

Transylvania in International Power Politics during World War II

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...in the Transylvanian question...
[Hitler] held the most perfect instrument... of blackmail.

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From earliest times, the land known today as Transylvania has been coveted by various nations and empires and has often been the object of diplomatic wrangling or the scene of wars of conquest. What made the region attractive to both masses of migrants and conquering armies have been its central location in the heartland of Eastern Europe and its fertile land complete with abundant resources. The years of the Second World War were no exception to this time-honoured tradition of keen competition for, and conflict over, Transylvania.

From September of 1939 to the war's end, the struggle for Transylvania continued, intensified if we consider the fact that during the interwar years the governments of neighbouring lands conspired to gain (or retain, as the case might be) control over Transylvania. This paper will point out that, in this struggle, at first two of Eastern Europe's small nations, Romania and Hungary, played influential roles; however, as the war progressed, increasing interest was displayed and influence was exercised by certain Great Powers, especially the Third Reich. In the end, the deliberations over Transylvania's fate were concentrated in the hands of the powers that emerged victorious in the war, and the final settlement of the "Transylvanian question" was imposed by the country that achieved preponderant influence in Eastern Europe at war's end: the Soviet Union.

Some eighteen-and-a-half centuries before the occupation of Transylvania by the Red Army in the fall of 1944, the Roman Empire — the superpower of the early Christian Era — conquered this land and held it for over 150 years. Barbarian incursions into the Empire later prompted the Romans to abandon most of their frontier provinces: Dacia was evacuated in

271 a.d. In the centuries that followed this land served as home to a succession of nomadic and semi-nomadic nations, including (in rough chronological order) the Goths, the Huns, the Gepids, the Avars, the Bulgars, and proto-Magyar tribes. After the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin late in the ninth century, Magyar control was gradually extended over Transylvania. Incursions by nomadic peoples from the east — first by the Pechenegs and the Cumans and then, in the thirteenth century, by the Mongols — usually proved quite destructive, but did not lead to lasting occupations.

More important than these military incursions was the immigration of new ethnic groups during the Middle Ages. Beginning with the early years of the eleventh century, Hungary's kings encouraged the transmigration of the proto-Magyar Székelys from other frontier areas of the Carpathian Basin to southeastern Transylvania where they were expected to serve as guardians of the Kingdom of Hungary against attacks by nomadic tribes. To strengthen the defences of southern Transylvania even further, in the following century German-speaking settlers from the Rhineland and elsewhere were invited to settle there and establish fortified cities that were to serve as defensive outposts as well as centres of commerce and industry. In time, the Hungarians, Székelys, and Germans (Saxons) of Transylvania would constitute the three founding nations of the land, and established a kind of a political condominium there while maintaining varying degrees of autonomy within the Kingdom of Hungary. Later immigrants to the land, Vlach tribesmen from the Balkans — the predecessors of modern-day Romanians — failed to achieve such a privileged status and became a major factor in the political affairs of Transylvania only in the modern era. In the meantime, from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries, the region witnessed the competition of the two dominant empires of the day for influence: the Ottoman Turkish and the Habsburg. In this struggle the princes of Transylvania often managed to play one side against the other with considerable success until the decline of Ottoman influence in East Central Europe led to the establishment of Viennese rule over the whole of Hungary, including Transylvania, which the Habsburgs administered as a separate province of their empire.

The Hungarian nation emerged from Habsburg domination briefly in 1848-49, and more effectively in 1867 as a result of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise.¹ From 1867 to the end of World War I, Transylvania became an integral part of Hungary and was ruled directly from Budapest. By this time, however, significant demographic shifts had taken place in the region as the Romanians had become the most populous ethnic group.² In the meantime, to the south, Romania shook off the increasingly feeble tutelage of

the Ottoman Empire and emerged as an independent nation. The stage became set for the growth of Romanian separatism in Transylvania which would reach its zenith during World War I.

From the First World War to the Second

The keen struggle for Transylvania during the Second World War can only be explained by developments that had taken place during and immediately after the First World War. As is commonly known, for some time during this conflict Romania remained neutral. Both the Central Powers and the Allies — and, especially, Russia — hoped to attract Romania to their side of the war, but it was the Allies who were in a better position to offer inducements to the government in Bucharest. In fact they made a secret offer to Romania of Transylvania, on the condition that the country join the alliance against the Central Powers. The Romanians, encouraged at first by the successes of the Russians against the German and Austro-Hungarian forces in the so-called Brusilov offensive, committed themselves, and a few weeks later, in late August 1916, declared war on Austria-Hungary and began the invasion of Transylvania. By then the Brusilov offensive had spent its fury and hastily assembled German and Austro-Hungarian forces defeated the invading Romanian armies and, within a few months, they occupied much of Romania.

The collapse of the Central Powers in the fall of 1918 gave a new opportunity to Romania to attack, which she did — a few days before the war's end. This time the Romanian armies were successful. They occupied Transylvania and, for a brief period of time in 1919, most of Hungary. In the Treaty of Trianon between the victorious Allies and Hungary of June, 1920, the peacemakers awarded Transylvania to Romania, along with large portions of the Hungarian Great Plain. In fact, more formerly Hungarian land was given to Romania than was left to truncated Hungary. Transferred with these lands were about 1,700,000 ethnic Hungarians.³

Of all the territorial losses the Kingdom of Hungary suffered in the wake of World War I, it was the severing of Transylvania that left the deepest wound on the Magyar psyche. The lands awarded to Romania constituted the largest of the dismembered chunks of the ancient Kingdom of Hungary, and they served as the homeland for the largest number of ethnic Hungarians with the exception of the area left to Hungary herself. Though Romanians constituted the most populous ethnic group (they made up close to 54 percent of the total) in the transferred territories, many counties and some cities were

populated predominantly by Magyar-speaking residents (while a few other centres had German majorities).⁴ Furthermore, Hungarians both in Transylvania and elsewhere generally considered that land to be the cradle of the modern Hungarian nation. Indeed, during the centuries when central Hungary was under Turkish occupation, and North-western Hungary was ruled by Vienna, Hungarian culture — and, at times, even political influence — thrived only in Transylvania. But there was more to the interwar Hungarian preoccupation with the loss of Transylvania than such sentiments. During this period many of truncated Hungary's leaders were of Transylvanian stock. The two most prominent were Count István Bethlen and Count Pál Teleki. The former served as Hungary's Prime Minister from 1921 to 1931 and remained an “elder statesman” thereafter. The latter was Prime Minister just before Bethlen, and again from 1939 to 1941. Both of them were convinced that the loss of Transylvania dealt a mortal blow to Hungary's strategic interests and constituted a grave threat to the survival of Magyar culture in Transylvania itself.⁵

It should not be surprising under the circumstances that Hungary's foremost foreign policy aim during the interwar years and early war years was the revision of the territorial settlement imposed in 1920, in particular the regaining of much if not all of Transylvania. Until 1938 this aspiration was frustrated by the existence of the Little Entente — a political and military alliance of Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, backed most persistently by the French — that was designed to frustrate Hungarian ambitions. The disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the onset of war in Europe, however, made conditions increasingly ripe for attempts to re-draw the map of Eastern Europe.

While Hungarians were eager to undo the post-war territorial settlement, Romanians were determined to hold on to what they had gained. They had convinced themselves that Transylvania was rightfully theirs not only because of the fact that they constituted the largest ethnic group there, but because of the historical legitimacy of their claim. According to one school of Romanian historiography — one which had gained wide popular acceptance among Romanians — Transylvania had been Romanian ever since the days of Roman Dacia. Accordingly, Hungarians were only “latecomers” there and the Treaty of Trianon only ended a long “foreign domination” of the land. Furthermore, that treaty did not satisfy all Romanian aspirations as it did not award to Romania the boundary promised by the Allies in the Treaty of Bucharest of 1916, nor did it restore all the lands to greater Romania that Roman Dacia was supposed to have had. While not all Romanians were ready to press even greater territorial demands against Hungary, they were

steadfast in their belief that what they had gained, was rightfully theirs. An indication of this attitude is the reaction of the masses in Bucharest to the news of the Second Vienna Award that in 1940 returned part of Transylvania to Hungary. According to some reports, it was not uncommon to see people cry in the streets, while others (or the very same people) called on Romania's leaders to defy, by force of arms if necessary, the German-Italian decision.⁶ There was even another parallel between the situation in Hungary and that in Romania. While in the former (as has been pointed out above) men of Transylvanian birth had at times come to dominate the government, in Romania the same happened though less frequently. After the end of World War I, former Romanian-Transylvanian politicians, such as Julius Maniu and Alexander Vaida-Voevod, gained prominence in Bucharest politics — the former was prime minister twice, in late 1918 and again from 1928 to 1930, and the latter was government leader in 1932-33. Both of them were ardent believers in a Romanian Transylvania. Nothing illustrates better the irreconcilability of the Hungarian and Romanian positions regarding Transylvania than the slogans that were popular at the time in the two countries. In Hungary, the cry was “*Mindent vissza!*” ([we want] everything back), while in Romania the national slogan was “*Nic'un brazda!*” ([we yield] not one furrow).⁷

