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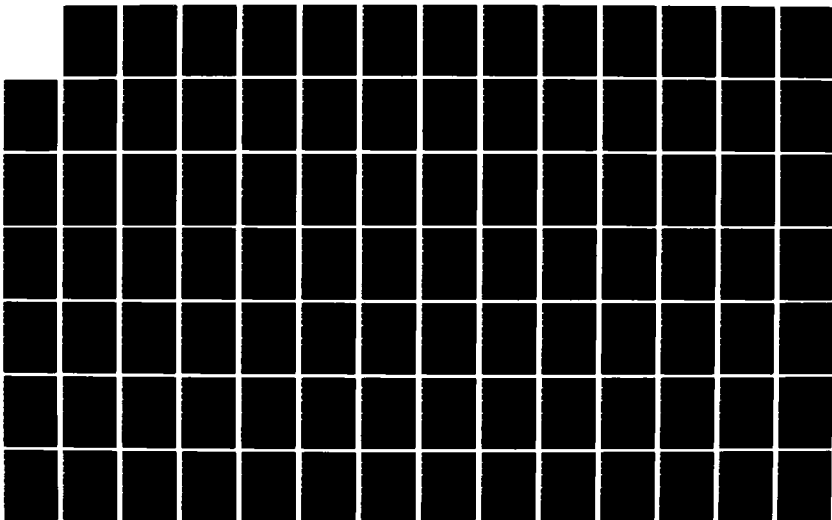
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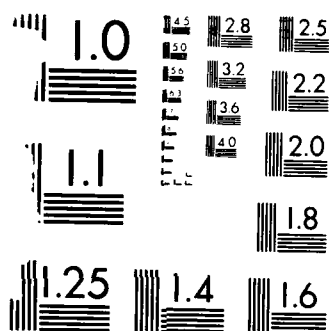
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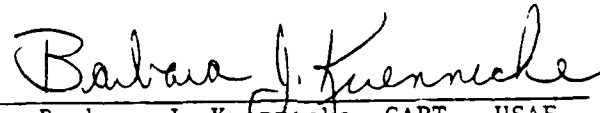
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ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL CONFLICT
THE MAGYARS IN TRANSYLVANIA

by

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Special Seminar Paper submitted to the Faculty of the Defense
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June 1985

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL CONFLICT:
THE MAGYARS IN TRANSYLVANIA**

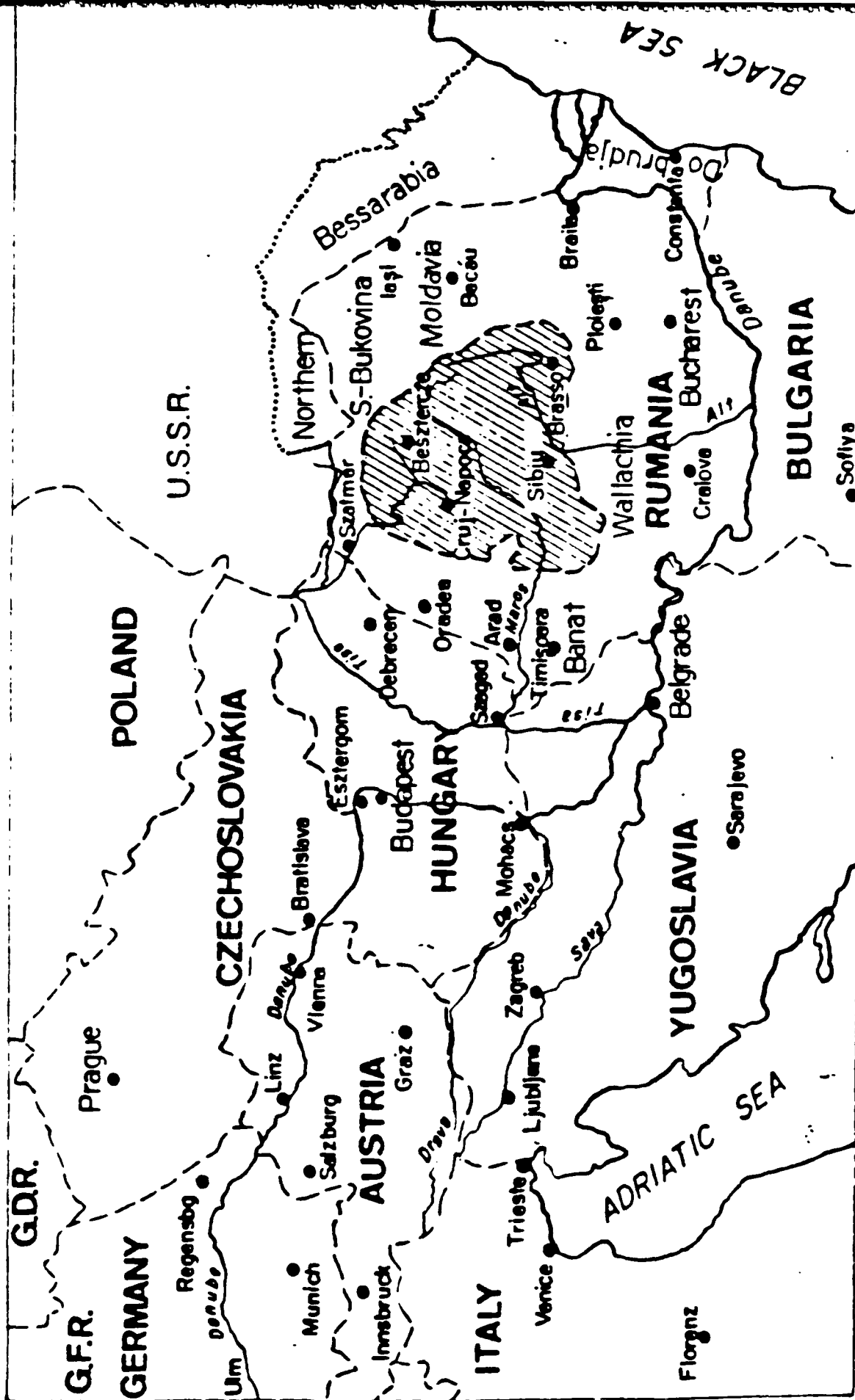
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Transylvania - Part of the Danube Carpathian Basin

Elmer Hives
National Minorities in Romania
Change in Transylvania

ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN WITHIN ROMANIA 1930-1977

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Romanians</u>	<u>Magyars</u>	<u>Germans</u>	<u>Jews</u>	<u>Gypsies</u>
1930	14,280,729	11,118,000 (77.9%)	1,423,000 (10%)	633,000 (4.4%)	452,000 (3.2%)	243,000 (1.7%)
1948	15,872,624	13,597,613 (85.7%)	1,499,851 (9.4%)	343,913 (2.2%)	138,795 (0.9%)	53,425 (0.3%)
1956	17,489,450	14,996,114 (85.7%)	1,587,675 (9.1%)	384,708 (2.2%)	146,264 (0.8%)	104,216 (0.6%)
1966	19,103,163	16,746,510 (87.7%)	1,619,592 (8.5%)	382,595 (2.0%)	42,888 (0.2%)	64,197 (0.3%)
1977	21,559,416	19,001,721 (88.14%)	1,705,810 (7.91%)	348,444 (1.62%)	25,686 (0.12%)	229,986 (1.07%)

Bradley Rickert
 "Postwar Romania and the
 Nationalities Question"

PROLOGUE

On May 15, 1985 the front page of the Washington Post reported that David Funderburk, the United States Ambassador to Romania resigned in protest over official U.S. policy toward Romania. The issue centered on the former envoy's belief that the U.S. has coddled Romania because of its foreign policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union despite increasingly harsh human rights violations by the Ceausescu regime in violation of the Helsinki Accords.

In a recent speech Vice-President George Bush stated :

"We look to what degree countries pursue autonomous foreign policies, independent of Moscow's direction, and to what degree they foster domestic liberalization - politically , economically and *in their respect for human rights.*"

Funderburk retorted :

" If you take the two goals he mentioned and measure what success we've had in Romania you'll see we've gone backwards. We've been unable to effect any reform in terms of the economy, the standard of living or human rights with the exception of a few individual cases." ¹

In January 1985, the Economist observed that Hungary's Foreign Minister, Peter Varkonyi paid a hurried visit to Bucharest to cool down heated tempers between his country's and Romania's long standing policy dispute over Transylvania. Varkonyi's visit came as a result of some of the harshest exchanges between the two countries

since 1945. Referring to the large Hungarian minority in Romania , Ceausescu stated that the minorities issue had been "solved" and warned the Hungarian government that questioning post-war frontier settlements was tantamount to siding with "revanchist and irredentist forces which threaten peace and security in Europe." Earlier, a Romanian magazine had published two aggressive attacks against a noted Hungarian journal accusing it of fomenting "fascist, chauvinistic and anti- Romanian ideas." ²

Official Hungarian response was swift. The Budapest daily , Magyar Nemzet argued that language and culture were of special significance to Eastern Europe, and that the assertion of democratic national rights was essential for the prevention of forced assimilation of ethnic minorities and for the protection of their identity. ³

On 31 May 1984 , the Washington Times reported that several hundred persons rallied on the steps of Congress protesting against the discrimination faced by the Hungarian minority in Transylvania . The protestors called for the swift passage of House Resolution 147, which condemned Romania for its policies of discrimination against the Hungarians in Transylvania and called on President Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz to challenge the Romanians on these issues. ⁴

It is evident from these and other examples, and, despite Romanian statements to the contrary, that the issue of human rights in Transylvania is of international concern. However, this issue has been overshadowed by recent events in other Eastern European countries, particularly Poland, and by severe censorship within Romania itself and so has remained obscure to most Western observers. It is not

within the scope of this paper to treat the full breadth of this issue, but to concentrate on a large, if not the largest, component of Romania's internal instability: the Magyars of Transylvania, and to focus on their struggle to maintain their cultural heritage within the framework of a competing East-West and East-East ideological struggle.

INTRODUCTION

To the historically uninitiated, reviewing a map of contemporary Eastern Europe at a glance, the bold lines delineating the national boundaries of all its countries appear natural enough. Upon further inspection it can be seen that they are artificial and simply do not demarcate effectively an area which for centuries, indeed millennia, has been in constant flux. From before the Roman legions of Emperor Trajan, through the Mongol and Ottoman conquests up to the present focal point of superpower interest the political organization of Eastern Europe has been fluid. The Treaties of Versailles and Trianon, infused with the noble but historically naive precepts of Wilsonian democracy and the League of Nations and, later, the divisions of Yalta and Potsdam, led to the creation of a "new" set of national borders in Eastern Europe. These 20th century attempts at levying war indemnities and reparations, and redressing ethnic injustice in the name of self-determination failed to keep the peace before World War II, in fact, more nations violated political treaties during the ten years between 1936 and 1945 than in any other decade since 1660.⁵

It is historically evident that postwar realignment of territory, usually at the expense of the vanquished, is seldom tidy. Factors such as religion, language or nationality do not lend themselves to neat, definable territorial division. Usually there is an interplay of these factors with many other considerations. In Eastern Europe, where the

Hapsburg Empire had controlled within its borders no fewer than eleven national minorities of over a million each,⁶ the territorial settlement of Trianon in 1920, created out of Austria - Hungary two new polyglot nations, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and a large chunk of Hungarian Transylvania was given to Romania .

This paper is about ethnicity, particularly Hungarian ethnicity, and how it pertains to the Magyar's present struggle to retain their collective identity in Romania. As 90% of the ethnic Hungarians in Romania live in Transylvania, my focus will be on this ancient region. However in studying this complex issue we cannot limit our examination to only the Hungarians in Transylvania. For a complete understanding of this issue it will be necessary to become attuned to the historical undercurrents of the area. Consequently it is important to investigate as well the roots of Romanian ethnicity and how through the ages it has usually collided but sometimes coexisted with the Magyars'. As with all of Eastern Europe, this turbulent region is victim of its long history. Fettered to the past, it is difficult for these peoples to shake their ancient cultural enmities. This is the root of the problem today .

Before discussing in detail the problem of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania we must define the term " ethnicity " and show how it pertains to a discussion of the Hungarian and Romanian nationalities. Ethnicity, or the feeling of ethnicity, is difficult to pinpoint. Ethnicity is as much a subjective experience as it is a matter of objective specification.⁷

Specifically, ethnicity is based on values related to

socio-cultural behavior derived from membership in communities claiming common ancestry. These communities are known as "peoples" and "nationalities." ⁸ Ethnicity can be further defined as a form of extended family feelings and obligations pertaining to "one's own kind." ⁹

This intangible feeling of ethnicity naturally develops "ethnic groups." Ethnic groups can be characterized as distinct social groups whose members are identified by : (A) a group consciousness to which all members owe supreme loyalty ; (B) a distinct culture, a common history , language and literature; (C) a physical connection to a territory; ¹⁰ (D) a shared religion. To quote Walker Connor's thesis, the ethnic group is a " basic human category (not a subgroup) characterized by unity of race and culture." This expanded means " the subjective, symbolic or emblematic use by a group ... of any aspect of culture, in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups." ¹¹ An ethnic group which uses its symbols in this way is a subjective self- conscious community that establishes criteria for inclusion into and exclusion from the group. Furthermore, "it is the acquisition of a sense of group identity that converts an ethnic group into a nation " (a national ethnic group). ¹²

In defining a nation, care must be taken not to confuse it with a state. For this paper's purpose, a nation is a community of people whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture and a national consciousness .

A state, in contrast, is a legal and political organization with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its citizens. ¹³ It can be

comprised of one or many nationalities. Consequently , as will be shown, the Hungarian state several times was destroyed or absorbed, though the Magyar nation by tenaciously hanging on to its language, culture and heritage, survived to arise several times to rekindle its statehood .

Within contemporary Romania the Magyars, according to the most recent census (1977), numbered 1,705,810 or 7.9 per cent of the total Romanian population. This is the most significant minority within Romania and one of the largest in Europe.

