all these features need to be further studied in detail, in order to analyze the extent to which there was a continuity of Romanianization policies from the interwar years to the Communist period.

Annexes

Annex 1. The International Romanian Players and their Ethnicity (1922-1929)

Player's first selection	Player's name	Player's club(s)	Player's ethnicity
1922	1. Adalbert Ritter	Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	2. Alois Szilágyi	MTK Târgu Mureș	Hungarian
	3. Elemér Hirsch	CA Cluj, Universitatea Cluj	Hungarian Jew
	4. Dezső Jakobi (Dezideriu Jacobi)	Haggibor Cluj	Hungarian Jew
	5. Nicolae Hönigsberg	CA Oradea	Hungarian Jew
	6. Francisc Zimmermann	CA Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	7. Aurel Guga	Universitatea Cluj, Politehnica Timișoara, CAM Petroșani, Jiul Lupeni	Romanian
	8. Carol Frech	Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	9. Paul Schiller	Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	10. Ferenc Rónay	CA Oradea	Hungarian
	11. Ioan Auer (János Avar)	AMEFA Arad	German (Swabian)-Hungarian
	12. Alexandru Szatmári	CA Cluj	Hungarian
	13. József Bartha	Săruința Oradea, Chinezul Timișoara	Hungarian
	14. Sándor Kozovits	Unirea Timișoara, CA Timișoara	German Jew
	15. Emil Rigolo Koch	MTK Târgu Mureș	German
	16. Stanislas Micinski	Polonia Chernivtsi	Polish
	17. Adalbert Ströck (Albert Török) – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	Săruința Oradea, Fulgerul Chișinău	German (Swabian)-Hungarian
	18. Zoltán Drescher	CA Oradea	German (Swabian)-Hungarian

1923	19. Ion Halmos	Unirea Timișoara	Romanian
	20. Rudolf Wetzer – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	Unirea Timișoara, Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)- Hungarian Jew
	21. Mircea Stroescu	Colțea Bucharest	Romanian
	22. Károly Fuhrmann (Iuliu Fuhrmann) – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	AMEFA Arad	German (Swabian)- Hungarian
	23. Alexandru Leitner	Victoria Cluj	German Jew
	24. György Tóth-Bedő (Gheorghe Toth)	Chinezul Timișoara	Hungarian
	25. Mihai Tănzer (Mihály Táncos) – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	26. Rudolf Matek	Chinezul Timișoara	Czech-German (Swabian)
	27. József Szilágy	Unirea Timișoara	Hungarian
	28. Hans Paulini	Olympia Bucharest	Italian-German
	29. Dumitru Vesianu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	30. Atanasie Protopopescu	Tricolor Bucharest	Romanian-Greek
	31. Leopold Tritsch	Brașovia Brașov	German (Saxon)
	31. Tudor Florian	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	32. Mircea Teclu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	33. Adalbert Nuridschany (Nuridsany)	MTK Târgu Mureș	Armenian- Hungarian
	34. Oscar Robert Tritsch	Brașovia Brașov	German (Saxon)
	35. Isidor Gansl	Maccabi Chernivtsi	German (Austrian)- Hungarian Jew
	36. Iosif Klein	Polonia Chernivtsi	German Jew
	37. Samuel Deutsch	MTK Târgu Mureș	German Jew
	38. István Török (Ștefan Ströck)	CA Oradea	German (Swabian)- Hungarian
	39. Iacob Holz	Unirea Timișoara	German Jew
	40. Attila Molnár	Mureșul Târgu Mureș	Hungarian
1924	41. Nicolae Bonciocat	Universitatea Cluj	Romanian
	42. Ioan Kriesshoffer	Victoria Cluj	German
	43. Károly (Carol) Weichelt	SG Arad	German- Hungarian
	44. László Csillag	CA Oradea	Hungarian
	45. Imre (Emeric) Vogl	Chinezul Timișoara, Juventus Bucharest	Hungarian
	46. Adalbert Rössler	Chinezul Timișoara	German

