

Transylvania: Balkan or Europe?

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At the threshold of a new millennium as the statesmen of Europe consider a historic step of "enlarging" Europe, on the south-eastern border lies a region whose belonging or not belonging is the subject of a serious debate. Nobody questions that Hungary has a thousand year old history as Europe's easternmost outpost. But beyond Hungary's current borders lies Transylvania whose thousand year old connections with Hungary and Europe has been severed some eighty years ago at the French palace of Versailles, at the Trianon peace conference when it was detached from Europe and attached to the Balkan.

Severing Transylvania from Hungary and awarding it to the less than sixty years old Kingdom of Rumania. As the question of Rumania's admission to NATO and to the European Union is being discussed, the minority issue becomes unavoidable. Therefore those advocating Rumania's admission are flooding the media and the literature with success stories about Rumania's ability to handle her minorities.

Unfortunately, these success stories of Rumania seems exaggerated even from the Rumanian perspective, especially if it is compared to the success of Hungarian efforts for over several hundred years to govern a multi-ethnic community that also included Transylvania. Under the Crown Doctrine, Hungary declared and treated all nationalities equal under Saint Stephen's Crown, following Saint Stephen's Advices to his son, until the Austrian ruling house started to incite the Rumanian nationalists, along with the other nationals of Hungary, to divide and conquer. The so called "King with the hat," Joseph II (ruled 1780-1790), had refused to crown himself with the Holy Crown —which had been a symbol of national unity— as king of Hungary so he was not bound to follow the Hungarian constitution and guarantee, among other things, equal and peaceful treatment of the nationalities.

His late would be successor, the assassinated Archduke Ferdinand, also planned to postpone crowning himself as king of Hungary after his succession to the throne as Austro-Hungarian emperor so he would be able, before taking his oath on the Hungarian constitution, to dismember Hungary and grant parts of the Kingdom of Hungary to the incited and therefore discontented national minorities or in the case of Transylvania to Rumania, like it actually happened in Trianon after the war that had been provoked by his assassination. So, even without Trianon, had Ferdinand ascended to Franz Joseph's throne, Hungary's fate would likely be quite similar. Ferdinand's goal was to draw both Serbia and Rumania into the Hapsburg empire. Just as the recent "successes" of Rumania have occurred at the expense of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, Ferdinand's plans were to be carried out also at the expense of Hungary. He was planning to enlarge his empire by victimizing Hungarians. It was this plan to incorporate the enlarged Serbia into the empire that led to his assassination by opposition Serb nationalists, with Russian (and French) support.

There is, however a difference between the Hungarian and Rumanian (also Serb and Slovak) nation-building methods, and it is a major one. The Hungarians were building a multi-ethnic nation where, according to the Crown Doctrine and the so-called "positive

sum" principle, where all nationalities benefited from the peaceful coexistence. The Rumanians and the other beneficiaries of Trianon are building an exclusively Rumanian, Serb or Slovak nation, where one nationality benefits at the expense of others. They followed the methods favored by the Hapsburgs, the so called "conflict approach," where one nationality benefits at the expense of all the others. There is no room for minorities under those chauvinistic regimes. They use methods of the most violent ethnic cleansing ranging from ethnocide to forced assimilation, intimidation and expulsion in their effort at 20th or now 21st Century "nation-building."

A contemporary Hungarian poet in Transylvania has captured the essence of the situation when he compared the Rumanians, the former minorities in Hungary who were accepted and shielded by Hungarians for centuries before Trianon, to the parasitic cuckoo bird that lays her eggs in the nest of other, smaller birds. As the baby cuckoo bird grows, he throws out his step-brothers and sisters from the warm nest that their parents have built, and of whose hospitality he is taking advantage, and becomes the only survivor from among the nestle of birds.

As we shall see, this is not just a Hungarian complaint but even Transylvanian and Moldavian Rumanians are complaining about it.

I wish I could praise the Rumanians for their successful nation-building methods after the execution of the feared and hated Ceausescu, but unfortunately, the minorities of Transylvania, dwindling in number to this day, continue to be victimized in spite of some more civilized rhetoric. It would take several volumes to list not only the atrocities and human rights violations, the efforts to thwart the work of CSCE and later OSCE, also known as the Helsinki Process that was initiated in 1975 as an effort to improve human rights conditions in the Soviet Bloc at the price of making border and other security guarantees to the Bloc. It is interesting to note that in the spirit of the Helsinki process, the border guarantees are linked with human rights. If human, including minority rights are not respected, the border guarantees should not be binding either.

The Daco-Roman Theory

Rumanian nationalism has as its ideological basis the theory of Rumanian and Daco-Roman continuity. The theory is not accepted by objective Western historians, since it is obviously false and have declared it a fabrication. Even Rumanian linguists (e.g. I. Coteanu) have criticized it, pointing out that the Rumanian language contains Latin words and other grammatical features that did not exist at the time of the Roman occupation of Dacia, thus, it is more likely that the Rumanian language originated much later, in the region of Illiria, along the Adriatic Sea. While the traditional explanation for the survival of the Dacian tribes for a milleneum after the withdrawal of the Roman troops is that they were, very wisely, hiding in the caves and forests so the invaders would not find and kill them, just recently the Rumanian government had issued a new twist on this unbelievable explanation. It did not seem to bother the Rumanian government that this is even more unbelievable. According to the State Report submitted by Romania on Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (found on MINELRES web site, 3-15-00)

" The ethno-cultural symbiosis which led to the formation of the Romanian people continued up to the end of the ninth century AD and the beginning of the

tenth century; it is during that period that the formation of the Romanian people may be regarded as having been completed... Between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries the Magyar tribes arrived in Central Europe and established the basis of the Hungarian Kingdom. Transylvania was gradually conquered during the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, from the North-West towards the south-east, following prolonged conflicts with the Romanian political and military forces. Transylvania then became an autonomous principality (voïvodat) within the Hungarian Kingdom..."