Caution however needs to be exercised in reading the Romanian census figures as there is continuing debate, with some acrimony, as to the true number of ethnic Magyars in Transylvania. Semi-official Hungarian sources estimate that there are up to 2.5 million Magyars living within Romania instead of the 1.7 million official Romanian figure. A painstaking analysis of the 1966 census led G. D. Satmarescu to state the "the number of Hungarians were officially underestimated in 1966" and "evidence suggests that the Hungarian population in Transylvania is closer in number to 2 million rather than the 1.6 million enumerated in the 1966 census." ¹⁵ Fred Pisky adds:

"East European ethnic statistics have seldom been reliable, as an unfortunate extremist nationalism created an atmosphere where members of an ethnic minority group often found it difficult to declare their nationality without fear of unfavorable economic, social and political consequences." ¹⁶

How is it that such a large, truculent Hungarian minority exists

in today's socialist Romania? Why is this minority becoming increasingly vociferous about its rights even after the deadening effects of forty years of unusually heavy-handed socialist rule and with little real hope of becoming reunited with the Hungarian motherland? What has made Transylvania the focal point of this unrest? To understand these questions and many other which will inevitably arise in this overview, one must return to the past, and briefly trace the histories of these diverse peoples.

TRANSYLVANIA - THE REGION

- " Who was the stupidest Magyar ever ? "
- " Our Founding Father Arpad . Had he gone three hundred miles farther we would now live in Switzerland . " 17

-Old Hungarian joke-

Transylvania has long invoked in our imagination images of Bram Stoker's Dracula, wolfsbane, and of backward, superstitious peasants cowering in their villages at night. In viewing the entire region, especially the rugged, poorly developed Carpathian mountains, it comes as no surprise that these legends came to be .

The Transylvanian Basin is one of the most distinctive geographical formations in Eastern Europe. A high plateau, Transylvania is separated in the south from Walachia by the Transylvanian Alps and, in the east, from Moldavia and Bukovina by the Carpathian Mountains. Directly west is Hungary. Girdled to the north, east, and south by these ranges one can understand why the Carpathian mountain chain is often called "the frontier between Europe and Asia. 18

The Basin is compact; it extends about 90 miles from west to east and 120 miles from north to south for a total of 21,292 square miles. In terms of soil fertility, population density and settlement, the Basin contrasts markedly with the heavily forested, negligibly populated mountain region.

Today Transylvania is one of the most advanced regions of Romania. The region is rich in mineral resources: notably lignite, iron, lead, manganese, gold, copper, natural gas, salt and sulphur. Large iron and steel, chemical, and textile industries have been recently built. Stock raising on its broad Alföld plain, agriculture, fruit growing, wine production are Transylvania's most important non-industrial occupations. ¹⁹

According to the 1966 Romanian census the population of Transylvania is broken down in the following manner :

**1966 Population of Transylvania Classified
According to National Origin and Language ²⁰**

		<u>National Origin</u>			
<u>Language</u>					
	<u>National Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	
<u>Percent</u>					
	Romanian	4,559,232	67.9	4,569,546	68.0
	Hungarian	1,597,438	23.8	1,627,702	24.2
	German	371,881	5.5	373,933	5.6
	Slav	101,000	1.5	96,000	1.4
	Jewish	14,000	0.2	1,000	0.0
	Gypsy	48,000	0.7	31,000	0.5
	Other	<u>28,004</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>20,374</u>	<u>0.3</u>
	TOTAL	6,719,555	100.0	6,719,555	100.0

Though these numbers have changed somewhat in the last 20 years , they still give a good representation of the makeup of the

general population and the percentages of the various ethnic groups
within Transylvania .

PART 1

The Magyars and Transylvania: From the Ninth to the Twentieth Century.

" I am a Magyar . Mine is the choicest land
in the five continents ;
it is a small world in itself .
No numbers can compass the bounties on its bosom .
Its peaks cast a thirsty glance
even beyond the waves of the Caspian Sea ,
and its fields extend into the distance ,
searching the ends of the earth. "

- Sandor Petofi , " Magyar Vagyck " [I am a Hungarian] 21

ORIGIN OF THE EARLY MAGYAR PEOPLE

Little is known about the early Magyars prior to their migration from the vast steppelands of Central Asia to their settlement in the Carpathian Basin in the late ninth century A.D. Believed to have originally come from the region between the great bend of the Volga River and the Ural Mountains, these nomadic

warrior horsemen moved first to the Khazar state, north of the Black Sea where they picked up a considerable Turkic influence before moving to the middle Danube river area. Their language, which with refinement, became modern Hungarian, is of the Finno-Ugric language group, its closest linguistic relative being Finnish.²³

C. A. Macartney describes Hungary's origin as follows:

" No state in European history has a beginning so precisely defined as Hungary. It was brought into being well nigh full panoplied, by a single act, when the Magyars, until then a people without fixed abode, entered the basin of the middle Danube, a place at that juncture as good as masterless, and made it their home. This was in the last years of the ninth century A.D."²⁴

The year 896 A.D. is the year generally accepted as the year when the Hungarians settled in this region. Initially the settlement was more akin to a staging area from which the Magyars became a scourge to Europe, penetrating as far as Bremen, Cambrai and Orleans with their raiding parties. In the period between 898 and 955 historians have counted no fewer than 33 major expeditions into Western Europe.²⁵ This plunder of Europe abruptly ended in 955 when Otto the Great of the Holy Roman Empire shattered the Magyars at Augsburg so decisively that they never again threatened Western Europe .

After Augsburg, the Magyars concentrated on settling the Carpathian basin and in forming their new society. In 1000 A.D. under King Stephan, (sainted in 1083), the Hungarians turned to Roman Catholicism and became in Western eyes a member of the

Christian family of nations rather than the outlaw, pagan horde they had been. This conversion was significant as it occurred during an era when Rome and Byzantium were competing for the souls of the Eastern European peoples. By this time the Eastern church had already converted the Russians, Serbs, Bulgars and Moravians.²⁶ This is a key reason that the Hungarians, as the Poles, have traditionally had a Western outlook and have zealously tried to distance themselves from the East.

By becoming fixed to the land, the Magyars soon had to endure a succession of traumatic invasions from the East - and having been Christianized - held the line for European Christendom as its most Easterly outpost for over 700 years. On several occasions the Magyar population was almost destroyed. The Mongols swept through in 1241 under Batu Khan; one account described the result :

" There was nothing to be found back in our own land except the bones and skulls of those murdered and destroyed walls of our cities, still red from the blood so freely shed." ²⁷

During these desperate times, when Hungary almost ceased to exist as a nation, its remnants coalesced in more defensible Transylvania which, though a part of the Ottoman Empire for 150 years, never was occupied and was able to retain its "Hungarianness." This Turkish occupation of Hungary began after the devastating Battle of Mohacs in 1526 and lasted until the liberation of Buda by the Austrian imperial armies in 1686. In Transylvania however the Magyar and Szekler community became, in the words of Paul Ignatus:

"... the firmest bastion in the struggle 'pro patria et libertate', remaining a token of relative Hungarian independence and a guardian of the Hungarian culture inherited from the years before the Mongol, Turkish and Austro-German invasions." 28

Ivan Volgyes states:

" As a result marked elsewhere by extermination of things Magyar, Transylvania became the seat of Hungarian culture ". 29

This was in contrast to the rest of Hungary where many Magyars were sold as slaves, killed, or carried off to the East. Under the Turks, the great Hungarian plain, the Puszta "became a barren flatland, deforested and uncultivated, where poisonous marshes alternated with untamed sands. " 30

It is important to focus on these calamities as they reach into the very essence of the Hungarian psyche. Indelibly etched into the Hungarian experience, their root of consciousness, is an aversion, a resistance, to all things Eastern. Even during the most oppressive moments of the Hapsburg mandate, the Hungarians during the peak of their nationalistic, anti-Austrian fervor were never anti-Western, so terrible had their experience with the East been. This sentiment is still on display in contemporary Transylvania, where ethnic Magyars and their cultural chauvinism continue to reject most things Eastern and yearns deeply to be reunited with the West .

To fully understand the Magyars in Transylvania, it is important to trace the Romanian role there as well, as the two ethnic groups are inextricably intertwined in the history of the region . The

Romanians are unique in Eastern Europe as they are a of non-Slavic culture speaking a non-Slavic Latin tongue and are surrounded by a sea of Slavic ethnic groups and languages [except for the Magyars].³¹ Claiming direct descent from the early Dacians of Wallachia, who were conquered by the Roman Emperor Trajan in 101 A.D., the Romanians then have some difficulty tracing their cultural history until the fourteenth century A.D. where solid documentary evidence indicates a Wallachian (the Vlachs) population in Transylvania speaking a Latin-based language .

Transylvania, part of Greater Hungary from 896 to 1920, has long been the geographical focal point of these two rival nationalities . Debate has raged between Romanian and Hungarian historians as to who actually settled first in Transylvania. Agreement, or proof, would settle the long lasting argument over which country it is, Hungary or Romania, of which Transylvania is rightfully a part.³² This has kept the tempers of the Hungarian and Romanian peoples frayed and has continued to provide an "ideological basis" for bitter territorial discord.³³

The Romanians believe that during the missing centuries between the disappearance of the Dacians after the Roman occupation (due to successive waves of barbarians), and until the emergence of solid evidence indicating the re-appearance of a Latin-speaking population in Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia during the fourteenth century, the remnants of the indigenous Dacian population remained in their homeland preserving their language and culture.³⁴

The Hungarian historians counter-argue, however, that the

early Dacians in Transylvania either left with the Romans when they evacuated in 275 A.D. or were annihilated by the barbarians who followed them. Transylvania was then, in the Hungarian view, occupied by Slavic peoples who in turn were conquered by the Magyars in the Ninth century, while the Latin speaking peoples then south of the Danube were displaced by the Bulgarian Empire in the Thirteenth century, many of whom consequently migrated to Hungarian Transylvania.³⁵ Discussing this issue Ian Matley queries:

"Are the present day Romanians the direct descendants of a mixed Daco-Roman population, speaking Latin, who have inhabited the territory of the former Dacia up until the present day, or was Dacia completely abandoned by the population upon the departure of the Romans, later to be repopulated by a Latin-speaking population coming from south of the Danube or from the Balkans? In other words, have the Romanian people an historical claim to the territories they now occupy, including Transylvania, or are they relative newcomers there compared to the Hungarians?"³⁶

Paul Lendvai quotes noted Romanian historian A.D. Xenopol who states:

"There is indeed no parallel to the mysterious silence which shrouds the Romanians for the one thousand years following the withdrawal of Aurelian and his legions - a period in which there are neither chronicles nor architectural remains. One lacks the very basis for reconstructing history."³⁷

Xenopol adds that this ethnic and demographic phenomenon of

the ten lost centuries is "*the enigma of the Middle Ages*". (Italics added) 38

It can easily be seen that these rival theories concerning the rightful legacy of Transylvania are in part nationalistically motivated though both have some merit. It seems more plausible, upon reflection, that a Latin people did remain in Transylvania after the Roman departure and somehow survived the barbarian incursions. It is also however an indisputable historical fact that Transylvania had been, until Trianon in 1920, a part of Greater Hungary for a thousand years. As George Schoepflin has observed :

" A mythicized concept of Transylvania, which may have little to do with existing realities, plays a central role in the national consciousness of both nations.Neither Romanians nor Hungarians can accept that Transylvania should be part of the other states territory and both accept a nationalist imperative that it should belong to them." 39

Hence the irreconcilable argument between Hungary and Romania over Transylvania .

Thus, the first clear picture we have of the ethnic situation in Transylvania is that of a Hungarian province where the Magyar and Saxon peoples were clearly defined while the position of the Romanian language is obscure, with regard to both origin and numbers . As Matley concludes:

" For over 400 years we have little or no idea of what was going on in Transylvania except that Hungary

was gradually consolidating her hold on the region .The hiatus has proved difficult for the Romanians as it deprives them of historical proof of their continuous presence as a people in Romania since Roman times." 40

--- THE MAGYARS AND AUSTRIA - HUNGARY---

With the expulsion of the Ottoman Turks the Austrians assumed control of Hungary, including Transylvania. Transylvania soon began to absorb a large influx of Romanian, Serbian and Saxon settlers. Underneath this new yoke the Magyars chafed, particularly because Transylvania was not fully reunited with Hungary, and was governed as an autonomous principality as it had been during the Turkish suzerainty. 41

Though oppressed by the Austrians, Hungary was exposed once again to powerful Western influences and Magyar culture flourished . The nearly undecipherable Magyar language was refined (it is still unintelligible by most standards) and a foundation was laid for the flowering of the writers, musicians and poets for which Hungary became noted. This creativity at times became stridently nationalistic as evidenced by the role the Hungarian intelligentsia played in 1848, later during the 1956 rebellion, and today in Transylvania.

Within Hungarian borders it increasingly became a matter of faith and policy that all who lived within Greater Hungary should speak Magyar. This attempted Magyarization of the multitude of

nationalities created serious problems particularly among the ethnic Balkan groups and the Romanians in Transylvania. Although the ethnic Romanians, Slovaks or Serbs had every right to learn their national languages and live their national cultures, Hungary was to be unified by language.⁴² This led Hugh Seton Watson to his main thesis that the single most important factor governing ethnicity in Eastern Europe and consequently in Transylvania was language.⁴³ This more than ever is a vital factor in contemporary Transylvania as we shall see.

