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The Revolution of the Black Diamond Republic: Negotiating Socialism and Autonomy in the Jiu Valley, 1918–1919

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Abstract

Scholars frequently portray the end of the Habsburg Monarchy as driven by nationalist revolutions in the provinces. The experience of the Jiu Valley, Transylvania's largest coal basin, demonstrates that nationalism was neither the only basis for revolution nor the most popular in all parts of the province. The multiethnic working class of Jiu embraced revolution as a response to state failures to provide basic services in a worsening wartime economy, even as state demand for coal rose. The miners created the Black Diamond Republic in October 1918 as Austro-Hungarian armies collapsed in an effort to actively negotiate their status after the war. The miners embraced revolution not as a bid for independence or ethnic secession but as a means to maintain local union power and negotiate the conditions of their inclusion in either Romania or Hungary. While “Romanian” and “Hungarian” councils were formed, such identities in Jiu were also linked to occupation (worker, peasant, or intellectual) rather than clear definitions of ethnicity.

Keywords: Habsburg Empire; everyday nationalism; nationalism from below; local nationalism; social movements; revolution; class; Eastern Europe

In October 1918, the miners of the Jiu Valley¹ declared the “Black Diamond Republic,” a republic of and for coal miners who would meld socialism and local traditions of ethnic relations.² Autumn 1918 was a revolutionary moment for Transylvania, with the promise of dramatic change as Hungary transformed from a Habsburg crownland to a nation-state and the Kingdom of Romania sought to unite with neighboring regions. Historiographies focusing on these national projects have overlooked multiple local efforts within Transylvania to seize the revolutionary moment—and to negotiate class, ethnic, and occupational identities in relation to one another. “[I]f we combine Romanian national colors and Hungarian national colors,” the Jiu revolutionaries proclaimed, “we will get white, white for peace” (*Zsilvölgye*, “Román Nemzeti,” November 23, 1918, 3).

Ethnic identities in Jiu were embedded in a local tradition of socialism that emphasized the importance of coal and industrialization to a modern state and thus the miners' right to a good life as they powered prosperity for all (see Glont 2015, *passim*). This tradition had emerged within the larger networks and conversations of Hungarian Social Democracy before 1918 and eschewed the more radical Communist and Bolshevik revolutionary dialogue of autumn 1918. Jiu revolutionaries recognized class and ethnic difference but promoted unity through consensus building and representative democracy while emphatically supporting private property of the means of production. The end of the Great War was an opportunity to fundamentally change discourses of peace, humanitarianism, and inclusion (on this see Gorman 2012; Sluga 2013) and this extended to the

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grassroots level. The revolutionary miners did not seek a radical social and economic revolution but autonomy at the local level that would allow the miners—and company leaders—to define their own community even as they contributed to the economic welfare of the wider state and society.

In examining the 1918 revolution in Jiu, this article does not propose replacing the nationality-based readings of 1918 with a solely class-based interpretation. Romanian historians since the 1960s have argued that organized labor in the province had rallied for the unification of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania.³ The striking workers thus represented a key element in communist-era Romanian historiography: the creation of a Romanian national discourse with authentic worker credentials.⁴ This well represented the priorities of the regime, but was facile in its representation of workers themselves. Nor was this approach limited to communist Romania; the interwar Romanian press and historians in communist Hungary similarly ascribed a nationalist intent to the 1918 Transylvanian strikes, though this time in support of their own national projects.⁵ Rejecting the primacy of ethnic categories does not obliterate them but rather highlights how national claims and counterclaims are embedded in discourses of class, local cooperation, or socialism (see also Brubaker et al. 2006).

The miners' approaches to national and ethnic belonging were complex and sometimes contradictory, often expressed relationally to their commitment to socialism or embedded in their occupational identity. The mutability of the miners' national affiliations and their situational allegiances support some of the conceptual framework offered by the literature on "national indifference," especially in the Habsburg Empire. National indifference frames how individuals refused to be ethnically categorized, changed national allegiances on a situational basis, and/or offered inconsistent commitment to projects of national identity (Zahra 2008; Judson 2016). However, as Jakub Beneš and Gábor Egry argue, national indifference was an accusation leveled by middle-class activists against peasants and the working classes. Adopting the concept as a category of analysis overlooks the ways that working class communities articulated and lived their own understanding of national belonging (Beneš 2017, 11–12, 54–56; Egry 2019, 142–148). Caught between two national projects with strong political goals in 1918, the socialist revolutionaries of Jiu possessed their own, local understanding of what ethnicity meant—but were willing to negotiate inclusion into a larger national project while simultaneously stressing an occupational, working-class identity.

The Black Diamond Republic complicates the story of 1918 in Transylvania. The end of the war represented a moment of revolutionary openness, one in which *any revolution seemed possible*. Grasping what the inhabitants of the Jiu Valley attempted to achieve in their short-lived republic highlights the importance of labor history in studying the downfall of the Habsburg monarchy and emergence of the successor nation-states. Looking to the story of the Jiu Valley, like myriad other local efforts that sought to use the revolutionary moment to make a new future, is a means to rethink existing narratives of the Hungarian borderlands' revolution (see van Duin 2009; Beneš 2017). The Jiu Valley's short-lived experiment with autonomy emphasizes the ways that local experience interacted with politics and identities mediated in Budapest and Bucharest and the slow failure of the Austro-Hungarian state. The wealth of possibility perceived in 1918 and the Jiu Valley's enthusiasm for autonomy highlights that the creation of Greater Romania was more fraught and less an inevitable triumph of long-standing Romanian aspirations. Romanian National Councils in Transylvania united in hopes for regional autonomy in the new state, not an unconditional unification.

Transylvania and the Negotiations of 1918

The Habsburg economy and state administration in Transylvania were near collapse by the end of the First World War, creating the space for revolution. The bureaucracy was increasingly unable to keep cities and the countryside in supply or to maintain order in the face of protests. The triumph of nationalist movements as the empire's armies faltered and the troops started returning to their

homes is widely accepted both in English-language historiography and the national historiographies of the successor states (Miller and Morelon 2019, 3). Desertion rates increased even as the High Command diverted troops from the front to suppress the growing number of protests (Plaschka, Haselsteiner, and Suppan 1974, 59–106, 159–277). The consensus in the literature is that the failure of the state to provide basic services led to the empowerment of nationalist (or later, in Hungary and Croatia, communist) movements that tore the empire apart (Judson 2016; King 2002; Zahra 2008). Thus the July and October 1918 strikes in Transylvania, part of a sweeping series of workers' protests throughout Habsburg Transylvania and the wider Empire, also wind up enmeshed in national narratives (Plaschka, Haselsteiner, and Suppan 1974, 35).