There were no "Romanian political and military forces" in Transylvania (or anywhere else) at the time of the Hungarian conquest? The map in Colin McEvedy's authoritative Penguin Maps of Medieval History includes Transylvania as part of the Hungarian Principality (later Hungarian Kingdom) as early as 930 and continues to do so through several centuries! But the maintenance of this lie is necessary to sustain the chauvinistic drive to an ethnically pure Great Rumania. This is also important to establish a territorial claim to Transylvania, which would disappear by admitting that at the time of the Hungarian Conquest Transylvania was a largely empty territory.

The unrealistic Dako-Rumanian theory is also criticized from an unexpected corner. Dr. Napoleon Savescu, founder and president of the Romanian Medical Society in the USA, and an amateur historian, wrote a book, THE REAL HISTORY OF ROMANIA, which can be found on Dr. Savescu's web site on the Internet (www.Dr-Savescu.com). Dr. Savescu explains, that if the Hungarians could not assimilate the Romanians of Transylvania in a thousand years, it is unlikely, that the Romans could have so completely Romanized the Dacians in about one quarter of that time. He also notes that modern Rumanian language contains a total of 7 (seven!) Dacian words. So, he proposes (in what seems to be a spoof on excessive and unfounded Rumanian national pride in their pre-history) that actually Rumanians are "not Roman descendants but vice versa," and the Rumanian language is several thousand years old, older even than the Sumerian civilization.

An outsider might make light and smile at the Rumanian naiveté to claim continuity between present day Rumanians and the Dacians of the third Century AD, but unfortunately, there is little to smile. Driven by unscrupulous political leaders, radical historians and other intellectuals, including many from among the Orthodox clergy and chauvinistic journalists, not only the Rumanian masses but many foreign historians and journalists who have not taken the trouble to do independent research have become brainwashed into an uncritical acceptance of a theory.

The result is that Rumania as a whole has become the hotbed of a dangerous form of nationalism. Pope Pius XI in a 1938 Address (Le Missioni il Nazionalismo) made an important distinction between two kinds of nationalism. After explaining that "nations were made by God," he stated that "there is room for fair and moderate nationalism, which is the breeding ground of many virtues, but beware of exaggerated nationalism as of a veritable curse." The guiding ideology of Rumania is such a curse. This is what they teach in many Rumanian schools, preach in many Orthodox churches, read in many Rumanian newspapers, and hear from nationalist Rumanian politicians like the major of Cluj, the former Hungarian capital of Transylvania, Kolozsvar.

Human and Minority Rights Abuses

In spite of some constitutional language and treaty obligations included both in the post W.W. I and post W. W. II peace treaties with Rumania about prohibiting fascist-like organizations whose purpose is to violate human and minority rights, the Vatra Romanesca, an openly anti-everything-but-Rumanian organization, still exists and works openly. Its admitted goal is terrorizing, exiling, and if they must, killing Hungarians, to establish an ethnically pure Rumanian Transylvania.

While some constitutional provisions seem to pay lipservice to human and minority rights, their effectiveness is undermined by other provisions proclaiming Rumania a "unitary nation state." In the common interpretation this means that "Rumania is for the Rumanians." Hungarians, whose ancestors may have lived in Transylvania for close to a millenium are called by the pejorative term "bozgor," that means homeless, one without a homeland, an unwelcome trespasser in their Rumanian's homeland.

They teach this to little Rumanian kids from kindergarten up, in reading, songs and history lessons, in and out of schools, in the street, on the radio and in churches. Little wonder then, that with cruelty that only children are capable of, they throw this in the face of their Hungarian classmates and schoolmates.

According to a study of Rumanian history textbooks, in the last few years the history texts for Hungarian students have been re-written in a somewhat more moderate and objective tone, but the Rumanian texts continue the old distortions. Thus the two sets of books seem to contradict each other on the history of Transylvania. Thus, generations of young Rumanians continue to grow up with this inculcated sense of superiority based on false history, and feel their rights are being violated daily by the presence of these unwelcome foreigners in their beloved homeland! When, in 1999 the style of some Rumanian language history books became less inflammatory and a bit more objective, the usual chauvinistic circles have created such an uproar that the Rumanian parliament had to invite the Minister of education, Andrei Marga, and who was forced to appoint a committee to study the situation.

In 1996 there was an International Colloquium in Jassi (Rumania) on Rumanian history textbooks. Lucian Boia, a Rumanian professor, warned that the current texts still reflect the 19th Century romantic view of Rumanian history and the historical myths that followed from it. His Rumanian colleagues severely criticized this view, of course.

This is the kind of nationalism that the pope called a "veritable curse"!

Therefore even if a Rumanian government would, by some miracle, make an honest effort at treating minorities according to expected international norms, at the first election they would be thrown out by a brainwashed, chauvinistic populace. If the problem is to be solved peacefully, it will have to be done gradually, by first providing and enforcing appropriate forms of autonomy to create a protective wall between the minority and the chauvinistic majority, until a new generation of Rumanians grows up in a more objective and more democratic atmosphere, where respect for all humans and human rights, based on an objective understanding of their true history, will be restored. This, however, would take generations, and would have to start with a new generation of teachers. A new generation of teachers could be trained, however, only with tremendous outside pressure

and assistance. But while cultural autonomy would satisfy some Hungarian demands there are Rumanians who want to go even further and demand an independent Transylvania that could join NATO and the European Community after Hungary.