The international developments of the second half of 1938, of 1939, and the first half of 1940, made many Hungarian leaders confident that the long-awaited opportunity to regain some or all of Transylvania would soon present itself. They had good reasons to think so. After the summer of 1938 Romania's international position kept deteriorating. The so-called Bled Accords with Hungary and, especially, the Munich settlement between Czechoslovakia and Germany, emasculated the Little Entente. Romania's diplomatic position further deteriorated in the late summer of the following year. At the time, Bucharest was aligned with Britain and France, but the sudden rapprochement between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia at the end of August and, especially, the occupation of Poland by these two powers in September, greatly weakened Romania's strategic situation. The country's predicament was further exacerbated by the fact that Hungary was not the only country eager to press territorial demands against it. In the wake of the Great War, Romania had gained lands not only from Hungary but also from Bulgaria and Russia. The Bulgarian claim to Dobruja probably did not alarm Bucharest unduly, but much more threatening was the desire of the Soviet Union to regain Bessarabia. Furthermore, Romania was also a possible target for an attack from still another quarter: Germany. The Ploesti oil-fields were one of the most important sources of energy in Europe, and Hitler could not

afford to allow them to fall into hostile hands. Against these dangers the Romanians had few defences. France and Britain were hardly in a position to offer serious help. Although they had issued a guarantee to Romania in the spring of 1939, but as German influence throughout Central Europe grew, this commitment gradually lost its credibility.

Wartime Hungarian Plans

Bucharest's increasing difficulties gave rise to various plans in Budapest to solve the "Transylvanian question" in a manner satisfactory to Hungary's interests. How differently Hungary's civilian and military leaders approached this issue is illustrated by the plans that were advanced by ex-Premier Count István Bethlen and Chief-of-the-General Staff, Henrik Werth. The scheme of the former — outlined in a long, secret memorandum to the government — started with the premise that Germany would lose the war against the West European democracies. Accordingly, Bethlen argued, Hungary should remain neutral in the European struggle and preserve her strength for the attainment of her national aims at the end of the war. Bethlen hoped that by participating in some kind of a security arrangement for post-war Europe, and by not annexing Transylvania but allowing it to become an autonomous member of a loose East European federation, Hungary could obtain Western diplomatic support for her plans.⁸ General Werth's plans for Transylvania were quite different. The Chief-of-Staff was not willing to wait until the outcome of the war was settled. When the Russian threat against Romania surfaced in the winter of 1939-40, Werth urged his government to prepare for the recovery of Transylvania by force should an armed conflict develop between Moscow and Bucharest.⁹

In April of 1940 Werth approached Regent Miklós Horthy and the government with a memorandum. The Chief-of-Staff began by asserting that Germany would more than likely emerge victorious in the war. Werth, who had just held discussions with members of the German General Staff, informed his civilian superiors that the Germans had offered their co-operation against Romania. But simple military co-operation was not sufficient according to Werth. Hungary had to abandon her neutrality and become an ally of Berlin so that she could regain the lands she had lost in the wake of World War I. Knowing that certain members of his audience were not convinced of Germany's invincibility, Werth added that even if Germany did not win the war, Hungary could retain her conquests because at the end of an

exhausting struggle the Allied Powers would be “too weak to send large forces in the Danube Valley.”¹⁰

The approach that the Hungarian leadership after some delay adopted towards the question of Transylvania differed from that advocated by Werth. Teleki was repelled by the idea of abandoning the country's neutrality. Unlike Werth, he was doubtful about the prospects of a German victory. He felt that the superiority of moral strength and physical resources was on the Allied side. In a letter to Horthy, he rejected the Chief-of-Staff's proposals and accused him of not seeing the problem of Hungary's interests from the point of view of a Hungarian (Werth was an ethnic German). Teleki also asked Horthy to see to it that soldiers did not meddle in politics.¹¹

Although Teleki rejected Werth's plan of regaining Transylvania with German military help, he did not give up hope of attaining a revision of his country's eastern boundaries through other means. The opportunity seemed to have presented itself in the summer of 1940. At the time Hitler was still hoping to force Britain to her knees and thereby ending the war in Western Europe. To do this Hitler needed peace elsewhere in Europe, especially in the south-east, from where came many of the foodstuffs, fuel and raw materials needed by the German war machine. In the meantime, the Russians had decided to act. At the end of June they confronted Romania with an ultimatum demanding the return of Bessarabia. The Soviet move caused hectic activity in Hungary.¹² The *honvéd* was mobilised and frantic efforts were made to ascertain Rome's and Berlin's attitudes to a Hungarian occupation of Transylvania in case of a Russo-Romanian conflict. But that conflict never came about. Romania surrendered Bessarabia without a fight. And from Berlin came word that Germany would be most unhappy about any disruption of peace in Eastern Europe.¹³

Even though the best opportunity for regaining Transylvania was now gone, the Hungarians continued their threatening attitude towards Romania, demanding at the same time that the dispute be submitted to a conference attended by the statesmen of Germany, Italy, Hungary and Romania. Teleki's aim was evident: threatened by a Hungarian-Romanian conflict at the time when Germany's interest demanded peace in Eastern Europe, the Axis powers would be forced to support the Hungarian claims in any negotiations on the issue. But, for the time being, Hitler did not wish to act as a mediator in a territorial dispute between Hungary and Romania. At a meeting of the German, Italian and Hungarian leaders in Munich during mid-July, he rejected the idea of a four-power conference and told the Hungarians to negotiate with the Romanians on a bilateral basis.¹⁴

In order to counter the threats to his country, Romania's King Carol took steps to improve his country's international position. In the spring of 1939, after the German occupation of Prague and Hungary's re-annexation of Ruthenia, King Carol mobilized Romania's army and, to imbue his people with a spirit of resistance, proclaimed the above-mentioned slogan "not one furrow" — referring to Hungarian aspirations regarding Transylvania. It was at this time that Bucharest accepted an Anglo-French guarantee, but balanced it with an economic agreement with Germany which, in the words of one historian, "assured a dominant position for Germany in the Romanian economy."¹⁵ While King Carol had realized the need to appease the Germans already in 1939, most of his subjects did not do so until the fall of Paris to the *Wehrmacht* in June of 1940. This development caused disappointment and a great deal of soul-searching in Bucharest. Its lessons were not lost on King Carol and his advisers. Soon, Romania renounced the Anglo-French guarantee. Next, the government sought a rapprochement with the extreme rightist Iron Guard, against which it had just carried out a bloody persecution campaign in the wake of the assassination of the country's Prime Minister by Gardist fanatics. At the same time, more right-wing politicians were co-opted into the country's leadership and, anti-Semitic laws were introduced with conspicuous references to the example shown by Nazi Germany.¹⁶

As could be expected under the circumstances, the Hungarian-Romanian discussions, mandated by Hitler in July, achieved nothing.¹⁷ There was no real reason for Bucharest to make substantial concessions: by this time Romania had acquired a new friend in Germany. The Hungarians could do no more than continue their threats against Romania and hope that Hitler, for the sake of peace in south-eastern Europe, would intervene in the dispute. They did not have to wait long. In August the *Führer* decided, for reasons that will be explained below, to settle the question of Hungarian-Romanian relations. This was almost what the Hungarians desired, but they wanted Hitler to act as a mediator in the dispute and not as an arbiter. They did not want to see another Vienna Award announced in which Germany and Italy imposed a settlement favourable mainly to German interests. If everything else failed, Teleki was prepared to accept arbitration, but he wanted the Romanians to ask for it: if Bucharest called for arbitral award, Budapest could insist on certain preconditions. Moreover, if the revision of the boundaries came about through arbitration requested by Romania, the settlement would have greater legitimacy in the eyes of the West, and Hungary would have a better chance to retain the territories gained at the end of the war, even in case of an Axis defeat.

