

# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN RUMANIA

TRANSYLVANIA  
— Hungary —  
IRREDENTALISTS

Transylvania has always been an integral part of the Kingdom of Hungary, even during the 150 years of Turkish (Ottoman) occupation, when Hungary was divided into three parts. At times, during history, Transylvania was an autonomous principality; nevertheless its Princes emphasized the role of the province as being the guarantor of the legal continuity of the Hungarian state.

Transylvania was attached to Rumania by the unjust Treaty of Trianon in 1920, as Rumania's award for the minor role she played in the First World War. The successful annexation of Transylvania represented the fulfillment of powerful Rumanian nationalistic aspirations.

The Hungarian minority of approximately three million people were regarded as a threat to these aspirations and a variety of discriminatory measures were introduced against them by the regime of Stalinist-communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu. In recent years these efforts of forced assimilation became so severe as to be viewed as cultural genocide.

We make the following facts known in the belief that observance of the basic Human Rights and Freedoms and respect for international covenants will promote trust and understanding amongst nations. International pressure must be brought upon those who, by their oppressive actions, work against universal peace.

## Specific Elements Of Oppression

### 1. DISCRIMINATION IN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Official Rumanian statistics indicate that the proportion of pupils allowed to be educated in the Hungarian language has dropped by 50 % during a period of only twenty years. This was the result of discriminatory quota systems, merging of Hungarian schools with Rumanian ones and compulsory Rumanian language instructions.

### 2. DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Long-established and respected Hungarian institutions of post-secondary education and research are being systematically eliminated. An example is the famous Bolyai University of Kolozsvár (Cluj) that was founded in 1581. It was merged with the Rumanian Babes University in 1959. Most Hungarian institutions have since been wiped out.

### 3. DISSOLUTION OF COMPACT HUNGARIAN COMMUNITIES

Hungarians, seeking employment, are forced to move to Rumanian areas and workers and professionals speaking Rumanian only are sent into compact Hungarian communities. The Hungarian population is often deprived of doctors, lawyers and other professionals with whom they could communicate in their own language.

### 4. LACK OF BILINGUALISM

The use of the Hungarian language is prohibited in judicial proceedings and at all levels of government administration. Officials, speaking Rumanian only, are appointed to positions which involve contact with the public in Hungarian counties. There is a complete lack of bilingual signs identifying streets, shops, agencies, localities, and so on.

### 5. CURTAILMENT OF CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

No independent Hungarian writers, artists, or musicians associations may exist in Rumania today. The volume of Hungarian-language books, papers and other publications is extremely low. Imports from Hungary is severely restricted. Newspapers and periodicals from Hungary are practically not available. Films are not produced in Hungarian. Twenty years ago there were six independent Hungarian theatres in Transylvania, today only two of them exist. Ten years ago the Hungarian Folk Institute of Kolozsvár (Cluj) was closed without explanation. Hungarian books in public libraries are in very short supply.

### 6. FALSIFICATION OF POPULATION STATISTICS

Rumanian statistics consistently understate the size of the Hungarian population in Transylvania by falsifying census data. There are three million Hungarians in Rumania, forming the largest minority in Europe.

### 7. CONFISCATION OF CHURCH ARCHIVES

The government nationalized all "documents, official and private correspondence, memoirs, manuscripts, maps, films, slides, photographs, sound-engravings, diaries, manifestos, posters, scetches, drawings, engravings, imprints, seals and like material" over 30 years old, from the possession of religious and cultural institutions or private citizens. The intent is to sever Hungarians from their historical roots.

### 8. HARASSMENT OF CHURCHES

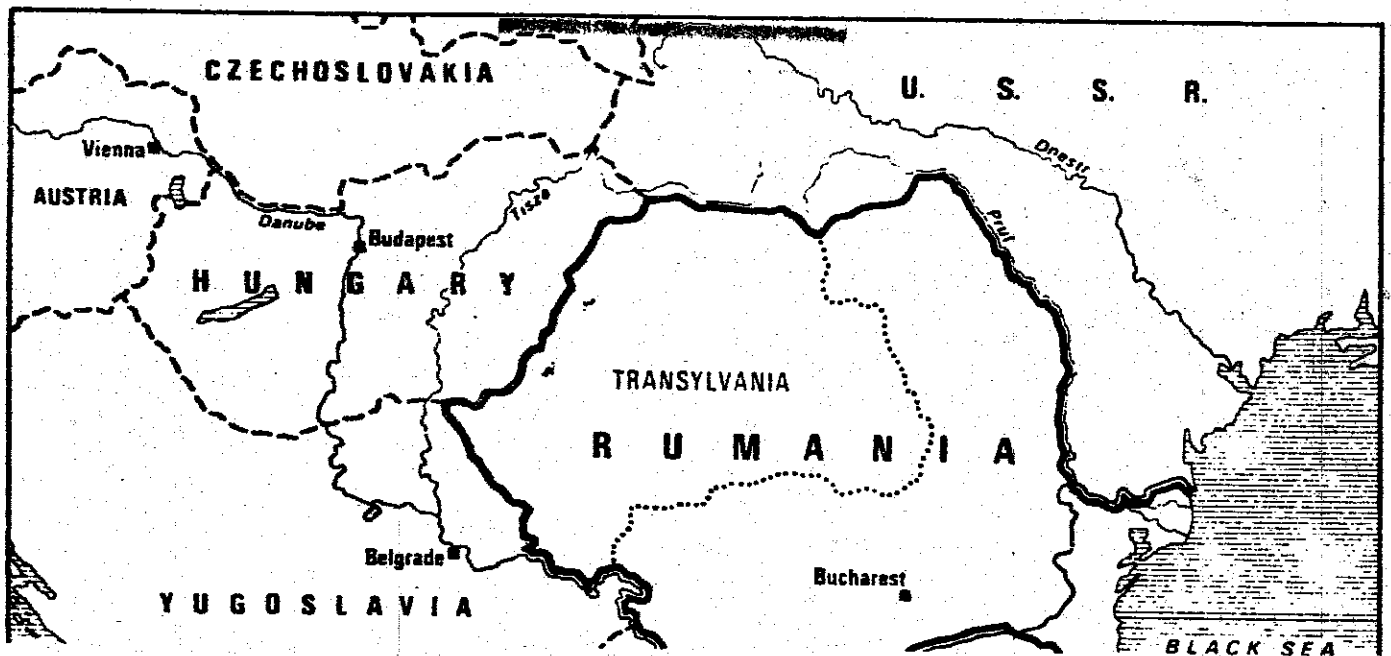
There is blatant interference with the established functioning of the Churches in Rumania. As an example, any religious gathering — with the exception of the Sunday worship — must be approved by the Ministry of Cults. These restrictions harm especially the minority populations.