The purpose of this essay is not to propose solutions, but it would be irresponsible not to point out that if such a reform is not soon forthcoming, for whatever reasons, it seems most likely that the situation for the minority will further deteriorate. According to the near consensus of international law experts if this would happen and autonomy is not granted (in time!) the people's rights to self-determination would include the right to separate from their perpetual oppressors (see *Autonomy and the New World Order*, by this author available on the internet under WWW.HUNGARY.COM/CORVINUS).

The Hungarian political party, the Democratic Union of the Hungarians in Romania (DUHR, or RMDSz in Hungarian) as coalition partner after the 1996 elections could not achieve any of its major goals, in spite of promises by the major party in the coalition government, because the hands of the major party were tied by the chauvinistic demands of the Rumanian public. After the 2000 elections the new Rumanian coalition partner also made some promises to soothe the European Community leaders with a seemingly more enlightened minority policy, but the public is not ready to accept any meaningful reform in the treatment of the "bozgors," as long as the Hungarians are viewed as "bozgors." They must remove first this label that reminds one of the cuckoo bird mentality from the Hungarian minority, through reforms first in the Rumanian Constitution, then in the education system, the media, and the sermons in the Orthodox Churches. One shortcut the government may attempt, as a starting point, is to change the "nation state" provision of the Constitution since according to the popular interpretation if Rumania is a "nation state," it means that Rumania is of the Rumanians, and all foreigners are "bozgors." Any meaningful reform must outlaw the constitutionally based term "bozgor," define calling and/or treating any minority "bozgor" as a hate crime, as it is done in other, more civilized societies, punishable with severe penalties.

During last year's (2000) elections, Senator Gyorgy Frunda, the presidential candidate of the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians in Romania, declared that his party (UDMR) is firm in its belief that Rumania is not a national state. The Senator also pointed out that Article 1 of the Rumanian Constitution, declaring that Romania is a national state, along with some other constitutional provisions, should be modified.

Frunda said that there are several national minorities that live in Romania and from this perspective, the above-mentioned statement in Article 1 of the Constitution of Romania "is not in accordance with truth". Also, the nation-state concept makes the non-Rumanian minorities second-class citizens, violating the equal rights principle! "If we want to become members of the European Union, we must apply this principle", explained Frunda.

UDMR President Bela Marko also stated that the fundamental law of Romania has a series of "shortcomings", such as the bicameral legislative system, and added that the modifications in the Constitution are done as a result of political consensus. In other words, if the Rumanian nationalists object to a human —or minority— right amendment, regardless of its fairness or necessity, it cannot be passed.

Thus one should take every promise of minority-policy reform with a grain of salt: is it a genuine willingness to turn Transylvania into a Switzerland type multi-ethnic country with equal rights for all, or is it only window-dressing to gain entry into the European Union?

The International Atmosphere

Although there are several international organizations, from the UN and OSCE (Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Group) to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia which had opened just last year (2000), to improve the human rights situation in Europe, there is little improvement in the minority situation in Central Europe. One reason is that the international community learned the wrong lessons in Bosnia and Kosovo. Instead of dealing with the problems while there is still time and before the human rights crisis boils over and large scale violence erupts so that it cannot be ignored any more, they tend to sweep it under the proverbial rug and turn the other way, saying "we don't want another Kosovo!"

The same international community has applied pressure on the Hungarian governments, beginning with the Antall government right after the first free post-communist elections of 1990, to sign bi-lateral treaties with the neighboring countries denouncing any territorial claim, and in effect if not in words, admit that there is no minority problem in those countries. The treaty with Rumania was signed under the post-communist Horn government by Laszlo Kovacs foreign minister, also a former communist. With this the Hungarian governments gave up their traditional role as protectors of the Hungarian minorities. All the current Orban government can do is to plug some holes and make it possible, by unilateral Hungarian efforts, to improve the status of the Hungarians in Rumania in relationship to Hungary, without any effective role to play in improving the minority right situation in Transylvania.

The true purpose of the Treaties becomes obvious from an interview with former Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs (Central Europe Online, April 27, 00). On the Hungarian-Romanian basic treaty concluded under the Horn government (1994-1998), Kovacs said it was the "best document attainable" at the time, which essentially accounted for improvements in Hungarian-Romanian relations and the situation of Romania's Hungarian minority. This "best document," due to the Rumanian government's stubbornness, in reality could not "attain" anything for the minorities, although it did improve the Hungarian-Romanian government relations, removing a major obstacle to Hungary's NATO and eventual European Union membership.

The irony is that while the US recognized as early as 1940 and the appropriate foreign policy panels like the "Interdivisional Committee on the Balkan-Danubian Region," made recommendations to the President about some necessary border changes after the war to correct the minority problem by returning major minority enclaves to the mother country (in this case to Hungary), US negotiators completely disregarded the suggestion of their own panel (see Ignac Romsics, *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary; Documents from the US Dept. of State*; Columbia University Press, 1991 pp. 256 ff)

In its desire to sweep the problems under the rug the Clinton Administration's foreign policy team through its Ambassador to Rumania, the Hon. James Rosapepe even took an

active role. It sponsored a survey to prove the pre-conceived conclusion that there is no minority problem in Rumania.