This was Teleki's plan. Its essential feature was to threaten war in south-eastern Europe and compel the Romanians to request Hitler's diplomatic intervention. But in this plan Teleki was double-crossed. At the critical moment, Werth informed the Germans that, as a final measure, Hungary was willing to accept arbitration rather than go to war.¹⁹ After such a disclosure, it was not difficult for Berlin to call Teleki's bluff. In the end the fate of Transylvania was settled by another German-Italian dictum, one which transferred northern Transylvania and the "Székelyföld" (easternmost Transylvania) to Hungary.²⁰ The new territorial arrangement, as well as the manner it was imposed, left both sides bitterly dissatisfied.²¹

The events of the summer of 1940 amply demonstrated the fact that the ambitions and feelings of Hungarians and Romanians regarding Transylvania mattered little. What tended to determine the course of events in Eastern Europe at the time were the plans and machinations of the two great powers in the area, Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Accordingly, our attention might well turn to an examination of these two states' approach to the "Transylvanian question" during the war.

Soviet Intentions

At the time of the outbreak of World War II neither the Third *Reich* nor the USSR had direct ambitions concerning Transylvania. Both of them, however, had indirect interests in the region that began surfacing in the winter of 1939-40, and became quite obvious in the months thereafter. These interests stemmed from the fact that both dictatorships had concerns about and ambitions in areas abutting Transylvania, especially in certain other regions of Romania.

Russia's designs on Bessarabia have been noted. The region had been assigned to the USSR's sphere of influence in the secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact of August of 1939. Throughout the winter and the spring following, Soviet spokesmen made no secret of their government's interests in the region. Soviet motives for expanding to the southeast have been the subject of controversy and have been interpreted in widely different ways. According to some, Stalin and his associates were interested only or primarily in forestalling possible German moves in that part of Europe. Others have described Soviet intentions differently. Vojtech Mastny, in his *Russia's Road to the Cold War*, acknowledges that in part the Soviet moves were basically defensive: "Stalin sought to offset the growth of the German domain in the west by expanding his own in the east." Mastny, however, adds that another Soviet motive was Stalin's desire to "extend his

tyranny into neighbouring countries...”²² Another historian, Adam B. Ulam, points to still another Soviet motive. In his view, the Soviet leadership was painfully aware of the fact that in a possible war “the Ukraine was the Achilles' heel of the Soviet Union...” and, a move to detach this fertile and resource-rich land from the USSR “would be facilitated by the existence of sizable pockets of Ukrainians” beyond the Soviet borders. In this respect, “Romania occupied a vital strategic position...”²³ Writing more recently, British authors Anthony Read and David Fisher have stressed that Stalin was so intent on pressing his demands for Bessarabia, and even for Bukovina — which had never been part of Russia, and had not been mentioned in the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact — that he was willing to risk a crisis in German-Soviet relations.²⁴ Stalin's more than purely defensive posturing, in fact his often blatantly expansionist ambitions, are emphasized in a still more recent work, in historian R. C. Raack's *Stalin's Drive to the West, 1938-1945*.²⁵

While during the winter of 1939-40 the Soviets satisfied themselves with more-or-less veiled threats against Romania, in the late spring of 1940 they stepped up their preparations. The Red Army began concentrating its divisions along the Romanian frontier and began staging border incidents “at the rate of two or three a week...”²⁶ These preparations, however, did not result in either drastic diplomatic action or a military assault against Romania for the time being. Hitler's successes in the West probably discouraged the Soviet leaders from undertaking the latter. Moscow finally made its move at the end of June, 1940, at the time of Hitler's triumph over France. Bucharest was given an ultimatum to hand over Bessarabia, as well as northern Bukovina. The latter region (as has been mentioned above) had not belonged to the Russian Empire before 1918, but had a large number of Ukrainian inhabitants. The ultimatum was well timed. Romania's traditional ally, France, had just collapsed, and the Hungarians as well as the Bulgarians were also pressing their irredentist claims for the lands they had lost to Romania in the wake of World War I. Under the circumstances, the Romanians were not likely to resist. In fact, it seems that Stalin and his associates had great expectations when they presented their ultimatum. They had hoped that Bucharest would not only surrender the regions in question without resisting, but would then proceed to request a Soviet guarantee of the rest of Romania and thus become client state of Moscow.²⁷ They, however, were to be greatly disappointed. In the summer of 1940 Romania would not become a satellite of Soviet Russia, as the leaders in Bucharest would find a seemingly much more powerful — and, possibly, a more congenial — protector for their country in Nazi Germany.

Hitler and Transylvania

From the summer of 1940 to August of 1944 the country that had the greatest influence over the fate of Transylvania was the Third *Reich*. More precisely, the destiny of this land was in the hands of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. The *Führer's* interest in Transylvania was a function of his interest in Romania, in Hungarian-Romanian relations, and in his dealings with the Soviet Union. Numerous factors helped to shape Nazi German attitudes to Romania. Some of these resulted from events in the distant past, others were the consequences of more recent developments. Many Germans probably remembered that Romania had entered the First World War on the Allied side, despite the dynastic and other links that it had to the countries of the Central Powers before 1914. Furthermore, post-World War I Romania had been a beneficiary of the despised Versailles system and had been a client state of France (and more recently also of Britain). In contrast, Hungary had fought alongside Germany to the bitter end in 1918, had been a victim of the post-war peace settlement, and had been friendly to the Axis powers ever since the beginning of the Italo-German rapprochement in 1937. There were also Nazi German grievances on account of Romanian domestic affairs. The extreme right-wing and anti-Semitic Iron Guard movement had had a checkered history in King Carol's Romania. What many Nazis probably remembered was the campaigns of persecution that were visited upon Iron Guardists, usually after one of their assassination attempts on the life of a Romanian leader.²⁸ They would also recall the fact that, in November of 1938, Corneliu Codreanu, the leader of this movement, along with 13 of his associates, were shot while in police custody. In comparison, the Hungarian government's occasional persecution of right wing extremists in Hungary must have appeared to Nazi German observers an insignificant and bloodless affair. Hitler and his associates also had a reason to look upon King Carol with derision. Despite his royal (Hohenzollern) background, this playboy king scandalized many by divorcing his queen (the mother of the future King Michael) and living with his Jewish mistress, Helen (Magda) Wolff, alias Madame Lupescu.²⁹

Though these sentiments were in the minds of Hitler and other Nazi leaders at the time, what determined their day-to-day attitudes to Romania and their plans for action there were the immediate political and strategic circumstances of the times. The most important consideration for Hitler was

undoubtedly his concern for the energy requirements of his armed forces, in particular the Nazi war machine's need for Romanian petroleum from the Ploești oil fields north of Bucharest. At the time, Romania was already the Third *Reich's* largest supplier of oil, in contrast to the Soviet Union, which was a distant second.³⁰ Germany, in Hitler's view — and his generals no doubt agreed with him wholeheartedly — could not afford to risk losing this absolutely vital war material. It was for this reason that the Soviet military build-up in Western Ukraine made the German leadership anxious.³¹ As a result, various plans were made by the *Wehrmacht* to occupy Romania or, at least, the Ploești region.³² The plan involved moving troops through Hungary, which did not perturb Hitler's generals as they considered it an easy task — a mere matter of marching.³³ It might be recalled that it was these plans that had prompted General Werth, Hungary's Chief-of-Staff, to request that his government offer an alliance to the Germans.³⁴

In the end, no German attempt was made at the time to pre-empt a possible Soviet move to occupy Romania and her all-important oil fields. One reason for the about-face in German strategic planning was undoubtedly the beginning of Hitler's Western offensive. But even more important might have been the fact that, faced with the Soviet threat, the Romanians began to draw closer and closer to Nazi Germany — quite “swiftly” as some commentators have observed.³⁵ An important step in this process was the start of new negotiations between Berlin and Bucharest during early March, 1940, aimed at the reaching of an agreement which was to provide for the delivery of German arms to Romania in return for additional quantities of oil.³⁶ After considerable delays, a new regime of petroleum deliveries was agreed upon. The Germans even established a line of credit with the Romanians for purchase of increased supplies from the Ploești oil fields.³⁷

Although Hitler seems to have been irked by Soviet machinations against Romania, and would have probably have preferred to curb them, he was reminded by Ribbentrop that Bessarabia had been promised to the Soviets, and that the Pact of 1939 had also proclaimed Germany's “disinterestedness” in that part of Europe.³⁸ Evidently, some concessions had to be made to Stalin. The first of these would be German acquiescence to the Soviet demand for northern Bukovina, and the second would be German pressure — supplemented by similar advice from Rome — on Bucharest to yield to the Soviet ultimatum regarding Bessarabia. The Romanians were told that a part of the price of German friendship would be their compliance with Soviet territorial demands.