The revolutions of 1848 and 1849 were felt throughout Europe. Awakened nationalistic sentiment temporarily overthrew the monarchic system associated with Metternich. In Hungary this manifested itself in a major rebellion against the Hapsburgs for complete Hungarian social and political autonomy. Sandor Petofi, perhaps Hungary's greatest poet, captured the moment when he wrote: "We swear, we swear that we will no longer be prisoners."⁴⁴

The events of 1848 are therefore extremely important to Romanian history, especially in Transylvania. While the Hungarians were rebelling against the Hapsburgs, a major ethnic Romanian peasant revolt against the Magyars occurred in Transylvania. This revolt was especially significant because it evoked the first concrete expression of *Romanian* national feeling in the history of the Romanian people, and it also signalled the first call for a union of the three principalities, Wallachia, Moldavia and Hungarian Transylvania into a Romanian state.⁴⁵

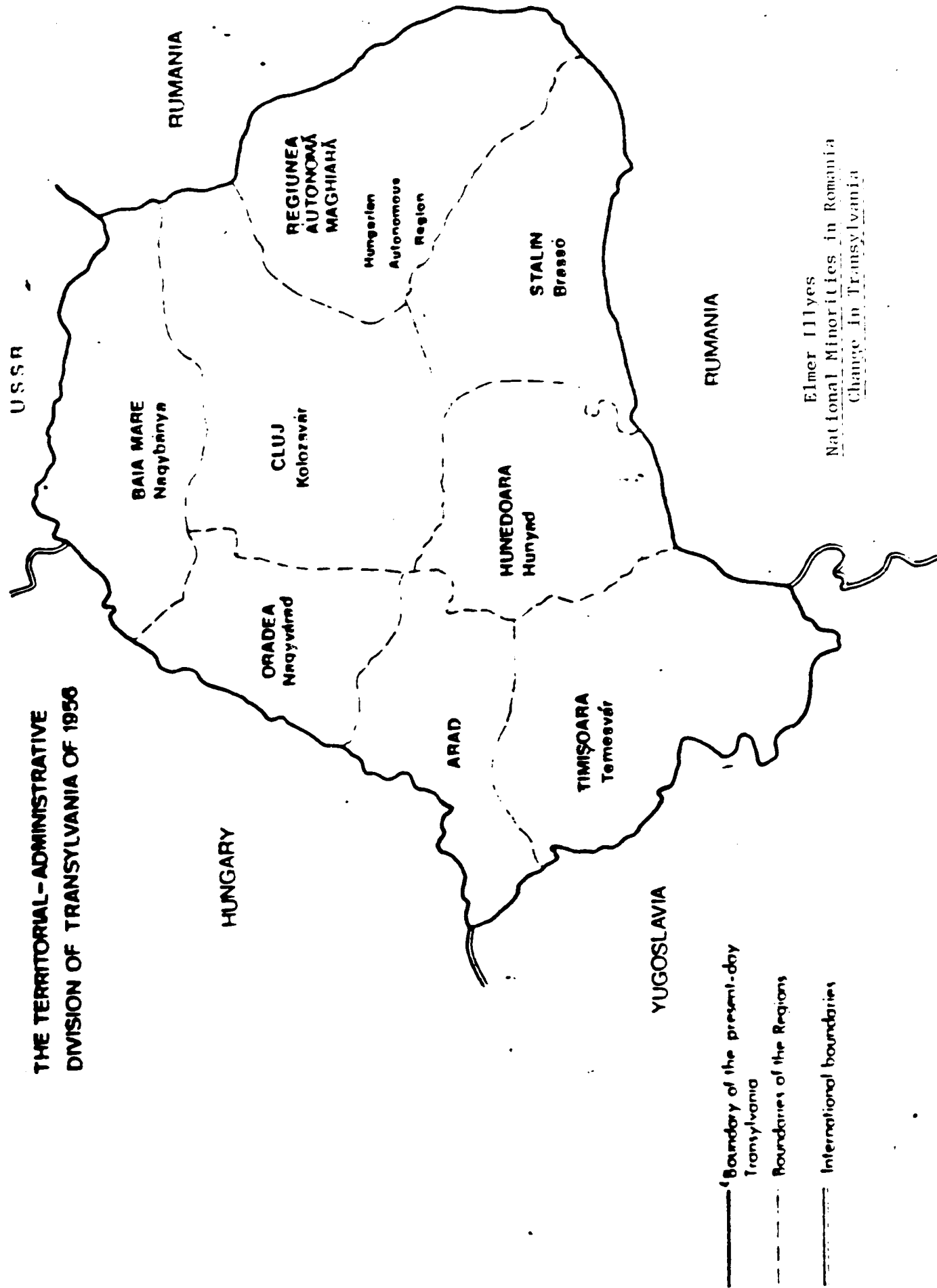
During the 1848 rebellion, the ethnic Romanians in

Transylvania actively aided the Austrian and Russian armies, who, by 1849 had crushed the Hungarian revolt. They received little recognition and no territory for their support of the Hapsburgs, however, in 1863, the Transylvanian Diet made substantial concessions in political reform to the Romanians. Four years later in 1867 this trend towards liberalization was negated by the declaration of the Dual Monarchy, or the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in the famous "Augsleich", whereby Hungary received near total autonomy from Austria. The Empire was divided into two separate spheres, and once again the ethnic Romanians in Transylvania were placed under complete Magyar control. ⁴⁶

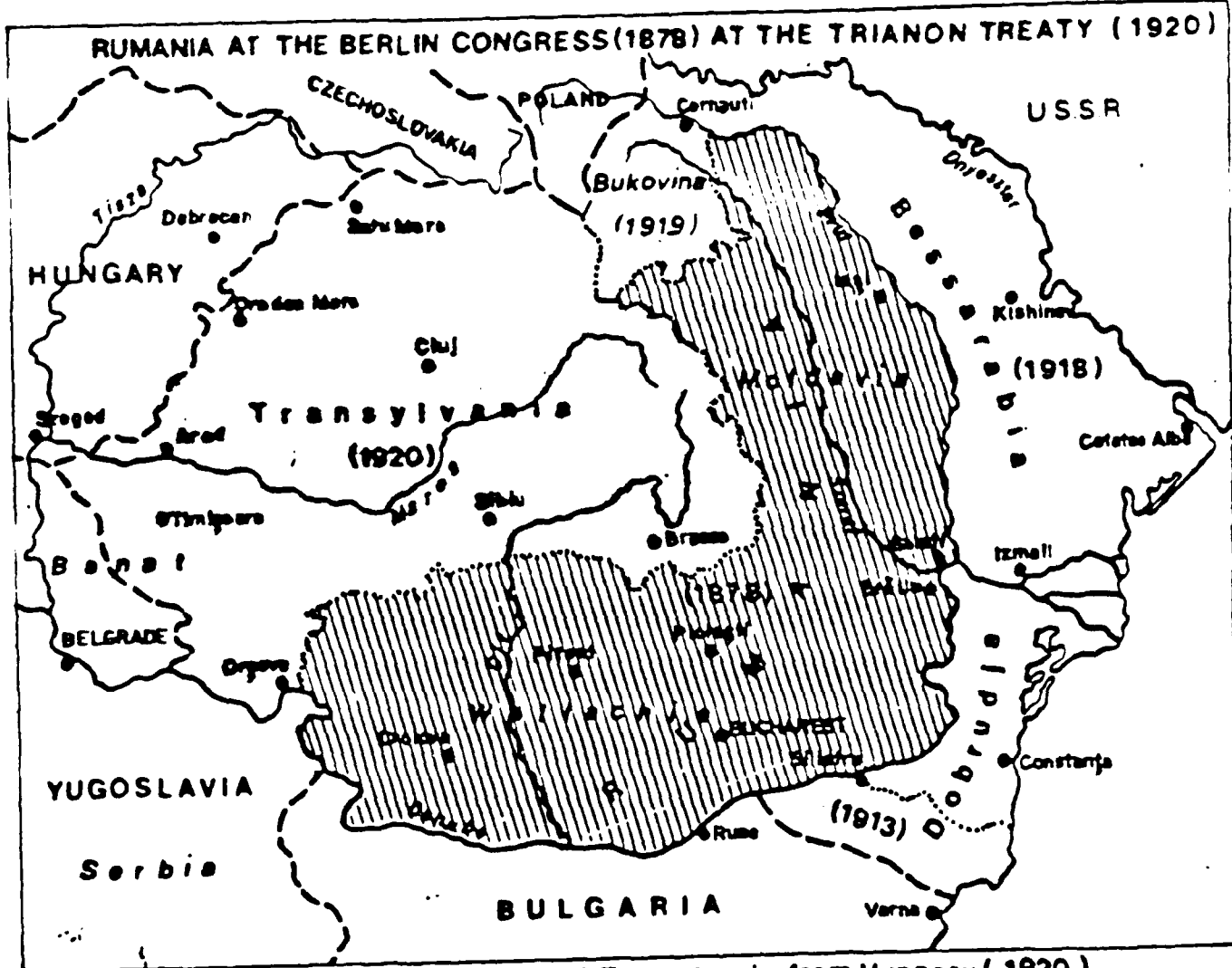
The compromise of 1867 created a Hungarian state, the territory of which was inhabited by a large number of non-Magyar minorities, whose allegiance to the Magyar court was highly questionable. Even the enlightened Magyar nobility had great difficulty keeping the lid on this large ethnic cauldron - especially in this age of newly found nationalism. Pre World War I Greater Hungary included 48.1 % Magyars, 25.8 % Slavs, 9.8 % Germans, and 14.1 % Romanians. Most of the Romanians were concentrated in Transylvania. ⁴⁷

The Romanian cause in Transylvania received a boost when in 1881 Wallachia and Moldavia were formally incorporated to become the Kingdom of Romania, and Prince Charles (a Hohenzollern) was crowned in Bucharest as King Carol the First. ⁴⁸ Immediately after Romania gained statehood, the Romanian National Party of Transylvania demanded the restoration of Transylvanian autonomy,

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Rumania took possession of Transylvania from Hungary (1920)
 Bessarabia (1918) from Russia
 Dobrudja (1913) from Bulgaria
 Bukovina (1919) from Austria - Hungary

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universal suffrage, the free use of the Romanian language, and assignment of more ethnic Romanians to posts within the Magyar dominated administration. These demands were rebuffed, and the attempted Magyarization of Transylvania continued apace. ⁴⁹

By the eve of the Great War the Transylvanian Romanians were in a difficult position. Their traditional loyalty to the Hapsburgs brought them no respite from the discriminatory Magyar rule. Ethnic Romanian soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian armies initially fought well against the Russians, Serbians, and Italians, but wavered later when called upon to invade Romania in 1916. The Kingdom of Romania had remained neutral until 1916, when it abruptly joined the Allied cause and was promptly crushed by the Central Powers. Romania sued for peace and eventually signed a separate treaty in early 1918. In return, she received a piece of long-contested Bessarabia from the Russians who had also collapsed. ⁵⁰

--- TRIANON AND THE TRUNCATION OF HUNGARY ---

The collapse of the moribund Austro-Hungarian Empire in the autumn of 1918 brought about radical changes of Magyar and Romanian fortunes within Transylvania. The Transylvanian Romanians could not be persuaded to remain with Hungary on any terms, and when Romanian troops marched into Budapest in 1919, the local Romanians in Transylvania took over administration of their

homelands. In a massive assembly at Iulia a resolution was passed unanimously to make Transylvania a part of a united Romania. At Trianon in 1920 these claims were validated,⁵¹ and Romania received all of Transylvania, which included a large Magyar minority. The ethnic shoe had passed to the other foot. As Volgyes observes:

"For the first time however, it was not foreign nationalities that inhabited Hungarian territories, it was now Hungarian and other ethnic groups which formed national minorities in surrounding states."⁵²

Examining this chart of Hungary's territorial losses it is easy to see how drastic this redefinition of boundaries had been.

Hungary's Territorial Losses After World War One

To Romania	102,787 square kilometers
To Yugoslavia	63,497 square kilometers
To Czechoslovakia	62,353 square kilometers
To Austria	4,107 square kilometers
To Poland	584 square kilometers
The Free City of Fiume	21 square kilometers

Total territorial loss 233,349 square kilometers

Retained by Hungary 93,343 square kilometers⁵³

Hungary lost 72% of the land which had been part of its Kingdom for centuries, and 64 % of its population. However, as Woodrow Wilson would later learn, this was not to be the solution to the seemingly unsolvable problem of ethnic self determination in

Eastern Europe.⁵⁴ The Treaty of Trianon cut through ethnic homelands seemingly without reason, as Lendvai notes :

" Political frontiers after World War I were not always chosen on the proclaimed basis of ethnic boundaries but also for political, strategic and psychological reasons." ⁵⁵

Julius Retzler adds :

" The changes in the territories and boundaries of Eastern Europe resulted in a massive transfer of ethnic groups between national jurisdictions . Hungary and Bulgaria were no longer multiethnic states since 90 % or more of their post 1918 populations belonged to the ethnic majority . Romania and Serbia (now Yugoslavia) became multiethnic states. Czechoslovakia and reborn Poland also became multiethnic during the interwar period ." ⁵⁶

Furthermore he states :

" According to official censuses circa 1930, 25.5% (23 million) of about 91 million persons living in non-Russian Eastern Europe belonged to minority ethnic groups in their respective countries. Of that 23 million people there were over seven million Russians and Ukrainians, six million Germans, over four million Jews, two point seven million Hungarians, one million Albanians and nearly one million Turks. " ⁵⁷

During the interwar period Hungary, still indignant from the settlement at Trianon, remained continually irritated by the treatment of the 2.5 to 3 million ethnic Magyars now part of other states . Most galling however was the loss of Transylvania , considered

the cradle of the Hungarian national state and the primary area toward which a newly kindled Hungarian irredentist spirit was directed. The approximately 1.5 million Hungarians who remained in Transylvania became the justification for restoring the "territorial integrity" of the old kingdom of Greater Hungary. ⁵⁸

Within now Romanian Transylvania, the quality of life immediately deteriorated for the Magyar minority. The Magyar nobility, about 10% of the total, lost most of their possessions, their land and were almost completely destroyed economically. ⁵⁹