According to a NATMINET 7 July 2000 report, —"the results of a survey sponsored by the USA Government, were made public in Bucharest on Friday, on the occasion of the international conference 'The Romanian Model of Ethnic Relations: the last ten years, the next ten years' shows that 'the relationships between Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania have not become worse, thanks to a high level of tolerance and to the wish of the two ethnic groups to co-operate in a democratic framework.' The survey was conducted by the Interethnic Relations Research Center in the period between 19th May and 1st June, according to the communiqué of the USA Embassy in Bucharest."

Unfortunately, the survey results do not bear out this optimistic conclusion. The Clintonese "spin-doctoring" begins with the statement: "According to the survey, 64.2% of the Romanians and over 70% of the Hungarians consider that the relationships between Romanians and Hungarians are better or the same as compared to the period before 1989. Only one third of the Romanians consider that the situation is worse today." But please note: this does not reflect the "situation" of the Hungarian minority, only the "relations" between the groups.

The report continues with a different result, seeming to contradict this just quoted result: "In Transylvania, where the concentration of people belonging to the Hungarian ethnic group is highest, almost 50% of the Hungarians believe that the relations between the Romanians and the Hungarians are 'the same', 'better' and 'much better' than before 1989. Almost one third consider that the situation is 'somewhat better' and 'much better'." If one reads this carefully, it will become obvious that more than half of the Hungarians living in Transylvania, believe that their situation has actually worsened since the Ceausescu regime was overthrown. But even if ten years later it is the same as it was at the high-point of the Ceausescu regime, it does not say much about the last ten years!

Before going any further, one must ask the question: how can such a discrepancy exist between the views of Hungarians in Rumania at large, and Hungarians in Transylvania? While in the at-large group "over 70% of the Hungarians consider that the relationships between Romanians and Hungarians are better or the same as compared to the period before 1989," among the Transylvanian Hungarians less than 50% answered positively to the same question. This means that the Hungarians in Transylvania were vastly under-represented, so the over-represented group of Hungarians had skewed the result in the direction of the expected result!

"Questioned about the interethnic relations at local level, meaning the region they live in, only 12.7% of the Hungarians and 2% of the Romanians feel that there is a conflict between the two ethnic groups. 'It is certain that those questioned feel the situation in their immediate vicinity - the one that they are accustomed to - better than that at national level,' concluded James Rosapepe, the Ambassador of the USA in Romania, present at the launching of the results of the survey." But there is another possible interpretation for these low figures. This question is largely irrelevant in ethnically homogeneous communities, where there can be no "local conflict" by definition! Also, if Transylvanian Hungarians are so underrepresented, the figures do not give an accurate picture of the true relationship in heterogeneous communities.

Another telling figure is that "the percentage of those that consider that the ethnic groups or the minorities represent a threat to the peace and security in Romania has dropped in the last five years to half, the survey points out." But it fails to explain, a "half" of what? But the point is that still a large number of Rumanians treat minorities as "bozgor." Also, that the openly anti-Hungarian Great Romania Party gained around 25% of the votes in the November-December 2000 elections.

"As for the means of improving interethnic relations, a considerable percentage of the Romanians (87.5%) and Hungarians (94.2) agree that the broadcasts and publications that stir ethnic hatred should be banned. 'It seems that both the Romanians and the Hungarians are of the same opinion - when there is nothing nice to be said about a minority group it is better to keep silent' the American ambassador James Rosapepe commented."

"Ethnic pride is considerable, taking into account the fact that 67.5% of the Romanians and 77.4% of the Hungarians declare that they totally agree with the statement: 'I am proud to have been born a Romanian/Hungarian'." One must wonder what the remaining one third of Rumanians and one fourth of the Hungarians have their own ethnicity.

" 'There are certainly differences in politics and perception. For instance, 65.9% of the Romanians consider that the Hungarians have enough rights, while 83.1% of the Hungarians think that the minority groups do not have enough rights. But, as the survey demonstrates, there is a high degree of tolerance and acceptance between the two ethnic groups. We have the conviction that the Romanian democratic system is a means of solving any kinds of differences. This is the Romanian model— a debate in a tolerant society', ambassador Rosapepe concluded."

Thus, the report seems to support the preconceived American notion that outside interference is not warranted, because the "tolerant" Hungarians will peacefully continue to carry their burden, so Rumania can eventually join NATO and the European Community, and will open the way for foreign investors, at the price of continued victimization of millions of Hungarians.

But fortunately, there are some "domestic," that is Rumanian voices that seem to be increasingly intolerant of the situation in Transylvania and Moldova, a Romanian speaking member of the CIS. The former Soviet republic is courted by Rumania, asking the to join Rumania, to unite all Rumanian speaking people in one country.

Dissenting Romanian Views

It is not only Hungarians that complain about conditions in Transylvania. In the Tuesday, November 23, 1999 issue of the Hungarian *Erdelyi Naplo* (Transylvanian Diary; published in Nagyvarad, Oradea in Rumanian) there was an interesting article, quoting a paper, "And Where Are We Headed?", written in the middle of the decade (1990's), by a well known Moldovan political scientist, Bogdan P. Nistor, who seems to be an ethnic Rumanian.

According to Nistor, "every Rumanian Constitution since 1923 contains the provision that Rumania is a unitary Rumanian nation-state, which means that all territories where Rumanians live, or where they have moved over the centuries, regardless the demographic composition of the region, is ancient Rumanian land." Thus, on this basis, Moldova is also ancient Rumanian land, "the Great Rumania's holy land, the legitimate

successor of the ancient Dacian Empire" and it must belong to the Great Rumanian State. Moldovans, of course, are terrified of this prospect, and in referendums have rejected joining their brethren in the Greater Rumania.

