



THE ION RATIU DEMOCRACY LECTURE

WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

Democracy and Freedom as Fundamental Human Rights

ELEONORA CERCAVSCHI

Recipient of the 2008 Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture Award

The Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture Series

Edited by Christian Ostermann and Mircea Munteanu

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Sam Donaldson
Chair, Wilson Center Council

INTRODUCTION



On behalf of the Wilson Center, I am pleased to introduce the Fourth Annual Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture. The 2008 lecture has been awarded to Ms. Eleonora Cercavschi for her remarkable work in defense of the rights of children in Moldova to be educated in their native language and her continued fight to protect the cultural identity of Transnistria's most defenseless. We are very pleased to have been able to host Ms. Cercavschi at the Woodrow Wilson Center. I am also delighted that Undersecretary Dobriansky agreed to introduce Ms. Cercavschi. Her participation highlights the importance of the public-private partnership for spreading and supporting democracy activism beyond diplomatic chancelleries and into the public discourse. Let me also recognize the Chairman of the Center's Board of Trustees, Ambassador Joseph Gildenhorn, and his wife Alma, as well as several ambassadors present in the audience.

The Woodrow Wilson Center is the national, living memorial honoring President Woodrow Wilson. It provides an essential link between the worlds of ideas and public policy in order to address current and future domestic and global challenges. The Center fosters policy-relevant research and dialogue to enhance the capabilities and knowledge of leaders, citizens, and institutions worldwide. Created by an Act of Congress, the Center is a non-partisan institution supported by both public and private funds.

The Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture, established in 2005, seeks to bring visibility and international recognition to the ideas and accomplishments of individuals around the world who are working on behalf of democracy. The lecture strives to enrich the intellectual environment in which ideas about democracy and democratic change circulate, both within and beyond Washington. Sponsored by the

Ratiu Family Foundation, the event expresses the deep commitment to democracy of the late Ion Ratiu through his contributions as a Romanian politician and intellectual as well as his interest in democratic change worldwide.

The Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture seeks to make available for students, scholars, practitioners, and policymakers the experience and insights of individuals whose work and commitment on behalf of democracy are broadly in keeping with those of Ion Ratiu and to provide opportunities to engage a wide range of Washington-based and international audiences to increase their appreciation of the contribution that individuals can make in advancing democratic change.

Equally important, the Lecture aims to be of value for the individuals who are selected to participate, providing opportunities to reflect and learn, and to benefit from individual and institutional resources that are uniquely available in Washington, including meetings with U.S. government officials.

Past awardees have included Egyptian democracy activist Saad El-Din Ibrahim and Anatoli Mikhailov of Belorussia, who is the president of the European Humanities University, now in exile in Vilnius.

Dr. Paula Dobriansky, one of this country's finest and most distinguished public servants and currently the Undersecretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs has graciously agreed to introduce this year's awardee. Dr. Dobriansky was nominated by President George W. Bush on March 12, 2001, unanimously confirmed by the Senate on April 26, and, on May 1, sworn in as Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs. On July 29, 2005, she became Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs. In this capacity, she is responsible for a broad range of foreign policy issues, including democracy, human rights, labor, refugee and humanitarian relief matters, and environmental/science issues. She has also been designated as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan

Issues and in February 2007, she was appointed the President's Special Envoy on Northern Ireland, with the rank of Ambassador.

Ambassador Dobriansky's previous government appointments include Associate Director for Policy and Programs at the United States Information Agency and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. She served as Deputy Head of the U.S. Delegation to the 1990 Copenhagen Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as Advisor to the U.S. Delegation to the 1985 U.N. Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, and as Director of European and Soviet Affairs at the National Security Council.

Dr. Dobriansky's distinguished career has been very much in the Wilsonian tradition: bridging and engaging scholarship and public policy. Prior to her appointment as Undersecretary, Dr. Dobriansky served as Senior Vice President and Director of the Washington Office of the Council on Foreign Relations, and she was the Council's first George F. Kennan Senior Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies. Dr. Dobriansky holds a M.A. and Ph.D. in Soviet political/military affairs from Harvard University. She is a former Fulbright-Hays

scholar, Ford and Rotary Foundation Fellow, and a recipient of various honors, including Georgetown University's Annual Alumni Achievement Award, the State Department's Superior Honor Award, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) Democracy Service Medal, the International Republican Institute's Jeane Kirkpatrick Award, Poland's Highest Medal of Merit, Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, National Order "Star of Romania," Hungary's Commander's Cross Order of Merit and Ukraine's Order of Merit.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank Christian Ostermann and his staff, Mircea Munteanu, Kristina Terzieva, and Timothy McDonnell, for organizing this event. I've already mentioned the support by the Ratiu Foundation. This event is also co-sponsored by the Eugenia Vintu Foundation for Excellence in Education and Journalism and the Moldova Foundation, and we greatly appreciate their support.

I trust you will enjoy the 2008 Lecture by Ms. Cercavski. Her struggle for the rights of children to be educated in their native tongue, her commitment to democratic values, and, most of all, her courage, serves as an example to us all.

SAM DONALDSON has worked for ABC News for nearly four decades as a correspondent, anchor, and program co-host. Donaldson began working at ABC News in 1967, after moving to Washington, D.C. In 1977, he became ABC's chief White House correspondent—a post he held until 1989—and quickly became known for his aggressive style of questioning. He was an anchor of World News Sunday for 10 years and for the next 10 was a co-host with Diane Sawyer of Prime Time Live. Since 1982, he has appeared on the panel of ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley" and co-hosted the program, renamed "This Week," with Cokie Roberts until 2002. He continues to appear on ABC News Now, the ABC News digital network, on a daily, half-hour, unscripted show, "Politics Live." He also appears on the "This Week Roundtable" regularly and is an ABC News contributor.

THE RATIU DEMOCRACY CENTER



The Ratiu Democracy Center is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization based in Transylvania, Romania. Through its varied programs and projects the Center seeks to promote values and behaviors associated with democracy, open society and multiculturalism. It was founded in July 2004 with the support of the Ratiu Family Foundation based in London, UK and leading faculty members of Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

The Ratiu Center is particularly active in the fields of democratization and civil society building through programs and projects that aim to improve the quality of democratic life and civil participation in the public sphere. The Center's beneficiaries range from specific groups (such as students, academics, women, teachers, pensioners, or those with special needs) to wider audiences such as whole communities (for example as an organizing partner of Turda Fest, a well-established Transylvanian community agricultural festival).