The Second Vienna Award

With the Bessarabian question out of the way, the road was cleared for the coming into the limelight of the question of Transylvania. That this was so was made sure by the Hungarians who were convinced that the time had come for settling that issue. As has been outlined above, the Teleki government threatened war, hoping to force Hitler (and Mussolini) to intervene in the dispute and put pressure on the Romanians to yield. While Hitler certainly did not want to see a conflict develop in south-eastern Europe which could threaten the flow of oil and other resources from that region to the *Reich*, he was not willing to become a tool for Hungarian ambitions either. As has been outlined above, he declined the Hungarian request to act as a mediator, and told the two sides to resolve their differences through negotiations. When these failed, Hitler decided to arbitrate. By this time he had found a plan that was to solve his concern over the safety of his Romanian oil supplies: he would attack and destroy the USSR in one massive military campaign in the spring of 1941. To prepare for this great undertaking, he needed peace in south-eastern Europe, and to achieve that peace, he had to see to it that the simmering conflict over Transylvania was extinguished. The Hungarians would receive some of their lost lands back, while the Romanians would have to reconcile themselves to such a loss in return for a German-Italian guarantee of the rest of Romania. Hitler probably suspected that both sides would be unhappy about the outcome of a new Vienna Award, and that it would be followed by both Romania and Hungary aligning their policies even closer with those of the Third *Reich*. What he could not predict, was the degree to which he would be able to exploit the "Transylvanian question" to Germany's advantage in his dealings with Budapest and Bucharest after August of 1940.

The fact that the Second Vienna Award disappointed both the Romanians and the Hungarians could be predicted, that it angered the Soviets as well, might not have been expected by casual observers at the time. "Stalin and Molotov were furious," to use the words of Anthony Read and David Fisher.³⁹ They were displeased both with the way it was arrived at and the provisions it contained. The Germans, with the cooperation of the Italians, had once again re-drawn the map of a part of Eastern Europe and confronted the Soviets with a *fait accompli*. In failing to consult the Soviet government, Berlin violated both the spirit and the terms of the 1939 Pact. Furthermore, the territorial guarantee that Germany and Italy offered to Romania as part of the Award, was seen in Moscow as being aimed directly against the USSR. It is not surprising that the Award's announcement was followed by weeks of recriminations between Moscow and Berlin. Authors Read and Fisher remark

that at this juncture the Transylvanian question caused “very serious strain” in German-Soviet relations, and came “close to destroying the pact [of August, 1939].”⁴⁰

Initially at least, the most disappointed in the Award were the Romanians. No one had prepared them for the magnitude of the coming territorial changes. They had abandoned their Allied orientation quite some time ago and had done everything to please the Germans; accordingly, they did not believe that Berlin would force them to make great concessions to Budapest. For this very reason they had refused to make any such concessions during their discussions with the Hungarians and offered to make only frontier adjustments when they discussed the matter with the Germans.⁴¹ Illustrative of the Romanians' shock at the final territorial settlement was Foreign Minister Manoilescu's fainting when the map of the new Transylvania was unfolded during the Award's announcement in Vienna. At home in Bucharest (as has been mentioned) on hearing the news, people cried in the streets. Massive demonstrations were organized against the Award, and demands were made for the recovery of not only the lost territories but also the occupation of all the territory that had been promised to Romania by the Allies in 1916.⁴²

Romania's leaders, however, soon recovered from shock and accepted the realities of the new order in Europe. Germany was now the dominant power on the continent and her friendship had to be earned. The loss of northern Transylvania was just a part of the price that had to be paid for Romania's former association with the Allies, and now the last vestiges of this orientation had to be rooted out. King Carol, now completely discredited, had to leave the country. Power was transferred to Marshal Ion Antonescu who became Prime Minister and *Conducator*, the Romanian equivalent for *Duce* or *Führer*. Under his guidance the process of Romania becoming a satellite of the Third *Reich* accelerated. The descent to the status of an Axis client state would have many stepping stones, but the most significant one would be Antonescu's request for German troops, ostensibly to train the Romanian Army, but in reality to underscore Bucharest's acceptance of its new role as a useful Axis ally.⁴³ This step was accompanied by other measures in Romanian domestic and foreign policy.

At home, the process of Romania's transformation into an Axis satellite was accompanied by several changes. The most disturbing of these was the resurgence of the Iron Guard, the formerly persecuted fanatical fascist movement. Prominent Guardists were co-opted into Antonescu's government, including Prince Mihai Sturdza, who became the new foreign minister. At the same time, the Guard experienced an expansion of its membership and an increase in its activities. The latter usually manifested itself in growing

Guardist propaganda — usually aimed against liberals, Jews, capitalists, and foreigners — as well as actual physical attacks against members of these groups. In foreign policy the most important step Antonescu's regime took, second only in importance to the stationing of German troops on Romanian soil, was the country's accession, in November, 1940, to the German-Japanese-Italian Tripartite Pact. Antonescu's prime motive for this move was probably the demonstration of his devotion to the Axis, with an eye to paving the way for a reversal of the Second Vienna Award, should the Hungarians not keep up with him in the race for Hitler's graces.⁴⁴

The Hungarians, however, were not about to allow Antonescu's Romania to overtake them in this race. Not unlike in that country, in Hungary too, the weeks and months that followed the Vienna arbitration witnessed the growth of Nazi German influence and the further alignment of Budapest's policies with those of the Third *Reich*. The first move in this direction came hard on the heels of the announcement of the Vienna Award. The German leaders asked Hungary to sign a protocol giving extensive rights and privileges to the country's German minority. Beyond such guarantees as access to minority education, the agreement gave Hungary's Germans the right to profess the Nazi ideology. Who qualified as an ethnic German was to be determined by an organization of Germans in Hungary. Next came economic concessions, including promises of additional food exports to Germany as well as of lumber from those parts of Transylvania that had been recently transferred to Hungary. In the realm of military affairs, the Hungarians found themselves acquiescing in the German demand for transit for the troops destined for Romania. The operation was shrouded in secrecy — the trains travelled at night to keep them from public view. In November these concessions were capped by Hungary's accession to the Tripartite Pact.⁴⁵ The Hungarians had the dubious honour of becoming signatories before the Romanians did. For now, they could assure themselves that they were ahead in the race for Hitler's good will. But it would soon become obvious that the race would have to be contested again and again.

An important factor in this race was the fact that in Antonescu Hitler found a man to his liking. The little, red-haired general made a good impression on the *Führer* at the time of his first official visit to Berlin in November, and the two remained on good terms thereafter.⁵⁰ That was in sharp contrast to Hitler's relationship with Horthy, the admiral who in 1938 had the effrontery of telling the German leader that, if a war would break out between Germany and England, the latter would prevail, because of her navy. Not surprisingly, it would be during Antonescu's November visit that the

Führer would make a hint to him about the possibility of a future revision of the Vienna Award's terms in favour of Romania.⁵¹

The most serious consequence of the emerging race between the Hungarians and the Romanians for Hitler's good will was their involvement in Hitler's war against Russia. In this connection the Romanians stood to benefit mainly because of the strategic importance of their country in any assault against the USSR. Not surprisingly, Antonescu was asked to participate in the preparations for *Operation Barbarossa*. No such invitation was extended to the Hungarians. Hungary was strategically not as important, and Hitler worried that any secrets passed on to the Hungarians would find their way to London. One of Antonescu's motive for offering full-fledged participation in the German attack on Soviet Russia was the recovery of the territories that Romania had lost to the USSR the year before. His other motive has been identified by one historian: "he... intended to demonstrate the superior value of Romania's friendship to Germany as compared with that of Bulgaria,... and of Hungary..."⁵²

The Hungarians — with some exceptions, the most notable of which was General Werth — had hoped to stay out of that conflict. They managed to do so for a few days, until great pressure was brought on them from various quarters. The most weighty consideration in the minds of decision-makers in Budapest was undoubtedly the fear that, if they stayed out of the war, they would fall out of favour with Hitler and might forfeit the territory they had only recently regained from Romania.⁵³