It should be noted that according to Grolier's encyclopedia, " Roughly coterminous with Bessarabia, Moldova forms the eastern half of historic Moldavia; the western half is in Romania...ethnic Moldovans, a Romanian-speaking people, constitute about 65% of the population. Ethnic Russians and Ukrainians each comprise about 13%14%, and the Gagauz, a Turkic-speaking group, total about 5%. Ukrainians and Russians form about 60% of the population in the Transnistrian region, between the Dneestr River and the Ukrainian border. The Gagauz live primarily in southern Moldova." Yet, Moldova has no minority problem, and its treatment of the Gagauz minority who live in the South, in an autonomous region, is exemplary.

Being a political scientist, Nistor seems to know that the best defense is a good offense. So he claims that the "great Rumanian Unity," used to justify incorporating Moldova into Rumania is a hoax, since even the three existing three regions of Rumania, the Regat, Transylvania, and Moldavia (that once had been united with Moldova) are divided by culture, politics, and historic past.

According to Nistor, History does not know "homogeneous nation-states. Let's look at ourselves sincerely, who we, Rumanians really are? Every thinking Rumanian knows that the Rumanian people itself is not so unified as the promoters of the "unitary Rumanian nation-state" imagine and lie to us. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia (and later Czechoslovakia; SB) fell apart, but what will happen to Rumania, which is also the result of the post World War I Peace Dictates? This question, from the perspective of Moldova, is especially worrisome."

"With some oversimplification, on the territory of today's Rumania, there are three basic 'culture-types'. Most typical is the soft Slavic spirit of the Moldovans: our folk art, poetry and architecture, and even our state-forming ability is much more developed than the Rumanians closer to the Balkans."

"The Rumanians of the Regat, who have assimilated to the Balkan people, blessed by intermarriage with the gypsies, are quick and smart in business, and are very power thirsty. The Byzantine thinking is so much in their blood that they can change their views without any scruples, according to their interests. They were always the most patriotic, the most nationalistic, the so called 'national patriots'."

"The third type is the Rumanians of Transylvania, who were acculturated by the 800 years of proximity to the western cultured Hungarians and Germans. From the religious perspective, being Greek Catholics, they are also a transition between Orthodox and Western Christianity. The national consciousness was formed by the Latin culture, which became the foundation of the 'all-Rumanian' consciousness, without accepting and digesting European Christianity's and spirit's values, and relationship systems."

"Thus, these three elements, with quite different historic past, were stitched together in the illusion of Great Rumania. This 'consciousness of greatness' had quickly turned into the false, and on the long run dangerous 'national consciousness,' which appears to be damaging only to the incorporated minorities, in reality, however, contains multiple

dangers for us too! Because the leading elite of this inflated state forged a political tool from our history whose main goal has become ethnic homogenization, which could only be carried out by a herd, centralized state apparatus. And this central apparatus was in the hands of the Southerners, so they have obtained the right to make decisions and in the process subdued the Rumanians of both Moldavia and Transylvania."

"The once flourishing Moldovian culture that kept pace with Europe, under Bucharest's domination sunk into a gray provincialism and to succeed they had to leave their homeland and move to Bucharest. But even there they had to fight against being 'outsiders.' But it was not only spiritual and cultural provincialism but economic as well. Moldavia's economic potential remained undeveloped or was exploited to the benefit of the Southern Region, condemned to a truly colonial role. If a native of Moldavia spoke up in support of his home region, he was quickly labeled a separatist..."

After examining the Regat's opposition to the return of confiscated Church property of the Greek Catholics in Transylvania, who are mostly Rumanians in union with the Pope, with the Orthodox Patriarch even threatening with a "Bosnia-like situation in the heart of Transylvania", Nestor announces, that "this is a shocking revelation to the Moldavians. This is a direct result of the centrist thinking that resulted in two dictatorships already for Rumania under Antonescu and under Ceausescu. This is too much in one century."

Then he drops the bomb: "We don't want the rule of the South! Because if the leader of the Roman Orthodox Christians threatens his overwhelmingly Rumanian brethren of the Greek Catholic faith, how can we expect that the current rulers accept us from the Moldovan Republic as equal partners, letting us retain our hard fought-for independence? According to their views any autonomy or independence is anti-Rumanian, and a source of civil war. The current government attempts even to make respectable to most nationalist, most chauvinist political parties, to maintain its parliamentary majority. The Funar (Gheorghe Funar is the radical nationalist mayor of Cluj-Kolozsvar, formerly the largest Hungarian city in Transylvania) party's program defines the creation of the historic national unity of Rumanians, while the Great Romania Party openly proposes the creation of Greater Rumania and the incorporation of Moldova.... In reality, the centralized Rumanian state apparatus does not want to hear of the autonomy not only of the provinces, but even of the counties and wants the administration of public affairs carry out by centrally appointed officials. They oppose and declare illegal any local initiative. The Moldovan Republic cannot fit into this structure except by force under military occupation, as it had happened after the two World Wars."

"We, Moldovans, do not want to be subjected to the corrupt southerners, who aim at exclusive power over the country through a centralized governmental structure. We still remember well the rule of the state officers who were sent to rule over us, and the pogroms of 1940 when the police sent from Bucharest, along with the Germans, robbed and murdered masses of Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, Gypsy, and even Rumanian citizens."