### 9. BANS ON PRIVATE LODGING

Rumanian law prohibits the accomodation of non-Rumanian citizens in private homes with the exception of closest relatives. The discriminatory character of this law becomes evident in light of the fact that it is the Hungarian population that has the greatest number of visitors from abroad. It is hard to find a Hungarian family without relatives or friends living in either neighboring Hungary or the West.

### 10. FALSIFICATION OF HISTORY

The official Rumanian theory for explaining the origins of the Rumanian people is based largely on pseudo-scientific speculation. This theory was to show that the area of Transylvania was first inhabited by Rumanians and all the minorities are intruders. In this way the superiority of the Rumanian people becomes a "historic fact". Although this theory is totally false, it provides a convenient "scholarly" justification for the Government to implement its massive campaign of cultural genocide against the minorities.



(The above information is based to a large extent on reports by the Committee for Human Rights in Rumania. The Committee appeared on several occasions before United States Senate Committees.)

TRANSYLVANIAN  
CULTURAL SOCIETY  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CANADA

## THE ESSENCE OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN PROBLEM.

It is a proven fact today that the government of the Socialist Republic of Rumania, known as the "Ceausescu Regime", Marxist in theory and Nazist in practice, is ruthlessly embarked upon the total annihilation of the three-million-strong native Hungarian population of Transylvania.

According to available documented records, since 1944 more than 200,000 Hungarians have been exterminated by the Rumanians in death-camps, prisons, police stations, village squares, streets, highways and railroad stations. Among them close to 800 clergymen, 687 educators, and more than 10,000 other intellectuals. During the years of 1981 and 1982 alone, we know of 198 cases where Hungarian educators, clergymen and simple workers, men and women, young and old, were beaten to death by the SECURITATE - political police - during the "interrogations" or became victims of "accidents", again by the hand of the Securitate.

Old Hungarian institutions of higher education, some of them dating back to the 15th and 16th centuries, were all taken over and Rumanized. More than three-fourths of the Hungarian grade- and middle- schools operating in 1945 are closed down today. The use of the Hungarian language is forbidden in all public places, including schools, playgrounds and food markets, and even the children who are overheard talking among themselves in their mother tongue, are severely beaten and punished. During the last three years this Quarterly has published many of such atrocities, and lately the international media is beginning to pay increasing attention to what is happening to Hungarians in Rumania. It is clear that the Ceausescu regime is engaged in an effort to solve the minority problem of this multi-national country by stamping out the very root of the problem: the minorities themselves.

While Rumania, as a nation and a country, was established only one hundred years ago on the North-Eastern corner of the Balkan, between the Black Sea, the lower Danube river and the South-Eastern slopes of the Carpathian mountains (known also as the Transylvanian Alps), Transylvania was an integer part of the Hungarian Kingdom for one thousand years, recognized by historians as the "citadel of western Christian culture and the bastion of western civilization." During the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries Vlach immigrants began to seep in from the Balkan

as migrant workers. Under the liberal laws of the Hungarian Kingdom they were allowed, even aided, in building their own villages, churches, schools and to maintain and develop their culture. Not having to serve in the Hungarian armies during the many wars fought in the defense of the West against the Tatars and the Turks, and later against the Habsburgs in defense of the freedom of religion, the Vlachs prospered and increased in numbers. Today, calling themselves Rumanians - a name invented for political purposes a century ago - they form a majority in many parts of Transylvania. Due to this "partial majority" Transylvania was cut off from the mother country and handed over to newly established Rumania as its share of the spoils of World War I. Within the Rumanian Kingdom between the two World Wars, the rights of the Hungarians were more or less recognized and respected. Thus, within twenty years of Rumanian occupation the Transylvanian Hungarian culture blossomed into World recognition through its writers, artists, inventors and educators. However, after World War II, though the peace treaties clearly stipulated administrative and cultural autonomy for the Transylvanian Hungarians, Communist Rumania soon began to set aside the provisions of the treaties, and embarked upon a course to destroy, first the Hungarian cultural heritage, then the Hungarians themselves.

Based on a politically motivated and completely false new history, the government of Communist Rumania declared Transylvania "the motherland of the Rumanian nation", claiming to be the descendants of the Daks and the Roman Legionnaires stationed in the province of Dacia between 107 and 271 A.D. when Emperor Aurelianus withdrew the last remaining Legions from that province under strict order to destroy all buildings, supplies, and evacuate the land before the oncoming Goths. It is historically documented however, that the fierce Dak people were completely exterminated by the Legions between 107 and 117 A.D., and that the Legions occupying the province were the so-called "Legions of the Barbarians", meaning army units recruited from the North-Western territories of the Roman Empire, inhabited by Germanic tribes. The Daco-Roman theory is therefore false and absurd. As research has proved, the Vlachs - who call themselves today Rumanians or even "Romanians" for the last half century - are the descendants of a large settlement of people brought over from the Italian peninsula by

THE TRANSYLVANIAN QUARTERLY

Greek landlords in the middle of the 4th century A.D. and settled next to Albania on lands devattated by the first Slav migration. This explains the Latin foundation of their language, the Albanian way of forming their numbers above ten, as well as the many Greek and Bulgarian words in their vocabulary. The truth is, that the Vlachs moved slowly from Albania up through the Balkan to the lower Danube valley, where they appeared first, according to the documents, in the 10th and 11th centuries, while in Transylvania they were mentioned for the first time toward the end of the 12th century as "a small tribe of the Vlachs" herding sheep on the high pastures of the Southern Carpathians, South-West from the fort of Fogaras. By that time, according to Byzantine chronicles, Transylvania was already a well established and prosperous part of the Hungarian homeland, inhabited by Hungarians.