The Ratiu Center for Democracy is also involved in several international projects including the prestigious annual Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture in association with the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, D.C. This public lecture, launched in 2005, is complemented by an award made by the Ratiu Family Foundation, as a means of encouraging and rewarding men and women of principle, thinkers as well as activists, struggling to implement democratic values and behaviors in parts of the world where these are either emerging or under threat.

The Ratiu Center team combines the energy of its younger members (including over 230 registered volunteers) with the expertise of its 24 professionals (both "town" and "gown," activists and academics) organized according to four principle modes of intervention that constitute the Center's four main departments: "researching," "learning," "informing," and "applying" the values and behaviors associated with democracy.

The Ratiu Center distinguishes itself by promoting "democracy as a way of life," the principle adhered to and promoted by Ion Ratiu (1917–2000), the life-long Romanian opponent of communism and advocate of democracy world-wide. This international perspective is complemented by programs and projects that are also distinctly local, focusing on the particularities of Transylvanian and Romanian post-1989 transition society.

—*Indrei Ratiu, Director*



INTRODUCING ELEONORA CERCAVSCHI

*Remarks by Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs
Paula J. Dobriansky*



It is truly a pleasure to be here with you at the Woodrow Wilson Center to introduce the recipient of the 2008 Ion Ratiu Democracy Award. First, I would like to thank the Wilson Center and commend its terrific president, Lee Hamilton, for all he does to advance scholarship on international affairs. Under Lee's outstanding leadership, the Woodrow Wilson International Center has become one of the pre-eminent institutions of its kind in America.

The Center's unique place in the constellation of think-tanks and academic centers is reflected not only in the fact that it attracts many of the most talented minds in the world for periods of intense study, but also that events such as this afternoon's are headlined by a man like Sam Donaldson. Sam is truly an icon of American journalism. From the trenches of Vietnam to the heights of Capitol Hill, he pioneered electronic journalism in America. It is an honor for me to share a role in today's lecture with him.

As Sam described, Ion Ratiu was also an iconic figure to millions of Romanians, both in Romania and abroad, for whom he gave voice to renewed patriotism and a love of freedom.

He was, some say, "the best president that Romania never had." He protested Romania's siding with the Nazis in World War II with as much passion as he used to speak out against the tyrannical regime of Ceausescu. He helped set up the World Union of Free Romanians as a vehicle for

keeping hopes of a post-Communist Romania alive throughout the Cold War. When the tyrant did fall, he returned to commit himself to rebuilding a democratic Romania that has worked tirelessly ever since to earn its seat at Europe's table. It is fitting that this lecture series should bear his name.

The current award marks the fourth in a series that began at my alma mater, Georgetown University. Its purpose is "to bring visibility and recognition to the ideas and accomplishments of individuals around the world who are working on behalf of democracy."

Eleonora Cercavschi is an educator and a human rights activist who is a champion for human rights. She has demonstrated heroism, a passion for education, and real courage in her efforts to ensure that the right to national identity is preserved in the Transnistria region of Moldova. In 1992, Transnistria declared its independence from Moldova sparking a three month war that ended in a state of legal limbo that has continued to the present day. The *de facto* government of Transnistria allies itself with Russia, and enforces a policy of russification on its citizens.

The State Department's annual Human Rights Report has repeatedly cited violations of human rights in Transnistria over the past two decades, including discrimination against Romanian speakers and Romanian language schools. The OSCE, which continues to monitor the 1992 cease-fire agreement, has compared the repression of Romanian culture in Transnistria to ethnic cleansing. Because of its dubious legal status, enforcing human rights protections in Transnistria is a monumental task. The real work of defending rights and

PAULA J. DOBRIANSKY is the Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, and, in this capacity, is responsible for a broad range of foreign policy issues, including democracy, human rights, labor, refugee and humanitarian relief matters, and environmental/science issues. Prior to her appointment, Dr. Dobriansky served as Senior Vice President and Director of the Washington Office of the Council on Foreign Relations. Her government appointments include Associate Director for Policy and Programs at the United States Information Agency, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Deputy Head of the U.S. Delegation to the 1990 Copenhagen Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Advisor to the U.S. Delegation to the 1985 U.N. Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, and Director of European and Soviet Affairs at the National Security Council, the White House. Dr. Dobriansky holds a Ph.D. in Soviet political/military affairs from Harvard University.

integrity of its citizens is done by often unsung heroes and heroines—such as Eleonora.

As principal of the Stefan the Great High School in Grigoriopol, she demonstrated her passion for education in resisting the order of local officials that classes be taught only in Russian. Her courage and heroism were evident in her willingness to risk persecution for insisting students be allowed to learn in the Romanian language. She was arrested, jailed, and threatened for fulfilling her role as a teacher and administrator.

Her championing of human rights inspired her to lead an effort for the re-introduction in Transnistria of the Latin alphabet—which the local authorities had replaced with Russian Cyrillic. When she was hauled into KGB headquarters and held for a week, she was told she would never see her children again. However, Eleonora refused to be daunted. She continued teaching in Romanian at yet another school—now 40 kilometers from her home. Her perseverance is a testament to her bravery and conviction. But just as extraordinary is the fact that her students would follow her to increasingly distant and difficult-to-access locations—a testament to her inspirational leadership.

Eleonora's public activities do not end with her teaching, however. She has founded an NGO called *Lumina* to defend the rights of children and their educators who choose to study and teach in Romanian. She is also active in politics, where she advocates for women's equal rights.

The letter in support of her nomination for the award she will receive today is signed by a former president of Moldova, together with academicians, journalists, leaders in civil society and head of a Moldovan political party. Clearly, her voice has been heard far beyond the classroom. But it is in the classroom that fundamental questions are raised.

The questions posed in Transnistria, and Eleonora's specific situation, go straight to the heart of some of the greatest challenges we face today in promoting democracy. They have to do with identity, and the critical role identity plays in the democratic architecture.