An Instrument of Blackmail

This rivalry between Romania and Hungary continued through most of the war, and Hitler exploited it to the fullest.⁵⁴ Whenever one side or the other failed to live up to the German leader's expectations, it would be threatened with territorial changes in favour of the other side. "The master of the 'New Order' knew," remarked the Romanian diplomat Alexandre Cretzianu, "that in the Transylvanian question... he held the most perfect instrument... of blackmail..."⁵⁵ The most blatant use of this "instrument" was probably made by Hitler in March of 1944 when he summoned Horthy to Salzburg to demand an explanation for the Hungarian government's "treasonous" behaviour, including its secret attempts to negotiate a separate peace with the Western Allies. The *Führer* told the Regent that unless Hungary complied with German demands — appoint a subservient government, allow German troops and security forces to occupy the country, solve the "Jewish question",

etc. — she would be taken over by her Axis neighbours. In any such occupation, Romania would not only regain northern Transylvania, but would seize much additional Hungarian territory.⁵⁶

Threatened with such dire consequences, the Horthy complied with Hitler's demands, at least for the time being. By August of that year, however, the Regent was once again making preparations for Hungary's exit from the war. In this undertaking, however, the Romanians "beat him to it" and managed to switch sides first. This time Hitler was ready to give all of Transylvania to the seemingly still "loyal" Hungary. The entrance of the first divisions of the Red Army into Transylvania quickly drove home the lesson that the age of Hitler being the arbiter of the fate of Transylvania was about to end. Indeed, by the time the Hungarians had tried to leave the war in mid-October — in a pitifully unsuccessful attempt — an angry Hitler was in no position to offer Transylvania to anybody: it was by then firmly in the hands of the Soviets and their new-found Romanian allies. The new arbiter of the future of that land was by now Stalin, the very man whose ambitions in that direction had been so thoroughly disappointed only four years earlier. Before the post-1940 Soviet policies are examined, however, attention might be paid to the views on the Transylvanian question of the other major Allied Powers, whose technical experts — and sometimes even leaders — also had opinions on the matter.

British Attitudes

The attitudes of the Atlantic democracies to the problem of Transylvania during the Second World War were influenced above all by the nature of the relationship that existed between the Danubian states of Romania and Hungary on the one hand, and Great Britain and the United States on the other. As long as Romania was under the Franco-British guarantee, for example, she enjoyed British diplomatic support; however, when she began drifting into the Axis orbit, she increasingly became treated as an enemy country until, in December of 1941, Britain finally declared war on her. Hungary's case was not very different. Contrary to what might be expected, before the autumn of 1940 there had been some sympathy toward the Budapest regime in London, despite Hungary's links to Italy and Germany. This favourable assessment of Hungary had, in fact, pre-dated the war and manifested itself occasionally. In the late fall of 1938, for example, the British accepted the results of the First Vienna Award — which returned the Magyar-populated districts of Czecho-Slovakia to Hungary — without

protest. The British government, however, reacted differently to the Second Vienna Award. Prime Minister Winston Churchill in fact declared that his government could not recognize a territorial arrangement imposed by countries that were at war with Britain.⁵⁷ The transit of German troops destined for Romania through Hungary, Budapest's accession to the Tripartite Pact and, especially, Hungary's participation — even though belated and limited — in the German assault on Yugoslavia in April of 1941, further alienated the Foreign Office, yet an actual British declaration of war on Budapest did not come until December of 1941.

The new official attitudes in London were not reflected in the first relevant analysis that was produced by the British experts assigned the task of preparing plans for a post-war world.⁵⁸ The study, entitled “The Problem of Transylvania,” was completed in mid-December 1942. It examined several possible scenarios that might develop regarding Transylvania during the war and, especially, at the peace negotiations. How any territorial settlement between Hungary and Romania might be arranged, was to depend largely on which of the planned confederation of states — the northern, the central, the southern, or a variation of these — the two states in question might belong to.

In all of these, Hungary was to end up with a settlement that was more favourable to her than the post-World War I territorial arrangement had been. In the eyes of the British experts, Hungary was entitled to most of the lands between the “Trianon border” and the western frontier of historic Transylvania. Possibly, she could get the Székely districts of south-eastern Transylvania as well, and even a “corridor” between the two. Failing this, the Székely region was to get autonomy within Romania. And, in a final settlement, the two countries were to possess minority populations of equal size: about a million Hungarians for Romania, and the same number of Romanians for Hungary.

The ideal solution, according to the study, would be the creation of a sovereign Transylvania, organized on the pattern of the Swiss cantons, with a great deal of cultural autonomy for the various districts and equality of the local (Romanian, Magyar and German) languages. The authors of the study, however, saw few prospects for the realization of this solution. They thought that it could come about only if both Hungary and Romania belonged to the same post-war East European confederation that the British experts (and others) had in mind for the region, and they doubted whether either Budapest or Bucharest would support such a solution.⁵⁹

These recommendations were formulated while in British government circles attitudes to Hungary were quite negative. After February 1943, however, British views on Hungary began to soften.⁶⁰ By this time Romania

must have appeared to London a more stalwart Axis ally than Hungary, and the Soviet Union began to show an increasing interest in Romania especially for the purposes of the post-war reorganization of the region. This revival of British sympathy toward Hungary proved of little benefit to her, as London's ability to influence events in that part of the world kept diminishing. By early 1944 the British government could hardly have exerted influence there without American support, but American interest in the region was marginal at best and, by the time it had intensified somewhat, it was too late for the Atlantic democracies to counterbalance the overwhelming influence that the Soviets had acquired in Eastern Europe.

American Plans

In the United States interest in the Transylvanian question was confined, until almost the very end of the war, to the experts who were charged with the task of developing plans for the possible territorial reorganization of post-war Eastern Europe. These experts discussed the Transylvanian question early in 1943, within the Territorial Subcommittee of the State Department's Advisory Committee that had the task of working out recommendations for future American peace proposals. The members of this committee quickly rejected both the idea of giving all of Transylvania to Romania, and that of awarding all of it to Hungary. The former was seen as leaving too many Magyars under Romanian rule, the latter as leaving even more Romanians under Magyar sovereignty. The 1940 arrangement was also deemed as unsuitable, partly for economic and partly for ethnic considerations. The concept of an independent Transylvania appeared attractive to some committee members, but they did not think that there was much support for it either in Bucharest or in Budapest — or, as a matter of fact, in Transylvania. Still another idea that emerged was the concept of an autonomous Transylvania confederated with Romania and Hungary. Later this idea was elevated to the status of a “recommended” solution, along with another proposal that the Western border of post-Trianon Romania be re-drawn more in line with linguistic realities.⁶¹

The Territorial Subcommittee's “recommendations” served as basis for the plans of another State Department bureau, the Division of Political Studies. This body's proposals regarding Transylvania envisaged the retrocession of the western parts of post-1919 Romania to Hungary — but they left the Székely counties within Romania. In late 1943 and early 1944, it was the Inter-Divisional Country and Area Committee's (IDCAC) turn to examine the Transylvanian question. The IDCAC reiterated the idea of ceding a substan-

tial strip of western Romania to Hungary — with a population of over one million inhabitants — and recommended autonomy for the Székely region within a post-war Romania. A later IDCAC document, dated 1 March 1944, did not repeat the proposal for Székely autonomy and talked only of minor border adjustments in favour of Hungary, but resurrected the possibility of creating an independent or autonomous Transylvania.⁶²

The IDCAC's recommendations were in turn examined by still higher-level State Department committees during the late spring and early summer of 1944. In this process they were also abridged. By the time they were presented to President Roosevelt in September of 1944, they contained only a single sentence which called for the return to Hungary of a “narrow strip” of land along the western border of post-1919 Romania.⁶³ By then, of course, the strategic realities had reduced the American position on Transylvania to not much more than academic theorizing.

Stalin: the Arbiter of Transylvania's Fate

From September of 1944 on, the country that was in singular position to determine the future of Transylvania, was the USSR. By then gone were the days when the Kremlin looked upon Hungary's interests in the region with disinterest bordering on sympathy, as it did in the early summer of 1940.⁶⁴ Since then, Hungary's leaders had committed many “crimes” in the eyes of the Soviets: they had allowed the settlement of the Transylvanian issue without consultation with Moscow, they had permitted German troops to move through Hungary, they had participated in the German invasion of Yugoslavia and, more importantly, in that of the Soviet Union itself.