The shattering of the Habsburg state created space for both Leninist ideas brought back from Russia by former prisoners of war (Newman 2010) and Wilsonian aspirations for national homelands (Cornwall 2011). In industrial cities such as Bratislava, where reformist socialists came to preeminence through the wartime policies of the state, historians emphasize the fracturing of Social Democracy along ethnic lines (van Duin 2009, 163–164). The Great War deepened national fault lines in the Austro-Hungarian army, which had been one of the unifying institutions of the Empire. The pressure of war strengthened ethnic bonds among soldiers, and when demobilized they returned with this national vision (Kučera 2013). The rich literature on the union between Transylvania and Romania understandably focuses on the nationalist triumph or disaster it represented for Romanians or Hungarians.⁶

Established scholarship has also emphasized how workers were faced with rising prices, endemic profiteering and continued state demands to increase production. Cities especially became increasingly chaotic after May 1918, as wildcat work stoppages proliferated over issues ranging from the shortage of food to demands the military release union members arrested in the course of these strikes (Geml 1924, 65; Kertész 1929, 9–16; Erényi et al. 1956, 45–46). If these were the immediate motives for the strikes that swept Transylvania in September and early October, observers at the time could misperceive those motives, particularly from the remove of Budapest. The influential analysis of Oscar Jászi (later the Minister of Nationalities in the short lived coalition Hungarian government of 1918 led by Liberals and Social Democrats) started a historiographic trend that continues to today: that throughout the summer of 1918, but especially in October, the provinces were beset by politically aimless if destructive *jacqueries* (Jászi 1924, 41–43; Mócsy 1974, 85; Romsics 2002, 105). During the 1950s and 1960s, historians in Hungary cast the strikes as an anti-Habsburg prelude to the Aster Revolution that created the First Hungarian Republic (Hajdu 1954, 246–48; Tökes 1967, 46–47).

From the provincial perspective, the motivations are clear: the state had failed in its responsibility to provide for its citizens. People demanded that this be redressed or they would take up the responsibility themselves at the local level. In several cities, such as Timișoara, the Social Democratic unions joined with local authorities and took over administrative tasks traditionally performed by local representatives of the ministries in Budapest. (Geml 1924, 100–145). This coalition of local authorities and workers further took administrative responsibility for social welfare benefits previously managed by large enterprises. The new city council organized its own police force to assure order, distributed food, and set price ceilings (Geml 1924, 89–93). This was also the case very early in October in Cluj, although in this case local chapters of the Hungarian and Romanian national councils had turned their focus to the debate over which national state Transylvania should be incorporated into by the end of the month (see Kertész 1929, 11–14).

The National Councils, both Romanian and Hungarian, represented simultaneous attempts to further national agendas but also to centralize political power. The *Magyar Nemzeti Tanács* (Hungarian National Council, hereafter MNT) emerged as the interim government of Hungary following the Aster Revolution in Budapest. Over October 28–30 protesters seized the capital, deposed Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle, and assassinated former Prime Minister István Tisza—widely perceived to be responsible for the continuation of the war. The MNT, led by Count Mihály Károlyi, was a coalition of Liberals, Social Democrats, and Oscar Jászi's socialist-inspired National

Civic Radical Party. In Hungary's eastern borderlands, it competed with the *Consiliul Național Român* (Romanian National Council, hereafter CNR), founded on October 30–31 in Budapest by members of the Social Democratic Party of Romanians and the Romanian National Party. By early November, the CNR had moved to Arad and sought from Budapest the sovereignty of Transylvania. Both the MNT and the CNR offered not just national projects but similar political visions of some ethnic minority rights, agrarian reform, the expansion of social welfare, and universal male suffrage.⁷ However, where the CNR offered little but promises for minority rights within the future state, the MNT, due to Jászi's position as a minister of nationalities, had a far more comprehensive plan. Jászi was hoping to follow the Swiss example and suggested a three-pronged strategy, based on a plebiscite to determine border, maintaining the infrastructure connecting Hungary to its former territories, and future federalization with full autonomy for each of the nations along the Danube (Jászi 1924, 57–58). The idea of federalization and the promise of determining borders through a plebiscite both seemed to shift power toward the local level, creating a space for communities to believe they could negotiate their belonging and the terms of their inclusion into a state. In the context of Romanian and Hungarian states that had sought ever-stronger centralization in the late 19th century, Jászi offered a voice to people who had been disenfranchised and actively prevented from unionizing. In contrast, the CNR offered a vision of overall Transylvanian autonomy that would provide ethnic recognition but not federalization (Swanson 2001, 61).

With administrative power in Transylvania having devolved to the local level over September–October 1918, both National Councils adopted similar strategies to appeal to local authorities. In a Transylvania where local councils increasingly ran local administration, organized armed guards, and distributed provisions, the MNT and CNR encouraged local councils to become affiliates and support their respective political agendas and leaders. In areas with a power vacuum, they sent organizers to create local chapters of the National Councils (for the latter, see Egrý in Miller and Morelon 2019, 19). The history of the councils in the Jiu Valley suggests, however, that while councils did affiliate with the national movements, this was not always an unconditional and unambiguous acceptance of ethnic belonging. Local chapters of Romanian and Hungarian National Councils as shown below could share members and jointly set negotiating points with the larger organizations. The negotiations of 1918 between the Jiu Valley, Budapest, and Arad reflected locals' efforts to strategically negotiate socialist goals.

Establishing the Black Diamond Republic

The Jiu Valley follows this same Austro-Hungarian pattern where the breakdown of the central state in 1918 leads to a local coalition government. However, in Jiu, that coalition was created between mining unions and the mining companies' local officials. Unions in the Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary had been tolerated at best and frequently ordered to disband, but were established regardless in the valley in the 1880s and forged strong links both with the *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt* (the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, hereafter MSZDP) and the Union of Mining Workers of Hungary long before formal legalization in January–March 1918 (Erényi et al. 1956, 134–135; *Népszava*, January 12, 1918, 4). József Csiszér, one of the central figures in creating the Black Diamond Republic, had come to Jiu as one of these links—sent from the Budapest headquarters of the *Bánya- és Kohómunkások Országos Szövetségének* (National Union of Mine and Smelter Workers, hereafter BKOS) to coordinate policy (*Minerul*, September 15, 1922, 2). By 1918, he had risen to the head of the mining union at the Lupeni mine.

The unions' assumption of power was not completely unexpected. In 1917 the local military garrison was reinforced by an infantry battalion after local authorities warned that the (then still illegal) unions were on the cusp of taking control of the area: “the situation is critical and [the Mining Administrators] are in great danger” (Iványi 1960, 196, 470). Despite the disruption in communications stemming from Habsburg economic collapse at the end of the war, the Jiu Valley mining union kept its connections with the both the MSZDP and the central offices of the BKOS

(*Népszava*, December 18, 1918, 5–6). The union was among the few organizations that wielded accepted authority over the increasingly embittered miners of the Jiu Valley, and the only institution that could convince them to continue work amidst the rising number of wildcat strikes across Hungary, much the same reason the Social Democrats had been included in the new government in Budapest (Swanson 2001, 49). The union leadership, in particular József Csiszér and János Szedlácsek, emerged as a key motivator in the emergence of a revolutionary council in the Jiu Valley—one that would also encompass mining directors, local state administrators, and local notables such as the Greek Catholic priest Károly Kiss.