"As I learned in the prison camps," former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky recalls in his most

RATIU FAMILY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Ion and Elisabeth Ratiu established THE RATIU FOUNDATION UK in London in 1979. The main objective of the Foundation is to promote and support projects which further education and research in the culture and history of Romania and its people. Projects, undertaken in Romania, are encouraged on different subjects, such as patrimony, civil society, democracy, civilization, and environmental protection. (www.ratiufamilyfoundation.com)

recent book *Defending Identity: Its Indispensable Role in Protecting Democracy*, "those with the strongest identities were the least likely to succumb to tyranny. Those who retained a sense of the value of history, of tradition, of community, those who saw a purpose in life beyond life itself proved to be the ultimate bulwark against Soviet evil."

It is through her efforts to preserve identity for a rising generation in Transnistria, that Eleonora has committed herself to the intrinsically democratic notion of respecting human rights in terms as fundamental as an alphabet and a language.

Democratic governments that cannot tolerate a diversity of identities begin—in the face of their intolerance—to seem less democratic after all.

Throughout the world, we face, and will continue to face, multiple questions of how to incorporate identity into the matrix of free and peaceful states. The challenge may seem less daunting if we consider it from the perspective of a single, brave voice—such as Eleonora's.

Certainly, there are ethnic and linguistic, religious and ideological aspects to identity. An equally important ingredient to the identity mix is courage, and that is a characteristic Eleonora has demonstrated herself to possess in ample supply.

With that, it is my distinct honor to introduce Eleonora Cercavski.



THE ION RATIU DEMOCRACY LECTURE 2008

Democracy as a Fundamental Human Right

Eleonora Cercavschi



Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable Audience, I want to begin by thanking first of all the Ratiu Family: Elisabeth, Nicolae, Indrei, Pamela, and Ioana Ratiu for this opportunity. I want to thank Madam Secretary Paula Dobriansky, Mr. Sam Donaldson, Ambassador Joseph Gildenhorn, Congressman Lee Hamilton, and Dr. Christian Ostermann for the support they offered me.

First I would like to say a few words about the geographic space where my country is located, where I live and work as a teacher and the director of a high-school.

The Republic of Moldova is a European state, found between Romania and Ukraine, and which obtained its independence as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Republic of Moldova was part of the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1991, as the Socialist Soviet Republic of Moldova. The republic has a population of 4.5 million people, a majority of which (67%) are of Roman descent.

Historically speaking, the current territory of Moldova was part of the medieval principality of Moldova, which began as an historical entity in 1359. Located at the intersection of great power geopolitical interests, ever since the 14th Century Moldova and its people have suffered a lot. Moldovan history is tragic, treated at the whims of the great powers surrounding it. Over the centuries many wars took place on Moldovan territory. Today, the former territory of the Moldova Principality is split between three different countries: Romania, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.

The wars suffered on its territory caused great damage to the country—the de-nationalization of the population, the destruction of the economy, loss of land, the forced relocation of the ethnically Romanian population, and the immigration of other nationalities.

Two thirds of the land of the Moldova Republic is on the right of the Dnister River, between the Prut and Dnister rivers, and one third is on the left of the Dnister. The region on the East side of the river Dnister is referred to as Transnistria, meaning the region beyond the Dnister.

Transnistria was first occupied by Tsarist Russia in 1792, and the region between the Prut and Dnister River, called Bessarabia, was torn away from the Romanian principality of Moldova in 1812. This whole area (both Transnistria and Bessarabia) was occupied by Russia until 1918, when the Romanian Kingdom accomplished the Great Union of all the Romanian-speaking principalities, and Bessarabia united with Romania.

In 1940, following the secret agreements between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, between Stalin and Hitler, Russia once again tore away this part from Romania, and governed it until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. That year, on August 27, the Republic of Moldova declared its independence from the Soviet Union, the result of the recognition that the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreements of 1939 were null and void. Yet this action of Moldova was not agreed to by Moscow, which launched a war against Moldova. The war began in Transnistria, where Russia had strong military bases and a well equipped and large army.

Following this war, Russia established an independent republic on the right bank of the Dnister River—the Transnistrian Moldavian Republic—under Russian guise. The Russian 14th Army is still stationed in this region today, supporting the totalitarian Transnistrian regime. In other words, for the third time, Russia took control over the Transnistrian region, and holds it as a bridgehead for its influence in the Balkans.

Since taking control of the Transnistrian region, Russia has attempted through all means to Russify the ethnic Romanian population of the area—about 40% of the population. It is important to note that, based on its regional location, and on the basis of a Russian-led policy of de-nationalization,

the ethnicity of the population is classified as Moldavian, and the language they speak is considered Moldavian. Yet scientifically, the language spoken is the Romanian language. It remains a historical fact that the population of the Moldava Principality was ethnically Romanian, and their language was the Romanian language. At present, in Transnistria, the education of children is carried out in “the Moldovan language” which is nothing more than Romanian, highly russified, and which is studied and written in the Cyrillic alphabet. Yet it is known that the Moldava Principality, historically speaking, was an area of Romanian ethnicity, and, together with the Principality of Wallachia, were known as the “Romanian” Principalities.

Since 1990, the Moldovan Republic adopted the law governing the use of official languages on its territory. On this basis, the Cyrillic alphabet, first introduced by Tsarist Russia and later confirmed by the Soviet regime, was replaced with the Roman alphabet.

Yet after 1992, the totalitarian regime in Transnistria, which serves Moscow’s geo-strategic interests, has banned both the teaching in school of the Roman alphabet and the use of school books edited in the Republic of Moldova or Romania. Thus, in schools under the control of the Transnistrian Republic, the Cyrillic alphabet was re-introduced. The education of local children today takes place with 20–25 year old school books, written in the Soviet Union. Those books no longer reflect reality, the radical political and social changes that have taken place in the ex-Soviet space in the past 16–17 years. The education program of Transnistrian schools introduces the study of foreign languages—French or English—only in the 5th grade, even if it is a well known fact that when children are exposed to foreign languages early in their education they are better learners. Education in Moldova itself, for example, introduces foreign languages in the second grade, and, many times, even during kindergarten. More so, the study and use of computers in Transnistria is

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not being done until the last two years of general education (grade 10 and 11), and even then, only for one hour a week. In contrast, education requirements in Moldova introduce computer labs in the seventh grade, at least twice a week.