In the shadow of this falsified history, the Rumanian government, as soon as Nicolae Ceausescu - a former junior member of the nazi Iron Guard - took over the helm, began to systematically destroy all the historical and cultural landmarks of the Hungarian past. Cemeteries were bulldozed over, old gravestones carted away and dumped into rivers. Museums, libraries and archives, including all the church archives, were confiscated and burned. All books, pictures, printed matters as well as private letters in the possession of Hungarian families more than 20 years of age had to be reported to the police and were taken away "for safe keeping". Frequent raids into private homes saw to it that the law was enforced and those caught hiding anything older than twenty years were arrested, beaten, and in many cases sent to forced labor camps.

Under the hate-campaign of Dictator Ceausescu, the situation of the Hungarians in Transylvania has turned worse, year after year. The discrimination, humiliation, deprivation suffered by Hungarians of all ages from the hands of Rumanian authorities knows no limits today. Even the American press is beginning to notice the tragic fate of the Hungarian minority in Rumania, though in many cases the commentators seem to miss the point. They talk about the Rumanian government abusing its own people. For an example: several newspapers printed the U.P. headline "Szöts, Rumanian poet, arrested!" Geza Szöts is not a Rumanian poet. He is a Hungarian poet in Transylvania, under Rumanian rule. He was charged with being one

of the editors of the Transylvanian Hungarian underground publications "Ellenpontok", meaning Counterpoints. Thus, an illusion is being created by the Press, though unwillingly, by confusing the European meaning of the word "nation" with that of its American use.

In this geographical and political unit called America we are all "one nation under God" whether we came from the British Isles, from France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, or any other part of the world. We have the freedom to cherish our cultural heritage as long as we want to, or assimilate into the Anglo-Saxon culture, but whatever we choose to do, we are Americans.

In Europe, and in this case in Transylvania, it is entirely different. If you are Hungarian, you are part of the original cultural history of that land and your name alone is a landmark of that history. Should you try to forget your national and cultural origin, the officials of the Rumanian administration remind you of it day by day in the way of discrimination. Assimilation is made impossible by the very fact that you are humiliated daily for being a Hungarian, persecuted and beaten if you dare to use your mother tongue. As a Hungarian, you are a life-long member of the Hungarian nation, whether you live in Hungary proper or in one of those parts which were cut off from the motherland and put under foreign domination. You became a minority in your own homeland, without moving anywhere.

Should Cuba take over the State of Florida one day by some unfortunate political tragedy on the basis that so many Spanish speaking people live there - who entered the very same way the Rumanians entered Transylvania centuries ago - would this turn Senator Chiles, Senator Paula Hawkins, Congressman McCollum or Congressman Chappell into Cubans? By no means, of course. They would become the leaders of the American minority in the Cuban province called Florida. Just the same way the Hungarians of Transylvania, though forced to live in the Socialist Republic of Rumania, can not be regarded as Rumanians but as Hungarians, members of the oppressed Hungarian minority in that country.

It should be clear to any thinking person that a land with mixed population can survive only if a peaceful coexistence between the different nationality groups can be successfully worked out. Like in Switzerland, where French, Geman and Italian population have lived side by side for centuries in peace and prosperity, with neither one trying to suppress the others.

In the past, Transylvania was often referred to as the Switzerland of the Carpathian Basin, and rightfully so. Hungarian kings in the 11th and 12th centuries brought German settlers into the land, and these Germans built their own towns next to their Hungarian neighbors, and took their share in developing and defending the country. As the migrating Vlachs began to seep in from the South, trying to escape from their despotic rulers, they also found a place for themselves and became citizens of the country.

However, compared to Switzerland the tragedy of Transylvania was, and still is, that besides its beauty it is also a very rich land, yielding great quantities of all kinds of natural resources. Due to this riches, every conqueror has tried to possess it during the centuries. It was forced again and again under Habsburg domination, who used their well-known policy of "divide and conquer" by inciting the Rumanians to burn down Hungarian towns and murder defenseless Hungarian women and children while the men were on the battlefields fighting for liberty. The seeds of national hatred were thus sown into a land where peaceful coexistence was the only way to peace and prosperity. It must be regarded as a miracle that in spite of all this handicap the Hungarian diet in the city of Torda, Transylvania, declared, without dissent, religious freedom for all religions and all nationalities as the law of the land in 1568. (It is indeed a shame that in 1980 the very building in which this great historic event took place was torn down by the Rumanian authorities for being a landmark of the Hungarian past.)

After the Rumanian Kingdom was created in 1878 from the "United Principalities of Moldavia and Vlachia" under the rule of Hohenzollern king, the word "Rumanian" emerged to replace the name "Vlach". From then on the same political intrigue, setting one Transylvanian nation against the other, came seeping across the borders from the South and the East, finally leading to the tragic dismemberment of Hungary, the thousand-year-old political, cultural and economical unit which defended for centuries Central and Western Europe from Eastern invaders, and held the delicate balance of power in that otherwise turbulent area for one thousand years. As a result, the Hungarian population of Transylvania, for ten centuries a very active part of the majority nation, became a minority in Rumania, and thorn in the political flesh of Rumanian nationalism.

