

TRANSYLVANIA -
CRADLE OF THE
RUMANIAN PEOPLE?

An Essay

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by

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*"The evil that men do live after them:
The good is oft interred with their bones."*

Shakespeare: Julius Caesar

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The aim of this essay is to focus attention on the Transylvanian Problem by i) defining the theory of Daco-Roman continuity, ii) examining the theory's claim to validity in the light of the science of history, archaeology and linguistics, iii) surveying the theory's effects on minority life in Transylvania from 1920 to the present day and iv) suggesting variants of the solution to the Transylvanian Problem.

At least since the beginning of the 19th century right to the present day, Rumanian historiography has been based on the theory of the so-called Daco-Roman continuity. According to this theory the Rumanians of today are the descendants of the Roman conquerors who intermarried with the native population in Dacia (modern Transylvania) between 106 and 275 AD; therefore Transylvania is the ancestral homeland, cradle of the Rumanian people, where non-Rumanians must be regarded only as latecomers, colonists or simply as vagrant intruders. Under the Ceausescu regime the continuity theory had been elevated to the level of state ideology and was taught as dogma in Rumanian schools from kindergarten to university. Though unsubstantiated, the claim of Daco-Roman continuity has found its way even into history books and encyclopedias published in the West. Significantly, Rumania's political leaders, almost 7 years after Ceausescu's demise, are still obstinately clinging to the nebulous continuity theory which serious historians, archaeologists and linguists all over the world tend to view with increasing contempt.

HISTORY Historians, who are not prepared to compromise the integrity of their discipline by political partisanship, are bound to find a lot of things wrong with the Daco-Roman theory. They cannot fail to notice that Rumanian history books uniformly ignore many salient historical facts, which contradict the idea of Latin continuity north of the Lower Danube. As a result, they are unable to find satisfactory answers in those books to scores of pertinent questions. It is not explained, for example, how the comparatively short Roman rule of about 170 years, maintained by the presence of only two ethnically mixed legions and scant numbers of administrators and settlers of largely foreign origin, should have been able to achieve the complete and lasting Romanisation of such an hostile and isolated region as Transylvania was at that time, while the Roman rule of 800 years in Tunisia, 400 years in Britain, more than 500 years in Eastern Austria and

about 400 years in Western Hungary had obviously failed to produce and leave behind masses of permanently Romanised populations.

After the withdrawal of the Roman army, administration and settlers from the Province of Dacia Traiana in 275 AD, under the increasing pressure of Barbarian incursions, the serious student of Rumanian history finds himself enveloped by the deafening 'Silence of Historians' lasting for almost a millennium, because no Roman population north of the Lower Danube (let alone in Transylvania is mentioned in historical records until the end of the 11th century, when the Vlachs, ie. the ancestors of the Rumanians, were first recorded there.

South of the Danube, in the Balkans, on the other hand, the presence of the Vlachs is definitely proven by written records from the 8th century on. Undeniable is the profound and lasting influence, on Rumanian culture and language, of centuries of close symbiosis between the early Vlachs and the Southern Slavs, (mainly Bulgarians), in the Balkans. It was from the Bulgarians that the Vlachs adopted the Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine) form of Christianity. This explains why the language of liturgy was Slav and the use of the Cyrillic script universal in the Rumanian Church until the middle of the 19th century. If the Christianisation of the mythical Daco-Romans and/or the early Vlachs had taken place and produced a significant Christian community in Transylvania as claimed by official Rumanian historiography, it is inconceivable that the existence of such a community should have remained undetected and unrecorded by the church hierarchy in Byzantium and/or Rome. But the Silence of Historians is profound also in Church History.

Also undeniable is the continued presence of Arumanians, Meglenorumanians and Istrorumanians in various parts of the Balkans up to our days, an awkward fact that tends to be ignored or played down by contemporary Rumanian historians. Their attempts to explain away this living refutation of their dogma of continuity north of the Danube on the basis of a hypothetical 'Carpatho-Danubian Common Language Area' embracing the Balkans and all the regions north of the Danube where Rumanian is spoken today, are as absurd as they are ridiculous. (In this connection, the discerning student will, of course, recall that the southern (and larger) part of that hypothetical 'Common Language area' was under Roman rule for six centuries, compared to only 170 years for Dacia Traiana. Nevertheless, Rumanian historians insist that Transylvania is the cradle of the Rumanian language and the Rumanian people.,).

In the centuries following the Roman withdrawal from Dacia, the region was submerged in the successive tidal waves of the Völkerwanderung. History, whose silence concerning Roman continuity north of the Danube after 275 AD is deafening, is certainly not silent about the peoples who occupied Dacia after the departure of the Romans. According to written records, the period from 275 to 896 AD, i.e. the year of the Hungarian Conquest of the entire Carpathian Basin including, naturally, Transylvania, is filled with the unbroken rule of Goths, Huns, Gepids, Avars and Bulgaro-Slavs in Transylvania. (The picture, painted by certain Rumanian historians, of at least 2 million Daco-Romans staying behind in Dacia after the Roman withdrawal, peacefully tilling the soil, tending their flocks of sheep and goats, living in flourishing cities and villages under their native princes and steadfastly maintaining their Daco-Roman identity amidst the raging tides of foreign invasions, is as beautiful as a technicolour saga of Hollywood and just as realistic).