The miners' participation in local administration gradually expanded over the month of September, starting with electing representatives to the mining companies' provisioning office that secured supplies of food and other basic necessities. When local state officials could not obtain work boots and clothing, the unions sent their own representatives to other cities, using the companies' funds to make good the shortfalls.⁸ In this context, Mining Director General Johann Winklehner (the former commander of the miners' battalions) sought to preserve the status quo throughout September and early October 1918 with diminishing success. Wartime drafts had left only 24 Hungarian gendarmes to police some 20,000 inhabitants, supplemented by military garrisons (Lungu et al. 1968, 111). Winklehner had enjoyed clear and effective state backing for much of 1917 (consisting of both food and troops), but his efforts to keep administration of work schedules and supply lines in the hands of mining company functionaries suffered significantly from the breakdown of the state. The remaining Habsburg troops in the Jiu Valley were moved some 30 km outside the valley to guard the Surduk Pass between Transylvania and the Kingdom of Romania. Winklehner thus suffered a gradual erosion of his power, reduced to attempts to withhold pay and access to heating coal. Since the coal towns were company towns, Winklehner could conceivably have evicted trade unionists from their housing, but such action would have required more gendarmes than those available. His threats to block access to the company stores or to heating coal were nullified by the chaotic state of the economy: few goods were available for purchase, and the workers already pilfered coal from the mines and company stocks.⁹

Winklehner's efforts on behalf of the state and the parent company set him against the increasingly restive miners. As the balance of power in local administration shifted, the unions were increasingly responsible for maintaining local order and guaranteeing rights. The final collapse of the Austro-Hungarian army in October 1918 created a power vacuum even as the most active labor organizers began to return from the front. In fear for his life, in early October the director asked for protection from local union leaders Csiszér and János Szedlácsek. Csiszér reportedly assured him "that the workers will not touch him, for they are not wild beasts" (*Minerul*, February 28, 1923, 1). Contrasting the "good nature" of Social Democracy with the "rapacious nature" of the bourgeoisie, the union newspaper *Minerul* later emphasized that while Winklehner sought to oppress the workers and prevent their unionization during the Black Diamond Republic, the workers behaved like socialists, not "Bolsheviks." "They harmed none, though they had the power and could have proceeded as they liked" (*Minerul*, February 28, 1923, 1). Revolutionaries in Jiu sought to peacefully establish a stable structure in which power would be shared between several constituencies.

Consequently, under the leadership of the Mining Union, in the beginning of October all seven towns of the Jiu Valley set up councils that united mining union representatives, members of the local mining administration, and municipal authorities. The councils increasingly coordinated efforts to secure supplies and maintain coal production. By October 10, an overarching council was set up in Petroșani with an enforcement arm, the Guard.¹⁰ This was an effort to concretely establish a Social Democratic local regime: the executive leadership of the *Petrozsényi Nemzeti Tanács / Consiliul Național Petroșani* (Petroșani National Council; hereafter, PNT/CNP) and the city councils were drawn from the unions. The chair of the PNT/CNP was Szedlácsek, the miner's union president. Council membership however, included representatives from the larger ethnic groups in the Valley and representatives of each social class: ethnic Romanians, Germans,

Hungarians, and a single Slovak representative, with occupations ranging across lawyer, mining engineer, civil servant, and doctor (*Zsilvölgye*, “Kik Vagyunk,” November 23, 1918, 1). Considering PNC/CNP membership, the term national was not meant to be descriptive but rather to indicate international legitimacy. The miners were well aware of the importance of Wilsonian principles and positioned themselves with an eye to the peace treaties negotiations, as explained further below.

The villages in Jiu similarly organized councils on November 7, affiliated with the Romanian National Council in Arad. A Romanian National Guard was similarly established to patrol in the villages, while the Workers’ Guard would patrol in the cities (Rus 2013, 542). This apparent ethnic division of the valley, however, breaks down on closer scrutiny. Ethnic Romanian villagers in the valley created the local national council not simply out of ethnic loyalty but given distrust of the miners. The local peasantry had largely been excluded from the economy of the mines—which had moreover been built on land expropriated from them—and relations between the two groups were rarely warm. Political and ethnic division in the Jiu Valley in 1918 was shaped by occupational identity and employer. Ethnically Romanian peasants and their priests strongly resented the loss of their land to mining and miners’ preferential access to food and benefits. Town dwellers—whether workers, functionaries, or shopkeepers—looked down on the peasantry whether or not they shared an ethnicity (Glont 2015, 90–93). The animosity between the miners and peasantry could be expressed in ethnic terms—for example, that a peasant was a “stinking Romanian”—even if in other circumstances the miner would identify as a Romanian. Everyday ethnicity could thus be performed in the context of social group and class belonging. Such expressions of everyday ethnicity, however, could also be disrupted: some ethnic Romanians chose to serve simultaneously in the Romanian National Guard *and* the Workers’ Guard (Rus 2013). Apparent division between the Romanian National Council in Petroșani (which emerged as the councils’ central body) and the PNT/CNP is belied in part by the fact that both included the urban ethnic Romanian intelligentsia who were closely connected to the mines.

By early November the two Councils had assumed nearly all of the functions of the state in the Jiu Valley (Hajdu 1954, 250). The councils held joint meetings under President Szedlacsek of the PNT/CNP and two vice-presidents—one Hungarian, one Romanian (Stanca 1935, 290). In later memoirs and speeches, Csizsér and Romanian Social Democratic leader Nicoale Deleanu would refer to this period as “the revolution” (*Minerul*, February 1, 1920, 1; Deleanu 1932, 45).¹¹ The newly founded revolutionary newspaper of the Republic, *Zsilvölgye* would similarly refer to the “Jiu Valley Socialist Republic.” But union leaders took some pains to establish that their republic was not a communist revolution, though the editors and contributors were careful with their words. The editors openly declared support for both the Social Democratic Party and Jászi’s vision of federalization and expanded rights (presented at length in the first issue). Yet they never use the word communism, even when the Hungarian Communist Party (*Kommunisták Magyarországi Pártja*, or KMP) is established on November 24, 1918. This is significant given that some of its founding members had been labor organizers in the Jiu Valley and were connected with local activists. Most notably, in 1913 the local gendarmerie had banned Béla Kun from setting foot in the valley for life due to labor agitation and his efforts to further expand local unions (*Népszava*, March 6, 1913, 10). Kiss, Csizsér, and Szedlacsek’s efforts to keep the more radical communists at arm’s length was implicit in their emphasis on private property and frequent mentions of the Social Democrats and Jászi.

Zsilvölgye ran weekly articles defining proper socialism and how the revolutionary council in the Jiu Valley followed these principles. Both Csizsér and Szedlacsek penned pieces on the feasibility of a Hungarian-wide socialist republic and on the local realization of socialism—an implementation that was, both stressed, neither going to seize all property or control over the means of production nor violent. Establishing a Workers’ Guard to keep order insured “that no one here has even one hair ruffled, that work was not suspended here even for one hour, that the miners *not for a moment ceased to work in the interests of the country*” [emphasis in original] (*Zsilvölgye*, “Kik Vagyunk,” November 23, 1918, 1). Publishing their program in *Zsilvölgye*, the council emphasized their

concern for “the safety of life and property” (*Zsilvölgye*, “Kik Vagyunk,” November 23, 1918, 1–2). The PNT/CNP stated that their new program secured local “socialist-republican” traditions: honesty, sincerity, hard work, and guaranteeing the steady supply of coal. The Austrian Empire founded the Jiu Valley coal towns in the 1850s to fuel both new industrial concerns and the railroads in Transylvania and, later, to provide coal for heating in urban areas. The union leadership had internalized this value. “The miners had been aware from the first moment that if there is no coal, there’s no railroad, no factory work, the great lords of the country, they who hold power in their hands, will tremble with cold, but the poor proletarians will be cold too” (*Zsilvölgye*, “Kik Vagyunk,” November 23, 1918, 1). The brotherhood of workers required both the production of coal but also the preservation of the privately owned coal companies.