Understanding the reasons which created the situation, it should be clear to anyone that neither assimilation nor emmigration is the solution to the Transylvanian problem. It is not only historically false, but extremely dangerous to assume that in case the Ceausescu government yields to the pressure and makes emmigration easier, aid to that government by the American taxpayers should be resumed. Doing this without securing the survival of the three million Hungarians living under Rumanian rule would be the same as signing the death sentences of so many men, women and children. Since the clue to Transylvania is coexistence, the Rumanian government must be persuaded to recognize this fact and act accordingly. The basic conditions for a good beginning were published recently in a memorandum sent by the Hungarian Socialist Workers Federation of Transylvania to the signatory powers of the Helsinki Agreement, among them to the Government of the United States of America. Any government of good will would automatically accept the conditions listed in that memorandum for the sake of justice and tranquility. (The conditions in question are listed on page eight of this Quarterly.)

However, should Rumania stubbornly refuse to recognize the need for a peaceful and just coexistence between Rumanians and Hungarians in Transylvania, there can be only one solution left: the return of Transylvania to the mother-country, which took care of it for ten centuries and made it possible for all the different nationality groups to prosper in peace, each within its own cultural identity.

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## GENOCIDE AND ETHNOCIDE IN RUMANIA

Excerpts from the publication of the International Conference of the Holocaust and Genocide, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1982.

Rumania leads a well planned and systematically executed campaign to eliminate the national minorities through forceful assimilation into the Rumanian nationality. Guarantees of minority rights are not observed. The Rumanian government refuses to allow the minorities self-determination, autonomy or any kind of independent decision making. Hungarian schools are eliminated, all Hungarian Universities were merged into their Rumanian counterparts. By controlling the housing and labor market, the government breaks up homogeneous Hungarian communities and districts. Rumanians from old-Rumania are settled in great numbers into purely Hungarian areas to work in the newly constructed factories (built with American money) while the native Hungarians of the area are forced to move into old-Rumania in order to find work and housing.

The Rumanian state exercises a policy of total interference in ecclesiastical matters, regardless of their nature. Protestant congregations are denied the traditional right to elect their own ministers and presbyters, in spite of the fact that it was in Transylvania where freedom of religion was written into the law for the first time in the history of Europe, in 1568.

Freedom to publish theological books, periodicals and other religious material is extremely limited. The propaganda booklet, "The Hungarian Nationality in Rumania", distributed recently by the "Rumanian Library" in New York, an arm of the Rumanian Communist government, was able to list only five theological books published in the Hungarian language in the last 25 years, compared to 83 published between 1934 and 1944.

For the 800,000 members of the Hungarian Reformed (Calvinist) Church in Rumania only one bimonthly publication is allowed to be circulated in a mere 1000 (one thousand) copies.

The Hungarian Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj (Kolozsvár) was hammered together in 1949 as a result of forced unification of the Presbyterian and Unitarian Theological Institutes, both established independently more than two centuries ago. Through this forced unification both the

Presbyterian and the Unitarian Theological Institutes were deprived of their ancient tradition of self-determination and self-administration, which included the education and training of their own ministers.

The curriculum of the Protestant Theological Institute is now carefully designed and supervised by an inspector of the Ministry of Cults. Exams are chaired by the same inspector in order to insure that future clergymen of the Hungarian minority keep in line with the policy of the State.

The Church is today the only remaining institution which could fulfill the minorities' needs and allow them to nurture their ethnic heritage. In this sense, therefore, the harassment of the churches assumes a far greater meaning for minorities than simple the curtailment of their religious freedom.

The forced isolation also harms minority churches which have sister-communities in the West and which are dependent to a great extent on donations from abroad to support their charitable work. Aside from limitations on their travel, clergymen are forbidden to receive gifts from abroad and to correspond with relatives, friends or institutions in non-communist countries.

The radical enforcement of these limitations is well documented in the available statistical data: between 1972 and 1982, in a period of ten years, 79 Hungarian clergymen were arrested, tortured, beaten to death or forced to commit suicide for overstepping the lines, drawn around them by the government.

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### ANOTHER HUNGARIAN CLERGYMAN MURDERED

As it was previously reported by the "Nouvel Observateur" in Paris, Rev. Iván Hadházy, age 36, Presbyterian minister in Beszterce, Transylvania was victim of an accident on Jan. 9, 1983. He was ran over by a truck owned and operated by the SECURITATE, the Rumanian political police. Further investigation revealed, that Reverend Hadhazy was often harassed by the SECURITATE in 1982 for having frequent visitors from Hungary and the United States, and corresponding with Hungarian writers and poets. Between Christmas and New Year Ivan Hadhazy entertained in his home a visiting clergyman from Hungary. Apparently this was the cause of his execution. Reverend Hadhazy is the ninth victim of similar "accidents" in the past three years.

Grigore Popa:

"MY ORDEAL BEGAN AT 35 AND ENDED AT 80"

A meeting with Grigore Popa, the man who orchestrated the 1940 protest against the Vienna dictatorship in Cluj.

Q. Mr. Grigore Popa, fifty years ago, on August 30th, the people of Cluj took to the streets at the finding of the Vienna Treaty. When they took over the Telephone Palace you talked in the name of the people with Bucharest...with the government. How was it?

A. If we are going to start with this, we will never finish. I haven't yet finished my writings about the fall of Transilvania. What can you say in an interview...yes...I organized the protest at Cluj against the Vienna Treaty alongside with my students from the Teachers' Seminar University.