The Hungarian conquerors of the Carpathian Basin were the first people to succeed (in contrast with the Huns and Avars) in establishing a permanent state in the area. The former Dacia, renamed 'Erdély' (Land beyond the forest) and Transylvania' (Latin translation of the Hungarian term) by the new masters, was to become the easternmost outpost of Western civilisation and an integral part of the Hungarian state for over 1000 years, until the end of World War I. By the so-called Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920, on the basis of secret treaties concluded in the turmoil of the war, without even a semblance of proper negotiations, and without valid plebiscites, the peacemakers of Versailles transferred Transylvania with almost 2 million Hungarians, an area representing over 1/3rd of Historic Hungary, to the backward young Balkan state of Rumania. (In the interwar period, astounded American businessmen, travelling from Transylvania to Old Rumania (and from Croatia to Serbia) could not understand why advanced races should be subjected to the rule of comparatively backward peoples. It remains to be seen whether the guardians of the present world order, which in the Carpathian Basin is still based on the Versailles Settlement, are now prepared to admit, in the light of the Yugoslav tragedy, that the scheme of things forced upon Central Europe by Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson was fundamentally flawed and must be discarded).

In the politically motivated books of myths, which pass for history books in Rumania, the serious historian would look in vain for even a scant allusion to the 1000-year-long role

of Hungary in organising the political, economic, demographic and cultural life of Transylvania. If the Hungarians are mentioned at all, they are depicted as barbarous oppressors of the cultured Daco-Roman majority population. Therefore, such awkward facts are not mentioned as eg. that it was in Hungarian Transylvania that the first effective measures were taken by both the ruling Hungarian prince of the day and Saxon-German and Hungarian private individuals to raise the desperately low cultural standards of the immigrant Vlachs arriving from their homeland in the Balkans. Books were published for the Vlachs, including the first ever Wallachian book printed with Latin letters (in 1570 AD), the first ever school textbook printed in Wallachian, the first Wallachian Bible (a translation from Hungarian) which antedated the first Bible translation in Wallachia proper by 40 years, etc. These books mark the beginnings of the Rumanian literary language. The very first primary schools for Vlach children were opened by the order of the ruling Hungarian prince.

Rumanian history books also ignore the fact that it was in 1210 AD that Vlachs were first officially mentioned in Transylvania (in 1164 AD in Moldavia) just inside the southern border between Hungary and the Balkan. Also played down is the fact that in 1254 AD Pope Gregory IX., in his letter to Prince Béla (later King Béla IV. of Hungary), asked "for the sake of God to grant refuge to those poor Vlachs trying to escape their Cuman masters". (This letter is most enlightening because it is clearly depicting a situation where Vlach refugees from the Balkans are to find refuge in Hungarian Transylvania in the first half of the 13th century, an event that was to be repeated countless times in the following centuries). No less significant, and generally ignored by Rumanian historians, is the royal decree of 1293 AD of Andrew III of Hungary whereby ALL Vlachs in Transylvania were to be settled on the royal estate of Szákes (Obviously, this means that the Vlachs could not possibly have represented the majority of Transylvania's population at that time if that could be settled on a single regal estate). Equally important in this connection is the well-known Regestrum Varadiense (Register of Várad) listing 2500 names of persons involved in proceedings of ordeals from about 600 Transylvanian settlements between 1205 and 1238 AD and containing not a single Wallachian name.

The above selection of available written records proves that the migration of the Vlachs from the Balkans in the first half of the 13th century was not significant. Their numbers started to grow after the highly destructive Mongolian invasion of Hungary in 1241. In the following centuries, under the impact of the relentless advance of Ottoman power in

the Balkans, the trickle of immigrant Vlachs became a steady stream pouring into Hungarian Transylvania. In the 18th century, the stream turned into a flood, as peasants, escaping grinding poverty and exploitation by Turks and ruling Phanariots in the Vlach principalities, fled by their hundreds of thousands to the safe haven of Transylvania. Contemporary written records of this mass migration are extant

After analysing the available and reliable historical records (considering even the lack of them, as represented by the 'Silence of Historians' concerning Roman continuity north of the Danube) it can be concluded that the theory of Daco-Roman continuity is invalid

ARCHEOLOGY Archaeological finds do not lend validity to the continuity theory either. Attempts, sometimes amusing, sometimes pathetic, by Rumanian archaeologists to prove that Transylvania is the cradle of the Rumanian people must remain unconvincing as long as these gentlemen have not succeeded in inducing every skeleton, peacefully resting in his/her grave in the company of a Roman denarius, a fragment of Roman pottery, or a Roman sword in the cemeteries established on Transylvanian soil between 275 AD and the Hungarian Conquest, to state his/her ethnic affiliation in classical Latin, or in the Daco-Roman idiom.