Csiszér and Szedlăcsek agreed that private property must be guaranteed but that there was a public interest in the administration of the mines that required public input into their direction: “Modern socialism is no longer driven by the hatred of the rich, but by the need for a more advanced form of production” (*Zsilvölgye*, “Keresztény-e,” December 14, 1918, 1–2). The local chapters of the mining unions participated in the administration of the mines through the local councils after November 4 and jealously defended their claim to administrative primacy. When Aladar Blascheck, the director of the Vulcan mine, sought to independently secure supplies, the PNT/CNP reviewed the existing contracts and ordered all mine directors to cease undertaking contracts without their prior approval. This was justified to stem any opportunity for the old order to creep back into power via baseless claims of “rebellion and disorder” (*Zsilvölgye*, “A Régi Rendszer,” November 30, 1918, 2–3). The mining unions saw the new order as a democratic system where workers, owners, and management had joint voices in the administration of property in place of the previous system of paternalistic welfare capitalism. The emerging Black Diamond Republic was not simply supposed to benefit the workers but benefit the countryside as well. If the union leaders’ articles and speeches failed to address land reform, this was perhaps a natural oversight in a valley where peasants already controlled the sparse agricultural land on the mountainsides—or perhaps reflected that the coal towns had been built on the best agricultural land, expropriated two generations earlier from the local peasantry, and returning it would require dismantling the coal industry. The new revolutionary leadership pursued a vision of socialist radicalism that emphasized democracy, a universal franchise that included women, and the reform of noble agricultural estates and demanded state social services to end the exploitative nature of capitalism. Kiss, editor of *Zsilvölgye* and a vice-president of the PNT/CNP, argued for “partnership and comradeship” across both the towns and villages (“Dózsa György,” November 30, 1918, 1). In his first article, Kiss officially abandoned Károly’s party for the Social Democrats, where he felt he was drawn by his moral convictions. (“Kik Vagyunk,” November 23, 1918, 1).

The national flexibility of the PNT/CNP, their emphasis on Jászi’s autonomy, and the close connection between the local unions and the MSZDP fits both the mold of national indifference and Egrý and Swanson’s emphasis on how national indifference results in an everyday performance of ethnicity that is contingent, not necessarily part of a centrally articulated national project, though it may support it (Swanson 2017, 12; Egrý, cited in Miller and Morelon 2019, 151). Meetings of the Romanian National Council and the PNT/CNP were trilingual, with simultaneous translation, but the language of the revolutionary newspaper defaulted to Hungarian (perhaps due to the lack of paper for additional editions). When Csiszér later established a newspaper for mining and metal workers in Transylvania, it would come out in three editions: Hungarian, German, and Romanian. This was not a choice readily available in 1918; indeed, considering the expectation that the Jiu Valley would be part of a socialist Hungary, it was an understandable choice. It was also one that shaded local Social Democracy towards the Hungarian project rather than the Romanian one. In this sense, the newspaper simply followed a longer-standing tendency in the Jiu Valley: efforts to organize illicit unions through newspaper subscriptions (a well-established work-around the Hungarian persecution of labor unions) tended toward Budapest-based, Hungarian language *Népszava* rather than Transylvanian based, Romanian language *Adeverul*, arguing that the

Budapest movement was stronger and better organized (Deleanu 1932, 39). In this sense, the miners appear to have consistently perceived Hungarian social democracy as stronger, shading their class interests in a reimagination of the Hungarian national project that would offer them full participation.

If the Black Diamond Republic presented a concrete, ideological vision, its founders were flexible in how to achieve it. The PNT/CNP sought to assume the role played by state institutions during the war as well as some of the functions the state had devolved to the mining companies (such as coordinating supply). The council assumed control over coal production in the mines, enforcing discipline among the miners, and negotiated fuel coal deliveries to the railways and heating coal to Budapest in exchange for supplies of food, tools, and clothing.¹² When this was insufficient, they traded coal outside the valley to private concerns and established funding drives to help poor families: in this respect, Winklehner was praised extensively for his personal donations. The PNT/CNP thus regulated both trade between the Jiu Valley and the outside world as well as local commerce. Responding to complaints over the rising cost of food, clothing, and alcohol, the PNT/CNP set price ceilings and mediated prices between shopkeepers and workers (Deleanu 1932, 45; Stanca 1935, 290–296). During the retreat of German troops through the Jiu Valley in November, the councils reserved the exclusive right to trade with the German military (*Zsilvölgye*, “A Németség,” December 7, 1918, 2). This was justified as serving the public interest: ensuring a fair distribution of available supplies and ensuring that the vulnerable did not suffer.

By November 9, the PNT/CNP secured the complete monopoly of violence in the Jiu Valley. The Workers’ Guard and the Romanian Guard initially existed alongside the small numbers of Hungarian gendarmes and the private regiment of Baron Viktor von Maderspach. Von Maderspach, owner of much of the mountain forest that supplied wood for the mines, was a local notable though he did not occupy any position in local administration. He had raised a private volunteer cavalry regiment that fought in Romania alongside the Austro-Hungarian army between 1916 and 1917. When he returned to his estate, some of these men accompanied him according to his memoir, *Through the Trail of Romanian Blood to the Black Sea*. The Guards’ forces were both larger and well equipped since local hunting rights and traditions meant that firearms and ammunition to arm them were widely available. These were supplemented by weapons left over from the creation of two local miners’ battalions in 1915 from widespread fighting in the Valley during the 1916 Romanian invasion and German counterattack, as well as the irregular demobilization of the Austro-Hungarian army (Lungu et al. 1968, 125). Maderspach’s regiment was initially accepted as an arm of the council, but when the baron refused to cooperate with an administration of “workers and Romanians” on November 9, “Mister Maderspach” was removed and his regiment disbanded (*Zsilvölgye*, “Hirek,” November 23, 1918, 4). Cooperation was bound to be difficult, as von Maderspach’s form of Hungarian nationalism was going to be difficult to reconcile with the councils’ efforts to negotiate their position: he believed it was Hungarian destiny to rule over “helot peoples.”¹³ The Guards increasingly became the main guarantors of local order. By mid-November, the 24 local gendarmes left for the county capital of Deva and the Guards had secured complete local control.