Q. How old were you at the time?

A. I had just turned 30 on July 31, 1940. When we heard the news we couldn't believe it. What should we do? Protest! We took a flag and we all started, teachers and students alike, towards town singing "Wake Up Romanian." People started joining in. Cluj caught on, Manasturul caught on, all the people were taking to the streets. All of Transilvania came out to protest then, not only Cluj. When we took over the Telephone Palace, I represented for the people a kind of head of the protest, and they picked me to talk with Bucharest.

Q. And then you had a long, tense conversation with the president of the Council Board, Ion Gigurtu; a conversation which after years would come out in the File #546, Volume #51, f.412, printed out for people to see as an historical document. Let's read a few lines.

G. Popa: Mr. Prime Minister, there are thousands of Transilvanians from all cities and villages to ask for justice. Here is all of Transilvania. All the people protest and ask for mobilization and resistance.[...]

I. Gigurtu: Politics cannot be formed by young people who aren't organized. These are decisions which have been taken by two great powers. If you want Romania to disappear as well, go ahead and do this.[...]

G. Popa: The people ask for mobilization, war and resistance.

I. Gigurtu: The people don't lead the state, the state leads the people.





**G. Popa:** The people alone defend themselves differently.

**I. Gigurtu:** The people will do nothing. The Hungarians will occupy and shoot the people. We'll lose the whole country and the last chance we have of reforming. We still have a chance now...The word from the government is for the whole country to keep quiet, and we must implement this decision.

**G. Popa:** This is not a decision, this is an arbitration!... The people refuse this arbitrary decision...The villages are in chaos! There are woman and children pouring into Cluj, no man has slept here all night. We ask you to see for yourself the precise, real state of mind of the people here and not to go by the official reports which lie...What is the government's attitude towards Transilvania's problem?

**I. Gigurtu:** Transilvania must obey the decision, otherwise risking to lose the whole country and communization as well.

**G. Popa:** We ask you and all of the government to come to Cluj in the middle of all of this to see the reality of things, to see that we are right.

**A.** Did you think that I knew that this conversation existed in writing? I just found out myself a few years ago when it was printed for the first time in an historical magazine. It wasn't complete but what was essential was there. I wasn't very polite with Gigurtu. "Who are you?...Transilvania?!...And what do you want?...I don't want you as a Prime Minister anymore because you are a nitwit, that's what I want!" The conversation was probably taped by the Securitate; they were obligated to record everything, officially. The second or third day I was under house arrest, supposedly to be protected. They kept me in the house a few days to destroy all my plans...Then at the Telephone Palace I first asked to talk with the King. At the Palace there was a female operator. "We want to speak with the King," I told her. She could not make the connection but she was so touched by what she heard was happening in Transilvania that she started to cry. I started to feel sorry for her so I hung up. The people were asking "Maniu, Maniu!" We found Maniu. He was at Athene Palace. One of the Chiefs of Cabinet answered the phone and told me that Maniu was very busy, that he had a meeting with foreigners. "Get out of here," I said. "Who's still talking to him when our country's borders are overflowing?" Maniu answered the phone. "You're asking for military aid?" he asked. I said, "We asked for it, we asked for it so much that our voices got hoarse. Are you coming?" "If you ask for military aid I will be there," Maniu said.



He never came. He came to Brasov where Mihai Popovici (another politician) was waiting. Maniu didn't come, Petru Groza came. Groza, on the outside, was with the Romanians, but in reality he sided with the Hungarians. Doubleplay, and very ugly...Groza came to "Head of Ox"; he had a lover in Cluj, a Hungarian woman of noble origins which people called, I don't know why, "Head of Ox."

Q. Did you believe then of a future reunification of Transilvania?

A. I was sure! I always believed in the best for my people. But how bad it is to be a small country in dramatic surroundings.

Q. And then if the Resistance would have been opposed to the Dictation Army, what do you think would have happened?

A. I don't know. We would have kept fighting, we would have taken to the mountains, something would have happened. I used to have a saying, at least in those times, "The foreign minister of Romania is God!"

#### In refuge at Sibiu together with Blaga

A. You don't know how it was in the 1940s, after the fall. Something unimaginable. What chaos, what suffering! 1940 was a very hard year. Antonescu was then a great luck for this country. After Transilvania's fall, the Hungarians made fun; they sent Romanians packed in wagons over the border; they sent the orthodox bishop from Oradea to Romania...There was nothing we could do. We were obligated by the surroundings to leave. When we got Transilvania back, after the war, the Russians didn't allow Romanians to return to Transilvania for six months. When they got back everything was occupied: all the governing offices, all the important official jobs, were taken by Hungarian communists, Russia's people. In Cluj, after 1940 there was nothing left except theology. The University was moved to Sibiu. Almost all of intellectualized Cluj was moved to Sibiu. Hateganu, the past peasant minister, who led the Romanian community in Cluj, remained...At Sibiu, I was named then, "The Right to Utilize", it was called, in the place of Cioran, who left for Paris. He was from Rasinari. I remember his father very well. He was a "Consilier la Mitropolie" and a very distinguished figure...I saw Blaga as often as I could in Sibiu. We were on very good terms. At that point I had written a lot about him, almost a book. I preferred him to all other Romanian philosophers because he was the only one who created a philosophy.



Q. In 1934, you wrote in the volume, "Transilvanian Landscape":  
"We clearly ask for the return of Lucian Blaga alongside Octavian Goga, at the University."