The presence of Roman objects unearthed in regions outside the Roman Empire is without ethnic significance. Such finds prove nothing more and nothing less than the great influence of the Roman civilisation reaching out beyond the frontiers far into Barbaricum.

As for the former Roman towns in Transylvania (there were only 11 or 12, fewer than in any other province of the Roman Empire), where, according to Rumanian historiography, the process of Romanisation of the Dacian population had taken place, excavations prove that after the Roman withdrawal Roman urban life had come to an end. (Significantly, Latin terms concerning urban living are completely missing in the Rumanian language) In contrast to eg. contemporary Slovenia, no Roman town names survived in Transylvania. During the Avar and Slav invasions, all the cities of former Dacia disappeared. All historic cities of Hungarian Transylvania, without exception, were founded by Hungarians and Saxon-Germans, and not by mythical Daco-Romans or immigrant Vlachs. Tangible evidence in Transylvania's architecture testifies primarily to a Hungarian past: eg. at least 278 stone churches built by Hungarian Christians from the 10th to the 17th century are on record. By comparison, the first stone church built by

Vlachs was not completed until the beginning of the 14th century, with 7 additional churches built by them by the beginning of the 15th century

Nor is there any archaeological or any other kind of evidence of a mass withdrawal of population to the shelter of Transylvania's mountains where, according to Rumanian historians, the meanwhile Christianised Daco-Romans had weathered the stormy centuries of the Barbarian Invasions before the Hungarian Conquest.

In the light of the testimony of archaeological finds and evidence reflected in stone and brick on the soil of Transylvania, one is justified in concluding: the Daco-Roman theory is invalid. (Be it said in passing that an unbridgeable gulf separates the points of view of Rumanian archaeologists and linguists on the origin of the Rumanian people).

LINGUISTICS The most important piece of evidence against the validity of the continuity theory is the Rumanian language itself, which, along with the other Romance languages, shows all the characteristic features of Late Latin, i.e. all the innovations which developed in Latin during the 3rd to the 7th centuries. In addition, the Rumanian language, as a branch of East Latin, shows unmistakable ties with Dalmatian, the dialects of South Italy and the Latin elements of the South Slavic languages and Albanian. (Especially close is the connection between the substratum of Rumanian and ancient Albanian, which, immediately before and during the Roman domination, was the main language of the central areas of the Balkan Peninsula). All this means that the ancestors of the Rumanians must have lived in close contact with the speakers of East Latin from around 200 AD probably up to the 8th century. This explains the lack of basic differences between the existing Rumanian dialects in the Balkans and present-day Rumanian north of the Danube, and the absence of Old Germanic elements in the Rumanian language. In other words, the early Rumanians could not possibly have been living in former Dacia Traiana after the Roman withdrawal because Dacia had been cut off and permanently separated from the Roman world since 275 AD at the latest by the Danubian frontier. (This crucial problem is also generally ignored in the relevant literature published in contemporary Rumania). The surprising fact that modern Rumanian, language of the self-styled Daco-Romans, does not contain a single word that can be reliably traced back to Dacian, does not enhance the validity of the Daco-Roman theory either.

Another surprise awaits the linguist who subjects the geographical names in the entire territory of contemporary Rumania to comprehensive scientific examination and does not find a shred of evidence to prove Roman continuity north of the Danube from the late antiquity to the early Middle Ages. This means that not a single place, river or mountain name confirms the continuity theory. Furthermore, not a single Dacian place name has survived north of the Danube. In this connection, especially revealing are the figures showing early place names of Hungarian and Vlach origin and settlements existing today in Transylvania and in the Banat: of 511 names of villages recorded before the end of the 13th century only 3 (0.6%) are of Vlach origin. Up to 1400 AD 1757 villages are mentioned, of which 76 (4.3%) have names of Vlach origin. Due to immigration from the Balkans the number of Vlach settlements in Transylvania shows a significant increase in the following centuries. It must be added here that Rumanians do not call Transylvania, their alleged ancestral homeland, 'Dacia', but 'Ardeal' which is an obvious borrowing from Old Hungarian 'Erdély' meaning 'Land beyond the Forest'. Last but not least, one does not even have to be a trained linguist to recognise the truth about Transylvania's past as reflected in the names of existing settlements and geographical features. Even a cursory comparison of parallel lists in Hungarian and Rumanian of geographical and historic place names in Transylvania proves that the Rumanian terms generally represent direct translations, or phonetically corrupted forms of the original Hungarian names.

After sifting and weighing the testimony of historical records, archaeology, architecture, linguistics and geographical names, the true researcher will draw the logical conclusion that the theory of Daco-Roman continuity is only a legend, simple, naive and childish, an example of wishful thinking and romantic-nationalistic myth-making, and, as such, wholly devoid of foundation. Consequently, Transylvania cannot be regarded as the cradle of the Rumanian people.