--- TRANSYLVANIA : THE INTERWAR YEARS---

The Romanian Land Reform Act of 1921 especially affected the Magyar and Saxon minorities. Of the 6.5 million hectares of agricultural land owned by these historically well entrenched ethnic minorities (ethnic Romanians owned 2.1 million hectares of a total of 8.6 million hectares of arable land in Transylvania), by 1929, 1.75 million hectares had been expropriated from land owners and wealthier peasants, and another 121,000 hectares formerly owned by the Hungarian state were ceded. Ethnic Romanians received 73 % of these expropriated lands, and those Magyars who wanted to buy land were restricted from settling within fifty kilometers of the northern frontier. ⁶⁰

Employment and many entrepreneurial activities were severely

curtailed for the Magyars. In 1934 a law was passed decreeing that every enterprise, large or small, had to have a quota of ethnic Romanians on the staff. This resulted in a mass dismissal of Hungarian employees across Transylvania. ⁶¹

The Romanianization of the ethnic minorities continued with other measures. Firms that displayed shop signs in non-Romanian languages were taxed, and a 12 % surtax was charged to those businesses which kept their books and materials in languages other than Romanian. ⁶²

Politically the Magyar minority fared no better. In the first election after World War I, thirty of thirty-three candidates nominated by Hungarian political parties were disqualified; just one was elected. Jurisdictionally, the powers of the local county and municipal councils were reduced and taken over by appointees from Bucharest many of whom could not converse in Magyar. Even the mayors of larger towns were appointees of the central government, and the notaries who administered the villages were, in turn picked by the prefects. ⁶³

Oddly, all did not fare well for the Transylvanian Romanians after unification. The liberating Romanians from Wallachia and Moldavia, expecting full gratitude from their countrymen of the "liberated provinces" were surprised when in many instances they were greeted by scorn. This was partially because the Transylvanian Romanians, along with the other ethnic groups, had been molded by a Western pattern in areas which had been part of Hapsburg Hungary, and who consequently resented it when the newcomers from

Bucharest attempted to superimpose their Eastern ways. This sense of cultural supremacy of the Transylvanians, be it Magyar, Romanian or Saxon exists still today complicating Ceausescu's efforts at a complete Romanianization of the Hungarian minority.⁶⁴ For instance, no Transylvanian, then or now, of any minority ethnic group, has ever tolerated being referred to a "Balkan" as the term refers to Eastern, Slavic things and runs contrary to the historic Transylvanian attachment to the West.⁶⁵ About this, Seton-Watson cogently writes :

" The unique feature of Transylvania is that it has been for centuries a country of two nations, each with its own history and culture. Neither Romanians nor Hungarians can rightfully be called minorities. Transylvania is historically both a Romanian land and a Hungarian land. " ⁶⁶

He goes on to describe this relationship vividly:

"Of Romania and Hungary there was a strange love-hate relationship between the two nation. Hungarian politicians in Budapest displayed a frivolous arrogance, based on a very thorough ignorance, toward the Romanians whom they saw as subhuman barbarians, natural serfs, stinking Wallachs whom Magyars were entitled to order about and insult. Romanian politicians in Bucharest replied with an unpenetrable resentment, and obstinate defensive hostility, based on equal ignorance, seeing in the Hungarians savage Asiatic oppressors whose pride it was the duty and the pleasure of the Romanians to humiliate. Yet, among Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania who knew each others' literature, art and folklore this attitude did not always

prevail. There were those on both sides who felt more in common with fellow Transylvanians of the other language than with men of their own speech from the centres of power beyond Transylvania." ⁶⁷

---IRREDENTISM AND WAR 1933 to 1945---

Though Hungary had lost Transylvania, by the mid 1930's a powerful irredentist sentiment emerged, fueled by the spectre of a strong and supportive Nazi Germany and by that of Stalin's Soviet Union which cast covetous eyes on Bessarabia. Spurred on by an increasingly right-wing government, using such rhetoric as "ancient historical heritage" and "sacred land," by 1936 there were many in Hungary who were fired up to march on Romania to liberate Transylvania. ⁶⁸ The Soviets in particular supported Magyar claims to Transylvania and goaded the Hungarians to take action. As the German Foreign Ministry reported :

"The political director in the [Soviet] Foreign Commissariat had expressed to the Hungarian minister in Moscow spontaneously and as his personal opinion [his government's] disinterest in Transylvania and Trans-Carpathian territory. It was striking how the Soviet Minister here was encouraging Hungary to take action against Romania in Transylvania. The Soviet Foreign Minister [Molotov] expressed himself in a similar vein." ⁶⁹

This is historically significant because in contemporary Romania

(1985) it is believed that the Soviets are once again working "to keep both irons in the fire " by encouraging Hungarian irredentism towards Transylvania in the hope of putting pressure on Ceausescu's independent and anti-Moscow foreign policy line.⁷⁰

The Germans and Italians responded to Hungary's threat to go to war against Romania when in 1940 they managed to browbeat the Romanians into yielding to the 2nd Vienna Award of 28 August. For the Germans this was crucial, as a "Balkan War" could destabilize their Southern flank and threaten the important oil fields of Ploesti (near Bucharest), Nazi Germany's major source of European oil. The Romanians, faced with threats from Hungary, German, Italy and the Soviet Union, had no choice but to accede .

From the Vienna Award Hungary regained most but not all of Transylvania .The German Foreign Ministry explained :

" Hungary could not receive the Szekler county (situated along the Carpathian Ridge and occupied by a Hungarian minority) in any event because this was too far removed from the present border and the intervening area was settled by large masses of Romanians."⁷¹

The Vienna Award returned to Hungary 43,492 square kilometers in Northern Transylvania, in which 1,308,758 Magyars along with 1,029,470 ethnic Romanians were living. Southern Transylvania which remained Romanian contained 59,295 square kilometers. A large number of the 363,000 Magyars in this area were able to emigrate to the north.⁷²

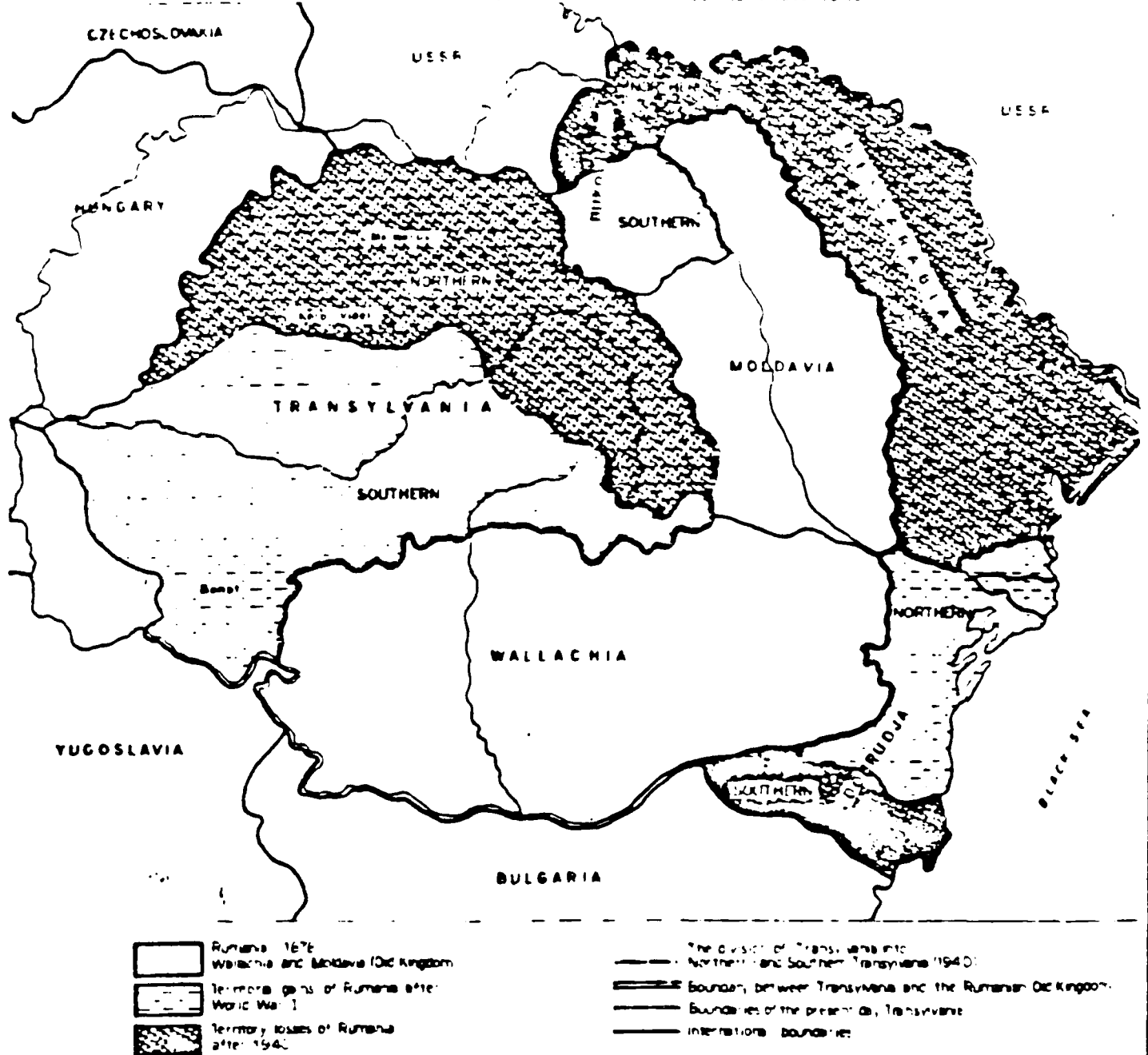
Both Hungary and Romania were manipulated by the Germans,

who held out the prospect of regaining or retaining Transylvania, both joined the Axis and supported the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. In the course of four years the Axis was badly beaten on the Eastern Front by the Soviets. The war was particularly catastrophic for the Hungarians who by the Paris Peace Treaties of 10 February 1947 once again lost all of Transylvania to Romania.

In August 1944 the Romanian King Michael, overthrew the Romanian military government and sued for peace. Following the terms of the subsequent armistice the Romanians reentered the war, this time against the Germans and Hungarians; they also agreed to pay the Soviets reparations and accept military occupation until a final peace settlement. It was because of this famous "switch in time" that the Soviets acquiesced in letting the Romanians regain all of Transylvania. The Soviets, in turn, reannexed Romanian Bessarabia.

Radical changes in the population of all the ethnic groups in Transylvania occurred as a result of this terrible war. The Magyars, Saxons and particularly the Jews suffered badly. Estimates range from 150,000 to 200,000 Transylvanian Magyars who died, were killed, were deported, or who disappeared during World War Two.⁷³

TERRITORIAL CHANGES OF ROMANIA BETWEEN 1878 AND 1945



Elmer Illyes
National Minorities in Romania
Change in Transylvania

PART 2

TRANSYLVANIA UNDER SOCIALISM : 1948-1985

"On your feet, Magyar! The Fatherland calls !
 The time is ripe, now or never !
 Shall we be slaves or shall we be free ?
 That is the question, choose for yourselves !
 We swear to the God of Magyars,
 We swear that slaves we shall no longer be ! 75

Since 1948, when the Romanian Communist Party, led by Ana Pauker and Vasile Luca, consolidated power at the expense of a fledgling constitutional, democratic process, Socialist Romania has, until recently, made substantial inroads in its quest for an "autonomous" foreign policy and in instilling a resurgent Romanian nationalism. Though the economy is presently in shambles, Romanian international self-esteem has been high, and Ceausescu's role as "great patriotic leader" seems, for the time being, secure.

There is however, in the words of Lendvai, "an Achilles heel to the buoyant Romanian nationalism." It is the status and role of Socialist Romania's large Hungarian minority.⁷⁵ Though Romania is today a far more homogenous country than it was before WWII (from 72% then to almost 88% now) and has subdued the nationalistic

imperative of ten other ethnic groups comprising three to seven percent of its overall population, the problem of the Magyars remains a continuing sore spot. For historical, political, emotional and numerical reasons, the problem of the compact Hungarian minority associated with another neighboring country which has been a traditional enemy for centuries has until now, remained an intractable problem for the Romanian leadership.⁷⁶