At the same time I have to point out that education in schools under the control of the Transnistrian republic is dictated by Russia’s policies, which do not always promote democratic values. Many times, the educational discourse in Transnistria is a violent one, directed against democratic countries like the United States and states of the European Union, and which promotes the idea of the superiority of Russian ethnicity over other ethnic groups. In 1992, at the National School No. 1 in the city of Grigoriopol, the representatives of the repressive separatist Transnistrian regime destroyed the Roman alphabet, symbolically shooting each letter in the presence of the students and the teacher. That same year, at the National School in the town of Tighina, all Latin script school books were burned.

The education of children in a language that does not exist—the so-called Moldovan language—is nothing short of a cultural genocide, taking away the children’s chance of a future. Starting 200 years ago under Tsarist Russia, the destruction of the local population’s national identity continues to be carried out in Transnistria. Fundamental human rights are being trampled upon.

We begin this fight with the understanding that prosperity and progress can only flourish when our education is a priority, where democracy and freedom of choice takes precedence. Progress in life and in society can only be obtained when we focus on the development of creative potential...

The Latin population of the region could not accept such a limitation of their rights. Teachers like myself, together with parents and many locals, tried to find a way out of this situation. We viewed it as our responsibility as teachers and parents to fight for democracy and education in our native tongue, meaning the Romanian language. We do not desire, and we are not arguing for, imposing the study in Romanian for the population of Transnistria as a whole. After all, in the Republic of Moldova there are schools in Russian, Gagauz, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian. We only seek the opportunity for the Romanian population of the Transnistrian region to study in their native tongue.

It is a clearly understood concept in the civilized world: the right to education in your native tongue is a fundamental human right. The duty of any school, be it grade school, gymnasium, or high school, is the education and formation of personalities. Myself, as a teacher, when I think of this very concept—of the shaping of personalities—I remember the ancient Greek myth of Prometheus. For thousands of years the story has given all of us extraordinarily important advice.

The story says that “human beings were not created like animals, with their head bowed down to the ground, but much like the Gods, with their head held high, their eyes turned towards the heavens.” This is an incredibly insightful suggestion. It is not by coincidence that over the centuries, that very statement has been the inspiration of countless works of art in regions of European cultural heritage.

Faced with the reality that our very rights and human dignity were trampled upon, we started opposing the dictatorial, anti-democratic, and authoritarian regime established in the region. In Transnistria this separatist regime, which claims its legitimacy from falsified elections, through disinformation and lies, supported by Russian forces, has brought about the trampling of human and constitutional rights, poverty, and provoked the exodus of the population. The assimilation process is being

carried now through mass media (television, radio, newspapers, and journals) through schools and through churches, in other words through every possible means.

Before I start talking about the history of the school I work at, Stephen the Great High School in the city of Grigoriopol, presently relocated to the village of Dorotcaia (which is under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova), I want to say a few words about the moral and ethical principles my colleagues and I personally share.

We began this fight with the conviction that school is at the basis of society, that the teacher, truthfully called the divine fruit of the human soul, must tend to the human qualities. Teachers have the duty to do the day-to-day work to prepare engineers, doctors, lawyers, workers of every profession. We all have a holy duty as parents and teachers to prevent our assimilation and the removal of our rights. We begin this fight with the understanding that prosperity and progress can only flourish when our education is a priority, where democracy and freedom of choice takes precedence. Progress in life and in society can only be obtained when we focus on the development of creative potential, as a requirement for this century. Our children, the flowers of our lives, will, I believe, only become true human beings, gaining the respect and sympathy of others and acting properly and humanely in any situation, when they grow up under a democratic system, a situation in which truth and lawfulness and social equity dominate, where honesty, human dignity, and knowledge are properly respected.

As a professor of literature, I’m going to make another reference to another literary work written by a contemporary author from the north of the Republic of Moldova, Ion Druta. In his work “Doina,” one of his characters, Tudor Mocanu, gives us an insightful confession of his faith in what man has most precious in this world:

“I’d place on the top, dignity, that’s all. From when he is a child, as he begins to stand up, then

looks around to make sure that no one will step on what is most holy to him. Dignity is as if he was carrying a bowl of water on a finger. You are human as long as the bowl is full.”

We teachers, and especially those of us who teach liberal arts, try very hard to give our students this very precious human virtue: dignity. It is not surprising that the nature of the soul rests on dignity. But please believe us, it is very difficult to educate when throughout the 20th century the Soviet people have been forced into a very serious moral deviation.

The same writer, Ion Druta, wrote in his article, “The Time to Cleanse—Letter to a Young Reader” on January 5, 1989, “For years and years, honesty, dignity and wisdom have been trampled and muddied to such an extent that they will never be able to be cleaned.”

The writer comments on a sad reality but we as teachers and parents do not have the moral right to fall prey to such pessimism. We have a duty to seek an exit from the current situation, to promote moral, ethical, and national values, the national language, a history of the Romanian people, the cultural traditions, national ideals, and the rights of the local population.

Let me say a few words now about the history of our high school, of the difficulties which we face constantly, placed in our way consistently and intentionally, and of the problems that I myself and my colleagues have to face. I have to say that even before the fall of the Soviet empire and the formation of the Republic of Moldova, but especially afterwards, we have acted in support of national ideals, scientific and historical truth, for the democratization of society, the implementation of the education system, of a set of moral and spiritual values, for education in the Romanian language and the introduction of the Roman alphabet.

All of these activities carried out by myself and some of my colleagues have awakened the hate of the separatist, anti-democratic regime in Transnistria. The leaders there threatened my life



and my family’s life in 1992 and prevented me from working as a teacher. In 1996, I became the leader of the civic movement to reintroduce the Roman alphabet into schools, which had been banned ever since 1992. Because of this, on October 2, 1996, I was arrested, placed in isolation in the KGB building in the city of Tiraspol, the administrative center of the separatist regime, and threatened and abused for an entire week. I was constantly told that I would never see my children again if I do not give up the idea of teaching the Romanian language.