Unfortunately, there is nothing naively harmless, or childishly innocent about the use to which this invalid theory - originally a tool of agitation for political rights for backward Transylvanian Vlachs - has been put by the Rumanian state since the latter's creation by the great powers at the Berlin Congress in 1878. It was the continuity theory that significantly fuelled the frenzied agitation by Rumanian chauvinists in Rumania, Hungarian Transylvania and Western Europe for the annexation of Transylvania, before and during World War I. By the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of civilised administration and more than adequate educational and living standards, the

descendants of the one-time Vlach refugees in Transylvania had, in spite of alleged Hungarian oppression, prospered and grown to form just over 50% of Transylvania's total population. (This state of affairs reminds us of the position of Cuban refugees who have, since 1959, settled in Miami and environs).

After the outbreak of World War I, Rumania, allied on paper to the Central Powers, remained neutral, but carried on a profitable trade in oil, cattle and grain with them for another two years. Finally in 1916, after Russia, France, Italy and England had promised over 1/3rd of Historic Hungary, including, of course, Transylvania, to Rumania, she, while officially still an ally of the Central Powers declared war on them and invaded defenceless Transylvania. But the invasion, launched in the hope of a walkover, soon proved to be a fatal miscalculation. Within 100 days a handful of German and Austro-Hungarian divisions, hastily transferred from other fronts, threw the numerically superior Rumanian invaders out of Transylvania and overran the best part of Rumania including Bucharest, the capital. Decisively beaten, Rumania concluded a separate peace with the Central Powers, thus breaking her solemn pledge to the Entente Powers and apparently forfeiting the fabulous prize promised by them.

Breach of treaty notwithstanding, the peacemakers of Versailles, as indicated above, generously rewarded Rumania for her war-time performance (or rather the lack of it), with the whole of East Hungary totalling 103,000 sq km, an area as large as Switzerland, Belgium and Holland put together. (By comparison, of 325,441 sq km which had comprised Historic Hungary, mutilated Hungary was left with only 93,000 sq km after the peacemakers had, naturally, without plebiscites, detached the whole of Northern and Southern Hungary as well, in order to create the two new artificial states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia respectively. As is well known, these two states no longer exist, because since 1989 they simply fell apart for lack of inner cohesion which they had never had).

The Mad Hatters' Party, costumed as the gathering of delegates for the drawing-up of the Peace Treaty of Trianon, culminated, allegedly in the name of national self-determination, in the vivisection of 1000-year-old Hungary, involving the forced transfer of 3.5 million Hungarians, ie. 1/3rd of the entire Hungarian nation, to the oppressive rule of three new multinational states masquerading as national states and democracies. This act concluded the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which none other than Winston Churchill, in his World War II memoirs, described as one of the follies of

the victors (of 1918) and a 'cardinal tragedy'. The results of the vivisection of a nation, the gangrenous slumps in the shape of oppressed millions, in the north, east and south of the Carpathian Basin, are still there, even after 76 years, visible to all that are willing to look.

THE EFFECTS OF THE DACO-ROMAN THEORY ON MINORITY LIFE No sooner had the Versailles peacemakers given the finishing touch to Greater Rumania in 1920, than the Rumanian government, with a minimum of scruples and a maximum of chauvinistic arrogance, in flagrant violation of the Minority Treaty just signed by Rumania herself, set about creating the Rumanian nation-state on the basis of the monopolistic and exclusivistic Daco-Roman theory. Of course, Rumania's political leaders knew only too well then, as they know today, that the continuity theory forged into state philosophy constituted a palpable falsification of history, but they had no qualms about the idea of developing national consciousness based on a system of blatant deceit.

The Daco-Roman state myth pervading every aspect of life in Rumania is obviously not designed to establish and protect the rights of minorities. Consequently, minority life in Rumania has been extremely difficult and unhappy, a veritable struggle for survival, in the last 76 years. In the Daco-Roman scheme of things the minorities have no part to play as they are permanently relegated to the category of second-class citizens that must not have an identity and/or a history of their own. They are encouraged to assimilate or emigrate, but, in any case, they are regarded as a nuisance that must eventually disappear. Within the totalitarian framework of Daco-Romanism, cobbled together long before the birth of fascism, there is no room for plurality and diversity in matters relating to culture, education, legal procedures and political life.

The impact of such state philosophy was nothing less than disastrous on the life of the Transylvanian Hungarians and Saxon-Germans with their well-developed sense of identity based on centuries-old historical, cultural and religious traditions, radically differing from those of the new masters from Old Rumania on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains. To speed up the disappearance of such solid linguistic and cultural blocks that were certainly not mere ethnic minorities, Bucharest, after 1920, wasted no time initiating the destruction of the centuries-old Hungarian and Saxon-German school system and the confiscation of privately and communally-owned landed

property of the Hungarian and Saxon-German population in the newly-annexed territories.