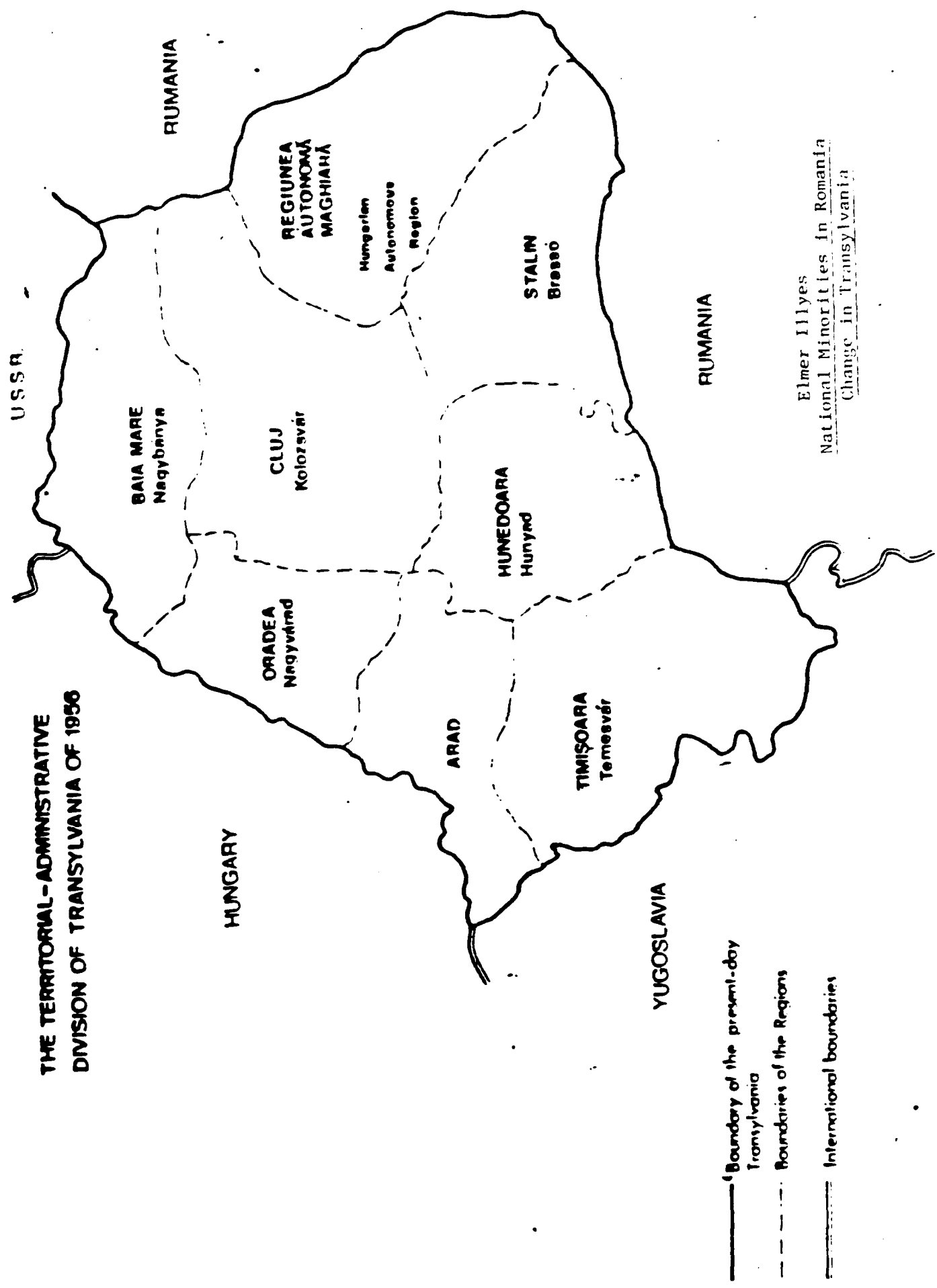
After World War II, the Magyar minority was treated relatively well compared to the the Saxons, many of whom were abused as ethnic relatives to the Nazis. This was partially because during the war, and immediately afterward, a high percentage of the Romanian Communist Party was comprised of persons representing the ethnic minorities. For instance Pauker was of Jewish and Luca of Magyar descent .

Stalin and the Soviets also had a vested stake in the welfare of the minorities .

"In accordance with Marxist- Leninist doctrine and following the Soviet model, the official ideology was that Socialism provides for a positive and just solution to the minorities' problems. National tensions and conflicts which are interpreted as a product of capitalistic development with the relatively weak RCP struggling to assert itself internally, would disappear once the bourgeois system had been overturned. The introduction of socialism would lead to the establishment of fraternal relations among the working people of all nationalities."⁷⁷

The Magyar political organizations in Transylvania were

THE TERRITORIAL-ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF TRANSYLVANIA OF 1956



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stronger than those in many other parts of the country.⁷⁸

Accordingly, the Magyars were essentially accorded the same rights as those enjoyed by other Romanian citizens. This liberality was not a result of Romanian sentimentality toward the Magyars. Rather it reflected Soviet tactical considerations. As a condition for the Soviet return of Transylvania, Stalin insisted that the Romanian government guarantee full rights to the minority populations. In doing so, Stalin hoped to mitigate the anger of Hungary over the loss of Transylvania and to use the lever of the minorities as a check against any incipient Romanian nationalism directed at the USSR, specifically against its reannexation of Bessarabia.⁷⁹

Romania's First Communist Constitution, based on the Paris Peace Treaty of February 1947, guaranteed equal rights to all minorities and the free use of their native tongues in the spheres of culture and education.⁸⁰

Part II, Section I, Article III of the Paris Treaty follows:

(1) Romanians shall take the steps necessary to secure to all persons under Romanian jurisdiction, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and Fundamental freedoms, including Freedom of expression, of press publication, of religious worship, of political opinion and of public meeting.

(2) Romania further undertakes that the laws in force in Romania shall not either in their content or in their application, discriminate or entail any discrimination between persons of Romanian nationality

on the ground of their race, sex, language or religion, whether in reference to their persons, property, business, professional, or financial interests, status, political or civil rights or any other matter.⁸¹

After 1947, the adoption of the Soviet style system resulted in the complete elimination of the private sector. Though this affected all Romanians, the minorities, particularly the Transylvanian Magyars and Saxons lost their independent economic base in becoming employees of the State. "The Sovietization of the region," in Julius Retzler's words, "thus delivered minority groups to the political and economic control of the majority."⁸² This became especially significant in 1952, when Pauker, Luca and the "Soviet clique" were purged, including many non-Romanian minority RCP leaders. This purge ushered in Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej and a purely Romanian majority leadership.

Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the Magyar minority was singled out for discrimination until after 1956. Hungarian language schools, theaters and folklore groups, as well as newspapers, periodicals and books were available. The Magyars even had their own political associations--the Hungarian National Democratic Union (MADOSZ) and later the Hungarian Peoples Union (UPM).⁸³

-- THE MAGYAR AUTONOMOUS REGION---

The RCP's generally liberal approach to the Magyars culminated in the creation in 1952 of the Magyar Autonomous Region (MAR) in the Szekler lands of eastern Transylvania.⁸⁴ This was the most symbolic indication that the Hungarian minority was being given special recognition by the Romanian Government.⁸⁵ Established under Articles Nineteen and Twenty of the "liberal" 1952 Constitution, the MAR encompassed only a small part of Transylvania, but it did include the area of highest density of Magyars in Romania. In the 1956 census, the population of the MAR numbered 731,387 of whom 565,510 or 77% were Magyar. This was however only approximately one third of the total Magyar population of Transylvania. There were other large pockets of Magyars concentrated in the neighboring regions of Cluj (257,974 Magyars) and Brasov (108,751)⁸⁶

Although the Constitution specified that the MAR would have "an autonomous administration elected by the population of the autonomous region," in reality the region functioned much the same as other Romanian territorial administrative divisions.

The Constitution of 1952 declared:

"The laws of the Romanian Peoples' Republic as well as the decisions and directives of the central organs of the State are binding on the territory of the

Autonomous Hungarian Region." 86

The MAR became a model Magyar region displaying Romanian enlightenment into which economic support and publicity were lavished. "Officials from Bucharest, Moscow and Budapest allegedly poured into the . . . region . . . to . . . make it a kind of showpiece." 87

It is believed that the creation of the MAR was modeled on the Soviet autonomous republics and rooted in Marxist- Leninist teachings concerning the national minorities and was prompted by Soviet pressure. Elemer Illyes in his complex study, Change in Transylvania, states that the MAR was created because of two considerations: (1) The external propaganda role the region could serve, and (2) the Region's potential within Romania as a means of enabling the government to achieve its goals within the framework of a Romanian nationalist minority policy. 88

Illyes further writes that:

"The Region was officially presented as the basic means for maintaining the existence of the Hungarian minority, and it was therefore possible to use it to divert attention away from endeavors aimed at the Hungarian national character outside the Autonomous Region. Everywhere else repression became more open. That was why the area comprising the Autonomous region was made as small as possible; in any case, it was as far as possible from the Hungarian border, was surrounded by counties with a majority of Romanian inhabitants and contained barely a third of the Hungarians in Transylvania; the Hungarians outside the Region, who represented two thirds of Transylvania's Hungarian

population were left to be discriminated against as second class citizens. As a result of the new territorial administrative reorganization, the proportion of Hungarians outside the Autonomous Region nowhere exceeded 6.5 to 28. 4 percent." ⁸⁹

Robert King supports Illye's more revisionist viewpoint by writing :

"If ethnic composition had been the principal criterion (for the MAR), another autonomous region could have perhaps been set up along the Hungarian border." ⁹⁰

It is generally established that the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the removal of Soviet troops from Romania in 1958 signaled the end of Romanian tolerance toward the ethnic Magyars in Transylvania and presaged an increased drive for their ethnic assimilation. As early as 1949, and despite the heralded creation of the MAR in 1952, trends towards the full Romanianization of Transylvania were seen until 1956 as troubling rather than threatening by the Magyar community.⁹¹ Large numbers of Romanians moved into Hungarian districts, diluting the ethnic mix, and replacing Magyars in many of the local governmental positions. Steps were taken to impede Hungarian-Romanian border traffic, a serious blow to the Magyars because many had relatives on both sides of the wire. Also at this time Gheorghiu-Dej was heavily Romanianizing the upper echelons of the RCP which also reduced Magyar political influence.⁹²

The first direct attack on the Magyars occurred in 1957 as the direct result of the Rajk trial in Hungary.⁹³ In 1953 the Hungarian Peoples' Alliance was harassed and then abolished, with many of its leaders arrested, on the grounds that it represented nationalistic tendencies.⁹⁴ Controls on Magyar schools and cultural institutions were tightened and a campaign was launched against the Roman Catholic Church because of its "foreign espionage links."⁹⁵

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the RCP, led by primarily ethnic Romanians, began to combine Stalinist control with increasing Romanian nationalism. A chauvinistic policy resulted which distinctly separated "the Romanian working people" from the "cohabitating nationalities," and this distinction, according to Retzler, "reduced the political and economic status of minorities vis-a-vis the majority ethnic group, particularly that of the Hungarians in Romania."⁹⁶

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION AND ITS AFTEREFFECTS

The 1956 Revolution dramatically changed the life of the ethnic Magyars of Transylvania. The revolt rocked the USSR and all the Communist regimes bordering Hungary, but especially Romania.

For Romania the situation posed by the rebellion was very serious. The impact on the increasingly restive Magyar minority, who had felt increasingly isolated since 1952, was immediate. Meetings

were organized, demonstrations were held, where on one occasion Romanian troops fired shots, and leaflets were printed supporting the Hungarian cause. A number of Transylvanian Hungarian patriots slipped across the Hungarian- Romanian border to aid the insurrection. So worried were the Romanians that some Magyar units within the Romanian Army were disarmed and confined to barracks. Travel was restricted, and all foreigners were barred from entering Transylvania.⁹⁷

The Romanian government clamped down on the dissidents, arresting many and executing several. They were zealous in assisting the Soviets in any way possible to quell the rebellion, including the loan to the Hungarian Secret Police of a number of Magyar speaking officers. Imre Nagy , before his execution in 1958, was kept in a Bucharest prison.⁹⁸ In return for Romanian assistance the new Kadar regime in Hungary, under pressure from the Soviet Union, expressed its fraternal appreciation by publicly renouncing, in 1958, its claims to Romanian (Transylvania) territory.⁹⁹

Spurred by the events of 1956, the socio-economic position of the Magyar minority continued to fade. Both the Hungarian and Saxon minorities had enjoyed a higher standard of living than the typical Romanian, and their educational level was generally higher. The Magyars were more urbanized than the Romanians with a large percentage involved in industrial labor while the Romanians remained primarily rural. The increased industrialization of Transylvania brought in many new Romanian workers who were becoming

increasingly better educated as RCP educational "measures" leveled the disparity between Magyar and Romanian schooling.

ASSIMILATION UNDER GHEORGIU - DEJ

1956 - 1965

With Gheorghiu-Dej solidly entrenched in power, Romanian nationalism continued to be stressed at the expense of the Hungarians. Several policies were instituted to force the assimilation of the minorities into the mainstream of Romanian life. Trond Gilberg outlines their key points:

"...restriction of educational opportunities for ethnic minorities in their native tongue (such as the closing of Hungarian schools at the elementary and intermediate levels and a reduction of lectures in these languages at the university level in areas of heavy minority enrollment.)"

"Attempts to limit the publications of books, newspapers and journals in minority languages, as well as restrictions on theatrical performances in non-Romanian tongues."

"Redistribution of apparat positions, both in the Party and State bureaucracies which tended to favor the

Romanian nationality. This was keyed primarily at the top of the party pyramid, but also at local levels."

"Actual repression of minorities in periods of crisis."

"A generally anti-Semitic attitude of the top political leadership throughout."¹⁰⁰

Official Romanian policy continued to change as the result of the emergence in Eastern Europe of a number of different ideological schools of Communism which differed from the Soviet model. This polycentrism allowed regimes with large ethnic minorities to deviate from Marxist-Leninist internationalism and establish their own minority policies.¹⁰¹ This fact, combined with the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1958, enabled the Romanians to undertake a more individualistic line, both internally and externally.

The attempted assimilation of the Magyar minority became increasingly directed at the Magyar culture in Transylvania. As one American Senator asked exasperatedly while trying to comprehend the nature of the oppression of the artistic intelligentsia in Transylvania :

"Why should a communist regime with all the force at its disposal fear a bunch of ninny painters, mostly alcholized poets and rowdy writers."¹⁰

The Magyars have a rich artistic and cultural heritage. It was

not lost on the Romanian Government that it was the Magyar intelligensia which inspired the nationalistic revolts of 1848 and 1956, and who were carrying the torch for Magyar culture and historiography within Transylvania. The increasingly nationalist, Romanian brand of ideology, forced on the Magyars is radically opposed to the accumulated behavioral patterns, norms and value system of the Magyars.¹⁰³ Though a number of intellectuals were co-opted and became proselyters of the new culture, despite this pressure there were many who continued to promote and espouse Hungarian ways, Hungarian education and Hungarian history. This intelligensia, contrary to what Marx had proclaimed, would not be a natural ally in the struggle for Communism.