1925	47. Augustin Semler	Chinezul Timișoara	German
	48. Iosif Killianovitz	Chinezul Timișoara, Fulgerul Chișinău, Jiul Lupeni	German Jew
	49. Svetozar Popović (Popovici)	Juventus Bucharest	Serbian (naturalized as Romanian citizen)
	50. Constantin Deleanu	Tricolor Bucharest	Romanian
	51. Alexandru Geller	Brașovia Brașov	German (Saxon)
	52. János (Ioan) Tóth	Brașovia Brașov	Hungarian
	53. Nicolae Czeh (Cseh)	Juventus Bucharest	Hungarian
	54. Iosif Brauchler	Juventus Bucharest	German Jew
	55. Alexandru Chifor	Victoria Cluj	Romanian
	56. Charles Kohler	Tricolor Bucharest	German-French Swiss (naturalized as Romanian citizen)
	57. Vasile Cipcigan	Victoria Cluj	Romanian
	58. Ferenc Székely	Stăruința Oradea	Hungarian
	59. Ioan Tesler	Chinezul Timișoara	German Jew
	60. Géza Nagy-Csomag	Stăruința Oradea	Hungarian
	61. Ioan Kiss	Colțea Brașov, Jiul Lupeni	Hungarian
	62. Nicolae Sternberg	Stăruința Oradea	German Jew
	63. Franz Fronio Kugelbauer	Maccabi Bucharest, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest	German Jew
	64. Ștefan Auer (István Avar) - <i>also played for Hungary</i>	AMEFA Arad, Colțea Brașov	German (Swabian)- Hungarian
	65. Nicolae Oțleanu	Sparta Bucharest	Romanian
	66. Adalbert Steiner	Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)
1926	67. Balázs (Blasius) Hoksary	Chinezul Timișoara	Hungarian
	68. Rudolf Steiner	Chinezul Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	69. Vilmos (William) Zombory	Chinezul Timișoara	Hungarian
	70. Pompei Lazăr	Universitatea Cluj	Romanian
	71. Pál (Paul) Teleki – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	Chinezul Timișoara	Hungarian
	72. József (Iosif) Magory	Gloria CFR Arad	Hungarian
	73. Ștefan Barbu	Olimpia Arad, Gloria CFR Arad	Romanian
	74. Grațian Sepi	Chinezul Timișoara, Banatul Timișoara,	Romanian

1927		România Cluj	
	75. Wilhelm Possack	CA Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	76. Adalbert Rech	UD Reșița	German (Swabian)
	77. Gheorghe Ciolac	Banatul Timișoara	Romanian
	78. Ludovic Raab	CA Timișoara	German (Swabian)
	79. Octav Stoian	Juventus Bucharest	Romanian
	80. Gyula (Iuliu) Madarász	Banatul Timișoara	Hungarian
	81. Nichita Rusen	Unirea Tricolor Bucharest	Romanian
	82. Mircea Nicolaescu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	83. Ferenc Boros	Colțea Brașov	Hungarian
	84. Alexandru Borbély (Borbil)	Juventus Bucharest	Hungarian
	85. Ilie Subășeanu	Olympia Bucharest	Romanian
	86. Vasile Cristescu	Juventus Bucharest	Romanian
	87. László (Ladislau) Raffinsky	Chinezul Timișoara, CA Timișoara	Hungarian
	88. Victor Giurgiu	Universitatea Cluj	Romanian
	89. Jean Lăpușneanu	Banatul Timișoara	Romanian
	90. József (Iosif) Czakó	UD Reșița	Hungarian
1928	91. Rudolf Bürger	Chinezul Timișoara	German
	92. Iuliu Borbély (Borbil)	Belvedere Bucharest	Hungarian
	93. Iulian Pop	Politehnica Timișoara	Romanian
	94. Emanoil Dumitrescu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	95. Béla Dezső (Adalbert Deșu)	UD Reșița	Hungarian
	96. Miklós Kovács (Nicolae Kovaci) – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	Banatul Timișoara	Hungarian
	97. Constantin Stanciu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	98. István (Ștefan) Czinczer	CA Oradea	Hungarian
1929			

* Note: I preferred to use the term “Hungarian Jew” instead of “Magyarized Jew” due to the fact that, as I showed in my thesis, the Magyarized Jews in Transylvania were assimilated as Hungarians and treated as such in the Romanian press.