At the same time, anti-Jewish excesses were orchestrated in Transylvania and Old Rumania, which continued throughout the interwar period and culminated in the mass murder of 400,000 out of 800,000 Rumanian Jews during World War II. The mediaval savagery of the anti-Jewish pogroms perpetrated by the Rumanian Army shocked even battle-hardened veterans of the Waffen-SS who often intervened to save Jews from being butchered. Ceausescu sold most of the survivors to Israel. Today there are about 20,000 Jews left in Rumania.

As for the ethnic Germans of one-time Eastern Hungary, the Transylvanian Saxons and the Banat Swabians - totalling 745,000 in 1930 - whose ancestors had been settled in the region from the 12th century on, by the kings of Hungary, their distinguished 800-year-old history virtually ended in the Ceausescu era which represented the apotheosis of the Daco-Roman cult (The Transylvanian Saxons were the first European people to introduce a system of compulsory education, 150 years earlier than the English. A Transylvanian Saxon, Hermann Oberth, was the mentor of Wernher van Braun. The latter had designed the V2 rocket and the Saturn rocket that carried the US astronauts to the moon). Deprived of their cultural and economic bases, the remnants of those Saxons and Swabians who had survived World War II and its no less deadly aftermath, were literally sold in their tens of thousands by Ceausescu to West Germany. Today, about 100,000, mainly elderly Germans are left in Transylvania, but even they seem to prefer emigration to living out their lives in their Rumanianized homeland. Indeed, another successful operation of ethnic cleansing, after the emigration of the Jews.

From the very first moment of Rumanian rule in Transylvania, Bucharest, obsessed with the Daco-Roman myth, singled out the strong Hungarian community as the main target of its xenophobic nationality policy. In the first five years after Trianon almost 2 million Transylvanian Hungarians lost more than half of their schools including their university in Kolozsvár (Rumanian Cluj), Transylvania's capital. Bucharest passed one anti-minority decree after the other. In the interwar period, the Hungarian minority, along with the Saxons, was subjected, in open violation to the Minority Treaty of 1920, to severe social, economic and cultural discrimination. Complaints against these oppressive measures, submitted to the League of Nations, were generally unsuccessful because the League was dominated by the Versailles peacemakers who were

obviously not interested in rectifying injustices arising out of their own revoltingly unjust peace settlement. The mood prevailing at the League is fully illustrated by the note written by the French Department of the League of Nations to the Foreign Minister in Paris on April 6, 1927, that "although the Hungarian complaint is justified, the Rumanians are our friends." Even Lloyd George, one of the main architects of the Versailles Settlement, was disgusted by the official French policy of covering up the outrageous treatment of minorities in the successor states of dismembered Austria-Hungary.

The lot of Transylvania's oppressed Hungarians improved somewhat by the return of Northern Transylvania to Hungary by the 2nd Vienna Award in 1940. The improvement lasted only until the end of August, when Rumania, until then Hitler's most enthusiastic satellite, suddenly performed another of her traditional 180-degree-turns of foreign policy, threw in her lot with the Soviet Union and proceeded to shoot her erstwhile German allies, who had been taken unawares, in the back. In October 1944, Rumanian militias, following in the footsteps of advancing Soviet combat formations instituted such unspeakable reign of terror amongst the Hungarians in Northern Transylvania that the Hungarian population, in fear of its very existence, felt compelled to appeal to the Soviets (!) for protection. (Truly, a unique event in those days in Central Europe). The Soviet Military Government promptly intervened and ordered the recently established Rumanian administration out of Northern Transylvania.

Since Rumania had joined the victorious side in the final months of World War II, the Peace Treaty of Paris rewarded her services once again with the whole of Transylvania in 1947.

For a few years after 1945, the true face of Daco-Romania was hidden behind the reasonably tolerant mask of the Rumanian People's Democracy. The education of the nationalities in their mother tongue, from primary to tertiary level, appeared to be guaranteed. At last, there was a Hungarian-language university in Kolozsvár and, for the first time in Rumania, even the Csángó-Hungarians in Moldavia were taught in their mother tongue by Hungarian teachers. But the eyes of the state power behind the mask were unsmilingly opaque. Occasionally, a red glare flashed in them. Whenever this occurred, a new discriminatory government decree, aimed at the minorities, was issued, eg. concerning the compulsory teaching of Rumanian in all schools, the issuing of rewritten history books ignoring the Hungarian history of Transylvania and the important

historical role of the Transylvanian Saxons, the dismissal of the teachers of minority origin, etc. The mask began to slip off in 1959, when the independent Hungarian Bolyai University of Kolozsvár was forcibly merged, under the chairmanship of the then young Ceausescu, with the Rumanian Babes University. As a result, three Hungarian professors committed suicide.