As Illyes writes the Romanian government faces:

"an intelligensia that had a basic pattern in common: the coagitation or shackling together of already existing but previously separate areas of knowledge frames of perception or universes of discourse."¹⁰⁴

It was an intelligentsia which, like its post-revolutionary Russian counterpart, wanted :

"...such diverse things as the right to privacy, on the one hand, and the right to participate in a substantive reshaping of the ideological realm, on the other, wanting the right to err and at the same time the right to be right; the intellectuals, especially the artistic intellectuals,

"wanted Freedom." 105

The populist sentiment of the intelligentsia, stirred the emotions of the older and middle aged Hungarians, now citizens of Romania, who remembered the "good old days" when they lived within their ethnic homeland between the wars , or even before the demise of the old Empire.¹⁰⁶ This sentiment continued to be passed on to younger generations of Hungarians that the Romanians had hoped would in time forget their past, and become fully assimilated Romanians.

Starting in the late 1950's and continuing inconsistently up to the present, the Romanian government has focused its attention on the Magyar intelligentsia. Many were forced to proclaim their loyalty to Romania and to denounce "nationalism" and "chauvinism" among their ethnic group. Others were arrested, tried, and convicted of political crimes, which the Magyar community viewed as intimidation tactics.¹⁰⁷

The most serious blow to Magyar intellectuals was the merging in 1958 of the respected Hungarian-language Bolyai University in Cluj, into the Romanian -language Babes University in the same city. ¹⁰⁸ This ancient university had been founded in 1581 on the basis of an older Hungarian Protestant college which flourished during the era when the heart of Magyar culture and survival under Turkish rule, centered in Transylvania, with Cluj as its capital. ¹⁰⁹ Declaring that "the line between Romanians and Hungarians and between Romanian

and Hungarian professors and students, is an anachronism" the government condemned "national chauvinism" and "national isolationism" while declaring the merger as a step towards strengthening "the unity between the Romanian people and the national minorities." ¹¹⁰

This merger was taken in conjunction with similar measures at other Hungarian university level institutions, including the Cluj Agronomical Institute, the Medical Institute at Tirgu Mures and a number of lesser schools and art institutes. ¹¹¹ So strongly did Hungarian intellectuals resent these moves that four professors, including the famous poet and literary scholar, Laszlo Szabedi committed suicide in protest. ¹¹²

After the absorption of Bolyai University the teaching of minority languages, in particular Hungarian, greatly decreased. ¹¹³ Realizing that language is at the heart of Hungarian ethnicity, the Romanians strove to limit its use and application by curtailing its instruction and use in schools. Often this was accomplished by mergers of Hungarian and Romanian-language schools whereby the former Hungarian school would become a section of the Romanian school, even if the Magyar institution had many more students. This process was extended to Hungarian theaters and cultural centers. ¹¹⁴ Since the 1960's, this gradual absorption of the Hungarian educational system has been the source of great distress within the Magyar community, as this policy aimed at the core of Hungarian ethnicity threatens its cultural continuity in the generations ahead.

In 1960, the crackdown continued with the dilution of the Magyar Autonomous Region which broke up the high percentage of Hungarians in that district. Until then, most of the actions taken against the Magyars had been against the intellectuals, but this affected the entire minority population.¹¹⁵ The MAR was renamed the Mures Autonomous Hungarian Region; the addition of the Romanian word Mures connoted that the nature of the region was changing.

These changes significantly altered the proportion of Magyars in the area. The districts of Sfintu Gheorghe (85.3 percent Magyar) and Tirgu Secuiesc (90.2 percent Magyar) were detached and added to the Brasov region. Three other regions heavily Romanian were added to the MMAR; Ludus (22.1 percent Magyar), Sarvas (13.7 percent Magyar) and part of the Tirnaveni district (25.6 percent Magyar). This gerrymandering reduced the overall proportion of ethnic Magyars to 62% from 77% in the MMAR. Many of the new resident Romanians took important jobs and political positions. This signified a major negative turn in fortune for the Magyars in Transylvania.¹¹⁶

This territorial change stirred a reaction from Hungary. Within one month no fewer than three members of the Hungarian Politburo visited Bucharest, ostensibly on vacation.¹¹⁷ This was one of the earliest indications of the growing problem between the Romanian and Hungarian states over the treatment of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania.

The nationality policy pursued by Gheorgiu-Dej during his final years was a continuation of that adopted after 1956. Although there

were no further drastic actions, such as the merging of the Universities in Cluj or the changes in the Autonomous Region, Romanian nationalism became increasingly promoted under official guidance, usually to the detriment of the Hungarian minority.¹¹⁸ Coupled with this were the deteriorating Romanian relations with the USSR which tended to isolate the minorities further. To gain Romanian popular support against the Soviets, the RCP stepped up its nationalist anti-Magyar campaign.¹¹⁹

In April, 1963 an article by Edward Crankshaw in the London Observer developed worldwide interest in the misfortunes of the Transylvanian Magyars. The issue became part of the agenda of the U.S. Congress, the United Nations, and other important forums. For example, a report published by the Bulletin of the International Commission of Jurists in 1963 indicated that compared with Romanians, ethnic Magyars were receiving unequal treatment in housing, education, jobs and other areas, and "that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that (the Magyars) are being subjected to discrimination."¹²⁰

PART 3

TRANSYLVANIA UNDER CEAUSESCU

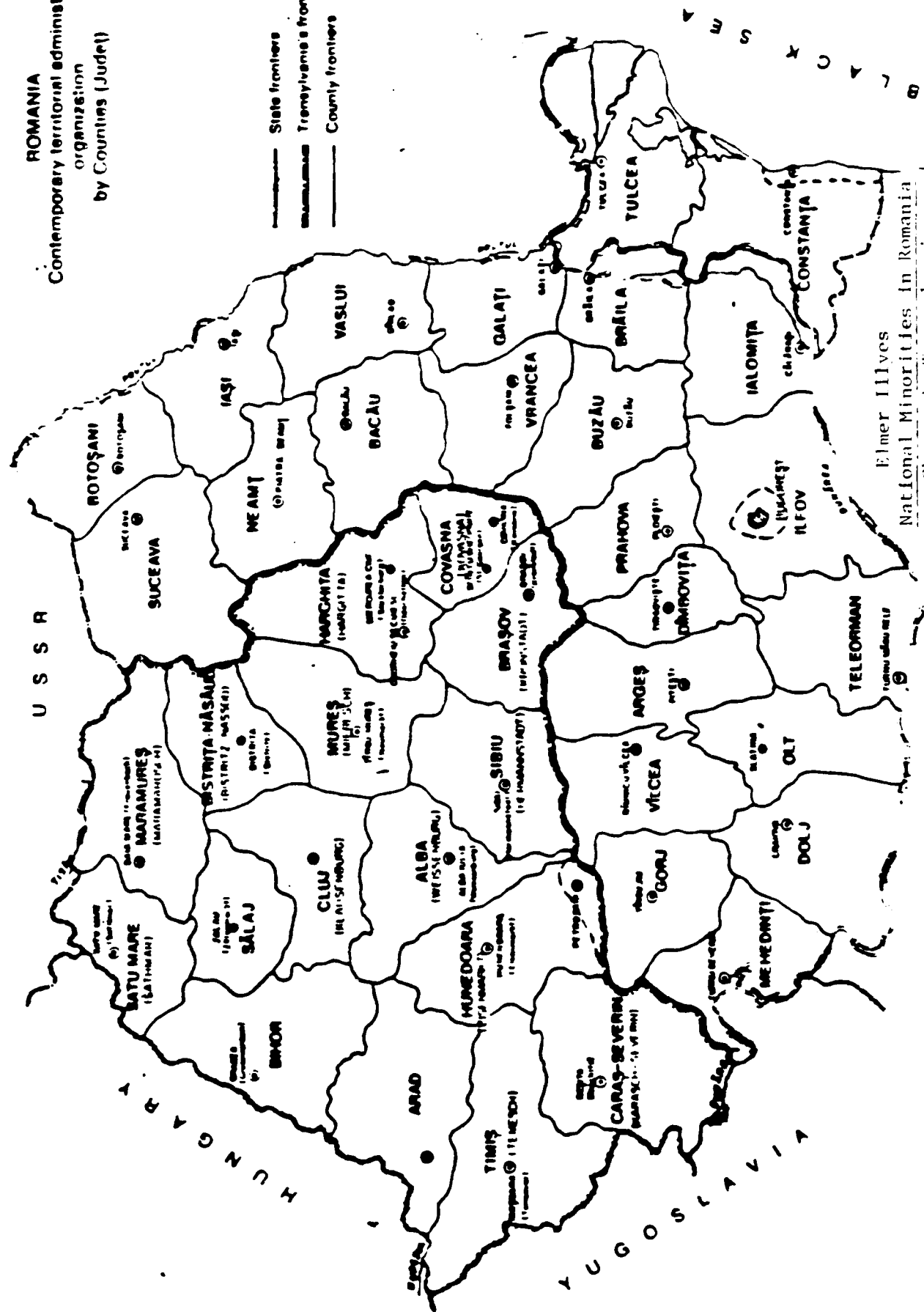
With the death of Gheorgiu-Dej in 1965, there was no major change in the nationalities policy by his successor Nicolae Ceaușescu, although initially the situation of the minorities marginally improved. Ceaușescu did continue to restrict links with, and travel to and from Hungary, however, he was more willing to allow the use of the Hungarian language and the development of Hungarian culture.¹²¹

In July 1965 the Ninth RCP Congress ushered in a new period for the Magyars and all of Romania both politically, and ideologically. The concepts of "sovereign nation" and "independent state" were heavily emphasized by Ceaușescu whose nationalism became increasingly hostile to Soviet control and influence, yet which, internally, remained ardently "socialist."¹²² He seemed willing at first to give to more rights to the Magyar minority as long as they realized they were Romanian citizens whose loyalty was first to Romania.¹²³

Though initially more liberal in his treatment of individual human rights, Ceaușescu moved to break up the sense of minority isolation and continued the integration of the Magyars. In 1968 the MMAR abolished; there would be no further autonomous regions in Romania. During this administrative reorganization, the sixteen Romanian provinces divided into thirty-nine counties (judets); the

ROMANIA
 Contemporary territorial administrative
 organization
 by Counties (Județi)

- State frontiers
- Transylvania's frontiers
- County frontiers



Elmer Illves
 National Minorities in Romania
 Change in Transylvania



MMAR was divided into the smaller counties of Harghita and Mures, and parts were joined to the neighboring Romanian counties.¹²⁴ This had a serious psychological effect on the Magyars and laid the groundwork for further Magyar unrest.¹²⁵

As Romanian rule and control became tighter, a number of Hungarian leaders in Transylvania despaired to the point that they secretly submitted a memorandum to Moscow in which they suggested Transylvania be incorporated into the Soviet Union - an alternative preferable to continued Romanian subjugation.¹²⁶ This touched a sensitive nerve, for probably not taken seriously by the Soviets, it played on the increasingly tense Romanian-Soviet relations. These reached an open break in 1968, when the Romanians castigated the Soviets for intervening in Prague and refused to take part in the intervention.

During this period the Ceausescu regime concentrated on the Soviet model of industrialization to modernize Romania's backward economy. Done precipitously, this upset Romania's social balance and increased the social mobilization of an increasingly restive population. Stalinist in its application, this rapid drive towards modernity disrupted the traditional agrarian life-style and put additional pressure on all its citizens, but especially the Magyars. This rapid economic shift validates Samuel Huntington's thesis that rapid modernization promotes unequal development and increases political mobilization.

To counter this stress on the system, Ceausescu resorted to

the exaltation of all things Romanian to whip up nationalistic fervor and to keep attention from the increasing internal malaise.

The Magyar way of life was altered seriously during this rapid industrialization. Many Magyars, particularly in the Harghita and Covasna areas, were not been able to fully participate in this industrialization. One reason for this was that the number of technical schools available to Magyars had dropped from eighteen with 12,200 students in 1952, to eight and 1400 respectively by 1959.¹²⁷ Hungarians living in rural areas were not permitted to move to the cities, while those Magyars in the cities were inundated by many Romanians from the country who took away jobs. This added to the continued Romanianization of the cities and of their culture. The trend developed that many Magyars intent on working in the urban industrial economy had to commute five or six hours daily to work; estimates quote percentages of 70-80% whom live this routine.¹²⁸ Although some Magyars were able to capitalize on the industrial and urban surge of the sixty's to become upwardly mobile and "white collar," this group remains a small proportion of the Magyar population.¹²⁹

In 1967 and 1968 several new Hungarian language newspapers were launched in those regions having large Magyar populations; but in 1979, a nation-wide "paper strike" reduced the size and circulation of all Hungarian and Romanian publications, though in time the Romanian publications were restored. Tighter controls were imposed on the Hungarian papers, and the Romanian official censor determined in

the words of George Schopflin:

"...what was permitted and what was not; thereafter the principle of uncertainty was introduced, articles were permitted or banned in an entirely unpredictable fashion and the result was that the Hungarian press became completely formalistic and empty of anything interesting." ¹³⁰

Hungarian cultural bulwarks continued to be undermined in the 1970's, especially when the worldwide economy, and especially that of the Romanians began to falter. In 1974, a series of decrees and laws were passed which threatened, not only individual human rights, but the entire foundation of the cultural heritage of the Transylvanian Hungarians. ¹³¹ Ceausescu's enactment of the laws "On the Preservation of the National Cultural Treasures" and "On the National Archives" authorized the state to take possession of all archival material, documents, church registers, diaries, family papers and letters over forty years old. ¹³² This forced acquisition of many relics deemed precious and vital to the Magyar cultural existence incensed the intelligentsia of both Hungary and Transylvania and fueled the Magyar determination to resist cultural assimilation. Many of these cultural items were consequentially "lost," misplaced and some destroyed. ¹³³

Preschool, Primary and Secondary, High School, Vocational, and Higher Education in Romania

Academic Year:	1955/56			1974/75			1977/78			1980/81		
	Schools (Sections)	Students		Schools (Sections)	Students	Teachers	Schools (Sections)	Students	Teachers	Schools (Sections)	Students	
<u>Preschool</u>												
Total in Romania	6,422	275,433		13,289	770,016	31,743	13,429	837,884	32,264	1,086	55,609	
In Hungarian	845	39,669		1,083	52,765	2,104	1,098*	52,580	2,188			
% in Hungarian	13.2%	14.4%		8.1%	6.9%	6.6%	8.1%	6.3%	6.8%			
<u>Primary & Secondary</u>												
Total in Romania	15,523	1,603,025		14,722	2,882,109	137,405	16,871	3,145,046	148,922	1,391	190,196	
In Hungarian	1,563	152,234		1,285	160,939	8,993	1,271*	170,045	9,173			
% in Hungarian	10.1%	9.5%		8.7%	5.6%	6.5%	7.5%	5.4%	6.1%			
<u>High Schools</u>												
Total in Romania	375	129,135		434	344,585	14,818	973	813,732	51,485	156	36,083	
In Hungarian	69	10,370		76	19,050	840	112*	29,028	1,703			
% in Hungarian	18.4%	8%		17.5%	5.5%	5.7%	11.5%	3.6%	3.3%			
<u>Vocational</u>												
Total in Romania	631	123,920		1,064	615,876	26,973	---	---	---	---	---	
In Hungarian	77	7,585		88	8,974	346	---	---	---	---	---	
% in Hungarian	12.2%	6.1%		8.2%	1.5%	1.3%	---	---	---	---	---	
<u>Higher Education</u>												
Total in Romania	---	---		---	108,750	---	---	129,133	---	---	176,881	
In Hungarian	---	---		---	6,188	---	---	7,497	687	---	9,593	
% in Hungarian	---	---		---	5.7%	---	---	5.8%	---	---	5.4%	

* The division between schools and sections is: Kindergartens -- 672 schools and 426 sections; primary and secondary schools -- 555 schools and 715 sections; and high schools -- 12 schools and 100 sections.