Under pressure from international organizations, I was freed. Yet faced with various other constrictions, I was forced to once again become a refugee and move with my family to the capital of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau. Even facing these difficulties I continued to fight for the right of children to study the Romanian language. In 1996, the Moldovan Minister of Education established a Romanian language school in the City of Grigoriopol and offered me the position of director. For six years, since we did not have a school building, we taught clandestinely in the homes of teachers and parents on the basis of educational programs developed in the Republic of Moldova.

Upset at our clandestine activity, the separatist regime in Tiraspol denied the right of the institu-

tion to exist and removed the right of our teachers to work in the schools in Transnistria. But we did not give up. For six years about 200 students and 20 teachers commute daily to the village of Dorotcaia, a village under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova. Each day, we would drive for 34 kilometers in three rented buses to hold afternoon classes in the school of Dorotcaia, constantly subjected to the humiliation of passing through the border points of the separatist Transnistrian regime.

I ask myself and ask you, of the over 200 countries that exist today, in how many do such atrocities, illegalities, terrorist and racist activities directed at children still take place? I say that probably in the Republic of Moldova and the territory of my country occupied by a pro-Russian regime is one of very few. The leaders of this regime, Russian citizens Smirnov and Antiufeev, have begun an inhumane fight against the national schools in Transnistria.

At the same time, the separatist Smirnov regime has commercial connections with about 90 businesses in the European Union. The financial resources obtained through these connections are also utilized in the fight against Romanian children in Transnistria, to punish them and to trample on their legitimate rights to education.

Even though we carry out our activities in such difficult conditions, without reading rooms or gyms, without well-equipped laboratories, our school continues to obtain impressive results year to year. In the national educational olympics we obtain the most medals. Every year, over 90% of our graduates are accepted at universities in Moldova and Romania. Because of our successes, in 2004 the Minister of Education in Moldova granted our school the special title of "Science High School Stephen the Great".

For us, this title is a symbol of liberty and national dignity, considering that Stefan the Great is the most well-known leader of our nation, known also throughout Europe as an unequalled military leader, defender of the Orthodox faith and of Christendom as a whole.

I want to say that presently in Transnistria, besides our own school there are seven more educational institutions that teach the Romanian language under the umbrella of the Minister of Education of the Moldovan Republic. They, too, work in difficult conditions consciously imposed by the separatist regime in Transnistria.

But at the same time another 34 national schools in Transnistria, or over 10,000 children are subjected to an educational genocide. The number of children in school becomes smaller each year because of the discrimination and disadvantages faced by these schools when compared to Russian schools to which many of the students are transferred.

To protect the teachers in Transnistria and coordinate our activities, I started in 1999 the Association of Transnistrian Teachers, *Lumina*. The primary goal of this association is to ensure the rights of children, parents, and teachers in Transnistria. Our activities aim to improve the educational process, supply libraries with necessary books, and facilitate the further education of our students in Romania where the level of education is better than in Moldova.

In the nine years that the association has existed, we obtained hundreds of university and high school scholarships for our students in schools in Moldova and Romania. Hundreds of Transnistrian children have been able to spend their vacations in camps because of the association. The libraries in Transnistria receive thousands of books, some obtained from the Romanian government and some from private publishing houses.

Let me end my speech with a Latin proverb which I like very much, "the way to the heavens is through patience." I want to be well-understood, neither I nor my close colleagues claim to have achieved unheard of performances; we simply see a ray of hope at the end of the tunnel. Our systematic efforts have a single goal in mind, to ensure that children have the fundamental right to education, giving them the knowledge base necessary for them to choose their own way

I hope for, as do the parents of my students, for a normal life, one without humiliation, in which culture, justice, and personal liberty are respected.

in life, to obtain the success and in the end, a decent existence.

I hope, as do the parents of my students, for a normal life, one without humiliation, in which culture, justice, and personal liberty are respected.

I want to stress that the “Stephen the Great” High School in the city of Grigoriopol is financed from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Youth of the Government of Moldova. From these appropriations—which unfortunately are very small—the school administration has to pay all expenses: the transport of students to the school, educational materials, computers, teachers’ salaries, etc.

It is regrettable that our efforts are not better assisted by the current communist government of the Moldovan Republic, but that in the end is not that surprising. The communist government of my country is educated by Soviet ideology, which in essence is anti-national, anti-democratic, and authoritarian. The mentality of the present leadership in the Republic of Moldova is not that different from the mentality of the Transnistrian leadership. The leadership of Moldova, like the leadership in Transnistria, ignores the scientific fact that the local population is ethnically Romanian and speaks the Romanian language. They are taking us back to the same old ideas of “Moldovans” and the “Moldovan” language, something that no one else in the world recognizes. The ideology promoted

by the communist leadership is anti-national and false, based on lies, dogma, and untruth.

My anti-communist position was formed by the education I received at home and from the stories I heard from my parents and the grandmother whose name I carry. My parents and grandparents were deported to Siberia from the Cernauti region, nowadays in Ukraine. They suffered famine, cold, and humiliation there. Some of them are buried there. Maybe this is the reason I’ve become who I am today.

During Soviet times, lacking information on democracy, I still hoped in my heart for a different system, a different life, where human hopes are the center. I hoped that one day we’ll be free and that did happen in August 1991, when the Soviet Union fell.

My desire to live in a civilized and democratic society, to see my country enjoy the same level of development and life as in more developed countries forces me to be more than just a teacher, to be involved in politics.

I think it’s my duty as a citizen to help bring about necessary changes in society. These changes cannot come before power is held by political parties that are inherently democratic, which lead the country based on national interests, based on the interests of all members of society.

I am a member of the National Liberal Party of Moldova. I am also a member of the Party’s Permanent Central Bureau.

In 2001 I ran for a seat in Parliament on the list of the Rebirth and Conciliation Party, the party of former President Mircea Snegur.

In 2005 I ran again for Parliament on the list of the Electoral Alliance “Our Moldova”, led by Mr. Serafim Urechean, which is presently in opposition.

In both cases, I regretfully did not win. But I am not disheartened, I did not lose my courage. I will continue to fight for a bright future for my country, and the future my countrymen deserve.

What do we, the teachers in Transnistria, hope for? What do I hope for?

