

# DIVERGENCE OF MENTALITY BETWEEN RUMANIANS OF TRANSYLVANIA AND RUMANIANS OF OLD RUMANIA

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**F**or more than twenty years Transylvania was under Rumanian rule, until the Vienna Award of August 30th., 1940, restored North Transylvania to Hungary, — the southern part of that province continuing however to belong to Rumania.

Below we offer data showing how profound is the sentimental gulf separating the Rumanians of Transylvania from the Rumanians of Old Rumania (popularly known as the "Regat"). Before doing so, however, we would stress that this difference is due primarily to the divergence in the respective development of the two kinds of Rumanians. The national consciousness of the Rumanians of Transylvania developed much earlier and much more intensively than did that of the Rumanians of the "Regat". Ever since the establishment of the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church at the Synod held at Gyulafehérvár in 1697, when the vast majority of the Rumanians of Transylvania acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope, the Transylvanian Rumanians have been linked up with Western culture. The racial and national character of the Rumanians of the "Regat", on the other hand, has remained typically Balkan. Another factor responsible for this divergence of mentality was that the Rumanians of Transylvania — in the Hungary forming part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy — were subject to a settled system of government founded on honest European principles. The Rumanians of the "Regat", on the other hand, lived in a Balkan kingdom which from 1711 until the suspension of Turkish suzerainty in the nineteenth century

was ruled by Phanariot princes, men of Greek origin who enjoyed the special favour of the Sublime Porte.

*The divergences between these two kinds were disguised by geographical distance and differences in respect of public law.* However, when in terms of the Peace Edict of Trianon Transylvania was subjected to Rumanian rule, this distance and these differences lost their significance, the consequence being that the Rumanians of Transylvania very soon became profoundly disillusioned, that resulting in the opening of an ever-widening spiritual gulf between the Rumanians of Transylvania and those of the "Regat" brought into being by the bitter party conflicts ensuing both in the Press and in the Rumanian Parliament. Very characteristic light is thrown on the divergence between these two kinds of Rumanian mentality by the speeches made in Parliament. In a speech delivered in the Rumanian Chamber of Deputies on September 3rd., 1932, *Alexander Vaida-Voivod*, then Rumanian Premier, dealt with the charge brought by the Rumanians of the "Regat" to the effect that the Rumanians had been treated as slaves in Hungary and had been emancipated in Rumania. The Premier (Vaida-Voivod) then, in a voice trembling with passion, made the following statement: — *"I was not emancipated by any one; I have always been a free man. I was no Transylvanian deserter selling my conscience or betraying and attacking my brethren, as was done by so many of those who shirked their duty"* (Journal of Rumanian House of Deputies, No. 3. — August 5th., 1932 — pp. 15—19).

And this same Alexander Vaida-Voivod, in a speech made by him before the Rumanian Senate on August 3rd., 1932, — while still Prime Minister of Rumania — made the following statements: —

"When I came here with the union proclaimed by us at Gyulafehérvár of our own free will — by the will of our Trans-Carpathian people — and without being compelled thereto by any one, I was received as the herald of our brethren beyond the mountains and feted at banquets and in speeches everywhere, even in the royal palace. Gradually, however, we who were then the leaders of Transylvania came to realize that a fusion with one or other of the

parties — in particular with the Liberal Party — would mean renouncing the idea which had always inspired us, — the idea of popular liberty which is the only guarantee of progress. To our sorrow we were fain to realize that the atmosphere of fraternity in evidence at the outset was changing to an atmosphere of hostility. We were — and still are — accused of regionalism and of undermining the foundations of the existence of the State and of Rumanian unity. These charges have not yet been abandoned. *After having been regarded in Hungary as traitors and irredentists, as we really were*", said Alexander Vaida-Voivod, Prime Minister of Rumania, "*we now find ourselves being treated in Greater Rumania as "bad Rumanians", as emancipated slaves and as men with an Austro-Hungarian mentality*" (Journal of the Rumanian Senate No. 4 — August 24th., 1932 — p. 86).

At the meeting of the Rumanian Chamber of Deputies held on August 19th., 1932, *Demostene Botez*, a Transylvanian Rumanian Deputy, explained that the Rumanians of Transylvania and of the "Regat" respectively — two distinct types — had for generations been brought up under the influence of two different cultures, the Transylvanian Rumanians under that of German, and the "Regat" Rumanians under that of French, culture, and then put the following question: —

"How would you reconcile these two types, the products of two distinct cultures, and at a blow create a spiritual unity between them? A divergence of cultures and systems of education may create differences calculated to lead even to racial differentiation" (Journal of the Rumanian House of Deputies No. 13 — August 25th., 1932 — p. 286).

In its June 8th., 1936, issue the Bucharest daily, "Curentul", published a report of a speech made at Yassy by Marshal Averescu on the differences between Transylvania and the "Regat". In this speech made by a typical "Regat" politician who has always played a leading role and has several times been Prime Minister of Rumanis, we read the following statements: —

"The Great War has brought about the realization of our national ideal. Politically, the whole of Rumaniamdom

has been united; but no spiritual unity has ensued. Today there are more serious antagonisms between Rumanian and Rumanian than there were prior to the Great War. The Rumanians living in Transylvania regard the Rumanians of the "Regat" as a sort of gipsies".

In the March 22nd., 1936, issue of the "Adeverul" *Virgil Muntean*, a Rumanian publicist living in Transylvania, published an article entitled "Colonial System" in which he threw a glaring light on the treatment meted out to Transylvania by Rumania. According to this eminent Rumanian publicist "Transylvania is daily becoming more and more impoverished, and its people have already sunk to the level of biological degeneracy. Apart from the general crisis, Transylvania is suffering also from the effects of a peculiar system employed by the Bucharest Government in its dealings with that province. Here are a few data by way of illustration of that system: — in the years 1934—35 nearly 200 teachers were appointed to posts in the territory of Transylvania; not one of these teachers was however a Transylvanian. Of the 1600 public employees appointed in the same years (1934—35) to posts in Transylvania only 67 were Transylvanians. That means that the ratio of Transylvanians appointed to public posts (expressed in %) cannot possibly be more than, let us say, the proportion of natives employed in the colonial administration in some colony — e. g. in India".

In a question put before the meeting of the Rumanian Chamber of Deputies held on December 19th., 1931, *Ghita Pop*, a former Minister and one of the representatives of the Rumanian National Peasant Party of Transylvania, speaking of the exploitation of Transylvania, complained that *the Rumanians of the "Regat" had initiated a veritable campaign of robbery and pillage in that province, and were ousting the Rumanians of Transylvania from the State and county services.*