The mask was completely dropped, when Ceausescu, assuming the title of Conducator (Leader), became Rumania's head of state. Now, the Daco-Roman brains trust decided the time was ripe for implementing the Final Solution of the Hungarian Question, and Transylvania's 2.5 - 3 million Hungarians soon noticed that they were facing the worst crisis of their long history. As the Rumanianization of all educational institutions was radically stepped up, instruction in Hungarian from kindergarten to university was reduced to a minimum, as a result of mergers, parallelization, unification, etc. In schools and mass media, the aggressive propagation of the Daco-Roman dogma was combined with open agitation against the two largest ethnic minorities, the Hungarians and Saxon-Germans, who were labelled as 'bozgars' (vagrants) and 'latecomers, colonists' respectively. There were even cases, where people speaking Hungarian in public were beaten to death; where women in labour in state maternity clinics, when calling out in Hungarian, were sharply told not to speak Hungarian, etc. In order to rob the Hungarians and Germans of possible sources of national consciousness, all historical documents, archives, libraries, etc. in private hands, and in the possession of religious congregations and other organisations were confiscated by the state. (As a matter of fact, the lion's share of Rumania's cultural and historical heritage has been contributed by Transylvanian Hungarians and Saxons, as a result of Transylvania's participating, since the establishment of the Hungarian State, in all intellectual movements that have shaped the face of Western civilisation, from Scholasticism, through Renaissance, Humanism and Reformation, to Enlightenment. With the exception of Enlightenment that belatedly reached the Rumanian principalities in the 19th century, these movements never penetrated into the exclusivist world of Eastern Orthodoxy outside the massive arc of the Carpathian Mountains. This fact explains why the architectural styles of the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo periods never crossed the ridges of the Carpathians to the South and to the East. All of this accounts for the fundamental differences existing, in every respect, between Transylvania and Old Rumania. It is difficult to imagine that the shades of Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson, wherever they might be, could still be proud of their handiwork that even now continues bearing bitter fruit, as evidenced by the recent

Yugoslav inferno and the prevailing ominous situation in Transylvania and elsewhere in the dismembered Carpathian Basin).

To add insult to injury, Ceausescu and cohorts repeatedly proclaimed that the 'nomadic people' i.e. Hungarians, and the 'immigrant people', i.e. Germans, did not bring with them an advanced civilisation, but simply took over the civilisation existing in Transylvania, i.e. Daco-Roman civilisation. One cannot help being amused by this claim, advanced by people whose ancestors, when they first appeared in Transylvania, had not yet managed to raise themselves above the cultural level of nomadic goatherds and shepherds. Other anti-Hungarian measures included the removal of monuments reminding people of Transylvania's Hungarian past, the Rumanianization of a number of well-known figures of Hungarian history associated with Transylvania, the replacement of Hungarian inscriptions by Rumanian ones on headstones in some cemeteries, the systematic mass migration of Rumanians to Transylvania's historic cities which had been overwhelmingly Hungarian-populated until 1920, while Hungarians were prevented from moving to urban areas, and the stepped-up construction of Orthodox churches in mainly Hungarian communities. (Religion generally defines nationality in Transylvania).

Finally, Ceausescu and his Daco-Roman zealots came up with the idea of the so-called 'systematisation scheme' involving the destruction of about 7000 villages, including, of course, several thousands of centuries-old Hungarian and German settlements. It had been intended to disperse the population of the settlements earmarked for destruction all over Rumania, but mainly in Old Rumania, and thereby to wipe out minority concentrations and/or majorities in Transylvanian localities, once and for all. At last, the Conducator's Great Design outraged world public opinion, which until then had been completely fooled by Ceausescu's 'liberal' Jewish emigration policy and his seemingly staunch anti-soviet stance. (As indicated above, the Conducator's 'liberal' Jewish emigration policy was only cynical exploitation of human misery and liquidation of an unwanted minority group. As for his 'anti-Soviet' stance, it was only a ploy to enable him to conduct intensive and successful industrial espionage in the West, primarily for the benefit of the Soviet Union). The world-wide storm of indignation stayed Ceausescu's hand long enough until it was too late. But he would most certainly have brought off his Daco-Roman masterstroke if he had not run out of time.

The revolution of 1989, triggered by Rev. László Tökés and his Hungarian parishioners in the one-time Hungarian city of Temesvár (Rumanian Timisoara), swept away Ceausescu and his system, but Daco-Romanism was not buried with him. Frightened by the explosion of popular discontent in the days of the revolution, Ceausescu's successors, including quite a few of his ex-associates, spoke eloquently and with apparent sympathy about the past grievances and just demands of the Hungarians. In fact, the new Rumanian government promised to guarantee the individual and collective rights of minorities. But as soon as the new administration had managed to consolidate its position, Daco-Romanism raised its ugly head again. The promised reforms for the benefit of the minorities were not introduced. The schools confiscated from the Hungarians and Germans were not returned. Neither the Hungarian University nor the Hungarian consulate in Kolozsvár (the latter also closed by Ceausescu) was reopened. The ban on the import of Hungarian books was reimposed and anti-Hungarian agitation in the mass media and anti-Hungarian oratory in parliament became the order of the day once again.