First of all, I hope to be able to improve the security of my students. I hope for a school for the Romanian students in Grigoriopol, a school in their own city, which will not require their present commute over dozens of kilometers each day. I hope for, as do the parents of my students, for a normal life, one without humiliation, in which culture, justice, and personal liberty are respected. I know it will not be easy to obtain these things. Without re-integrating Transnistria into the Republic of Moldova we will never attain a normal situation in the region with respect to our fundamental human rights. And, obtaining our own rights automatically means respecting the same fundamental human rights of the Russian population in Transnistria.

To obtain these rights—a quiet, normal life with security, with the right to maintain your own cultural and ethnic identity without outside interference—we need the more active involvement of the European Union and the United States. But this involvement should not be limited to government to government relations. Governmental contacts are extraordinarily important, but they are not enough. I believe, and I call on civil society to continue to involve itself in the process of democratization of Transnistria. I continue to believe in maintaining and expanding contacts between

foundations and representatives of civil society in the European Union and the United States with those organizations and individuals in Transnistria that are actively fighting for the democratization of Transnistria. I believe that these contacts, both at government level, but also at the level of civil society, will bear fruit, both in the long term, but, just as importantly, in the short term, in a region in which hope, not yet lost, is severely weakened by current realities.

I feel privileged that in 2000, Romania honored me with the rank of Commander of the Order “For Loyal Service.” Yet it is not recognition or my career that I fight for. That being said, in all sincerity, I say that “The Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture” given me this year is indeed a great honor, and I want to thank those who selected me from the bottom of my heart: the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, the Ratiu Democracy Center, and the Ratiu Charitable Foundation.

I hold the hope that you as well, from now on, while you live in the country of democracy, will continue to pay attention to my forgotten land. I also want to express again my deepest gratitude to my colleagues for the noble activities they have undertaken.

MS. ELEONORA CERCAVSCHI is a dedicated human rights and democracy activist in Moldova’s Transnistria region. Through her remarkable accomplishments, in particular her leadership of the Stephen the Great High School (Stefan Cel Mare Si Sfint Lyceum) in Grigoriopol, Moldova, she has received recognition as a political activist and an educator. Ms. Cercavschi demonstrated unparalleled commitment to securing the rights of high school children in Transnistria to education in their native language, and outstanding dedication to the cause of promoting democratic values.

THE RATIU FAMILY

A Short Note on Ratiu Family History



By *Indrei Ratiu, M.A., M.B.A.*
Trustee, Ratiu Family Foundation
Director, Ratiu Democracy Center

“**R**atiu” (or “Racz” as the name was typically spelled under Hungarian rule, or “Ratz” under Austrian rule) is one of the earliest documented Romanian family names in Transylvania. It first appeared in 1332 when Voivode Thomas Szecezenyi certified that Andrei (aka Indrei) is “Nobilis” (i.e. nobleman) of Nagylak and rightful owner of the lands around the village of Nagylak on the Mures river near present-day Alba Iulia. In mediaeval Transylvania, noble status such as Andrei’s entitled a man to many privileges, and especially to land.

In 1396, Thomas de Nagylak (Andrei’s grandson) and his men enlisted as crusaders in the army of the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg who had allied his forces with those of Romanian voievode Mircea the Old of Wallachia and other crusader armies from the West. This turned out to be the Western powers’ last stand against the Ottoman Turks’ invasion of the Balkans that ended with the Europeans’ disastrous defeat at Nicopolis and the permanent loss of all lands south of the Danube to Islam.

Nevertheless, Thomas de Nagylak distinguished himself in the campaign. As a reward for his services, King Sigismund ennobled him. In Transylvania, Thomas’ neighbours nicknamed him “Ratiu” or “Racz”—ie “The Croat” (“Hrvac”) because he had fought in the land of the Croats—and the name stuck: the family name became Racz de Nagylak.

From the 14th century onwards the family obtained several further titles of nobility. Emperor Rudolf II Habsburg appointed Petrus Ratz von Nagylak, (as the name was now spelled in German), “imperial translator for Romanian relations.” Petrus and his family settled in Rudolf’s chosen capital, Prague, and fought in a number of his campaigns. Eventually Petrus was appointed the emperor’s ambassador to the Court of Russia, in St Petersburg.

These promotions are reflected in changes in the family coats of arms at this time; the family leopard not only gained a second head and a Mercury messenger stick reflecting the bearer’s ambassadorial status, but Petrus and his descendants also received a new, additional coat of arms in recognition of their Crusader heritage; it depicts a decapitated janissary head (which the family rarely shows).

Since the rights and privileges of nobility in this part of Europe were frequently contested, in 1625 Prince Gabriel Bethlen of Transylvania formally renewed Stefan Racz’s Nagylak title (note the Hungarian spelling again). Twenty-five years later in the next electoral contest for the princely title to Transylvania, Stefan duly supported his Bethlen benefactors, but Bethlen lost, and in 1653 the victorious contender, Prince George Rakoczi II, confiscated all Stefan Racz’s Nagylak lands.

Stefan Racz’s two eldest sons now headed west down the river Mures and settled in the present-day town of Teius. There they entered the service of the victorious Prince Rakoczi. In due course they were rewarded with lands and a title of their own: Ratz von Tövis (note the German spelling). Stefan and his other children, including his youngest son Coman, headed north across the river Mures and settled in Turda, a “closed” city where only people of noble descent resided.

Somehow, the Nagylak Ratiu’s—nephews of Stefan and sons of Coman—were accepted in Turda and survived there. All the Turda Ratiu’s are descendants of these 18th century fugitives from Nagylak.

Eventually, in 1680, the Turda Ratiu’s Nagylak title was reconfirmed by Prince Rakoczi’s successor, Prince Mihai Apafi I. This 1680 document mentions Ratiu descendants Vasile with his sons Ioan and Vasile.

18th century Ratiu family members also became closely identified with the Uniate Church (i.e. Greek-Catholic) part of the former Orthodox diocese of Transylvania that had united with Rome in exchange for civil rights under Austrian rule. But the promised civil rights were all too slow in materializing.