A. Later, Blaga would have liked very much for me to be his assistant. I didn't want to because I had written so much about Blaga that I didn't want the rumours to spread that I did it so I could become his assistant. As a person, Blaga was, to be honest, pretty boring. He would start when he would see you, "How are you?" Then he'd be quiet. You would talk and talk like a fool and he would still be quiet. And at the end he would ask again, "How are you?"...And all this time he was thinking about something else...I unwillingly refereed an argument between Blaga and Dan Botta. I was the editor of the newspaper, "The Country", which was in circulation for a few years, until the 23rd of August. My last article was a political one, in August of '44 when the Russians invaded at Iasi. The article was called "Your Greatness, Stefane"...Dan Botta wrote an article in which he said that Blaga's theory on minimal space with uphill, downhill was preconceived by others, including himself. Blaga got mad, and even though he wasn't a polemicist he wrote an article, "Hazul imperial al lui Dan Botta" or something like that. Dan Botta responded very harshly in very strong terms; he was a much better polemicist than Blaga. And I, of course, published his article. Then Blaga was very upset with me, but after awhile he let it go. He was extraordinarily sensitive about what was said about him; he suffered terribly; when he was attacked he simply couldn't sleep. I would find him at 7:00 in the morning at the newspaper office.

#### Instead of a Biography

A. Before the war, no one would ever ask you how many teeth you have in your mouth, who are your parents, etc., etc. I was from the country, from Podeni, by Turda, from a peasant family with seven children and I never felt persecuted because of this. I only knew one thing: I have to learn! At the University in Cluj, some of my teachers included Stefanescu Goanga and D.D. Rosca. In 1933, I received a literature and philosophy degree. The hardest exam I ever took in my life was my capacity exam. I got the best score in the country. Ion Petrovici, who was in the commission, asked me to go to Iasi, but I didn't want to go. I was how Transilvanians are, tied to Transilvania. For my doctorate I wrote a thesis on existence and truth by Soren Kierkegaard. Between 1936 and 1938, I received a scholarship in Paris at L'Ecole Roumanine de Paris. Those years were the best of my life. I was studying, reading what I wanted: poetry, metaphysics; it was drunkenness of the spirit...I was asked to remain. I was 28 years old.



It never crossed my mind to stay, there wasn't this mentality then. I didn't think that Romania would enter the war...Active politics I was never a part of. I sympathized with Goga, it is true, with whom I shared similar ideas ever since we had been in school. I never got involved with party politics, and this was a mistake because no one defends you, as I found out in prison. No. My nature was always independent. I never liked to integrate myself.

Q. Most-loved philosopher?

A. Plato. For the great distinction for which he made between the world of ideas, the ideal world and the world in which we get tangled in day to day. He didn't believe in the truth of sensation, in general, the greeks didn't believe in the truth of sensation.

Q. Family?

A. I got married in 1938. In refuge at Sibiu, Our two children were born. One boy, Horea, and a girl, Oncuta.

Q. Grigore Popa wrote and published everything he wrote (ten books of essays and a book of poetry) until 1944. He was 34.

A. Not one of my books got published after 1944. And since I was arrested the books lost circulation rights and were transferred to be filed.

...In 1944, on Christmas Eve, I was thrown out of the University where I was D.D. Rosca's assistant. In 1945, in the first days of Groza's "large, concentrated democratic government", I was arrested. With two interruptions, I was a political prisoner until 1964. We moved to Bucharest in 1966. We left because anything that would have happened in Cluj I would have been interrogated for. I retired from a psychologist's position with 2300 lei, after 45 years of living the life of a dog. For me the ordeal started when I was 35 and ended when I was 80. Ordeal in the true sense of the word: locked-up, beaten, family destroyed. I am one of the few survivors. My great moral satisfaction is that I lived to see the fall of communism, to see its end. The rest, if I die today or tomorrow, it doesn't matter anymore.

Q. In 1990, at almost 80 years old, Grigore Popa, is accepted in the Writer's Union.

A. Doinas was always very nice to me. He was the first, even now, the one who thought of me. The Union completed my pension. They offered it to me, they voted on it, I didn't ask for it. It's too bad I feel so weakened...for a year and a half I haven't left the house.





Q. We can decipher from Grigore Popa's life experience an example destiny. One of those people with his family humiliated, with his health destroyed. People humiliated years and years, but for the fault of daring to think differently and representing through this a danger for "The Peoples' Democracy", for the dictatorship of lies and fear established in 1945 in Romania.

### Accusation? "War Criminal!"

A. I was arrested in 1945 on the grounds of nationalistic, journalistic activity. I was called a "war criminal." To laugh until you cannot laugh anymore! How many have suffered for their ideas and not for anything else. Everytime they would interrogate me I would tell them, "Hey, don't beat your heads! Everything I've thought I've written down and signed with my name." My position was anti-Sovietic. I was neither with the alliance for the Russians nor was I with the alliance for the Germans.

Q. Who were you for?

A. For Romania! I wrote pro-Romanian articles of belief and conviction. Why am I afraid? The people of today are very quick to categorize, "That's it! Nationalist!" I was against the Russians, I was against communism. One of Maniu's naivities was that the Americans, the allies, would re-establish the 1919 "Sanitary Line".

Q. How did you know what communism was in 1940? From lectures? Did you read Gide's "Travel Notes from the U.S.S.R."?

A. How could I not know? From lectures, of course. In any case, I expected less than what it was in real life, what it means.

Q. How do you see the difference between communism and the left?

A. One is a totalitarian doctrine, closed, with dogmas. On the other side, the left is something very vague. All of our people that would come from Paris would be from "the left", including D.D. Rosca. Communism is a moral swamp: a totalitarian system in which people say one thing and do and think something else...After my first arrest, they set me free and then they took me to "The Channel." From The Channel I was taken to Onesti then Borzesti to all of the hydro-electric frontiers. We laid down the foundations. We were blue-collar workers. We carried rocks, laid down the tracks for trains.



They had the need for free labor...I had a short vacation and then in 1958, in Cluj, they took me again because they guaranteed the Russians that after they left the country they would take measures so that nothing would happen. The measures were this:

a new wave of arrests. They accused me because they got an informative note that I said that Basarabia is Romanian land.

