

Foreword

Atlantic Research and Publications has selected to publish a re-worked version of *Report on the Situation of the Hungarian Minority in Rumania*. This work was printed in Budapest in 1988 under the aegis of the Hungarian Democratic Forum. Two major reasons account for this selection: First, that the *Report* is in itself a historic document. It is the result of the healthy national self-assertion of a non-governmental organization (Democratic Forum) challenging the official policies of Hungary's Kádár administration which ignored the plight of Hungarian minorities in neighboring states. On the nationalities question this is the first time that a non-governmental organization publicly challenged an East European autocracy's right to make policy. In Poland Solidarity, in Czechoslovakia Charta 77, were the only other instances of such challenges, but these did not extend to policies on the fate of ethnic and national minorities.

The second reason for this selection is that it is an excellent summary of the status of the Hungarian minority in Romania under the Ceausescu dictatorship. Such brief but well-documented treatments are woefully lacking in the English-speaking world on a problem area that is becoming more and more central to the peace and stability of the region. The "Report" also presents a balanced analysis that rises above the strident nationalism of the Ceausescu-dominated variety.

A third reason may also be added to above major two considerations. Just a little more than a year after the publication of the *Report*, the Ceausescu administration was overthrown at the end of December, 1989. Ironically, this momentous change did not bring about a total rejection of the Ceausescu legacy. Particularly in the area of minority policies, the ghost of the former dictator is alive and well. The current Romanian leadership seems to follow in his footsteps in scapegoating and persecuting the Hungarian minority. To understand these policies, the outline of the Ceausescu past is most enlightening.

The republication of the *Report* under the new title of *The Hungarian Minority's Situation in Ceausescu's Romania* requires some additional observations. The re-edited version makes the issues of interethnic rela-

tions in Romania clearer for those readers who are unfamiliar with the history of the region and its peoples. This has been accomplished with the addition of some explanatory footnotes as well as a brief historical chronology. The style has also been re-worked to provide more unity and clarity. While the content remains the same, it is at least stylistically a new book.

One important change, however, in both the title and the book is the spelling of Romania. While the original *Report* spelled the name of "Rumania" with "u", in the present version we have adopted the now accepted practice of spelling the name with an "o". Since 1990 even *The New York Times* has made this switch from "Ru" to the Ceausescu instituted "Ro". While we too now use the designation Romania, we wish to stress that the previously used spelling was more in line with both the actual pronunciation of the name and the history of the designation. The French spelling reflects this even today as Roumanie.

Ceausescu changed the spelling to Romania not much to designate independence from Moscow or from Slavic roots, but to emphasize the "Roman" origins of the "Rumanians". This is all linked to the revival of exclusivist nationalism among the Romanians which Ceausescu had attempted to use to distract attention from the shortcomings of his own leadership. However, he was also reacting against the historical implications of the "Rumanian" designation. Since Romania only came into being as a unified state in 1859, prior to that time "its" territories were called Wallachia and Moldavia (which after World War I were expanded with the additions of Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania and Dobrogea). The majority inhabitants in these provinces referred to themselves as Rumîn (sing.) or Rumîni (pl.). The most likely and plausible explanation for this is that as vassals of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, and as Vlach subjects of the Empire's Balkan territories from the end of the 14th to the middle of the 19th century, they accepted the overlord Turkish designation for them. The Turks called their conquered subjects of the former Byzantine Empire the inhabitants of "Rum" or "Rumelia" (the latter became the official provincial designation of the future Bulgaria for a time). In other words, the Turks referred to their conquest on the European side of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus as Rumelia, while they referred to the regions on the Asian side as Anatolia. In this way they too claimed to be successors of the Roman Empire, via state succession, and via maintenance of continuity in the designation of the territories they annexed to their expanded empire. Its a minor point to note that their succession was to the Eastern

Roman Empire, which for centuries had already been Greek in culture, religion, and language. Of course the more obvious and direct linkages are frequently ignored, when the symbolism of "Roman" means grandeur and glory, something that of course Ceausescu's Romania was not.

Finally, the editors wish to thank all those individuals who contributed to the original "Report". It was originally produced by the efforts of a team of scholars, some contributing entire chapters, some others just parts of chapters or important data. At the time, the entire work was done illegally and some of the contributors used pen-names to hide their identity. Herewith, the editors of the present volume wish to acknowledge the debt they owe to this original team which included Attila Ara-Kovács, György Dávid, Rudolf Joó, Géza Entz, József Nagy, Károly Antal Tóth, and Judit Vásárhelyi. They also wish to thank Júlia Balogh, Zoltán Bíró, Lajos Für, László Hámos, Béla K. Király, Peter Pastor, Géza Szócs, Gáspár Miklós Tamás, Árpád E. Varga and many unnamed others who made the *Report* and its original English translation possible. For the re-worked version of the *Report* the revising editor is particularly indebted to Mrs. Barbara Roberts for her patience and quality wordprocessing skills.

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