In 1829 Fr. Basiliu Ratiu (1783–1870) a leading figure in the Romanian Uniate Church, countered yet another attempt by the local Hungarian nobility to evict the family from Turda. This was a landmark settlement that complemented Fr. Basiliu’s successful resolution of the family’s legal battle against the heirs of the family’s Nagylak lands—by this time held by the family’s former neighbors and friends in Nagylak, the Bethlens. Fr. Basiliu was not able to recover the land itself but he obtained substantial compensation instead. To these funds other family members in turn made donations of their own so that in 1839 a new stone Uniate church and a school—both catering primarily to Romanians—could be built right in the center of otherwise Hungarian Turda. Both structures have survived. The charitable foundation or “Eforie” established by Fr. Basiliu in 1867 with the balance of the Bethlen settlement later financed the construction of Turda’s central market place (which also survives) and granted scholarships to numerous young Romanians until as recently as 1948 when all assets of the Romanian Uniate church were finally confiscated by the communist regime, and remain unreturned to this day.

The same “Eforie” founded by Fr. Basiliu Ratiu also supported the establishment in 1902 of Turda’s first College of Arts and Trades which survives today as Turda’s “Ratiu College” with buildings erected on Ratiu family land. During the 1930’s his descendent Augustin Ratiu played a leading role in equipping the school with adequate buildings and a spirit of enterprise. Although for 40 years of communism the school was known as “Chemistry 2,” it has recently revived the family connection and (since 2004) Indrei Ratiu serves on the school board.

Fr. Basiliu Ratiu and his illustrious nephew, the lawyer Dr. Ioan Ratiu, took part in and survived the bloody 1848 revolution in Transylvania. Dr. Ioan Ratiu, whose statue can still be seen opposite Turda’s city hall, went on to champion civil rights for Romanians within Austro-Hungary’s officially multicultural empire, leading a 300 strong delegation of Transylvanians to petition emperor Franz-

Joseph with a historic “Memorandum” of the civil rights they sought. Although Dr. Ioan Ratiu and his colleagues were jailed for their efforts, his memorable words at their trial were taken up by the press throughout Europe, serving as powerful encouragement to subject peoples everywhere: “Gentlemen” declared Dr. Ioan Ratiu before his judges, “it is not we who are on trial here today, but yourselves. The existence of a people is not for discussion, but rather for affirmation...”

Dr. Ioan Ratiu died in 1902, but his widow Emilia and his daughter Felicia continued his struggle for Romanian civil rights and, once Transylvania had united with Romania in 1918, implementing the principle of national self-determination, mother and daughter focused more specifically on the cause of women’s rights in Romania—in which they were pioneers—until their deaths in 1929 and 1938 respectively.

Also in 1918, following Transylvania’s union with Romania, Dr. Ioan Ratiu’s great-nephew, the young lawyer Augustin Ratiu was rewarded with the prestigious post of first Romanian prefect of Turda County. In addition to a successful law office and his active involvement in the town’s College of Arts and Trades, he was also to hold office repeatedly as mayor and councillor at both the county and municipal levels. In Turda, Augustin Ratiu’s civil administrations ushered in a period of prosperity (Turda’s great glassworks opened soon after WWI), and post WWI Turda of Augustin Ratiu’s day quickly became a cultural melting-pot (Romanian, Hungarian, German, Jewish and Roma).

Also present throughout the historic process of Transylvania’s 1918 union with Romania were Dr. Ioan Ratiu’s private secretary, protege and distant relative of Iuliu Maniu, who was to serve many times as Romanian prime-minister during the inter-war period, and his young grandson, Viorel Tilea. Tilea later went on to set up Romania’s first national tourist office, the “ONT”, and to serve as Romanian ambassador to Great Britain. Here in 1939, he was joined by another young lawyer, Augustin Ratiu’s own eldest son, Ioan (later

Ion now committed his life to the cause of unmasking the true nature of communism worldwide through numerous publications, broadcasts, demonstrations and the exhibition of political cartoons.

changed to “Ion” which he considered more pleasing to British ears!).

On his recall to Marshall Antonescu’s nazi-allied Romania in 1941, Tilea and his entire embassy sought and received asylum in Britain. Ion immediately received a scholarship to Cambridge University where, already a qualified lawyer, he now committed himself to the study of comparative political systems and economics. Tilea was to die in London in 1974 while Ion’s exile from his native Romania was to last almost 50 years. It was not until 1990, after the fall of Ceausescu’s communist dictatorship, that he was able to continue his lifelong campaign for Romanian democracy on home territory.

In London, Ion met and married Elisabeth, from the glass-manufacturing Pilkington family, who even boasted a crusader ancestor buried somewhere in Romania’s Olt valley on his way to Palestine. After the war, the young couple planned to return to Romania, but in 1946, soon after the birth of their first son Andrei, they were advised instead by Ion’s mentor Iuliu Maniu, to “continue the fight for Romanian democracy and freedom from abroad.” In 1948 Maniu and Romania’s entire democratic leadership as well as all loyal priests of the Romanian Uniate church were jailed by the newly installed communist regime. Most of those jailed, including Maniu and supporters such as Ratiu family member Liviu Cigareanu, died in prison, their bodies dumped in unmarked graves—in fields and on hillsides which can be visited to this day.

Maniu’s advice and a long fight with tuberculosis spared Ion and his own immediate family from a similar fate. Ion now committed his life to the cause of unmasking the true nature of communism worldwide through numerous publications, broadcasts, demonstrations and the exhibition of political cartoons. He also engaged in activities specifically addressing the issue of a democratic future for Romania, such as the Cambridge University Romanian Students Association, the Free Romanian Press, (founded in 1957); ACARDA, the Anglo Romanian Cultural Association, and the World

Union of Free Romanians, launched at the Geneva Congress of Free Romanians in 1984.

Like his ancestor Fr. Basiliu Ratiu, Ion was also to demonstrate considerable business acumen, first in shipping, later in real estate and media. The family business, managed today by his son Nicolae was to be the platform for yet another development in the family tradition: a new family foundation.