Stalin's determination to exact revenge from Hungary for her misdeeds became abundantly clear in late 1941, during the discussions that the Soviet leaders had with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden during his visit to Moscow in mid-December. The two sides were in the process of drafting a treaty of alliance and military assistance when the Soviets revealed their plan for a secret protocol to the treaty concerning the redrawing of Europe's borders after the war. Here Stalin's plans for punishing Hungary were revealed. Hungary was not only to relinquish any territories she had regained before and during the war, but Czechoslovakia was “to be enlarged in the south at the expense of Hungary which ought to pay the deserved penalty for her behaviour...” Regarding Hungary's eastern borders, Stalin had similar proposals. He announced his plan to have Soviet military and naval bases in post-war Romania, which would be “somewhat expanded in the west

at the expense of Hungary... [as] additional punishment to Hungary for her role in the war.”⁶⁵

While Stalin's suggestions of December 1941 may have been an accurate illustrations of his vengeful attitude toward Hungary, they were not entirely accurate prognostications of Soviet policy on the Transylvanian question during the next four years — and they were certainly not precise forecasting of wartime Soviet rhetoric on this issue. During the Anglo-Soviet discussions of policy toward lesser Axis allies in 1943, reference was made to the restoration of wartime conquests only, and not to further territorial punishments for the vanquished. But when it came to Soviet propaganda, even this principle was shunted aside. When liberation movements were being established among POW officers in the USSR, the Soviets wanted to have the example of the Free Germany Committee copied by Hungarian and Romanian officers in their custody. For this purpose, they tried to make sure that rumours reached the former that, after the war, Transylvania might end up in Hungary, as an “autonomous” province. To the Romanians, however, they told that “Transylvania will be Romanian.”⁶⁶ Stalin proved himself a good student of Hitler in exploiting the Transylvanian issue to his advantage.

By the summer of 1944 the strategic situation in Eastern Europe had changed in a way as to make the Soviet leadership favour Romania over Hungary in any negotiations over the future of Transylvania. The latter country had been occupied by the Germans in March and a more compliant pro-Nazi government had been installed in Budapest. In the meantime, elements of Romania's elite began secret armistice negotiations with the Soviets. The latter in the meantime made preparations for a massive Red Army offensive into Romania — while ceasing operations on the Polish front while the *Wehrmacht* prepared to liquidate the Polish Home Army. On August 23, three days into the Red Army offensive, Antonescu was ousted and the new regime under King Michael defected from the Axis. Soon, Russian forces — and their new-found Romanian allies — made their way into Transylvania from the south, where their entry had not been anticipated.

In the negotiations that accompanied these changes the Transylvanian question occupied an important position. At first the Soviets offered to annul the Second Vienna Award should Romania switch sides in the war. When the actual armistice deal was signed, however, the transfer of northern Transylvania (or a “large part” thereof) to Romania, was made subject to the approval of the coming peace conference. Nevertheless, early in March 1945 the Soviets permitted a new Romanian government, dominated by then by the communists, to establish control over all the Transylvanian lands that had belonged to Romania between 1919 and 1940.⁶⁷ Stalin's long-standing

ambition to control Romania (including Transylvania) had at last been realized. Theoretically, the acquisition of northern Transylvania by Romania's Soviet-controlled regime was still to be approved by the peace conference, but few in Eastern Europe expected that approval not to materialize in view of the overwhelming influence the Soviets had achieved in that region.

Indeed, the post-war peace negotiations brought no change to the state of affairs that had developed in Transylvania by early 1945. True, the question of the Romanian-Hungarian border was on the agenda at both the Potsdam Conference and at the subsequent series of meetings designed to prepare the peace treaties with the vanquished Axis states, but nothing came of the American efforts to keep this issue alive. The British government had decided, even before July of 1945, to call for no more than the restoration of the pre-1938 borders in Eastern Europe. The Americans persisted a little longer, sometimes only half-heartedly, but could do little in the face of persistent Soviet opposition. The issue was finally taken off the agenda in September of 1946. Unlike the Versailles peace treaties in the wake of the First World War, the treaties that followed the Second did not even contain any guarantees of the rights of minorities living under alien rule.⁶⁸ Sponsored by the new European superpower of the post-war era, the Soviet Union, the new solution for the Hungarian-Romanian territorial dispute sealed the fate of Transylvania and her peoples for a long time to come.

NOTES

The author would like to acknowledge his indebtedness to the agencies that have supported his researches over the years, especially the Academic Research Program of the Department of National Defence and the Standard Research Grants Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This paper had been prepared for a special volume of another journal — a volume that never materialized. Since it had been written, much literature has appeared that relates to the subject. Perhaps the most important such work is Balázs Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál* (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), also available in English, in an abridged edition: *Pál Teleki (1874-1941): The Life of a Controversial Hungarian Politician* (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs; also Wayne, New Jersey: Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications; distr., Columbia University Press 2006).

¹ The Compromise or *Ausgleich* of 1867 reorganized the Habsburg Empire into the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in which the Kingdom of Hungary became autonomous. In addition to the dynastic link, which meant that Francis

Joseph was at once Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, the two halves of the Monarchy shared defence policy, foreign policy, and constituted a customs union.

² Béla Köpeczi, Ambrus Miskolczy, and Zoltán Szász, *Erdély története, 1830-tól napjainkig* [The History of Transylvania from 1830 to Our Days], vol. III of *Erdély története* [History of Transylvania] Béla Köpeczi *et al.* eds. (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1986), p. 1196 (citing the results of the 1850-51 census), and p. 1739 (here the results of the 1910 census are cited).

³ For a succinct overview of Hungary's treatment by the peacemakers see C.A. Macartney and A.W. Palmer, *Independent Eastern Europe: A History* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 118-30, and 161-67. Their conclusion illustrates Hungary's fate aptly: "Hungary was the diminished remnant left after the claims of Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Yugoslavia and Austria had been met." (p. 130). Concerning the ethnic composition of the territories transferred from Hungary to Romania, Macartney and Palmer give the following statistics: 2,800,000 Romanians, 1,700,000 Hungarians, 560,000 Germans, and 200,000 others (p. 168).

⁴ According to statistics derived from the 1910 Hungarian census, in six of the counties transferred to Romania (Szatmár, Bihar, Maros-Torda, Udvarhely, Csík and Háromszék), Hungarians constituted the absolute majority. In two other counties (Brasso and Ugocsa) Hungarians were the largest ethnic group, while in one (Nagyküküllő) the Germans were. In the other fourteen transferred counties (or part of counties), Romanians constituted the largest group or had absolute majorities. Mihály Korom, "A második bécsi döntéstől a fegyverszünetig" [From the Second Vienna Award to the Armistice], in *Tanulmányok Edrély történetéről* [Studies about Transylvania's History], ed. István Rác (Debrecen: Csokonai Kiadó, 1988), 170f.

⁵ On István Bethlen's ideas regarding this issue see my article, "Count Istvan Bethlen's Secret Plan for the Restoration of the Empire of Transylvania," *East European Quarterly* VIII (1975): 413-23. This paper points out that Bethlen would have probably accepted the establishment of an autonomous Transylvania within a larger East European federation. The best political biography of Bethlen is Ignác Romsics, *István Bethlen: A Great Conservative Statesman of Hungary, 1874-1946* (Highland Lakes, N.J.: Social Science Monographs – Atlantic Research and Publications, 1995), Mario Fenyo, transl. A short biography of Teleki is by Loránt Tilkovszky, *Pál Teleki, 1879-1941: A Biographical Sketch* (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1974). Balázs Ablonczy's much substantial biography of Teleki has been cited in the introduction to these endnotes.

⁶ Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1970), 306f.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁸ István Bethlen's secret memorandum, undated but probably written in early September, 1939. It is printed in *Magyarország külpolitikája a II. Világháború kitörésének időszakában, 1939-1940* [Hungary's Foreign Policy in the Era of the Outbreak of World War II], Gyula Juhász, ed. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1962), volume IV of the series *Diplomáciai iratok Magyarország külpolitikájához, 1936-*

1945 [Diplomatic Documents on Hungary's Foreign Policy, 1936-1945], general ed. László Zsigmond (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1962-82), doc. no. 577 (pp. 743-61).

The memorandum is summarized in English in my study: "Count Istvan Bethlen's Secret Plan..." pp. 413-23.

⁹ C.A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957, 2nd edition, 1961, 2 vols.) Published in the United States as *A History of Hungary, 1929-1945* (New York: Praeger, 1957.) 2 vols. The references in this paper are to the British edition. Vol. 1, pp. 388-89.

¹⁰ Werth's memorandum is cited in Gyula Juhász, *A Teleki-kormány külpolitikája, 1939-1941* [The Foreign Policies of the Teleki Government, 1939-1941] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1964), pp. 103f. The same author's textbook on Hungarian foreign policy during the Horthy era does not go into much detail: Gyula Juhász, *Magyarország külpolitikája, 1919-1945* [Hungary's Foreign Policies, 1919-1945] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1969), pp. 216-19. This book was published later in English: Gyula Juhász, *Hungarian Foreign Policy, 1919-1945* (Budapest, 1979).