This reflected the councils’ increasing resistance to the authority of Hungarian officials in Deva. Relations between the PNT/CNP and Deva deteriorated over county officials’ inability to provide consistent supplies of food and clothing. Increasingly strident demands from the civil authorities in Deva for more coal to supply the Hungarian railways in Transylvania were met with demands in Jiu for basic goods. On November 17 the police prefect in Deva sent a regiment of gendarmes on an armored train, supported by machine guns, to reestablish order and disarm both guards. By this point the PNT/CNP had firmly moved toward local autonomy and refused to accept the administrative authority of the county capital. The Workers’ Guard and the Romanian National Guard confronted the gendarmes, bolstered by the miners currently on shift in the Dilja mine. The detachments of the Guards, wielding firearms, and the miners with pickaxes and hammers routed the gendarmierie detachment and followed it to the train station, where an armored car armed with

machine guns was surrounded not just by the Guards and the miners but by a growing crowd of women and children (Stanca 1935, 297; Dej 1956, 471; Kertész and Chiriță 1962, 65). The gendarmes chose to retreat to Deva rather than spark a massacre. The authorities in Deva now sought to negotiate the reestablishment of their control in the valley—a request refused by both councils, who responded that “we will no longer give coal until we receive bread in exchange, and our children peace and health” (Stanca 1935, 298). The miners issued a manifesto emphasizing that “the work of the miner must be a layer that fits within the labor of society,” and their needs must be met as well if they are to deliver coal (*Zsilvölgye*, “Olvasóinkhoz” November 23, 1918, 1). Appeals by Deva Commissioner Károly Peyer (1918) that the miners release coal and “work calmly in support of the [Hungarian democratic] revolution” lest everything be lost in a counter coup received attention so long as they were accompanied by at least some supplies (“Kérelem a zsilvölgyi,” November 23, 1918, 3).

Negotiating a Place for Social Democracy

The break with Deva was encouraged by the PNT/CNP’s growing belief that the Károly government was the *wrong* revolution, a placeholder that should be replaced by a fully Social Democratic republic. “Hungary will be socialist, or will no longer be” read the frontispiece of *Zsilvölgye* on November 23, 1918. The miners were increasingly dissatisfied with the situation in Budapest following the MSZDP’s rise to power, its alliance with Károlyi, and the declaration of the Hungarian Democratic Republic on November 16. József Csiszér, like many union members, saw incorporation in the Hungarian state as negotiable; he was a miner and a socialist first, a Hungarian second. As the Dual Monarchy disintegrated, socialists could use democratic principles to shape the new state as much as ethnic parties could. The unions suggested at joint meetings of the PNT/CNP with the Romanian National Council in Petroșani that the Wilsonian Fourteen Points would apply to workers—and that workers’ fight for freedom was not a fight for national identity but based on their identity as miners. There is a clear delimitation between the miners and the national idea: “We will not erect obstacles in the path of your national unification, which warms your soul. [...] Our goal is the same: Freedom, peace among peoples. Only the road by which we seek it is different” (Stanca 1935, 289).

The council leaders thus took a flexible approach to the question of ethnic identities. Certainly, sources produced in 1918 and into the early 1920s by council members—either in *Zsilvölgye*, serialized in other working-class newspapers after 1919, or published immediately in the years following the war in book form—do not emphasize a primacy of ethnic identity. They recognized nationality as a meaningful category—since nationality and language choices were firmly linked to workers’ understandings of socialism and capitalist development. In this respect, the union could be flexible on the ethnic question in pursuing socialist activism. Inclusion in Hungary was preferable for many of Jiu’s revolutionary leaders in part because of past ties. They hoped to draw on their alliance with both the Hungarian and Romanian wings of the MSZDP to achieve this—some miners, such as Csiszér, were long-standing members of both wings. But these affiliations with the government in Budapest were a matter of achieving socialist goals, not ethnicity. If Jiu was to be integrated into a larger Romanian kingdom, Csiszér publicly argued that miners who were ethnically Hungarian, German, Polish, Czech, Bosnian, Roma, or Jewish should accept this so long as the new kingdom acknowledged the autonomy of the mining community itself. The local miners’ strikes and meetings consistently stressed the solidarity of the working class across ethnic lines from October through January (Erényi et al. 1956, 190, 215). The miners saw national organization as part of the larger, socialist revolution. A socialist state would naturally address national belonging as well.

Revolutionary socialists in Jiu thus sought to balance relations with Hungary and with the Kingdom of Romania, and their concerns about the MSZDP were matched by their worries about the firmly antisocialist government of the Kingdom of Romania. The PNT/CNP was well aware,

however, that their revolutionary socialism was not isolated—and could not stand on its own. The valley was economically interdependent with Hunedoara county and Transylvania as a whole. Jiu socialists sought to leverage their coal town's economic importance to secure a position in a new political order—whether part of a larger Hungarian socialist revolution that might encompass Transylvania or the Romanian “Great Assembly” seeking to unite the region with the Kingdom of Romania. And this position was viewed in *class* rather than ethnic terms. In his memoirs, PNT/CNP councilman Dominic Stanca states that the unions maintained that it was not Hungarians who should be blamed for the oppressive policies of the Empire but capitalism itself, which oppressed all (Stanca 1935, 290).

The Jiu councils thus sought to maintain connections with Budapest and Bucharest. The Romanian Army had already sent a liaison to the Jiu Romanian National Guard in late November (Aldescu 2001, 204), and a multiethnic delegation of the PNT/CNP went to Romania inquire as to plans for military deployment in the Jiu Valley (*Zsilvölgye*, “Hirek,” November 30, 1918, 3). The local chapter of the Romanian National Council and—particularly—the villages supported union with Romania: some of the village priests had suffered incarceration, deportation, and worse for supporting the Romanian Army in 1916 (Stanca 1925, 127–140). However, ethnic Romanian members of the urban intelligentsia were less convinced. Even as various Romanian National Councils in Transylvania issued statements in support of the Alba Iulia Assembly throughout November, the Jiu Valley was conspicuous for its relative silence regarding the congress (Lazăr and Cerişer 2009, 116–124).

When the General Romanian National Council in Cluj called for unification with Romania, the PNT/CNP responded, “workers want to make their own fate” (Stanca 1935, 298). As late as the end of November, the editorial staff of the *Zsilvölgye* still believed that it would be possible to at least remain in Hungary, a larger country that seemed well on its way to a socialist republic (*Zsilvölgye*, “Hirek,” November 30, 1918, 3). However, the joint councils echoed Csiszér in stating that they would “not oppose the union of the Romanian nation, but they demand complete freedom and autonomy for the mining workers” (Stanca 1935, 314; Aldescu 2001, 204). The workers' councils notably feared that without assurances of autonomy the Romanian army would choose to kill the more militant members of the labor movement.¹⁴ Given the multiethnic character of the Jiu Valley's mining workers—created over sixty years through immigration from throughout the Habsburg Monarchy—the disregard of ethnicity by labor leaders like Csiszér (himself an ethnic Hungarian) might have been welcomed by the Romanian government—save for the fact that such autonomy stood in the way of establishing effective central control over not just the state's new territories but over the particular prize of the Jiu mines.