The worst example of Daco-Roman revival was the murderous attack by a scythe-wielding crowd of 2000 Rumanians chanting: "We want to drink Hungarian blood!" on unarmed Hungarians peacefully demonstrating for the return of their schools, in the centre of Marosvásárhely (Rumanian Tirgu Mures), on 19th March 1990. On that occasion, several people were killed and hundreds seriously injured, including András Sütő, the most famous Hungarian writer in contemporary Transylvania, whose injuries consisted of one eye destroyed and one arm and several ribs broken. The sluggish response to the attacks and attempts to spread the blame showed that official sympathies were with the attackers. The attacks showed signs of being orchestrated, with the attackers being driven in buses to the scene from surrounding rural areas.

In the six years since the Pogrom of Marosvásárhely, the human rights position of the Transylvanian Hungarians has not improved. They still have no university of their own; most of their confiscated schools and cultural institutions have still not been returned to them and, of course, there is still no Hungarian consulate in Kolozsvár. Hungarian officials voted into office in Hungarian-inhabited regions have been known to be dismissed and replaced by Rumanians appointed by the government. If Hungarians dare to display in public a Hungarian language poster announcing a play in the Hungarian Theatre in Kolozsvár, the Rumanian mayor has the poster promptly removed by police. Recently, the same mayor has been responsible for organising excavations,

consisting of a network of deep trenches in the main square of the city, by means of which, as the story goes, Rumanian archaeologists are planning to unearth new, startling evidence of Daco-Roman continuity...Meanwhile, the Bucharest government has passed two additional anti-minority laws. one, on banning the display of foreign (ie Hungarian) flags and the singing of foreign (ie, Hungarian) national anthems in public, and, the other, on seriously discriminating against the teaching and study of the Hungarian language. To some extent, Hungarians in Transylvania are worse off today than they were in the Ceausescu era.

It is incredible that such things can be inflicted on 2.5 - 3 million members of one of the old historic nations of Europe, in their ancestral homeland, where, under Hungarian rule in 1568, the Diet of Torda, far in advance of Western European practices, declared universal and complete freedom of worship. Incredible and revolting, in the final years of the Century of Human Rights, in the heart of Europe, these things are the logical consequence of the unnatural Versailles Settlement and symptoms of a planned process of cultural genocide, that has been making relentless progress since 1920, propelled by the racist, totalitarian ideology of the spurious Daco-Roman state myth. Wielding the myth as a tool of indoctrination, Rumania's political leaders have deprived generation after generation of their own countrymen of the true image of themselves, imbued them with a corrosive hatred for everything Hungarian and effectively prevented the creation of genuine historiography in Rumania. At the same time, the myth has been cynically used to justify the outrageous treatment of Hungarians to the Rumanian population, and to cover up such unpalatable truths as, eg. the fact that Rumania had not gained Transylvania on historical grounds, or by virtue of her military achievements, but simply for betraying her allies in 1916 and 1944. Naturally, the myth has also served as a convenient cover for Rumania's uneasy conscience about the dubious legitimacy of the fabulous prize gained at Trianon, that surpassed her wildest expectations, and for the very natural feelings of inferiority of a young, backward Balkan state about winning an enormous piece of territory with superior urban civilisation.

Even the present, by no means exhaustive survey of Daco-Romanism and its impact on minority life should suffice to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt, that as long as this exclusivistic and divisive philosophy of state is holding sway over Transylvania, inter-ethnic peace must remain a mirage in the region. The Daco-Roman state myth, that so glaringly militates against the spirit of our age, is engendering and perpetuating inter-ethnic prejudice, hostility and hatred on such a large scale that the resulting

destabilisation of Central Europe can no longer be ignored and tolerated as an internal affair of Rumania, especially since Rumania has expressed her wish to join the EU and NATO.

In order to defuse the potentially dangerous situation in Transylvania and work out a satisfactory solution of the problem, international intervention by appropriate agencies of the EU, UNO and NATO is now urgent and unavoidable.

First of all, under the auspices of the above organisations, the axe should be laid unto the root of all evil in Transylvania, perhaps by means of a large commission of independent historians, archaeologists, linguists and jurists who should examine every aspect of the Daco-Roman theory and its effects on minority life, with painstaking care. The report of the commission, presumably no legitimisation of Daco-Romanism and no praise of its impact on inter-ethnic relations, should be officially sent to the Rumanian government and to all universities in Rumania. (Hopefully, the first positive result of this step would be the beginning of genuine historiography in Rumania). Naturally, the report should also be made available to the world mass media, to all universities, including the University of Paris, and to publishers of encyclopedias all over the world.