Even then, I said, Basarabia is Romanian. Then they asked me to write a declaration proclaiming this, so I did. Then in 1958, I was condemned to 22 years in prison at Aiud. It was also then that they accused me of wanting to be the minister of culture. I told them that I didn't want to be the minister of culture, but the minister of finance because I have been poor all my life...In 1965, they started to appeal our cases to rehabilitate us. "I'm not interested, I don't want to hear it!" I said. I never believed in their rehabilitation system or in their words. Us, the ones with political cases, are left marked until death. They are open cases. Cases that can be re-opened. Any time.

Q. Do you think that?

A. I don't think, I'm sure of it.

Q. Even today?

A. Even today. Whenever they want. They do what they want.

#### Transilvania's Problem

A. My essays were against "Transilvanianism" propoganda by the Germans and the Hungarians. After Romania became a whole they came up with a theory that Transilvania is a country apart. I challenged them with cultural arguments.

Q. You wrote in "Transilvanian Landscape", "Let's not talk the political surface of this problem, even though it is existent with all the denying partisans."

A. I wrote another book called, "Transilvania, the Garden of Romanian Roots" which was published right as the Russians were entering the country. It became dust. Luckily, my son, Horea, salvaged my books during a searching; he was just a child and without them seeing he pushed the books, one by one, under a couch with his leg. Otherwise they would have taken all of them. They destroyed my library. At every search they would take something. Once they took all my socks. They didn't even leave me socks to put on my feet...

Q. How did you answer to the accusation of "nationalist"?



A. I never had, and still don't have, pride because I am a Romanian. I am proud because I am a human being. What's that? A "good Romanian"? You can't be a better or worse Romanian, smaller or bigger. I am simply a Romanian, but I'm pleased that I am Romanian, and I wouldn't want to belong to another nation.

Q. What is your opinion about "The Good Co-existence" for Transilvania?

A. "The Good Co-existence" is absolutely necessary. It is of vital importance for everybody. But it is possible only when you respect the country in which you live. This country is Romania. I agree to respect the Hungarians rights with the same agreement on their part to respect their co-citizens and to honor their national obligations as a minority: to respect the schools, the language, Romanian holidays, not to despise them. I can understand elementary schools, but universities in Hungarian seem to me to be absurd and unnecessary in a country where the majority of the population is Romanian. I don't like generalizations. I had and I have Hungarian friends, but the truth is that the Hungarians were always unsatisfied, and unsatisfied they will be forever. If Transilvania would be theirs they would be very happy. They think that's their happiness. This for them is an obsession...How can you believe them when they speak of friendship and co-existence, when they speculate any weakness and when all their minority politics and all their external actions until today are against Romania as a state. They play on our compromise. This is my opinion.

#### Memories from Prison

A. ...At the coast of Gales, there was death. When they threw us there, there was nothing: not barracks, not water, not salt, nothing. If one of us would find a head of lettuce in the field, he'd be very happy. The greatest happiness at "The Channel" was marmalade; when it would arrive, it was an event. Our prison guard, the political prisoner guard, was a common thief. First he would take as much marmalade as he wanted and after that it was our turn. In order, we'd each receive a small piece.

Q. Without bread? And, please, forgive me, always without butter?

A. Oh my God! Butter! That didn't exist! I didn't see bread. They gave us corn shells. From the coast of Gales they moved us to the Black Valley where it was much better. We could even get packages if they would give them to us. I, out of all of them, got one, that's it. For me, who until then didn't get any news from my family, it was a great happiness. After "The Channel" they moved us to Moldova. I met a very nice man there.



He wasn't a prisoner, he worked there. His name was Vlad. I told him that I didn't get any news from my family, from my home. He mailed a letter and put a return address from another town and that's how I started to receive letters from my family, through him. I even got two pictures of my children. My son, Horea, who was just a child then, wrote me some terrible things. "Dad, I'm very sorry that I'm not there with you, the ones that weren't allowed to speak out. And I want you to know that despite all the humiliations I still hold my chin up high and wait for you..." No, his mom didn't tell him to write that, he would have never accepted that. If his mother would have tried to get a divorce, let's say, Horea would have left home; that's how he is, that's his nature. I mention divorce because it was encouraged, sometimes it was forced; this would be the first news that they would communicate in jail, divorce. To try to destroy any moral support. My wife never divorced me. I was very loved and close to everybody. My family never tried to unload me, to deny me like others did, no.

Q. And what did you feel, knowing that you couldn't help them?

A. To not be able to help them, nothing, but to think that just by the fact that you are breathing you are doing them harm, made you want to die. How much these children suffered! Humiliated in school, thrown-out, very ugly things. That's why anything I would ever do for them will never seem enough. With their files, my children could not even continue their education. My boy was a driver. He is one now, too, except on 18-wheels in America. In 1983, he came to see me at the hospital after an operation. That's my last image of him. He crossed the Danube. He swam across! He didn't tell me anything until he got to Vienna. Now he is an American citizen. He took his wife and his children. They are doing very well. Oncuta has two children as well. A daughter who is going to finish medical school in a year, and a son who just took the entrance exam for art school where I hope he will succeed, even if he is Romul Ladea's grandson...My last six years I was jailed at Aiud, very close to Cluj, where my family was. All this time I never got any news from them, nor them from me. Every year on the 23rd of August, my wife would ask for a pardon and invariably she would get the same answer, "It's not necessary."

Q. Did you ever get sick there?

A. Many times. Everything was cured without medicine. Once my face was puffed up and I had terrible pains. They never even gave me an aspirin. One night my pain became so intolerable that I couldn't take it anymore. I yelled something at them which could have costed me my life. At that moment I felt relief. Dentists and doctors didn't exist...Monsters.