Bradley Rickert
"Postwar Romania and the
Nationalities Question"

--- THE CHURCH UNDER PRESSURE---

The Magyars' religious heritage was also under assault. As the second key determinant to the Magyars ethnicity in Transylvania, (after language) religion has played a leading role in Transylvanian culture for close to a millenia. The state has maintained tight control of the close to one million Hungarian Roman Catholics. The church's cultural importance to the Magyars is in part explained by Michael Petrovitch :

"Most of the people of Eastern Europe achieved a sense of identity and some political expression of that identity in medieval times, long before the Age of Nationalism. This sense of identity and the political expressions naturally differed from those of the modern times, but it was there nevertheless. Indeed, that sense of identity persisted even after its political forms were destroyed by alien conquerors. The East European peoples assiduously preserved this continuity, and resurrected it in modern times as a veritable cult of medievalism which forms an imposing part of their Romantic nationalism." ¹³⁴

This was especially true of the Magyars who had seen their culture nearly exterminated several times; the maintenance of the Church was a critical factor in the preservation of their ethnic consciousness . Even today, Hungarians still refer to Transylvania as being part of, "the crownlands of St. Stephan" . His crown is the most ancient and venerated symbol of the Hungarian nation and was returned to Hungary from the USA in 1978. ¹³⁵

Since 1966 there have been slight improvements in the lot of the Magyar churches as a side effect of the Romanian desire to appear more appealing to the West while conducting its nationalist and often anti-Soviet foreign policy. For example, the Hungarian Bishop of Alba Iulia, Aron Marton, for the first time since he was released from prison in 1955, was permitted to leave his residence in 1966 to celebrate a church jubilee. ¹³⁶

Hungarian speaking Roman Catholics now have five hundred and fifteen churches and five hundred priests. Though allowed to practice its faith, the Roman Catholic Church is not formally recognized by the Romanian state, and has no legal statutes and hierarchy. The appointment of bishops requires the approval of the state, and priests are appointed by the bishop subject to approval of the Department of Legal Affairs. ¹³⁷

The Reformed (Calvinist) church in Transylvania is entirely Hungarian and has about 800,000 adherents. The reformation took deep roots in Transylvania, strengthened by the Hungarian College of Debrecen, a citadel of Calvinism in the sixteenth century. Many aristocratic Transylvanians adopted Calvinism as an alternative to Roman Catholicism, and Cluj became its main center, as it still is today. ¹³⁸ This church, as all churches in Romania, both Slavic and non-Slavic had to endure Stalinist, atheistic oppression through the 1960's. Although still state controlled the Reform Church at present has a degree of creative license to practice its faith as long as it tows the line of Romanian nationalism.

---TRANSYLVANIAN DISSENT GROWS--

In the middle to late 1970's a fundamental shift in Transylvanian Magyar opposition occurred. A number of documents appeared, some signed and others anonymous which outlined Magyar grievances.

The most noteworthy case, occurred in 1977 when Karoly Kiraly, a former alternate member of the RCP Political Executive Bureau and a vice Chairman of the Hungarian Nationality council, presented to the Romanian state and party leadership a paper criticizing the large gap between theory and practice in the treatment of the minorities.¹³⁹ In observing the Romanian Constitution of 1965 Article 17 is most illuminating.

"The citizens of Socialist Republic of Romania irrespective of their nationality, race, sex or religion, shall have equal rights in all fields of economic, political, juridicial, social and cultural life.

"The state shall guarantee the equal rights of the citizens. No restrictions of these rights and no difference in their exercise on the grounds of nationality, race, sex or religion shall be permitted.

"Any attempt at establishing such restrictions, at nationalist-chauvinist propaganda and at fomentation of racial or national hatred will be prohibited by law."
(Italics added)¹⁴⁰

Kiraly implied that the Constitution was a facade and that the Magyars fell under the last paragraph as nationalist and chauvinist, and consequently were protected by Romanian law. Kiraly further charged Ceausescu with complicity in educational and cultural discrimination against the Magyars, stating that his policies amounted to "forcefully assimilating nationalities" living in Romania. Kiraly viewed this not as a failing of Communism but rather, "the methods used by the leadership . . . we must renounce policies based on demagoguery, the personality cult, and the capricious application of Marxism." 141

Kiraly's list of complaints included the Romanian state's general non-observance of most of the Hungarian rights granted to them constitutionally. He noted the decline of the number of schools teaching in Hungarian; the discouraging of speaking Hungarian in public; the removal of bilingual signs, announcements and street names in heavily Hungarian districts; the increase of Romanian political leaders in local Hungarian districts many of whom spoke virtually no Hungarian; and the restriction of personal and cultural contacts between Transylvanian Hungarians and Hungary.¹⁴² Kiraly further noted in a letter to Illie Verdets, who at the time was in charge of Romanian Minority Affairs and was one of three or four members of the RCP leadership closest to Ceausescu, that:

"The problems nationally are real ones, the preoccupations of hundreds of thousands of people. National feeling is a sensitive problem that must be

treated with the greatest care. It represents the qualitative side of any nation." 143

In another letter, this one to RCP Central Committee member Janos Vincze, Kiraly sums up his perception of the Magyar plight:

"We were promised new secondary, vocational and technical schools in which studies were to be conducted in the languages of the nationalities, but in reality we have witnessed a decline in the number in these schools. Each year there are fewer and fewer of them. Children cannot study in their native tongue; compulsory instruction in the Romanian language has been introduced even at the kindergarten level. In 1976 a decision was born to eliminate Hungarian institutions of higher education. After the Bolyai University in Kolozsvar (Cluj) came the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacology at Marosyasarhely (Tirgu Mures) and then, by special order from above, a Romanian section was established at the Istvan Szentgyorgi School for the Dramatic Arts, thereby liquidating in effect the last 'island' of higher education in a nationality tongue; and . . . just to eliminate any remaining doubt concerning the latter move . . . of the six Hungarian graduates of the school for the Dramatic Arts, only one was appointed to a Hungarian theatre, while the remaining five . . . whether they liked it or not . . . were placed in Romanian theatres." 144

Lajos Takacs, candidate member of the RCP Central Committee and former rector of the University of Babes-Bolyai, followed Kiraly's suit and denounced Romanian policies which had reduced Hungarian participation at the national university level. Furthermore, he called for the Romanian state to re-establishment in Transylvania university

level education where both Romanian and Hungarian would be equally accepted. ¹⁴⁵

Internal dissent continued. In May 1978, sixty-two Magyar intellectuals in Transylvania presented an unsigned open letter to the Romanian intelligentsia, complaining of anti-Hungarian discrimination, and calling on the Romanians to combat such manifestations. ¹⁴⁶

---CRACKS IN THE WARSAW PACT ? ; OFFICIAL HUNGARIAN
AND ROMANIAN POLEMICS OVER TRANSYLVANIA---

In January, 1978, a leading Hungarian poet, Gyula Illyes, broke an unwritten taboo when he *publicly* voiced anti-Romanian sentiment and set in motion a string of unofficial, and, then official polemics over the minorities issue, and later, over the entire nationality and nationalism issues. In his daring two part article he described the Magyar minority as suffering "a fate close to apartheid" and as being "vulnerable to an attempt to socially downgrade a whole community and destroy it" equivalent to "ethnocide". ¹⁴⁷ Illyes wrote of the increasing nationalistic bent of the Romanian schools, where "in primary schools textbooks inform the (Magyar) children that their ancestors, contrary to the truth, were barbarian invaders and inferior plunderers." He added:

"Doctors and patients, of the same mother tongue,
have to communicate through an interpreter because
they are allowed to speak only in the official language.
This results in patients from settlements numbering

hundreds of thousands, virtually entire cities, being forced to explain their most intimate symptoms mostly by gesture, thus reducing health service to the level of the jungle."

"...national resentment and intolerance toward minorities has spread with such unexpected force that in many places the humanism proclaimed by socialism has remained ineffective." 148

Whereas in the past, Magyar dissent may have been spurred by the Soviets to keep Romania off-balance, this explosion of Magyar sentiment, both in Hungary and in Transylvania appears to have been genuinely motivated and "homegrown". Previously in 1967 the Soviets had brazenly applied pressure on Romania by conducting maneuvers code named, "Moldava," together with Hungarian troops along the Romanian border. 149 In the late sixties the Hungarian press had been most strident in condemning independent Romanian tendencies, especially after Ceausescu's visit to Peking in 1971. For example, in 1966, a rebuke against the Romania's minority policy of Zoltan Komocsin, a Hungarian Politburo member, was published in Pravda. The articles characterized the Trianon Peace Treaty as an Imperialist Diktat which had robbed Hungary of its territories. 150

In 1968 more polemics occurred as a result of Romania's non-compliance in the Czech crisis. With obvious Soviet approval, Komocsin wrote of Transylvania:

"No people would sever its ties with its torn away parts, which speak the same language and have an identical history and culture. No people would or could act like this without abandoning itself. We have an inalienable duty to preserve and cultivate these issues."
151

It is believed these proclamations were orchestrated by Moscow, as it would have been unlikely for Hungary at the time to have made such disuniting remarks on its own.

Ceausescu responded with alacrity to these changes. Admitting there were "shortcomings" in some areas of ethnic relations which he pledged would be eliminated, Ceausescu attempted to deflect attention from this issue by blaming these criticisms as caused by external agitation of foreign elements who were stirring up Romania's enemies. In March 1978 he said:

"We will not permit anyone to interfere in our domestic affairs . . . We must firmly expose and reject this activity by reactionary circles and by the Foreign press and the radio stations . . . For unfortunately, there still exists plastic and morally weak elements who, for two pieces of silver or gold, for a bowl of lentils or goulash , go to serve Foreign circles ." 152

Several months later Ceausescu became more direct:

"The problems of the Hungarian, German, Serbian and other nationalities in Romania are not to be solved in Budapest, Berlin or Bonn, Belgrade, or elsewhere (Moscow?), but here, in Bucharest, by our Party." 153

Several years later in 1982, as the Budapest-Bucharest dialogue became more heated, Ceaucescu declared:

"Anyone who tries to pursue a policy fostering national hatred is pursuing a policy against socialism and communism--and consequentially must be treated as an enemy of our socialist nation. We must fight for national advancement. We observe the rights of the nationalities and work to ensure these rights. We wish to advance together with Communism. Therefore, we cannot permit any attempts at nationalism--or chauvinism mongering, no matter where they come from. This should be treated as an activity inimical to the cause of socialism and communism.

"Romania is among these nations of the world that can be proud of the fact that they have systematically, correctly and lastingly solved the nationality question. Our country guarantees complete equality of rights without any kind of discrimination." 154

Romania has gone to considerable lengths to ensure that its treatment of the minorities, meaning principally the Magyars, is presented in the best possible light abroad. A number of fact sheets, magazines and pamphlets concerning the welfare of the minorities have been distributed abroad; however, the information, though useful, is well nigh impossible to verify.