The PNT/CNP still hoped to retain local autonomy when the local delegation left for the Alba Iulia congress, and the representatives (including both ethnic Romanians and Hungarians) demanded this in exchange for agreeing to union with Romania (Liveanu 1960, 561; Pascu and Popescu-Puțuri 1989, 284; Lazăr and Morar 2009, 146). This was the same offer the councils had made to Hungary—autonomy and the preservation of socialist local administration—but it would be offered in vain. Their report home bitterly states they were not successful: only by joining a socialist country could they keep the results they had achieved” (*Zsilvölgye*, “Alba Julia,” December 7, 1918, 1). In negotiating with both Budapest and Bucharest, the PNT/CNP had waited too long—the First Hungarian Republic might be friendlier to workers than the Romanian state, but Transylvania was headed toward union with the latter.

The ministries in Bucharest—which were returning to the capital on December 1 only after exile during nearly two years of occupation by Austria-Hungary and Germany—perceived multiple crises. Internationally, communist revolution was a threat, particularly given that Romanian troops had already intervened in Bessarabia in January 1918 against Bolshevik forces. Romania hoped to secure the annexation of additional territory in the peace treaties—something that both required establishing order in the borderlands and dealing with potentially hostile ethnic minority communities. Finally, order had to be restored in Wallachia and Moldova: widespread peasant and

worker unrest had emerged (something particularly concerning given the 1907 peasant revolt across Moldova) after the withdrawal of the German army of occupation in November (Livezeanu 1995, 252). If revolutionaries in the Jiu Valley sought to negotiate local interests, state agents in Bucharest would read events there through the lens of these contexts. The ministries were thus far from overjoyed at the news arriving from the Jiu Valley, and as soon as the Union with Transylvania was signed on December 1 the 10th *Jäger* Regiment under the command of Major Constantin Oprescu was dispatched to secure the Jiu Valley, its rail connections, and its pass over the Carpathians between Transylvania and Wallachia. The 2nd Battalion, formed of four machine-gun companies, occupied the Jiu Valley on December 5, and by December 21 the entire regiment moved into the Jiu Valley (Aldescu 2001, 208). This was the beginning of the end of autonomy.

The Cluj-based *Consiliul Dirigent al Transilvaniei, Banatului și ținuturilor românești din Ungaria* (Ruling Council of Transylvania, Banat and Romanian Lands in Hungary, hereafter CDT) was established on December 2 as the transitional Transylvanian administration to direct incorporation into Romania. The PNT/CNP was expected to work through the CDT and report directly to Oprescu—not undertake negotiations with Budapest or Bucharest directly. Throughout December, the PNT/CNP continued to represent the Jiu Valley to the provisional government in Cluj, hoping to preserve the role of the unions in running local matters (*Zsilvölgye*, “Nemzeti Tanácsok,” December 7, 1918, 4). By mid-December two commissions, one from Cluj and one from Bucharest, arrived to assess the state of the mines and the mood of the miners.

If the PNT had initially looked to define Jiu within Jászi’s proposed federation, by December its leadership looked to negotiate its incorporation into Romania. The Romanian army’s advance into Transylvania in mid-November ended any dreams of a peaceful, uncontested federalization of the borderlands. The PNT thus joined the CNP in sending a delegate (Csiszér) to the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia on December 1. In the December 7 and 14 issues of *Zsilvölgye*, the PNT’s leadership was guardedly optimistic about union with Romania. Peace and productivity could be maintained as long as Bucharest kept its promises regarding freedom of assembly and restored the prewar levels of social welfare that the companies had provided (*Zsilvölgye*, “Hirek,” December 14, 1918, 2–3). However, the PNT also sought to maintain connections to socialism in Budapest with articles emphasizing the success of socialism in Hungary and the miners’ duty to continue to supply heating coal to the Budapest proletariat. In response, Oprescu halted publication of *Zsilvölgye* after December 14 and began confiscating printed materials across the Jiu Valley. Military reports emphasized that the remnants of the PNT/CNP and the labor unions still demanded local autonomy, and circulated manifestoes against their full inclusion in the Romanian state.¹⁵ The military registered such protests for autonomy or for the release of imprisoned comrades as Hungarian irredentism. Consequently, the 10th *Jäger* Regiment occupied workers’ neighborhoods and dispersed any demonstration demanding autonomy for the Jiu Valley. According to the Romanian army (and most Romanian military historians after 1989) military action in Jiu in 1918 involved shooting Hungarian agitators who were resisting the incorporation of a Romanian territory into greater Romania. Intriguingly, the regimental records refer to the Workers’ Guard as the “Hungarian Guard,” suggesting how the Romanian state would ascribe identities after 1919 (Aldescu 2001, 200–215). In this light, on December 29 the regiment extended its control by beginning the forcible disarmament of the population, including both the Romanian National Guard and the Workers’ Guard (Kertész and Chiriță 1962, 67).

The disarmament campaign started just as the government in Cluj solidified its hold over local administration. The CDT named Toma Vasinca as the new Hunedoara county prefect in charge of police and civilian administration. Vasinca promptly replaced Victor Ianza, an ethnic Romanian local district (*járás*) leader of the Jiu Valley of 30 years’ service and a PNT/CNP member, with Amos Gligor, an ethnic Hungarian civil servant from Deva (Baron 2020, 87). In this case the CDT was less interested in securing local leadership with the appropriate ethnic credentials than it was in removing any administrator who had shown sympathy to miners’ efforts at autonomy. The PNT/CNP was now officially dissolved and its members rapidly removed from local

administration. Oprescu received orders from Bucharest and Cluj to order the local civilian administration to assume the responsibilities the councils had performed. Particular stress was placed on expanding supply lines and thus restoring order: the government commissions dispatched to the Jiu Valley had warned in late December that labor unrest could be expected unless the workers' demands for food, clothing, shorter work hours, and improved safety in the mines were addressed.¹⁶ Lacking sufficient consumer goods or equipment and supplies for the mines, however, local authorities could do nothing.¹⁷

Both miners and local administrators grew increasingly frustrated in late December, as Bucharest and Cluj now demanded coal at low, set prices without committing to the local traditional social contract. The Habsburg state had historically mediated relations between labor and management, provided free medical care, and ensured that consumer goods at controlled prices were available in the Jiu Valley. The PNT/CNP had assumed those responsibilities in 1918 as part of its socialist vision for the region. Now, after December 29, Bucharest and Cluj were focused on establishing control while ignoring local expectations. The workers accordingly resented disarmament, the new production quotas, and fixed prices for coal. The Romanian army further delegated all financial and organizational responsibility for supplying the workers to the coal companies, which had trouble securing sufficient resources.¹⁸ As one of the directors of the Salgótarján Company pointed out in a notably bitter memorandum, the new orders from the Romanian government could not achieve increases in production but they could enrage the workers and increase tensions between miners and engineers. By early January 1919, workers and administrators blamed each other for the untenable situation and together castigated local administrators, regional leaders in Cluj, and the ministries in Bucharest for the lack of basic necessities.¹⁹ The unions continued to organize labor, but they were no longer included in the administration of the mines or the towns. From their miners' point of view, the Romanian state excluded organized labor from power while shirking its social responsibilities.