Q. Did you hate them? In what state of mind were you living through all of this?

A. Disgust, not hate. Why should I hate some schmuck who is deceiving because he got the orders to be? Just disgust and desparation. I always had very good nerves, my nerves were always very strong. I could sleep anywhere, directly on cement if I had to, and that was a great advantage. At Aiud, sometimes you would be in solitary confinement; you had to stand at the side of the bed from 5:00A.M. to 10:00P.M. without leaning or stretching to torture you. If I ever saw a man die there? One? I saw more than one. When I was at Aiud, Traian Braileanu, the past education minister, died next to me. He had an ulcer. He got sick; they didn't even want to look at him. Overnight his ulcer perforated, he died by morning. I couldn't help him at all. How I didn't lose my mind there? I guess I didn't. These factors of mental resistance are hard to determine. How did we continue cultural exercise in jail? Orally. At Aiud, for example, we had clandestine lessons for months. The boys would take notes, whatever notes they could, on the soles of their boots, with chalk or wall debris. They would transmit the lessons further to the adjacent cells through the walls or with the Morse Code. There was a lot of literature being learned. All the jailed up peasants knew Eminescu and Cosbuc by heart. Romanians had a very good poem for prison. Radu Gyr wrote all the time, wrote continuously.

Q. Yourself, how many poems did you write in jail?

A. Not very many, but I have them in a volume.

Q. Did you write them in your head?

A. Everything was made up in my head. Memory was very precious in prison. I would repeat them daily and when I got out of prison I would write them down...

[At this moment, Grigore Popa's wife enters the room. She's a petite woman with much youthfulness in her way of being. Now she tells a story with a spark of irony in her intense blue eyes.]

**Letitia Popa:** At one of Grigore's hearings in Bucharest in 1948, his lawyer was a very passionate Bassarabean. But Patrascanul, who was the justice minister, was very well-intended and ready to pardon Grigore. He told the judge, "Set this Romanian free because many foreigners got set free as well." Anyway, everything would have gone as planned, if not for the Hungarian woman who, in the middle of the trial, beat her fists into the table and yelled, "Do you want to be arrested as well?"



The Bassarabean said later in the trial, in Grigore's defense, "There will be a day when they will erect a statue of Antonescu in this country." And I read in the paper today in August 1990 that in Buteni, Arad there is a statue being erected for Ion Antonescu.

### Maximum Morality

Q. What sustained you? How did you resist?

A. When you believe, it's something; when you don't believe, you fall. I knew from the first moment that I was innocent and that justice was on my side. What I admire most in a man is his personal morals, his own personal ethics. That's what pulled me through: the culture and the ethics, the belief, the trust, the conviction, and the truth of my actions, yet I was never afraid of death. If I was to start over now, everything I wrote I would write again. In prison I saw death with my eyes. Death seems to me, like a change from one form to another. Fear paralyzes. I was never afraid of being arrested. It was the fear of leaving nothing at home. When they took me to "The Channel" I left my family with nothing.

Q. In all those years didn't you ever feel defeated?

A. From this point of view, my life was a very straight line. I never pretended to have more than I could provide.

Q. Did you ever try to protest?

A. What to do? Protest? To whom? To Petru Groza? To Gheorghiu-Dej? Whom should I protest to? I endured everything with dignity and I won. And after 1964 I continued to say what I thought. I didn't believe in the efficiency of protesting. In general, protests were moods appearing like mushrooms after the rain. I think it's very good that they existed, I just didn't believe in their efficiency.

Q. Did you enroll yourself in the "Association of Past Political Prisoners"?

A. Oncuta enrolled me, my daughter. I thought there would be something serious coming out of it, but so far nothing has come out of it.

Q. Does it seem to you that a lot of things have changed lately in Romania?



A. Very few, that's why I'm troubled. I think back many times at how beautiful the young people were in the revolution, and now you can't see them anymore. A lot of leeches appeared, fighting to tell their stories of persecution which they had endured. A lot of victims appeared who weren't treated so badly. The country is anarchists...There is great confusion...But the historic goals are not possible. You cannot abruptly move the population of a country from one place to another. One day the confusion of transit will crumble, then we will see what comes out of it. I am sure we will escape the remains of communism in the end. People who actively served, for years, in politics of deception, cannot change. Our hope is the youth. Order must be obtained, but whoever does it has to be human, and first of all, must refuse lies. Speaking of lies, on television there is a very weak program. It says everything but it says nothing. What thieves have stolen, what crimes have happened. Is that all that they can tell me? I would like for them to discuss the country's big problems. Even now I don't understand what happened on June 13, 14 and 15. Who organized it? Where is this fascist organization; let us see it, too! I'm sure the people would fight until they would get to a point where they would be comfortable. People cannot manifest themselves unless they are in a pure democracy. Like our country was before the war, except, adapted to a modern way of life. "Be with the people so you don't get them lost!" That's what Barnutiu said in 1948.

Q. How do you think these people will rearrange themselves?

A. They will rearrange themselves! I told you God is our foreign minister...

Interview conducted by Eugenia Voda  
Published in "Romania Literara"



**Subject: indigenous relatives?**

**Date: Sat, 5 Feb 2000 09:05:57 -0800 (PST)**

**From: "Dr. Pyotr Joannevich van de Waal-Palms American\_bank" <russia@aa.net>**

**To: Russell Jim <russell@yakama.com>**


Kamchatka & the Russian Far East (directly west of United States Atu island in the aleutians and pribilof Island.) South of Anadyr and Povedenia Russia


Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky is unique volcano country with three sky piecing volcanoes names Koryaksky, Avanchinsky and Kozelsky, which resemble Mount Adams Rainier and Baker. In the remote, rarely visited Esso Region in the middle of the eninsula are the Koryak and "Even" indigenous peoples. some of whom still practice a normadic way of life 'Koryak" comes from the native word "Khora" meaning reindeer. The reindeer which still supply the natives with shelter, food and clothing


Might there be a distant relationship?

Have they ever participated in the World Council of Indigenous People's (United nations organizaition)?

Peter Palms

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