"We remember well.... Therefor it is not without reason that we want (with the exception of the paid agents of Bucharest) the unity of Moldova but not under the present power structure and constitution, in the framework of Rumania but as a Moldovan Republic, united with Moldavia...." In other words, Nistor openly advocates the breaking up of

Rumania, making Moldavia independent so it could unite with Moldova in a free republic. This would restore the situation that existed before Moldavia united with Wallachia to form the kingdom of Rumania in 1859.

"This question is constantly on the agenda. Recently the editor in chief of the *Patria Tânara*, a monthly with 300,000 circulation, announced that he will promote the idea of the Greater Moldova... Every Rumanian knows that from the 14th Century to 1859 Moldova was an independent principality, with its own state, independent army, treasury, money, and government...."

Nistor concludes his study by pointing out that Moldovans, who want to belong to Europe once again, rightfully see Rumania as an obstacle of joining Europe, therefore the road to Europe leads through Transylvania. Thus, he argues, an independent Transylvania should join the European Community and "open the way for an independent, unified Moldova to finally join, from her own resources, the more developed regions of Europe. We, Moldavians, must plan our future in this direction," concludes Nistor.

We have spent considerable time on the brilliant analysis of Nistor on the problem of the three diverse Rumanian cultures because it helps to understand the Hungarian minority's situation under the Rumanian oppression, and on Moldova, because Nistor's criticism is followed by a similar plea by a Rumanian in Transylvania.

On September 16, 1998 the ethnic Rumanian Sabin Gherman, a Transylvanian journalist, published an article in the Rumanian press, "I have had enough of Rumania!"

"I am fed-up with being a disrespected citizen, wrote Gherman, just a 'Hey, you' ," for everyone, with the wheeling-dealing and Gypsy-like behavior that is associated with the name of Romania." He continues with a litany of grievances against the centralized Rumanian government, from the exorbitant sums spent on Bucharest, the Central City, more than is spent on the entire region of Transylvania, and the conditions of the roads, to "standing in a queue at the revenue office, at the bank, at whatever is owned by the State and everywhere it's usual to give a tip! A bribe, a payola. True Turkish habits, without which nothing will work."

His politician contacts keep telling him, "that 'we have no chance whatsoever' (*Transl. note*: to join modern Europe)... And what then? I don't want to emigrate, just because nothing has been changed in ten years. I'm just fed-up with Romania. With its synonyms. With its make-believe tales that have nothing to do with the history.... If I regret anything now, at 30 years old, is that I was born here, that I am one of those who learned in the school that this people, - "the people" (*Transl. note*: this is how Ceausescu used to pronounce the word "people"), Gentlemen! — was in a permanent erection in front of the history. What people? We, who hadn't shown virility even once, we, who had packed up during the periods of migration and flew to the forests, we, who had fallen down in a faint in those salons where the history had been decided (*Transl. note*: reference to the Romanian Foreign minister's faint, when he heard the Vienna decision in 1940, returning Northern Transylvania to Hungary), we, who stand in line for a piece of bread and don't know what other new slyness to invent...."

"I'm fed-up to hear that the utmost danger watching for me like a mugger behind the corner, is the federalization of Romania. I'm fed-up to hear that I must tighten the belt

again and again, as docile as a donkey. In the name of the "unity" and "prosperity" of the Romanian people. While I'm waiting for the real unity, the unity of Transylvanian representatives for Transylvania, the civilian offensive to safeguard the small that remained here. And me, who is praying every evening to come an end to László Tőkés, with his ethnic Hungarian demands and accusations directed against all of us Romanians. (*Transl. note*: ironical reference to the Hungarian Reformed bishop, the frequent target of Romanian nationalists' attacks). Yet, in vain. So far. Some people have carried out the Unification [of Transylvania with Romania in 1918]. Other people put their hopes in a Swiss-type confederation with Hungary, the Czechs and Austria. And still others, as *Ioan Slavici* for example, said that the unification of Transylvania with Romania is hogwash, and were jailed. Now we can see, what the unification caused. Seriousness, elegance and discipline, that are features of Transylvania, were flooded with vulgarity and arrogant laziness. The ordinary Balkan habits, the civilization of pumpkinseeds."

"Romania had a chance to unite with Transylvania, to learn something from its organization, its system of values. It did not happen so: Romania had swallowed up Transylvania - this is why on the great boulevards of Bucharest one can slide down every three yards because people spit. I am not the man who says this, but someone who is equal to the Lord, *Cioran* (*Transl. note*: well-known Romanian writer). Many people will jump up to the sky to repel what I have said here-before. But: how many of you didn't go to Bucharest with full bags, the famous woven bags, packed with bottles of hard drink? And you didn't carry them to your friends, but to directors, to the ministries, to offices with armored doors. And if you would have been so idiots to forget those bags, how many times weren't you warned that in Bucharest it's used to open the door with your head, your hands being dragged down by "packages". Bucharest, this is the place where the genius suffering from tuberculosis is kissing with the illiterate millionaire, a city, which has thought all the country that goods are "distributed". "Meat is being distributed", "Eggs are being distributed". Something is always being distributed. Mollusk attitude.

"There are no rights here, but only favors. People from here eat pumpkinseeds, and they say: '*there is many*', and generally the peons born, reproduce themselves and die. They didn't learn anything from the Hungarians, nor from the Austrians or the Germans. ... Perhaps, this is why the bravest 'defenders' of Transylvania were born beyond the Carpathians, outside Transylvania. Perhaps, this is why Europe ends somewhere at Brasov (Hungarian: Brassó). There ends also Transylvania. Because, beside of the language and the bad highways we have nothing in common. We have to wake up. We have to admit that what is happening now it's a comedy. And one, in which your children are asking for chocolate, and you just shrug your shoulders. Where, tremblingly, you are always looking for protection, supporters, and favors. Where you mutter at the street corner about the villas of the policemen and of the representatives. This is a world condemned to live by borrowing from one salary to the next...."

