

## **DEAR READER Re: The Autonomy of Szeklerland**

It is clearly unreasonable to expect that you know the detailed history of other countries, especially when they pertain to periods before you were born. Hence, let me enlighten you, in a few words, about the history of the Szeklers.

The Szeklers are a branch of the Magyar nation, who have lived, since at least 895 AD, in the same country with Hungarians and thus are an integral part of that nation. Subsequent to WWI, Hungary was dismembered and 4 million Magyars suddenly found themselves in minority status under a reign of terror, at the mercy of new governments. Romania received from Hungary – without a national plebiscite – the territory of Transylvania, where Szeklers have lived for more than eleven centuries. To no avail have Hungarian governments pleaded for revisions to the peace edict of Trianon (Peace Treaty of Paris, 1919), it was only in 1940 that the northeastern portion of Transylvania, with parts of Szeklerland, was reunited with Hungary under the aegis of the German and Italian governments. Their arbitration was requested by the Romanian government. After WWII, the territory was handed back to Romanian administration through the good graces of the Soviet government.

Around 1945, about 45% of the population of Transylvania was composed of Magyars and Germans. Then forcible and brutal assimilation, Romanianization, was begun, using every possible means. Germans and Jews were exchanged to and resettled in – after a ransom – Germany and Israel. The Magyars were oppressed at every opportunity, encouraged to emigrate, jailed or dispersed to other parts of Romania. Religious and cultural organizations were suppressed, their buildings and other assets confiscated. The cultural mementos, birth and marriage registries, documents and official archives of religious groups were confiscated – taken away for ‘safekeeping.’ Its university became Romanian-language, most Hungarian-language schools were closed.

The population of Szeklers, who only a few decades ago numbered over one million, living in a contiguous block, has, by today, shrunk below a million, in spite of a favorable birthrate. Today, in Transylvania and other Hungarian populated areas, systematic ethnic cleansing is being carried out, by overt or covert means – all under the noses of the UN and EU.

In a threatened position, the Szeklers tossed to Romania and the ancient Hungarian-populated borderlands (the Partium) now are energetically pursuing regional autonomy, demanding territorial self-government. They are cognizant of the fact that they are unable to separate from Romania – Szeklerland lies in the center of the country – but their firm resolve is to gain their autonomy through, for the moment, peaceful means.

There are numerous examples for this in Europe: the Basques, the South Tyroleans, the Swedes of Finland, the Germans of Belgium, the Scots and the Welsh. Why are the Hungarians of Slovakia, Sub-Carpathia, Romania and Serbia unable to secure regional self-government?

After reading these few lines, you can more easily understand the declaration that follows. If you wish to learn more about the Hungarian-Romanian circumstances, please look up our website: [www.hungarianhistory.com](http://www.hungarianhistory.com).

**Declaration of the demonstration for the autonomy of Szeklerland**  
held in Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania).

We, the free citizens of Romania and a uniting Europe, exercising our right of free association and free expression of opinion, cognizant of our responsibility to future generations, today, on November 24, 2012 in Sepsiszentgyörgy, as a sign of our common aspiration, hereby take a stand on behalf of our Transylvanian Hungarian communities and the autonomy of Szeklerland.

We do not have a further twenty-two years to wait for Bucharest to arrange our mutual affairs.

Let us clearly state: the sad experience of the past decades was that the centralized authority has, so far, caused us more problems than it solved!

We have had enough of idle waiting for a miracle!

We have had enough of backroom deals made that affect us!

We have had enough of corrupt politicians squandering our children's future!

We have had enough that we have to pay for the bad decisions of every government!

We have had enough that the mere existence of the hub of our Motherland, Szeklerland, is denied!

Szeklerland has existed, exists today and wants to continue existing.

That is why we have gathered today.

We demand to feel at home in the homeland we inherited from our ancestors. It is our inheritance. We insist on it.

We want to use our mother tongue and national symbols freely. Hungarian must also be an officially recognized language in Szeklerland. We have a right to it.

We demand independent education, from kindergarten to university. We must have a right to it!

We demand that our taxes be spent here to benefit Szeklerland and its people. We must have a right to it!

We want to be able to have control over our natural resources, not devastated by outsiders, leaving us to heal the ecological wounds afterwards. We must have a right to it!

We demand that a governor, untutored in our ways, not obstruct our value-retention and value creation works.

We demand that we be able to make decisions in matters concerning us.

We want autonomy because autonomy is the solution. It affirms the dignity of our celebrations, makes possible the success of everyday work and confirms the confidence of the future.

This is not negotiable. We will continue our struggle by peaceful and democratic means until we reach our goal.

By ourselves, person by person, we will not be successful. We have need of everyone.

We call on our churches! The retentive power of our faith, the Christian values, is our compass of past millennia.

We call on our civil associations to make our lives more bearable! We must rebuild our communities.

We call on our writers, scientists and artists! We can be rightly proud of the uniqueness of Transylvanian culture.

We call on our politicians! You must make a unified plan for the achievement of autonomy that fulfills the unanimous wish of the Transylvanian Hungarians. And do not deviate from it, regardless of the party that helps get them elected.

We call on the elders! We can build on their wisdom and experience.

We call on the young! Their creative momentum carries us forward.

We call out to the dispersed communities. Szeklerland – the core of the Motherland – will not forget them.

Let us quote the spirit of Transylvania! Our struggle for autonomy is part of the desire to have a Transylvania without the arbitrary and despotic interference of Bucharest. Thus, we seek a cooperative partnership with Romanians who also seek to regain the dignity of Transylvania!

If we must gather a million signatures so that Europe will finally pay attention to our cause, we will collect it.

If a hundred thousand signatures are required to press our just cause with the representatives in Romania's Parliament, we will collect it.

If we must raise our voices demanding autonomy in demonstration after demonstration, then we will take to the streets again and again. Not in opposition to any others but because we have right on our side.

To quote the apostle of national autonomy, Károly Kós: "We must work if we want to live – and we want to live, hence we will work."

With faith and humility, we will work responsibly and with dedication towards self-government: to protect our heritage, and towards improving our present and ensuring our future.

May God bless us in this endeavor!

(A nevek nem közölhetők! Csak tájnékoztatásul:

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