

POOL REPORT

Pool numbers 8 and 11

Train arrival at Sinaia and visit to Monastery

August 3, 1975

President's train arrived at 10:35 am at stone railway station. Waiting on the platform was a troop of Romanian mountain soldiers in berets, several dozen police and security men looking like heavies from Mission Impossible, and a group of pretty girls in embroidered native costumes.

On departing the train, Ford and Ceausescu and parties were presented a huge loaf of bread carried by a mountain man, also in costume, with a large gray mustache. Ford, Ceausescu and Kissinger took pieces of bread, dipped bread in salt, and tasted it again. This is a ceremony of friendship. Then they each took a drink from a wine flask. Contents described to us as Tzuica, a plumb brandy.

Ford and Ceausescu were approached by a small group of uniformed little girls who kissed them on each cheek and presented new red, yellow, and blue kerchiefs which they tied around their necks.

When the party walked out to the front of the train station, they received loud cheers from a crowd that extended up a steep hill across the way. After waving, they took off for the Pelisor Residence where they apparently left Ceausescu behind. He did not go to the monastery.

Monastery is enclosed by a wall, contains a bell tower, courtyard, monk's cells, a chapel building, and a smallish church in the center. Architecture was described to us as Brancovan, characterized by colored tile insets and filigrees around windows and pillars. First Ford went for five minutes to pray in the small chappel, then went to main church for 19 minutes for a special service of friendship. There were no seats -- everybody stood. When they left the church, Ford pressed a role of money in the hand of the Bishop -- we were unable to learn immediately how much he gave. Then the motorcade left the moristary.

Mort Kondracke
John Mashek
Ed Hodges

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