"We have to become conscious of the fact that there are also other ways of living. That we are different. That all what's really wrong comes from Bucharest, from the luxury palaces, where the politicians are quarreling over the bone without shame. We must see that neither the Hungarians, nor the Germans are our enemies, but ourselves, we, who live from one day to the other, we, who are condemned to steal and curse on the street

corner. We have nothing to tell to each other, we have told everything in 75 years (*Transl. note:* since 1918 when Transylvania was united with Romania) and we are now 75 times poorer. As for the rest, I wish you a nice day - as for myself, I am fed-up with Romania, I want my Transylvania!"

Therefore Gherman started the "Pro Transylvania Foundation" with Transylvanian Rumanian support. True to the dictatorial methods of the Bucharest authorities, there are several law suits pending against him. He is charged with treason and with undermining state authority. But he and his friends are undaunted. The irony is that while he is risking his freedom and perhaps even life for democracy and self determination, the West pays little attention to his crusade, and the American Ambassador, in the name of a government that governs the oldest democracy on earth, is twisting survey results to show that all is quiet in Rumania, the West may sleep in peace, and eventually should admit Greater Rumania to the community of civilized nations. It would be like the well-known American saying about the "bull in the china store."

As for the Hungarians, most of whom also are ready to support him, in an interview Sabin Gherman quoted Brătianu, the brilliant Rumanian strategist after World War I, who had stated that "we want Transylvania, but without the Transylvanians." According to Gherman, "since then, not much has changed!" Instead of resources, Rumanians treat minorities as an inconvenience, burden, something to get rid of.

The Official Response--A Political Analysis

Rumanian authorities have taken the Gherman challenge quite serious. According to STRATFOR's Global Intelligence Update (June 9, 1999) "Romania Confronts Transylvanian Separatism" (see MINELRES report, Thu, 10 Jun 1999 19:32:23 +0300 (EET DST)Message-Id: 375FE624.349BDA9D@mailbox.riga.lv) "Romanian President Emil Constantinescu has rejected the call - contained in a document circulating among intellectuals in the Transylvania region of western Romania - for Transylvanian self-government within a federal Romanian state. The devolution argument, while framed in economic terms, has clear ethnic overtones as Transylvania is home to a large population of ethnic Hungarians. The Transylvania question is but one of the ethnic minority issues that continue to plague the new NATO members and aspiring NATO members of Eastern Europe. With NATO seen as effectively sanctioning the devolution, if not independence, of an ethnically Albanian Kosovo from Serbia, keeping these other problems in check will be an increasingly difficult task."

"During a visit to Mures and Teleorman counties in the Transylvania region of western Romania on June 5 [1999], Romanian President Emil Constantinescu responded to a document reportedly circulating among intellectuals in Transylvania that calls for a federal structure for Romania. The document reportedly asserts that, as Transylvania is more advanced economically than the rest of Romania, it could be integrated more rapidly into the European Union. The document argues for the devolution of Transylvania and the Banat region, with the establishment of a regional government and parliament. According to the proposal, Bucharest would then only deal with foreign policy and defense issues related to the Transylvania and Banat regions."

"In his reaction to the document, Constantinescu ... stressed that his administration cannot accept 'any form of federal governing system or regional-type legislative

administrations, and we do not accept separatist ideas running counter to the interests of the Romanian nation.' He added, 'intellectual adventures of this kind will cost the people of this country dear.' Constantinescu was echoed three days later by the main party of the governing coalition, the PNT-CD Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party. The party's spokesman, Remus Opris, said on June 7 that the President and the whole country had to 'watch so that constitutional provisions regarding national, sovereign, independent, unitary, and indivisible state were not attacked either from inside or outside of the state.' Still, while ruling out a federated Romania, Constantinescu did accept the possibility of administrative autonomy for the region, noting that a juridical framework already exists to support such a move."

"While sources claim that 80 percent of the document's signatories are ethnic Romanians, and the document reportedly stems from the 1998 manifesto "I am fed up with Romania," written by Romanian separatist Sabin Gherman, any suggestion of Transylvanian devolution immediately raises the issue of the region's Hungarian population. Like Serbia's Vojvodina and sections of Slovakia and Ukraine, Transylvania is home to a large ethnic Hungarian minority, and has been recently experiencing increased ethnic tensions."

"Anti-Hungarian demonstrations erupted on June 5 and 6 [1999] in the Transylvanian city of Cluj, following a victory by the Romanian soccer team over the visiting Hungarian team. The mayor of Cluj, Gheorghe Funar, who is also the head of the nationalist Party of Alliance for the Romanians' Unity, reportedly rallied the crowds with extremist anti-Hungarian comments, sparking a demonstration of several thousand people in front of the Hungarian Consulate in Cluj. The demonstrators shouted slogans such as 'we will defend Transylvania' and 'out with the Hungarians from the country.' Scattered incidents of vandalism by Romanians against Hungarian properties also reportedly occurred in large Transylvanian cities...."

"... Inside Romania and Slovakia, ethnic Hungarian parties have been limiting their public activities to political fights for bilingual government in areas of greater than 20 percent ethnic minorities, but the independence calls from radicals within Hungary have not gone unheard."

