

Chapter 23

TRANSFORMATION IN TRANSYLVANIA

REINHOLD STIPSITS

I don't for a moment think that we have done things that will have a world wide impact. What we have done is to show, on sort of a smaller test-tube basis, that change is possible, reconciliation is possible, reduction of tension is possible, if a person-centred, facilitative climate is present. And that means a great deal to me. What we have worked on is more basic than the solution of problems; we have worked on helping people to understand one another, communicate with one another, and that, I feel, represents a much more realistic base for the solution of specific issues. (Carl Rogers, in Rogers & Russell 2002: 306)

Rogers' plea for a small step rather than a giant leap into unknown territory seems a particularly apt way to introduce a further example of the potential political impact of the person-centred approach (PCA). Obviously convinced of the effectiveness of the PCA, Rogers affirmed the ideas of freedom and human rights as its highest goals, freedom being an essential condition of a psychological climate in which healthy growth processes can take place. Creative teaching may be yet another goal however. The following paper deals with a personal experience which took place in 2004 during a guest professorship in that magical-sounding but relatively unknown place, Transylvania. I was offered a position for the spring term at the Babes Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, situated in the heart of Transylvania, teaching in the Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, at the German department of Communication and School of Journalism.