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Annex 2. The International Romanian Players and their Ethnicity (1930-1939)

Player's first selection	Player's name	Player's club(s)	Player's ethnicity
1930	99. István (Ștefan) Dobay	Banatul Timișoara, Ripensia Timișoara	Hungarian
	100. Alfred Eisenbeisser Fried (Feraru)	Dragoș Vodă Chernivtsi, Venus Bucharest	German Jew
1931	101. Corneliu Robe	Olympia Bucharest	Romanian
	102. Adalbert Hrehuss	CA Timișoara	German Jew
	103. Petre Steinbach	Unirea Tricolor Bucharest	German
	104. Gheorghe Albu	Gloria Arad, Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	105. Radu Niculescu	Olympia Bucharest	Romanian
	106. Gheorghe Mureșanu	România Cluj	Romanian
	107. Andrei Glanzmann	CA Oradea	German (Swabian)
	108. Gyula (Iuliu) Bodola – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	CA Oradea, IAR Brașov, Venus Bucharest	Hungarian
	109. Elemér Kocsis (Kociș)	CA Oradea	Hungarian
	110. Samuel Zauber	Maccabi Bucharest	Romanian Jew
1932	111. Lazăr Sfera	Universitatea Cluj, Venus Bucharest	Romanian-Serbian
	112. Vasile Chiroiu	CFR Bucharest, Ripensia Timișoara, CA Oradea	Romanian
	113. József Moravetz (Morawetz)	RGM Timișoara	Czech-Hungarian
	114. Sándor (Alexandru) Elek Schwartz	Ripensia Timișoara	German-Hungarian Jew
	115. Eugen Lakatos	Ripensia Timișoara	Hungarian
	116. Adalbert Püllöck	Crișana Oradea	German
	117. Vasile Gain	Universitatea Cluj, Venus Bucharest	Romanian
1933	118. Rudolf Kotormány	Ripensia Timișoara	Hungarian
	119. Silviu Bindea	Ripensia Timișoara	Romanian
1934	120. Andrei Sepci	Universitatea Cluj	Romanian-Hungarian
	121. Petea (Petre) Vâlcov	Venus Bucharest	Gagauz
	122. Gyula (Iuliu) Barátky –	Crișana Oradea,	Hungarian

1935	<i>also played for Hungary</i>	Rapid Bucharest	
	123. Vasile Deheleanu	Ripensia Timișoara	Romanian
	124. Carol Burdan	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	125. Andrei Criza	România Cluj	Romanian
	126. Ion Zelenak	Chinezul Timișoara	Slovakian
	127. Augustin Juhász	CA Oradea	Hungarian
	128. Nicolae David	Universitatea Cluj	Romanian
	129. Anghel Crețeanu	Juventus Bucharest	Romanian
	130. Petre Sucitulescu	Unirea Tricolor Bucharest	Romanian
	131. Rudolf Demetrovics (Demetrovici)	Chinezul Timișoara, Venus Bucharest	German-Serbian
	132. Vintilă Cossini	CFR (Rapid) Bucharest	Italian-Romanian
	133. Alexandru Cuedan	CFR Bucharest	Romanian
	134. Nicolae Munteanu	România Cluj	Romanian
	135. Gheorghe Georgescu	CFR Bucharest	Romanian
	136. Lucian Gruin	Chinezul Timișoara	Romanian
	137. Cornel Bugariu	AMEFA Arad	Romanian
	138. Andrei Bărbulescu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	139. Andrei Szilárd	Chinezul Timișoara	Hungarian
	140. Zoltán Beke	Ripensia Timișoara	Hungarian
	141. Petre Rădulescu	Unirea Tricolor Bucharest	Romanian
	142. István (Ștefan) Klimek	ILSA Timișoara	Hungarian
	143. Zoltán Szaniszló – <i>also played for Hungary</i>	AMEFA Arad	Hungarian
1936	144. Dincă Schileru	Unirea Tricolor Bucharest	Romanian
	145. Dumitru Pavlovici	Ripensia Timișoara	Romanian
	146. Mircea David	CA Oradea, Venus Bucharest	Romanian
1937	147. Ștefan Dobra	Gloria Arad	Romanian
	148. Gheorghe Popescu	Sportul Studentesc Bucharest	Romanian
1938	149. Ioachim Moldoveanu	Rapid Bucharest	Romanian
	150. Iacob Felecan	Victoria Cluj	Romanian
	151. Arcadie Buibas	AMEFA Arad	Romanian
	152. Gheorghe Brandabura	Juventus Bucharest	Romanian
	153. Gheorghe Rășinaru	Rapid Bucharest	Romanian
	154. Silviu Ploșteanu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	155. Ionică Bogdan	Rapid Bucharest	Romanian
	156. Robert Sadowsky	AMEFA Arad	Polish
	157. Nicolae Iordăchescu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	158. Traian Iordache	Unirea Tricolor	Romanian