¹¹ Juhász, *A Teleki-kormány külpolitikája*, p. 106. Werth was not only a *Sváb* (a "Swabian," i.e. an ethnic German), but was married to a citizen of the Third Reich. According to Nagy-Talavera, in the 1941 census Werth declared himself a German. *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

¹² Juhász, *A Teleki-kormány külpolitikája*, pp. 121-24.

¹³ Telegram [from Ribbentrop], to State Secretary von Weizsäcker, 1 July 1940, giving instructions to von Erdmannsdorf, the German Minister in Budapest. Also, memorandum by [Weizsäcker], 2 July 1940, detailing the German *démarche* to the Hungarians. Printed in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945* (hereafter *DGFP*), ed. Raymond James Sontag, John W. Wheeler-Benett, *et al.*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. X, *The War Years, June 23-August 31, 1940* (London, 1957), doc. nos. 75 and 81.

¹⁴ News of Hungary's threatening attitude was reported to Berlin by Erdmannsdorf. See his telegraphic reports of July 1st and 2nd, printed in *DGFP*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. X, *The War Years, une 23...*, doc. nos. 69 and 85. The record of the discussions between Hitler, Count Ciano and the Hungarian delegation, of 11 July 1940, is given in doc. no. 146 (179-82). These events are summarized in Juhász, *A Teleki-kormány külpolitikája*, pp. 150f.

¹⁵ Nagy-Talavera, *Green Shirts*, p. 303. In his memoirs, Romanian diplomat Alexandre Cretzianu tells the story of the economic negotiations with the Germans and the origins of the Anglo-French guarantee. According to him, Viorel Tilea, the Romanian Minister in London, told the Foreign Office that the Germans had presented his government with an ultimatum to accept the proposed economic pact. Tilea's ruse worked: it resulted in the offer by London and Paris to extend a guarantee to Romania, in order to forestall a possible German invasion of that country. British efforts to have Moscow, Warsaw, and Ankara involved in the guarantee were not successful. Alexandre Cretzianu, *Relapse into Bondage 1918-1947: The Political Memoirs of Alexandre Cretzianu*. S.D. Spector, compiler, chapter 7 in *Southeastern*

Euorope 16 (1989 [1997]) pp. 58-61. Romanian discussions with the Foreign Office were conducted at the time by Tilea and Cretzianu.

¹⁶ Nagy-Talavera, *Green Shirts*, pp. 304-05.

¹⁷ The story of these negotiations is outlined in András Hory, *Még egy barázdát sem* [Not even one furrow] (Vienna, 1967), pp. 34-73. Hory was a senior diplomat in Hungary's diplomatic service during the late 1930s. He headed the Hungarian delegation. For an English-language summary of these talks see my *Hungary's Way to World War II* (Toronto: Helicon, 1968), 130-33.

¹⁹ Memorandum by Teleki addressed to Regent Miklós Horthy, 1 September 1940. Printed in Miklós Szinai and László Szücs (eds.), *Horthy Miklós titkos iratai* [The Secret Papers of Miklós Horthy] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1965), doc. no. 49 (pp. 233-9). There is some controversy concerning the question whether the Romanians had requested arbitration, or agreed to it only after they were confronted by an Italo-German ultimatum to do so. Nagy-Talavera suggests that King Carol had asked Hitler to arbitrate (*op. cit.* p. 306), while Korom, citing Romanian sources, argues that the Romanians agreed to arbitration at the last moment, only under heavy pressure. See Korom, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

²⁰ The Award transferred about a million Romanians to Hungary and left almost half a million Hungarians within the new boundaries of Romania. A settlement which would have been satisfactory to both sides was probably impossible. For further details see Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, vol. I, pp. 422-24; also, Andrew Ludanyi, *Hungarians in Romania and Yugoslavia: A Comparative Study of Communist Nationality Policies*, appendix B. A doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1971 (pp. 493-96). For the Award's text, see *DGFP*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. X, *The War Years, June 23...*, doc. no. 413 (pp. 581-84).

²¹ While many Hungarians were unhappy with not getting more of Transylvania back, some were displeased by the fact that certain railway lines connecting the *Székelyföld* to other Hungarian territory, were left passing through Romania. Teleki, in particular, was displeased with the way the whole affair had transpired and, especially, with Werth's indiscretion. He protested the Chief-of-Staff's actions to Horthy, and offered his own resignation, to make room for the appointment of someone who could reign in the soldiers. Horthy promised to remedy several of Teleki's grievances, but refused to accept his resignation. Teleki's memorandum to Horthy, 1 September 1940, *loc. cit.* See also Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, vol. I, p. 433; and my study, "Civil-Military Relations in Nazi Germany's Shadow: The Case of Hungary, 1939-1941," in *Swords and Covenants: Essays in Honour of the Centennial of the Royal Military College of Canada*, ed. Adrian Preston and Peter Dennis (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 230-32.

²² Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 28f.

²³ Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 299.

²⁴ Anthony Read and David Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace: Hitler, Stalin and the Nazi-Soviet Pact, 1939-1941* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), 463-73, 503-05.

²⁵ R.C. Raack, *Stalin's Drive to the West, 1938-1945: The Origins of the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995). According to Raack, Stalin's "grandiose plan" in the early spring of 1940 was to wait till Germany, as well as France and Britain, became exhausted in a war of attrition — on the pattern of 1914-18 — and then move against Europe. "Stalin," Raack remarks, "had woefully miscalculated." (p. 52). For my own views on this subject see "Stalin's Wartime Plans for Transylvania, 1939-1945," in *Hungary's Historical Legacies: Studies in Honor of Professor Steven Béla Várdy*, ed. Dennis P. Hupchick and R. William Weisberger (Boulder and New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 2000), 146-54.

²⁶ Read and Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace*, p. 463.

²⁷ Adam B. Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and his Era* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), 525. According to Raack, in Britain many people failed to recognize the real motives behind "the Soviet move" and judged it "as defensive." See Raack, *Stalin's Drive to the West, 1938-1945*, p. 54. Indeed, the late C.A. Macartney found evidence of Soviet attempts to cause domestic unrest in Romania and put further pressure on Budapest at the time. According to Macartney's sources, communists in Transylvania had been ordered to proclaim "a Soviet Republic in Transylvania simultaneously with the Russian advance into Bessarabia." Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, vol. I, n. 2, p. 405.

²⁸ Prime Minister Ion Duca was assassinated on 29 Dec. 1933, and Prime Minister Armand Calinescu was shot to death in broad daylight, in downtown Bucharest, on 21 Sept. 1939. In April of the previous year, an alleged Guardist plot to kill King Carol was "discovered" and resulted in renewed persecution of Guardists. The members of this organization almost did manage to kill the king, at the time of his escape from Romania in September, 1940, but the bullet-riddled royal train, with the Iron Guard in hot pursuit, managed to cross the Yugoslav border before the Guardists had a chance to finish their job. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.* p. 308.

²⁹ At one point Carol swore to keep Madame Lupescu in exile, but promptly reneged on his promise. See Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

³⁰ Read and Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace*, p. 464. The Romanians also supplied Germany with grains, meat and timber.

³¹ Read and Fisher point out that, even after the settlement of the Bessarabian issue, the presence of large numbers of Red Army troops there continued to make Hitler "extremely nervous." *The Deadly Embrace*, p. 503.

³² Read and Fisher tell the story of German Minister in Bucharest Wilhelm Fabricius devising a plan for German commandos sailing from Vienna to Bucharest on the Danube using passenger ships. (*The Deadly Embrace*, p. 503.) For an account of the Hungarians receiving information to the effect that a German move for the occupation of a part or all of Romania was imminent, see Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, vol. I, pp. 395f.

³³ Swiss-Hungarian historian Peter Gostony (Péter Gosztonyi) has told the story (possibly apocryphal) how Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, the then Chief of the German High Command (OKW), assessed the problem of the *Wehrmacht* occupying Hungary on its way to Romania. When asked how much time the *Wehrmacht* would need for this operation, Keitel replied “24 hours.” When asked how much time would be needed if the Hungarians resisted, Keitel responded “12 hours.” When pressed for an explanation of the difference, Keitel quipped that in case of a hostile occupation of Hungary there would be no need for speeches of welcome. Péter Gosztonyi, *A magyar honvédség a második világháborúban* [The Hungarian Army in the Second World War] (Roma: Katolikus Szemle, 1986), 21.