On January 5, 1919, a wave of strikes began in the Lupény mines that escalated across the Jiu Valley over several days. Miners demonstrated against the Romanian government, tearing down and burning Romanian flags (Aldescu 2001, 209). Union leaders who had served in the PNT/CNP led strikes in Lupeni, Vulcan, Petrila, and Petroșani, protesting the lack of basic resources. When Oprescu arrested all union leaders who had served on the council, the strikes spread to all mines in the Jiu Valley (Roller 1956, 355–356; Kertész and Chiriță 1962, 67). The regimental dispatches claim that some of the miners attacked the soldiers guarding the prisoners in an attempt to free their comrades on January 8. The 10th *Jäger* Regiment was thus ordered to pacify the protests by whatever means necessary and on the same day began shelling the town of Vulcan with a field artillery battery, dispersing protesting miners and allowing infantry to enter the town to begin mass arrests—killing 25. During the subsequent weapon searches, two more miners were killed (Aldescu 2001, 209–210). Oprescu ordered the further arrest of 500 miners upon learning that the Jiu Valley had sent delegates to the Social Democratic council in Sibiu. State agents now saw organized labor in the valley as inherently adversarial (Aldescu 2001, 210). Of the 58 miners who were ultimately sent to Sibiu to be court martialed by a military tribunal, 19 were condemned to 5 to 12 years in prison for “communism” and revolutionary efforts (*Minerul*, May 1, 1921, 4). As the leadership's arraignment and sentencing suggests, the military tribunal was aware—and concerned—by the European wave of strikes and labor unrest of 1917–1919. Social Democrats' efforts to champion working-class interests saw further radicalization by emerging communist leaders across Europe. Nonviolent socialist revolutions in both Germany and Hungary saw the emergence of rival communist revolutions (Gewerth 2020, 56–57). To the military officers conducting the trial in Sibiu, the difference between socialist and communist was academic.

The Jiu strikes of 1918 and 1919 represented something new for Romania. The national government presented the strike of 1919—a strike since largely forgotten in Romanian labor historiography—as a “Hungarian strike” intended to undermine Romanian unity (Ag. Dacia, 1919, 1). This reflected a genuine truth, that labor organization and syndicalist traditions had been

stronger in Austria-Hungary—a tradition of organized labor that, moreover, was reflected across a multiethnic workforce and thus highlighted the perceived danger of ethnic minorities. The “new provinces” of the Banat, Transylvania, and Bukovina thus complicated labor–management and labor–state relations in the Kingdom of Romania.²⁰

For Jiu in 1918 and 1919, the strikes were first and foremost about local issues and about the local experience in shifting from war to peace—protests about food and everyday issues and the right to assembly more than ethnic concerns. Worse, the Black Diamond Republic was declared at the same time that workers and peasants throughout Transylvania were engaging in massive protests and strikes, largely paralyzing local industry (Livezeanu 1995, 132). If authorities in Cluj cast the strikes in a pro-Romanian light (that ethnic Romanian workers were protesting against ethnic Hungarian owners), the view from Bucharest (and among some conservatives in Transylvania) focused on how the unruly workers were ethnically Hungarian—or, at least, ethnically unreliable. Therefore the Black Diamond Republic was unsettling for the central government on several levels. It reinforced the emerging perception of Greater Romania as an achievement under siege from unreliable minorities and poorly supported by Romanians from the newly acquired provinces (see Livezeanu 1995, 205–207). It also sharpened fears regarding unity among ethnic Romanians and of a communist revolution.

Conclusion

Interwar disagreements about what vision and goals of the Black Diamond Republic highlight how the history of the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire was cast in terms of national belonging. Such disagreements carried a political logic, as the interwar Social Democratic Party was an outlier in Romanian politics. This led to the neglect of how the Social Democratic party and affiliated unions had developed their own understanding of nation toward the end of the Empire (Beneš 2017). The miners were aware of the political nature of their ethnic identities but strongly embedded them in additional forms of identity, also politicized in the larger state context. National coding of class and occupation was present in the everyday lives of Jiu Valley inhabitants. These were recognized—the PNT/CNP had used all three languages in simultaneous translation—but their contentious nature was expected to fade over time. Once a socialist revolution was achieved, the issue of nation and language would solve itself—guaranteed rights, freedom of expression, and expansion of schooling would naturally allow all ethnicities to express themselves. The issue is not that the miners were indifferent to the nation. Rather, they saw the larger national projects as overly concerned with ethnicity and too prone to ignore socialist solutions to the issues they faced every day. They were aware of the political nature of ethnic belonging, but they assessed national projects in relation to occupational and class concerns.

If the Transylvanian revolution of 1918 has been represented as an upwelling of nationalist feeling that pitted ethnic Hungarian against ethnic Romanian and finally ended in the realization of a Romanian nationalist dream, this article argues that at the local level in industrial areas choices about affiliation with the National Councils had more to do with hopes for a socialist revolution; the traditions of cooperation between mining companies, state, and labor; and the rural–urban divides created by industrialization policies. The Black Diamond Republic exists in specific context of the creation of a coal industry in Transylvania in the latter half of the 19th century and the larger context of the Great War, leading to state failure in the Habsburg Empire and a revolutionary moment in October–November 1918. The case of Jiu illustrates how occupation, class, and ethnicity functioned relationally and challenges the way that we might approach the larger question of labor conflicts in Transylvania—or in other areas where shifting borders have led historians to focus on ethnic elements in labor organization.

The Black Diamond Republic, and other such efforts to create socialist revolutions in Transylvania, cast long shadows in Romanian 20th century. Jiu’s revolution would not survive into 1919, yet the union representatives who created it would continue to perpetuate their understanding of a

just order in the Transylvanian-wide unions they organized in Greater Romania. The republic left two lasting legacies. As part of the regional strikes in 1918–19, it set the tone of Transylvanian workers' relationship to the Romanian state. Jiu coal was as essential for Romania as it had been for Hungarian Transylvania, but lingering suspicion of the antinational character of the workers would remain. The politically dominant *Partidul Național Liberal* (National Liberal Party) repeatedly cast miners' strikes in an irredentist light in an effort to discredit both the workers and their allies, the largely Transylvanian *Partidul Național Țărănesc* (National Peasants' Party). While the Romanian state was willing to address the miners' "bread and butter" concerns, it remained deeply suspicious of both their socialism and their antinational leanings. At the regional level, the experience of 1918–19 contributed to persistent local legacies of union socialism and hostility to ethnic organizations. As far as Jiu's miners were concerned, the fight for socialism did not end with the failure of their revolution. Instead, it demanded they play an outsized role in provincial organized labor—as the leaders of the scattered, failed local revolutions now sought to forge connections and mutual support in opposition to the economic policies of Bucharest (see also Deleanu 1932, 43). The workers did not expect the revolutionary potential of 1918 to reemerge, but they did think of themselves as taking up the struggle for socialism in a capitalist state. They conceptualized capitalism in the Romanian state the way they had in Hungary—as oligarchic capitalism that oppressed all: "they're all the same, pushing down the workers"—and in the process they sow the seeds of their own destruction: "Workers, let's keep it together! Then we'll be able to force the state to take care of all equally!" (*Minerul*, February 1, 1920, 4).