1939		Bucharest	
	159. Gyula (Iuliu) Iosif Prassler	AMEFA Arad	German (Swabian)-Hungarian
	160. Cornel Orza	Venus Bucharest	American Romanian
	161. Adalbert Marksteiner (Marcu) - <i>also played for Hungary as Béla Marosvári</i>	Ripensia Timișoara	German
	162. Nicolae Reuter	CAM Timișoara	German
	163. Iosif Slivas	AMEFA Arad	Greek
	164. Iosif Lengheriu	Rapid Bucharest	Romanian
	165. Ion Lupaș	Tricolor Ploiești, Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	166. Alexandru Negrescu	Venus Bucharest	Romanian
	167. Ilie Oană	Juventus Bucharest	American Romanian
	168. Francisc Spielmann – <i>also played for Hungary as Ferenc Sárvári</i>	UD Reșița	German

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Rec. Sport. Soccer Statistics Foundation. “Romania National Team 1930-1939 – Details”. <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/r/roem-intres30.html> (accessed December 19, 2011).

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Memoirs of Mircea David, the Former Goalkeeper of the National Football Team). Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1979.

Annex 3. Sports Associations (Clubs) Registered in Romania in 1934

Sport	Number of sports associations (clubs) registered
Football	403*
Tennis	52
Winter sports	52
Boxing	40
Swimming	37
Wrestling	22
Gymnastics	21
Athletics	17
Ski	16
Table tennis	16
Fencing	14
Equestrianism	13
Rugby	10
Ice skating	10
Basketball	8
Volleyball	8
Cycling	7
Rowing	7
Shooting	4
Total	749**

Notes:

* In the following year, 1935, there were 500 football clubs registered.

** Some clubs had not only one, but two or more sports disciplines.

Source:

Manuşaride, Chiriac, Ghemigean, Chevorc. *Aproue totul despre fotbal* (Almost Everything about Football), 2nd ed. Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1986.

Annex 4. The Football Map of Romania in 1935:

Clubs' Distribution by Region

The League	Number of clubs	The most important football centre(s)	Number of clubs
<i>Liga de Sud</i> (Southern League: Wallachia and Dobrudja)	183	Bucharest	65
<i>Liga de Centru</i> (Central League: Central Transylvania)	75	Braşov Sibiu	
<i>Liga de Vest</i> (Western League: Banat and Oltenia)	122	Timișoara Arad	37 32
<i>Liga de Nord</i> (Northern League: North-West of Transylvania)	58	Oradea Cluj	
<i>Liga de Est</i> (Eastern League: Moldavia, Bukovina and Bessarabia)	62		

Source:

Economu, Virgil. *Football. Studiu documentar și critic* (Football. Documentary and Critical Study). Bucharest: 1935.

Annex 5. The Champions of Romania between 1921 and 1940

Season	Champion
1921-1922	Chinezul Timișoara
1922-1923	Chinezul Timișoara
1923-1924	Chinezul Timișoara
1924-1925	Chinezul Timișoara
1925-1926	Chinezul Timișoara
1926-1927	Chinezul Timișoara
1927-1928	Colțea Brașov
1928-1929	Venus Bucharest
1929-1930	Juventus Bucharest
1930-1931	UD Reșița
1931-1932	Venus Bucharest
1932-1933	Ripensia Timișoara
1933-1934	Venus Bucharest
1934-1935	Ripensia Timișoara
1935-1936	Ripensia Timișoara
1936-1937	Venus Bucharest
1937-1938	Ripensia Timișoara
1938-1939	Venus Bucharest
1939-1940	Venus Bucharest

Sources:

Ionescu, Mihai, Tudoran, Mircea. *Fotbal de la A la Z. Fotbalul românesc de-a lungul anilor* (Football from A to Z. Romanian Football along the Years). Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1984.