³⁴ While General Werth advocated a German alliance, Hungary's civilian leaders made plans for the proclamation of a government-in-exile, in case the Germans actually made their move. This story is told in my “Bridges to the West: The Horthy Regime's Reinsurance Policies in 1941,” *War and Society*, 7, 1 (May 1989): 1-23.

³⁵ Read and Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace*, p. 464.

³⁶ Telegram, Fabricius to [Ribbentrop], 7 March 1940, printed in *DGFP*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. VIII, *The War Years, Sept. 4, 1939 to March 18, 1940* (London, 1954), doc. no. 660. Ribbentrop told *Luftwaffe* boss Hermann Göring that the deal was very advantageous to the *Reich*. *Ibid.*, doc. no. 678.

³⁷ Telegram, Neubacher (Germany's special representative for economic questions in Bucharest), to [Ribbentrop], 28 May 1940, printed in *DGFP*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. IX, *The War Years, March 18 to June 22, 1940* (London, 1956), doc. no. 338.

³⁸ Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, pp. 298f.

³⁹ Read and Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace*, p. 504. József Kristóffy, the Hungarian Minister in Moscow, became aware of this fact rather late, in early October. See his telegram to Budapest of 3 Oct. 1940, printed in *A moszkvai magyar követség jelentései 1935-1941* [The Reports of the Moscow Legation, 1935-1941], ed. Peter Pastor (Budapest: Századvég Kiadó & Atlanti Kiadó, 1992), doc. no. 180 (p. 256).

⁴⁰ Read and Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace*, pp. 504f.

⁴¹ On July 26, Romanian Minister President Gigurtu told Ribbentrop that Romania would try to base a settlement with Hungary “on the formula of boundary revision plus exchange of population, for a large-scale boundary revision alone would create a Romanian irredentist movement and lead to new complications...” The record of this conversation is printed in *DGFP*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. X, *The War Years, June 23...*, doc. no. 233 (p. 305.).

⁴² Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, Vol. 1, p. 431.

⁴³ The sending of a German military mission to Romania had been first suggested by King Carol. See Cretzianu, *Relapse into Bondage... Political Memoirs*, p. 146. This fact is also confirmed in the documentary evidence: Fabricius to the Foreign Ministry, 2 July 1940, printed in *DGFP*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. X, *The War Years, June 23...*, doc. no. 80.

⁴⁴ At the same time this conservative military man might also have been courting the *Führer's* friendship in order build up his own position *vis-à-vis* the Iron Guard whose ideas and unruliness he (and his friend and adviser Mihai Antonescu) disliked. For an analysis of post-August, 1940, Romanian politics see Cretzianu, *Relapse into Bondage... Political Memoirs*, pp. 158-70; as well as Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, chapter XI. Soon, Antonescu would move to curb the Iron Guard's influence.

⁴⁵ For a more detailed outline see my *Hungary's Way*, pp. 140-42. In this book I suggested that, not unlike Antonescu, Teleki made concessions to Hitler not only to keep ahead of Bucharest in retaining Hitler's goodwill regarding Transylvania, but to strengthen his position at home against an ever more vociferous extreme right. (*Ibid.*, pp. 142f.)

⁵⁰ Norman Stone, *Hitler* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1980), p. 107. Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, Vol. 1, p. 444.

⁵¹ Hitler's words: "The last chapter in the history of Transylvania is not yet written," are quoted by Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, p. 318. On Antonescu's Berlin visit and Hitler's reception of him see also Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, Vol. 1, p. 444.

⁵² Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, 2 vols., (New York: Norton, 1973-1974), Vol. 1., p. 252.

⁵³ The catalyst in Budapest's decision to abandon the original stance had been a mysterious incident in which planes, identified by some as those of the Red Air Force, bombed the city of Kassa (today's Košice). The incident resulted cries for "retaliation" and convinced the then Hungarian Prime Minister László Bárdossy that the Germans had staged the attack to force his hand. On this see my articles: "New Twist to an Old Riddle: The Bombing of Kassa (Kosice), June 26, 1941," *Journal of Modern History*, 44 (1972), 232-42; and "Contradictory Evidence Concerning Hungary's Declaration of War on the USSR in June, 1941," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 19, (1977), 480-88. These studies suggest that the air-raid might have been carried out by the Soviets after all, but was meant to hit a Slovak target, in retaliation for the Slovak declaration of war on the USSR the day before.

⁵⁴ This is not to say that there were no secret contacts between the two countries aimed at making arrangements for Transylvania's future in case Hitler lost the war — which became more and more obvious to both sides after 1942 — but nothing came of these feelers. Maurice Czikkann-Zichy, *My Life: Politics and Diplomacy in Turbulent Times* (Englewood, N.J., Universe Publishing, 1986), pp. 40-41. Also, Dániel Csátori, *Forgoszállban: Magyar-Román viszony, 1940-1945* [In the Whirlwind: Hungarian-Romanian Relations, 1940-1945] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1969), pp. 246-51.

⁵⁵ Cretzianu, *Relapse into Bondage... Political Memoirs*, p. 176. "Moreover," Cretzianu added, "[Hitler] knew that Romania knew [this]."

⁵⁶ The most up-to-date account of Horthy's visit with Hitler of March 1944 is Thomas Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918-1944* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1994), 325-33. An earlier work is Mario D. Fenyo, *Hitler Horthy and Hungary; German-Hungarian Relations, 1941-1944* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), especially pp. 163-74.

⁵⁷ András D. Bán, ed., *Pax Britannica: Brit küllügyi iratok a második világ-háború untáni Kelet-Közép-Európáról, 1942-1943* [Pax Britannica: British External Documents on Post-World War II East Central Europe, 1942-1943], (Budapest: Osiris, 1996), p. 25. This theme is explored at greater length by Eva S. Balogh, "Peaceful Revision: The Diplomatic Road to War," *Hungarian Studies Review*, X (Spring-Fall 1983), 43-51.

⁵⁸ In particular, Foreign Research and Press Service, later known as the Foreign Office Research Department. Earlier it had been under the aegis of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and was staffed by eminent scholars such as Arnold Toynbee and C.A. Macartney.

⁵⁹ "The Problem of Transylvania" 21 December 1942, printed in Bán, *Pax Britannica*, pp. 152-169. Summarized by the editor on pp. 26-28.

⁶⁰ The following is based on István Mócsy, "Hungary Amidst the Great Powers: the Failed 1943 Peace Mission," *Hungarian Studies Review*, X (1983) 118-21. See also Gyula Juhász, ed., *Magyar-brit titkos tárgyalások 1943-ban* [Hungarian-British Discussions in 1943] (Budapest, 1978).

⁶¹ Ignác Romsics, ed., *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary* (Highland Lakes, N.J.: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1992), 17-22. For another overview see Romsics's paper: "Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary and the Paris Peace Conference, 1941-1947," in *20th Century Hungary and the Great Powers*, ed. Ignác Romsics (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs; Columbia University Press, distr., 1995), especially pp. 160-61.

⁶² Romsics, *Wartime American Plans*, pp. 27f.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶⁴ As Kristóffy, the Hungarian Minister in Moscow, explained the Soviet attitude in his report to Budapest of 11 July 1940. See Pastor, *A moszkvai magyar követség jelentései*, doc. no. 180 (pp. 256f). In this same report Kristóffy reported that, as far as he knew, the Soviets had designs on Subcarpathia, the land just north of Transylvania.

⁶⁵ Minutes of the meeting of 16 Dec. 1941, printed in *War and Diplomacy, The Making of the Grand Alliance: Documents from Stalin's Archives*, Oleg A. Rzheshevsky, ed. (London, etc.: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), doc. no. 4 (pp. 11-22). Stalin appears to have talked of the pre-1940 Romanian-Hungarian border when he suggested its extension to the West. This interpretation of the document is questioned by Korom (*op. cit.* pp. 178f).

⁶⁶ Mastny, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-05. Because Hungarian POW officers refused to denounce Horthy, Soviet talk of a "Transylvania within Hungary" quickly ended.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-257, *in passim*. The conditional nature of northern Transylvania's transfer to Romania in the armistice agreement of August is pointed out by Korom, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁶⁸ The above information is based on Romsics, "Wartime American Plans... and the Paris Peace Conference," pp. 163-67. For a detailed treatments of this subject see Bennett Kovrig, "Peacemaking after World War II: The End of the Myth of National Self-Determination," in *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation* (New Haven:

Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1988), Stephen Borsody, ed., pp. 69-88; and, Stephen D. Kertesz, *Between Russia and the West: Hungary and the Illusions of Peacemaking, 1945-1947* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1984).