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Notes

- 1 Toponyms in Transylvania vary between Hungarian, German, and Romanian, with the latter forms those generally adopted in English. In this article I generally use those terms generally accepted in English-language scholarship, except for formal names of journals or titles. Thus, Jiu rather than Zsil. The valley included seven towns built from the 1850s onward either around a mine or a combination of mineheads. They include Petroșani (Petrozsény in Hungarian), Lupeni (Lupény), Petrila (Petrilla), Vulcan (Vulkán), Uricani (Urikány), Aninoasa (Aninósza), and Câmpul lui Neag (Kimpulunyág). Miners were recruited between 1850 and 1910 from mining regions throughout the Dual Monarchy. The 1900 census registered 28,750 inhabitants of the larger community (including an additional nine villages on the mountain-sides). In the coal colonies, 44 percent claimed Romanian as a mother tongue, 41 percent Hungarian, 7 percent German, 3 percent variously Slovak, Ruthenian, Serbian, or Croat, another 4 percent chose "other," and 3 percent were Jewish, identified by their faith (A Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal 1902, 404–405). There were 2,548 independent smallholders in the villages, with 6,381 dependents. (A Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal 1904, 806–807).
- 2 "Black Diamond Republic" as used in revolutionary newspaper articles in 1918 and subsequent memoirs poetically referred to the idea that, under heat and pressure, the miners would create something precious—a socialist society in which workers would be assured a reasonable standard of living and a right to political participation.
- 3 This trend encompasses both the history of general unrest in Transylvania (Liveanu 1960, 542) and the histories of Jiu Valley labor organization (Lungu et al. 1968, 118–119). The connection between the Russian October Revolution and the Petroșani Black Diamond Republic was tentatively drawn in historiography only during early communism and quickly abandoned (see, respectively, Roller 1956, 350–364; Kertész and Chiriță 1962, 52–53).

- 4 According to Romanian communist leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the workers' councils were the main source of order in the Jiu Valley, coordinated by the central council in Petroșani (Dej 1956, 470).
- 5 The Romanian tendency to quietly ignore some Transylvanian workers' opposition to the full union with Romania began with the Romanian Social-Democrats (*Partidul Social-Democrat din România*, hereafter PSDR) in the interwar period. The PSDR emphasized the leading role played by six members of the ethnic Romanian wing of the MSZDP, who went on to join the *Consiliul Național Român* (Romanian National Council, or CNR) and fought for the inclusion of Transylvania in Romania. This nationalization of socialism was perceived as central to the success of the party because, despite the split between the Social-Democrats and the Communists of the Third International, the Old Kingdom Romanians regarded the national loyalty of the PSDR with suspicion. The PSDR, Romanian traditional parties felt, had been too close to the Hungarian Social-Democrats and continued to represent a multiethnic body of workers in Transylvania (Jurca 1993, 9–36). Thus, especially after the 1920 general strike, the PSDR sought to avoid being associated with what the interwar Romanian media and political leadership cast as the “anti-Romanian” behavior of workers in the new territories. Constantin Titel Petrescu (1946, 304), a leader of the PSDR, thus emphasized the “good” Romanian socialists, who (in spite of being opposed by ethnic Hungarian socialists) championed unification. Hungarian historiography initially focused on perceived injustice in the union and thus saw strikes as supporting its claim to the territory (Raffay 1987, 250–255). After 1960 both historiographies increasingly shifted to a view that worker unrest in Transylvania and Hungary stemmed from hunger, poverty, and instigation by returning soldiers rather than ethnicity or ideology (Romsics 2002, 108–117).
- 6 For example, the National Academy in Hungary and Romania published several major series on the events at the end of the war. Pascu's (1983, 1989), and György Litván's (1978) studies are emblematic of their approaches. The prism of national revolution dominates even in cases where there is an attempt to reconcile Romanian and Hungarian historiography (Grad and Ciubotă, 1998).
- 7 For recent work on the Romanian National Council and its transition to power see Gheorghe Iancu (1993); for the relationship between the Romanian National Council and the Hungarian National Council, especially the negotiations led by Jászai, see Haslinger (1993); for a discussion of the Hungarian historiography regarding both councils and the transition of the area to Romania, see Bárdi et al. (2011).
- 8 Serviciului Județean Hunedoara al Arhivelor Naționale (hereafter cited as SJANH), Fond 71 Societatea “Petroșani” DM, Registratură, Secretariat, folder 2/1918.
- 9 SJANH, Fond 133 “Salgo-Tarjani”-Societate pe actii maghiare, folder 44/1918, f.52.
- 10 Balázs Schuller mentioned that the Jiu Valley National Council was created on November 4, based on the diary of Andor Bajkó, one of the members of the PNT/CNP. However, the date can be misleading: the communique of the Romanian National Council in *Zsilvölgye* gives November 4 as the date the Council changed its name to the Petroșani National Council (*Zsilvölgye*, “Román Nemzeti,” November 23, 1918, 2). Furthermore, both Deanu's history of the Social-Democrat workers and councilman Andor Bajkó's memoirs place the start of the revolution and the council in the beginning of October.
- 11 The internal reports of the Urikány Mining Company similarly use the term revolution. SJANH, Fond 813 Întreprinderea Minieră Lupeni, folder 3/1919, f.7.
- 12 The miners and the foremen together assessed workplace safety and directed where shifts should work. See the letter sent by János Szedlacsek, “President of the Miner Group,” reproduced in Kertész and Chiriță (1962, 61).
- 13 Viktor von Maderspach was a fervid Hungarian patriot. The baron, at least in his memoir of the campaign published in 1930, advocated allowing the Romanians (and likely other ethnicities) their language, as the role of Hungarians was to be “the ruling race, from which a populace

dedicated to the governance management and control [...] emerges. To serve as a soldier in the ravaged country, to administer it, to produce grain rationally, to manage the economy, to put the helot people to work and to take care of them in a fatherly manner. This would be the task of future Hungarian generations.” (Maderspach 2012, 251).

- 14 SJANH Fond 29 Comisariatul de Poliție Petroșani, folder 06/1923, f.23, 24
- 15 Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (hereafter cited as ANIC) Fond 2890 Socialiștii români din Ungaria după desăvârșirea unității noastre naționale, Microfilm, Reel 218, Frames 52–54; (Aldescu 2001, 208).
- 16 SJANH Fond 133 “Salgo-Tarjani”-Societate pe actii maghiare, folder 44/1918.
- 17 SJANH Fond 133 “Salgo-Tarjani”-Societate pe actii maghiare, folder 44/1918, f.52–58. The internal reports of the Urikány company reflect the same sense of powerlessness; see SJANH, Fond 813 Întreprinderea Mineră Lupeni, folder 3/1919, f.8.
- 18 SJANH, Fond 813 Întreprinderea Mineră Lupeni, folder 3/1919, f.7.
- 19 SJANH, Fond 61 Societatea Salgó-Tarján, Documente Confidențiale, folder 1/1919 f.1–3.
- 20 Social democratic organization only took off in the Kingdom of Romania after 1910, and that to the great consternation of the government (Cușnir-Mihailovici 1961, 270–281; Marinescu 1995).

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