Thereafter, the settlement of the Transylvanian Question should be attacked. A solution can only be effected by the states that are responsible for having created the problem in the first place. Consequently, attempts to bring about 'reconciliation' by forcing Hungary and Rumania to sign a bilateral treaty would be just another exercise in hypocrisy and futility. (Commencing with the Minority Treaty, which was an integral part of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Rumania has, since, signed scores of peace treaties, minority accords, human rights and basic freedom declarations without, however, honouring a single one of them. After all, since 1920, compliments of Trianon, she has been holding all trump cards ie 103,000 sq.km of territory and millions of hostages. (For similar reasons, the enforced bilateral treaty of 1995 between Hungary and Slovakia has since turned out a resounding failure). A bilateral treaty would, once again, sweep the case of Transylvania's oppressed Hungarians under the carpet).

The politicians and diplomats charged with the task of finding a solution to the Transylvanian imbroglio will have to address themselves to their business in the spirit of perfect impartiality. (By comparison, the Versailles peacemakers of 1920 did not bother about reading the documents representing the submissions of the Hungarian delegation

to the peace conference. The original sealed envelopes with contents were found 50 years later by a researcher in the archives of the French Foreign Ministry in Paris). However, the politicians and diplomats concerned should bear in mind that Rumania, over the last 76 years, has clearly forfeited the right and demonstrated her inability of administering multi-ethnic territories, in a civilised manner. Nor should the fact be ignored that since 1989 several state borders in Europe have been changed, mainly by Trianon's beneficiaries, without the perpetrators suffering international condemnation. Consequently, it is an act of palpable hypocrisy to preach inviolability of borders only to Hungary, victim of Trianon's vile injustice. After the break-up of Yugoslavia and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the present political heirs of the Versailles peacemakers must face up to the fact that the Trianon Settlement in the Carpathian Basin has finally died because it was congenitally diseased. What now is vitally important, is a healthy replacement that will do justice to the legitimate interests of all national groups in the region. Peace in Central Europe can only be established within the framework of a new comprehensive settlement that will guarantee life without fear for all ethnic groups in their ancestral homelands. (In this connection, a belated tribute is due to ex-Assistant Secretary of State of the USA, Richard Holbrooke who, in September 1994, in an impressive Congressional Address, put the blame for the present tragic inter-ethnic scene in Central Europe, squarely where it belongs: upon the Versailles peacemakers and their handiwork - Obviously, Central Europe and the world would be a happier place today, if the Versailles Show of 1919-20 had been run by men of Holbrooke's vision and calibre, instead of Clemenceau & Co.)

Naturally, the new comprehensive settlement in the Carpathian Basin must include, as an integral part a new order in Transylvania as well, in order to prevent a repeat performance of the Yugoslav tragedy in another theatre. The new order in Transylvania will most certainly have to entail border changes because, in the interest of progress and human dignity, either the Hungarian-inhabited areas only, or the entire region must be freed from the unnatural rule of Bucharest with its oppressive atmosphere compounded of Daco-Roman obsession, traditions of Balkan violence, Levantine corruption and xenophobic Orthodox intolerance.

VARIANTS OF A SOLUTION One possibility and a significant improvement on the present intolerable state of affairs would be the reattachment of Transylvania's Hungarian-inhabited regions to Hungary roughly along the lines of the 2nd Vienna Award of 1940.

Another possible solution would be the creation of an independent Transylvania ruled by a coalition government made up of all nationalities on an equitable basis, with every nationality enjoying full individual and collective rights embodied in an autonomous political structure in its respective area

There is another satisfactory variant yet which has a great deal to recommend it. This would be a federation of Transylvania, Carpatho-Ruthenia (part of the Ukraine, at present), and one-time Southern Hungary, three distinct regions and yet unmistakably integral parts of the perfect geographical unit of the Carpathian Basin, cut off, at the moment, by state borders and customs barriers and attached to political entities whose centres of gravity are situated outside the Carpathian Basin.

CONCLUSION The West, to which Transylvania had belonged for over 1000 years, before the men of Versailles thrust her into the prison of an alien world, must pay its debt of honour to her by smashing the door of her prison. Only then will she be able to regain her soul and provide happiness and prosperity for all her children

Trampling fundamental human rights under foot in the last 76 years, Bucharest has done everything in its power to completely Rumanianize Transylvania by attempting to deprive a couple of million people of their ancient ethnic identity. Instead of succeeding, the frenzied attempt has only resulted in drawing international attention to the findings of true historians, archaeologists and linguists, who have always known that the claim of Daco-Roman continuity was false, and therefore: Transylvania is **not** the cradle of the Rumanian people.

This essay was written in April 1996. Since then the situation of Transylvanian Hungarians has not essentially improved in spite of the Basic Bilateral Treaty between Hungary and Rumania signed under duress in September 1996.

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TRANSYLVANIA

Some fine examples of western architecture in the region. Hungarian and Saxon in essence. Byzantine-orthodox Rumanian culture has left no mark on pre-Trianon Transylvania.