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Annex 6. The Football Map of Romanian *Divizia A*:

Teams' Regional Distribution in the First League during 1932 and 1940

Season	Teams from Transylvania	Teams from the Old Kingdom	Teams from Bessarabia and Bukovina
1932-1933 (14 teams)	10 teams (Ripensia Timișoara, Crișana Oradea, Gloria CFR Arad, România Cluj, Șoimii Sibiu, Universitatea Cluj, CA Oradea, AMEFA Arad, RGM Timișoara, Brașovia Brașov)	4 teams (CFR Bucharest, Tricolor Ploiești, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest, Venus Bucharest)	-
1933-1934 (16 teams)	11 teams (Crișana Oradea, Universitatea Cluj, AMEFA Arad, Chinezul Timișoara, Brașovia Brașov, Ripensia Timișoara, CA Oradea, România Cluj, Gloria CFR Arad, Mureșul Târgu Mureș, Șoimii Sibiu)	5 teams (Venus Bucharest, CFR Bucharest, Tricolorul Ploiești, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest, Juventus Bucharest)	-
1934-1935 (12 teams)	8 teams (Ripensia Timișoara, CA Oradea, Universitatea Cluj, Chinezul Timișoara, România Cluj, Crișana Oradea, Gloria Arad, AMEFA Arad)	4 teams (Venus Bucharest, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest, CFR Bucharest, Juventus Bucharest)	-
1935-1936 (12 teams)	8 teams (Ripensia Timișoara, AMEFA Arad, CA	4 teams (Juventus Bucharest, Venus Bucharest,	-

	Oradea, Gloria Arad, Crișana Oradea, Chinezul Timișoara, Victoria Cluj, Universitatea Cluj)	CFR Bucharest, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest)	
1936-1937 (12 teams)	8 teams (Ripensia Timișoara, AMEFA Arad, Victoria Cluj, CA Oradea, Gloria Arad, Chinezul Timișoara, Universitatea Cluj, Crișana Oradea)	4 teams (Venus Bucharest, Rapid Bucharest, Juventus Bucharest, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest)	-
1937-1938 (20 teams)	13 teams (AMEFA Arad, Victoria Cluj, Chinezul Timișoara, Phoenix Baia Mare, CA Oradea, Jiul Petroșani, Olimpia-CFR Satu Mare, Ripensia Timișoara, Gloria Arad, Universitatea Cluj, Vulturii Textila Lugoj, Crișana Oradea, Aripile-CFR Brașov)	6 teams (Rapid Bucharest, Unirea Tricolor Bucharest, Dacia Unirea Brăila, Venus Bucharest, Juventus Bucharest, Sportul Studențesc Bucharest)	1 team (Dragoș Vodă Chernivtsi)
1938-1939 (12 teams)	7 teams (Ripensia Timișoara, AMEFA Arad, UD Reșița, Victoria Cluj, Carpați Baia Mare, Chinezul Timișoara, Gloria Arad)	5 teams (Venus Bucharest, Rapid Bucharest, Juventus Bucharest, Sportul Studențesc Bucharest, Tricolor-CFPV Ploiești)	-
1939-1940 (12 teams)	6 teams (UD Reșița, CAM Timișoara, Ripensia Timișoara, Carpați Baia Mare, AMEFA Arad, Victoria Cluj)	6 teams (Venus Bucharest, Rapid Bucharest, Sportul St. Bucharest, Unirea Tr. Bucharest, Gloria CFR Galați, Juventus Bucharest)	-

Source:

Rec. Sport. Soccer Statistics Foundation. "Romania Final League Tables".
<http://www.rsssf.com/tables/roemhist.html> (accessed May 5, 2012).