In 1979, Ion and Elisabeth established a British successor foundation to Fr. Basiliu Ratiu’s original 1867 Family Foundation, or “Eforie.” This was the Ratiu Family Foundation, a British charitable trust, designed for the “promotion of Romanian language, culture and civilisation, and the relief of poor Romanians.” In 1987, 120 years after his ancestor Fr. Basiliu had gathered members of his own generation in Turda to establish the first Ratiu Family Foundation—the “Eforie,” Ion presented his vision for the new Family Foundation to a London gathering of over 25 family members, inviting all to participate in the new foundation’s work, as volunteers.

Today the Ratiu Family Foundation is managed by his son Nicolae and partners with various institutions and organizations around the world in pursuit of its mission. The Foundation maintains offices in London, Turda, and Bucharest that are jointly staffed by professionals and volunteers. Communications technology makes it possible for family members in present-day Turda, London and Bucharest to share in the organization of Foundation-sponsored programs and events as far afield as Phoenix (where the Foundation offers Romanian travel scholarships through Arizona State University) and Washington, D.C. (where the Foundation has endowed the Ion Ratiu Chair of Romanian Studies at Georgetown University, the only one of its kind on the American continent).

Most recently, the Family Foundation has worked with the Center for Democracy, the Third Sector of Georgetown University, and with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., to develop and organize the innovative annual lecture entitled the Ion Ratiu



Democracy Lecture that seeks to recognize and reward men and women of principle struggling in their own part of the world to promote democracy and freedom.

More recently in Romania, The Family Foundation funds organizations that include the Ratiu Center for Democracy with offices in Cluj as well as Turda, offering (since June 2009) a historic library of 20th century political papers collected by Viorel Tilea and Ion Ratiu; an annual series of open Democracy Lectures in the university city of Cluj; competitions that foster innovative democracy-related social science research; the annual Turda Democracy Gatherings, and a multitude of civil society applications of democratic principles, such as Turda Fest—an annual agricultural fair; debating for young people; various campaigns, such as anti-human trafficking—and a lively volunteer program.

Fundatia Ratiu Romania is a Romanian humanitarian foundation established by Ion's widow Elisabeth to provide vital assistance to categories of Romanians that other agencies fail to reach, such as children with leukemia, or fostering chronically ill or handicapped homeless children. Today Fundatia Ratiu promotes social engagement through the arts. These charitable activities are supported by the Ratiu Foundation U.S.A., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization registered in Washington, D.C.

When he died in 2000 Ion Ratiu left neither personal wealth nor major bequests....only family responsibilities: the responsibilities of managing and applying those resources that, like those of his 19th century ancestor, he had left in trust so that the family's work might continue.

Ion Augustin Nicolae Ratiu

Ion Augustin Nicolae Ratiu, born in Turda, Transylvania, on 6 June 1917, was the son of Augustin Ratiu, a successful lawyer, mayor, county prefect and great-grandnephew of Dr. Ioan Ratiu, the leader of the Romanian National Party. A promising law student, Ion Ratiu seemed destined for an academic career, but in 1938 he was com-

missioned as top cadet at the Artillery Military Academy in Craiova, and in April 1940 he joined Romania's Foreign Service. He was sent to London as a chancellor at the Romanian Legation. The decision to align Romania with the Axis powers later in 1940 appalled Ion Ratiu, who resigned his post and obtained political asylum in Britain. He won a scholarship to study economics at St. John's College, Cambridge, and in 1945 Ion Ratiu married Elisabeth Pilkington in London.

In exile in London after the communist takeover of Romania in 1946, Ion Ratiu threw himself into the struggle against communism, becoming a regular contributor to the Romanian Service of the BBC, Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. In 1957 his book *Policy for the West* was published, radically challenging contemporary Western views of the nature of communism. He then went into shipping and later into real estate, where he accumulated considerable wealth. In 1975, the year he published another work, *Contemporary Romania*, Ion Ratiu decided to devote all his energy to the pursuit of a free Romania. Mr. Ratiu led the British-Romanian Association from 1965 to 1985 and played a key role in the setting up of the World Union of Free Romanians, of which he was elected president in 1984. After the fall of Ceausescu, he continued for some years to subsidize the publication outside Romania of the monthly *Free Romanian*, which he had launched in 1985.

Ion Ratiu returned to Romania in 1990 to run for the presidency. Although he became member of the Romanian Parliament, and served as both Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies as well as Romania's roving ambassador to NATO, his failure to win the presidency was a grave disappointment to many. Sympathizers continue to refer to him as "the best president Romania never had."

Ion Ratiu died in London surrounded by his family after a short illness, and in accordance with his wishes, was buried in January 2000 in his home town of Turda. His funeral was attended by over 10,000 people. *[Adapted from the obituary published in the London Times, 19 January 2000.]*

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ION RATIU DEMOCRACY LECTURE

The purpose of the Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture is to bring visibility and international recognition to the ideas and accomplishments of individuals around the world who are working on behalf of democracy. The event expresses the deep commitment to democracy of the late Ion Ratiu through his contributions as a Romanian politician as well as his interest in democratic change worldwide. The Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture aims to replicate for campaigning democrats today, whether in exile from repressive regimes or representative of today's emerging democracies, the life-changing experience in Washington, D.C., of the then young Romanian democrat, Ion Ratiu, during the 1970s and 80s.

The Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture strives to enrich the intellectual environment in which ideas about democracy and democratic change circulate, both within and beyond Washington. It seeks to make available for students, scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers the experience and insights of individuals whose work and commitment on behalf of democracy are broadly in keeping with those of Ion Ratiu; to provide opportunities to engage a wide range of Washington-based and international audiences to increase their appreciation of the contribution that individuals can make in advancing democratic change. Equally important, the Lecture aims to be of value for the individual or individuals who are selected to participate, providing opportunities to reflect and learn, and to benefit from individual and institutional resources that are uniquely available in Washington, including meeting with U.S. government officials.

The 2008 Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture at the Woodrow Wilson Center is the fourth event in a series begun at Georgetown University in 2005 and held at the Wilson Center since 2006. Past awardees include Sergio Aguayo (Mexico), Saad El-Din Ibrahim (Egypt) and Anatoli Mikhailov (Belarus).

Professor Eliot Sorel, MD, serves as Senior Advisor to the Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture.

Nominations for the Ion Ratiu Democracy Lecture should be submitted to IonRatiu-lecture@wilsoncenter.org or to www.wilsoncenter.org/ratiu