"With the conflict in Yugoslavia apparently leading to NATO-sanctioned and guaranteed autonomy for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, radical nationalists in Eastern Europe seem encouraged to push their own similar agendas. As countries like Hungary attempt to settle into Western politico-military structures, and others like Romania and Slovakia seek admittance into NATO and the European Union, these cross-border disputes will become ever more critical. There are a great number of maps of Europe waiting to be redrawn, and a host of groups eager to start drawing. With Hungary in NATO and NATO heading into Kosovo, it is too late to talk about keeping these problems outside Western Europe. Pandora's box is opening, and unless these problems are addressed politically and economically, they may, like Kosovo, express themselves militarily. Constantinescu's willingness to discuss greater administrative autonomy for Transylvania may be a first step in the right direction."

Obviously, it is this Pandora's box that the West wanted to sweep under the rug by insisting on the Basic Treaties between Hungary and her neighbors, and motivated the

Clinton Administration to create and spin-doctor a survey to show that all is fine in Rumania. But the thin veil is so transparent that serious groups like STRATFOR, an American intelligence consulting firm (<http://www.stratfor.com/>) easily see through it. Unfortunately, though, even the limited administrative autonomy, mentioned by Constantinescu as a possible start, has come to a halt. So, Rumania still aspires to become a NATO member and to join the EU, therefore have invited the UDMR into the coalition as window-dressing. No meaningful reform is likely in the near future without outside pressure concerning Transylvania's colonial status and any demands for autonomy are likely to be ignored at best, oppressed at worst.

It should be noted that Remus Opris, spokesman of the Rumanian PNT-CD Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party, the main party of the governing coalition, in his list as potential dangers included any challenge "either from inside or outside of the state ... to Rumanian constitutional provisions regarding national, sovereign, independent, unitary, and indivisible state were not attacked."

The list of prohibited demands includes demands of the Hungarian community, namely, changing the nationality provision, and of Nistor and Gherman, asking for an independent or at least autonomous Transylvania and Moldavia, as they would violate the "unitary and indivisible nature" of Rumania. For good measure, by asserting the sovereign and independent character of the Rumanian state, Opris rejects in advance any potential foreign pressure or intervention! Thus, there is no room for any challenge to the current domination of the Rumanians of the Regat! The Rumanian policy is an absolute defense of the status quo! Still, they want to get into NATO and EU as a democratic, liberal country!

Yet, in spite of this categorical rejection of any meaningful reform, according to many observers of Transylvania today there can be no serious discussion of the future of Transylvania, and consequently, of Rumania, without addressing the process initiated by Bogdan P. Nistor and Sabin Gherman. This will be especially important if and when Rumania applies for NATO and EU membership.

At the present time Rumania can take comfort in the fact that the UN Resolution ("UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of December 14, 1960) ending colonization in Africa and other parts of the world, also prohibited border changes to protect human rights, unless the offending country or government voluntarily relinquishes a certain territory, or the minority successfully fights its way to freedom. But now, that Nistor suggests that Rumania treats its regions like Moldavia and Transylvania as territories, the original UN provision about colonization should apply. This seems to close a convenient "little door" allowing Rumania to continue its oppression of a population and exploiting a region, holding it as a colony. If and when Rumania's admission to NATO and the EU comes up, they should make sure that a colonial regime in the center of Europe cannot join, without major reforms, the other civilized nations, some of whom were forced to give up their colonies decades ago.

Thus, there is a serious conflict brewing. "Unless these problems are addressed politically and economically," as the STRATFOR report suggests, any attempt to sweep the Rumanian situation under the proverbial rug will not succeed for long.

Now, in addition to the dissatisfied Hungarians, here are two fed-up ethnic Rumanians, from two entirely different regions, yet, the picture they paint is identical: Transylvania is, and *MOLDOVA* refuses to be, an occupied colony robbed blind by a power-thirsty, uncivilized elite running a corrupt central government. It is not only a minority problem! Not even a primarily minority problem. In fact, most Hungarians don't even realize the depth of the problem. The minorities seem to be caught up in the struggle for domination by the Regat Rumanians in their desperate efforts to hold together a colonial empire that they had fabricated with the naïve (or sinister?) connivance of the West.

True to the traditional colonial methods, the Regat dominated central governments have caused by government policy huge population transfers, sending tens of thousands of Regat Rumanians to Transylvania as a power base for a colonial system. Also, the Rumanian government does not build its military barracks near the borders for defense purposes but inland, in the centers of potential danger, ready to be used in Tian Mien Square style at the drop of the hat. The situation is so bad that most Hungarians don't even realize the depth of the problem, or if they do, they feel too intimidated to even mention it openly!

It is a problem of generally corrupt country which must keep the ethnic fires burning to maintain its political control over a culturally diverse Rumanian population, even if they belong to the same language group (since it is uncertain if the *Moldovan Rumanians*, the *Transylvanian Rumanians* and the *Regat Rumanians* (due to several centuries of mixing with other peoples: the Moldova Rumanians with the Slavs, and the Regat Rumanians with Gypsies, Turks and other races) if they still can be considered one and the same ethnic group with common blood relationship.

Anyway, the sad conclusion must be that Transylvania, after a millennium of glorious, sometimes independent, sometimes autonomous region, and at times under enlightened Hungarian rule, ended the second millennium as a despised and oppressed colony of a backward, Balkan populace, not because military conquest by some brave warriors but thanks to the power politics of the unscrupulous victorious nations after both World Wars.