Index of Political and Cultural Personalities

Involved in the Football Romanianization Campaign

Carol II (1893-1953). King of Romania (1930-1940). He directly oversaw the establishment and development of the Romanian national football team, first as Prince Heir to the throne, then as King. He imposed in the 1930s his favourite politicians at the head of the Romanian Football Federation. His mass movement *Straja Țării* (“The Sentinel of the Motherland”) evolved in the late 1930s from an office meant to control the national football team’s ethnic composition.

Crainic, Nichifor (1889-1972). Writer, philosopher, university professor. He was one of the theoreticians of the interwar Romanian extreme right through his traditionalist and anti-Semitic views. His newspaper *Calendarul* promoted the football Romanianization campaign, topic which Crainic himself wrote about in the 1930s.

Davila, Theodor (1886-1941). Colonel, son of the renowned playwright Alexandru Davila, and the Ford representative for Romania. Member of the selection committee of the national football team, he was also vice-president of the Romanian Football Federation, both in the 1930s. He died in World War Two, during the battle for Odessa.

Economu, Virgil (1896-1978). Agronomist, journalist, football author. The first national coach to put into practice a Romanianization agenda in the late 1930s, he is considered one of the most important theoreticians and tacticians in the Romanian football. He was among the victims of the anti-Semitic laws from 1940 onwards.

Froda, Scarlat (Solomon Weitzendorf) (1899-1964). Playwright, translator, journalist of Jewish origin. Former university colleague with Nae Ionescu, he directed the leftist newspaper *Rampa*, which embraced the football Romanianization campaign in the 1920s.

Goga, Octavian (1881-1938). Poet, academician, extreme right politician, Prime Minister (1937-1938). His daily *Țara Noastră* promoted football Romanianization in the 1930s. As Prime Minister, he initiated a series of anti-Semitic laws.

Hațieganu, Eugen (?-1958). Lawyer, brother of national peasantist politician and minister Emil Hațieganu and of eugenicist doctor Iuliu Hațieganu. Member of the selection committee of the national football team, he was among the promoters of Romanianization. He was killed by the *Securitate* after he was released from the Communist prison.

Ionescu, Nae (1890-1940). Philosopher, logician, university professor. He was one of the theoreticians of the interwar Romanian extreme right through his *Trăirism* and anti-Semitic views. He was the director of the newspaper *Cuvântul*, which promoted the football Romanianization.

Iorga, Nicolae (1871-1940). Historian, literary critic, university professor, academician, Prime Minister (1931-1932). He wrote in the 1930s in his daily *Neamul Românesc* about the minority

players which composed the Romanian national football team. He was killed by an Iron Guard commando.

Leucuția, Aurel (1894-1964). National peasantist politician, minister of the National Economy in the 1940s. He was the first president of the Romanian Football Federation (1930-1933). A close ally of Iuliu Maniu, who was his uncle, he died shortly after he was released from the Communist prison.

Marinescu, Gabriel (1886-1940). General, politician, prefect of Bucharest police, minister of the Interior and minister of the Public Order in the 1930s, one of the most influential members of the royal camarilla of King Carol II. President of the Romanian Football Federation (1936-1940), he was also the owner of the club Venus Bucharest. He was killed by members of the Iron Guard while being imprisoned in Jilava, in the same night as Nicolae Iorga.

Petrescu, Camil (1894-1957). Writer, playwright, journalist, founder of the modern Romanian novel. He was the most prominent among the promoters of football Romanianization, issue which he wrote about in the 1930s either in Octavian Goga's *Țara Noastră* or in his own periodical *Foot-ball*.

Șeicaru, Pamfil (1894-1980). Journalist. He was the director of *Curentul*, the newspaper which fiercely sustained football Romanianization in the 1930s. He left the country after the Communists' takeover.

Tilea, Viorel Virgil (1896-1972). Politician, member of the National Peasantist Party, and then of the Romanian Front. One of the closest allies of Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, he became a political adversary of his uncle, Iuliu Maniu, as the initiator of the young wing *Chemarea* ("The Calling") of the National Peasantist Party. President of the Romanian Football Federation (1933-1936), he was named by King Carol II Romania's minister in London in the late 1930s. He never returned to Romania and died in London.

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