In 1981, these publications state that the Magyars comprise eight percent of the RCP, though it has been pointed out that these positions are generally lower level. 155

an indication of the principle quantifiable trends in education for ethnic Hungarians. The number of Hungarian language schools at all levels has substantially decreased since 1955, though the total number of Hungarian students has steadily increased. Granting that these figures are not ironclad, it must be remembered that these are Romanian figures; but even these upon examination show that the Magyars may have a legitimate grievance in stating that they are being discriminated against in all aspects of scholastic endeavor. ¹⁵⁶

Another major reason the Romanians strove to mask their assimilationist policies was the increasingly lucrative trade they enjoyed with the West, particularly the USA especially after receiving "most favored nation" (MFN) trading status in 1974. MFN became jeopardized as the increasingly negative reports about Romanian minority policy surfaced. Even in 1975 the Hungarian lobby in the USA publicized so much evidence of Romanian discrimination to the House Ways and Means Committee of Congress that Romania nearly did not get the concession. ¹⁵⁷ As a signatory of the Helsinki Accords, and with MFN up for renewal in 1976, the Romanians came under increasing scrutiny. What surfaced was that promised Romanian emigration had dropped heavily and that a new crackdown on dissidents had occurred, including the incarceration of the noted Romanian human rights leader, Paul Goma. ¹⁵⁸ Finally, after much deliberation, the Carter Administration decided to continue Romanian MFN status citing that month to month fluctuations in the statistics were inevitable and that Romania's record should not be judged over a

short period of time. ¹⁵⁹ This decision represents, a U.S. desire to look past the minorities problem in order to avoid antagonizing Romania, because in the cold harsh world of Realpolitik, Romania at the time was the only real dissenting voice in the Soviet Bloc. ¹⁶⁰

The Hungarian government, though obviously concerned, played down the ethnic discrimination in Transylvania. In 1979, they officially restrained publication of a number of tracts written by one of Hungary's most respected intellectuals, Gyula Illyes. He responded:

"Our people are badly treated in Romania, in Czechoslovakia. Many are peasants. They cannot defend themselves against these strong governments. So someone must do so." ¹⁶¹

A number of dissidents in Hungary were also harassed because their writings began to reflect a shift to overt nationalism: a desire to talk about the national issue, the most sensitive aspect of which was Transylvanian problem. Until then, the dissidents had been able to speak and publish with discretion, but in this crackdown Peter Reny, who is considered a spokesman for more doctrinaire elements, chided:

"Consider which way you have chosen, what course will follow once you cross the Rubicon that separates critical ideological attitude from hostile political activity." ¹⁶²

In the ensuing crackdown, one of Hungary's most eminent poets Sander Csóori was arrested after writing an attack against the "raging

perversity" of the treatment of the Hungarian minorities in Romania.¹⁶³

In 1982 with the publication of the book Word About Transylvania by the Romanian writer, Ion Lancarnjan, hyperbole dramatically increased between the Romanians and the Hungarians. The author took up the old Romanian-Hungarian arguments over Transylvania with a vehemence unmatched in prior writings and excoriated the Hungarians for creating the current tensions. In addition, he implied that Hungary was a neo-revisionist state.¹⁶⁴ and implicitly accused Hungarian Party leader Janos Kadar of irridentism for having mentioned the 1920 Treaty of Trianon.¹⁶⁵ This book concluded with a glorification of the Romanian character of Transylvania which the author called "a conch inside which the soul of the nation reverberates, cries out, sings or boils with anger." It was rapturously received in Romania.¹⁶⁶

Word About Transylvania was reviewed in Hungary by Gyorgy Szaraz who gave what appears to be an officially sanctioned reply in his newspaper column. Szaraz termed Lancranjans text:

"...a strange book, which caused consternation and concern in Hungary, (and Transylvania) because it proved the author's and consequently the Romanian state's commitment to an ethnocratic state, where power is nested not in the unity of demos . . . but rather in the unity of ethnos, the race of one blood, where the tainted, the alien is unwelcome."¹⁶⁷

Szaraz also noted that the falsehoods stated in Lancarnjans book were dangerous, because they not only rewrote history, but, because these falsifications threatened the existence of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania.¹⁶⁸ Finally, they confirmed in the Hungarian's eyes the surge in Ceausescu's nationalism which had earlier stated: "everybody, irrespective of his nationality, has the same rights," but then added that anybody, "...harming the unity and cooperation among Romania's citizens was a servant of the countries enemies."¹⁶⁹ From this moment on (1982), the Hungarian National Government took a more assertive position in regard to the treatment of the Transylvanian Magyars.

Also in 1982, in an unprecedented move among the Warsaw Pact nations the Hungarian newspaper Nepzabadzag published a cartoon and satirical text ridiculing the personality cult of President Ceausescu and the campaign for Daco-Roman historical continuity in Romania,¹⁷⁰ as evidenced in "The Dacians," a movie epic which became a smash hit in Romania.¹⁷¹ This was a part of the festivities commemorating the 65th anniversary of the establishment of the unified Romanian State following the absorption of Transylvania and the Banat into Romania in 1918. The Romanian press turned out a flood of editorials, articles, speeches, and poems extolling the union of the Romanian people and praising the equal rights and treatment of all minorities in Romania.

One example of the Romanian cant was:

"We have eliminated all national oppression and

ensure complete equality of rights to all sons of our fatherland, without any discrimination with regard to nationality . . . Our party has brought about a unified institutional framework that makes it possible, without regard to nationality for every worker to participate directly in the handling of state affairs." ¹⁷²

Another article said that Transylvania was the ancient home of the Romanians and that the Magyars were unlawful intruders. ¹⁷³

The obviously irked Hungarians, led by Politburo member Georgi Aczel, the regime's main spokesman on cultural and ideological matters, lashed out at Romania's nationalities policy:

"Unfortunately our old faith, namely that the principles of Lenin's nationality policy would assert themselves automatically, proved to be an illusion. What is more, old nationalist views are being brought back to life and attempts are being made to encroach on peoples rights and achieve forced assimilation." ¹⁷⁴

Official Hungarian National Policy continued to evolve to the point where it could no longer avoid complete public involvement in this controversial issue. The oppression of the Transylvanian Magyars had become too hot a political issue to handle by benign neglect. Virtually the entire Hungarian nation felt a stake in the issue and were expectant that the Kadar Regime would move more assertively in attempting to find a solution to the problem. ¹⁷⁵ With perhaps the legitimacy of his regime on the line domestically, Kadar has added as a new element for the 1985 Hungarian Party Congress, references to the rights of Magyar ethnic minorities in neighboring countries. ¹⁷⁶

Throughout the late 1970's and early 1980's Ceausescu was inconsistent in the handling of his minorities problems. Beset with increasing domestic problems and scoring less successes in his foreign policy, his regime has become ever more "Stalinist," oppressive not only to the minorities, but of the Romanian population as a whole. As George Shoepflin writes:

"The assessment of the position of a minority under communism is complicated by the problem of gauging the extent to which repression is directed particularly and with special force at the minority group, as distinct from repression that falls on all sections of the population, including minorities, with more or equal force." ¹⁷⁷

A number of recent instances, some substantiated, some not, show though that the Magyar problem is a ubiquitous one. It appears the more Ceausescu lauds the success of his nationalities program, the more negative incidents occur.

Encouraged by Budapest's more assertive stand over its hard pressed minority in Romania, Hungarian protests within Transylvania have grown louder. Although some eighty percent of the Saxon minority is reported to be seeking emigration to the West, few Magyars have been let free. The intellectuals, increasingly obstructed by the regimes policies, have been left to choose between withdrawal at home or exile abroad. ¹⁷⁸

In 1984, according to the latest semi-annual report by President Reagan on the implementation of the Helsinki Accord (primarily Basket Three) the record of Romanian human rights had

been poor.¹⁷⁹ It has been hard to corroborate reports from emigres because the Romanian censorship of the press has been very tight. For example, the most widely known Samizdat publication Ellenpontok (Counterpoints) has been shut down, and its writers dispersed.¹⁸⁰

In the Spring of 1984, the Romanian state launched a major investigation of the Kriterion publishing house, which specializes in Hungarian material. This action was aimed partly at Geza Donokos, who headed the Kriterions publishings, and is yet another symptom of the continual Romanian pressure on the Hungarian language system in Transylvania. Compared to thirty-five years ago, only a third as many books are published in Hungarian today, though the potential readership has risen by several hundred thousand. On average, only one Hungarian book per capita is printed annually in Romania: an average of two hundred titles, many pure propaganda, are available to ethnic Magyars, while seven to eight thousand are available in Hungary. Very few books printed in Hungary are available in Transylvania.¹⁸¹

The dissent has taken more overt and violent overtones lately. During Christmas 1983 a Hungarian parish priest Geza Palfi was arrested and beaten for several hours by the Romanian Security Police. He had reminded his Hungarian congregation that Christmas was a holy day in Hungary, whereas it was a workday in Romania, which he regarded as an act of religious repression. He died two months later in a prison hospital.¹⁸²

The proletariat have also been restive. Last year strikes flared

up in the Jiu valley where much of Romania's mining is done. Though many of the miners are Magyar, this event illustrates the depth of overall discontent in Romania. ¹⁸³

Rumors of peasants rioting against the rationing of bread and of attacks upon state and party activists have been surfacing. Especially interesting are reports in 1984 of bomb attacks on party premises, on bookshops displaying Ceausescu's works, and on the statue of Romanian hero St. Michael the Brave in Sfintu Gheorghe, a Transylvania city with a large and militant Magyar population. ¹⁸⁴

Though on a much smaller scale than in Poland, these incidents of Magyar self-expression and the inability of the Ceausescu regime to stifle the Magyar's zealous hold on their own ethnicity, augurs ill for the continued stability of the Ceausescu regime. Much of what occurs in Transylvania we in the West can only speculate upon ... as the access of the foreign press to news is so tightly controlled in Transylvania. The growing trend towards violence and confrontation, not only of the Magyars, but of many Romanians as well will need to be watched carefully in the upcoming years.

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

As we have seen there is a very serious problem within Romania with respect to its minorities . How Ceausescu and his successors deal with this question will determine whether the ethnic friction between Magyars and Romanians will become a threat to the viability of the Romanian State or evolve into a working cooperative union as evidenced in present Yugoslavia .

It has been shown that much of the current stress is based upon centuries of historical friction. Such deep rooted animosity and distrust between Romanians and Magyars over Transylvania can only be resolved by long term confidence building; there are no easy solutions.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, both Romania and Hungary must exhibit sensitivity towards the complicated political and social processes in each others country, as the political legitimacy of both Ceausescu and Kadar among their respective citizens rests in part on the successful resolution of the Transylvanian issue.

Moreover this issue becomes all the more urgent as it is automatically linked with both countries relations with the U.S.S.R. As Connor elaborates :

" These issues have a long history ; however none of these governments threaten to support a national segment outside of its borders to the extent of provoking war . Neither the comparative strength of any coalition of these states can be expected to decide that issue because the Soviet Union remains as final arbiter . The Soviet Union would undoubtedly frown upon open hostilities

between fraternal socialist states and the Soviets would likely invoke the Brezhnev Doctrine and intervene." 186

Prior to reaching any final conclusions on this complex issue care needs to be exercised not to condemn arbitrarily the Romanians for their assimilationist policies, because the Magyars, both in Transylvania and Hungary are themselves not entirely above blame . A distinction must be made between the Ceausescu regime's oppression of the Magyars and its oppression of all Romanian citizens . This is not always easy . Furthermore, irredentist dialogue also clouds the issue . After all, Romania is a sovereign nation intent on maintaining its territorial integrity and establishing a complete, all encompassing Romanian polity . As Bradley Rickert explains :

" The inescapable fact is that the country is ruled by the Romanian Communist Party,, a party which, in a country whose population is overwhelmingly ethnic Romanian, pays primary heed to Romanian interests at home and internationally . The fostering of Romanian national pride by the RCP is not specifically directed at any group as such, but rather reflects the perceived need to mobilize a majority which until recently had lagged behind and felt itself inferior in many respects to the principal majorities." 187

Gilberg adds:

" What is rather unique in Romania is the intensity with which these mechanisms have been employed and the range of the regimes concern with individual human rights and behavior." 188

To date, the Romanians have been only partially successful in assimilating the Magyars. Despite the many measures taken by

different Romanian regimes, the Hungarian sense of ethnicity, "of being Magyar" still strongly persists. Fueled by the Romanian government's policies which continue to threaten their national identity and cultural heritage, and by the Hungarian government's tacit support, the Transylvanian Magyars have remained cohesive and obstinate in their resistance to Romanian "reform." Several key statistics support this fact.

In the two most important elements of ethnic differentiation in Transylvania, language and religion, *negative* assimilation has taken place. For example, from 1956 to 1966, a period encompassing the height of Gheorgiu-Dej's assimilationist policies directed primarily at Magyar educational systems, statistics show that the Magyars had become even more attached to their mother tongue. In 1956, 98.6 % of Magyars living in Transylvania spoke Hungarian; ten years later, after the closing of many Hungarian language schools, 98.9 spoke Hungarian - an incremental increase - but extremely important evidence as an indicator that Magyar pride and cultural attachment remained strong.¹⁸⁹ There is no reason to believe that this trend will change in a major way during the foreseeable future.

In the upcoming decades it is likely that the Saxon and Jewish minorities will cease to become a Romanian State problem because through emigration to West Germany and Israel, respectively, their numbers have steadily diminished. At present, no such easy solution exists for the *increasing* Magyar population of Transylvania.

Although the Hungarians of Transylvania remain, as they have always been, ineradicably and uncompromisingly Magyar, they feel little desire, even if given the opportunity, to emigrate en masse across the

border into communist Hungary. The statement of an old woman in Sighishoara, Transylvania related to Gordon Brook Shepard sums up this feeling:

"It's all very well for the German minority. Many of them have relatives and ties over in the West. But where do we go for a real change of air? All our roots are here." 190

In closing it must be remembered that this issue must always be also observed in its historical context. The struggle of the Magyar minority in Transylvania in its present incarnation is forty years old and only sixty- five years old if one counts the break at Trianon. This interlude is but several decades of a millennia long struggle to consolidate Magyar culture, language and territorial rights within Transylvania. Taken from this perspective perhaps the Magyars can derive limited solace, because as every historian knows, no condition is permanent and systems change. The long term hope of the Magyars in Transylvania is that events will one day occur in some unpredictable way - such as a Warsaw Pact breakup, which could favor their fortunes in Transylvania .

For the short term it appears little will change in Transylvania. The ethnic Magyars will continue to be subjected to Romanian assimilationist policies, and they will no doubt continue their struggle to cling on to their Magyar culture and traditions.

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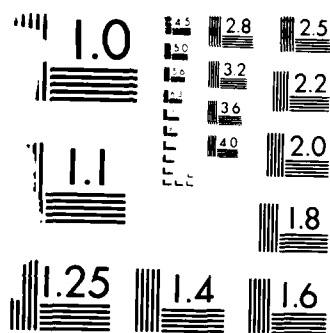
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