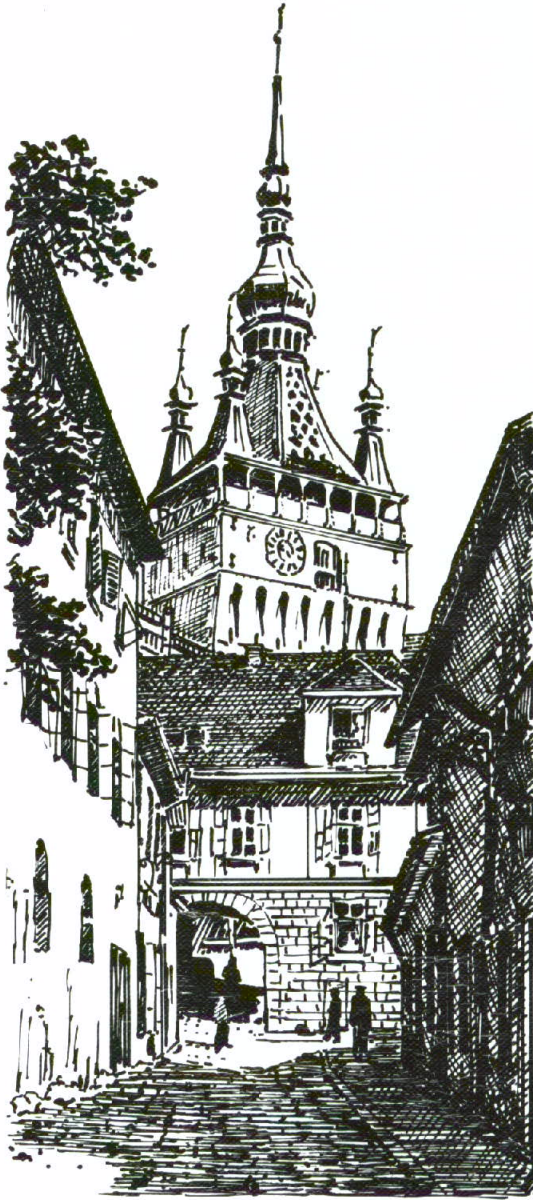


area handbook series

Romania

a country study



Romania

a country study

Federal Research Division

Library of Congress

Edited by

Ronald D. Bachman

Research Completed

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Foreword

This volume is one in a continuing series of books now being prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies—Area Handbook Program. The last page of this book lists the other published studies.

Most books in the series deal with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its political, economic, social, and national security systems and institutions, and examining the interrelationships of those systems and the ways they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic understanding of the observed society, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal. Particular attention is devoted to the people who make up the society, their origins, dominant beliefs and values, their common interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward their social system and political order.

The books represent the analysis of the authors and should not be construed as an expression of an official United States government position, policy, or decision. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Corrections, additions, and suggestions for changes from readers will be welcomed for use in future editions.

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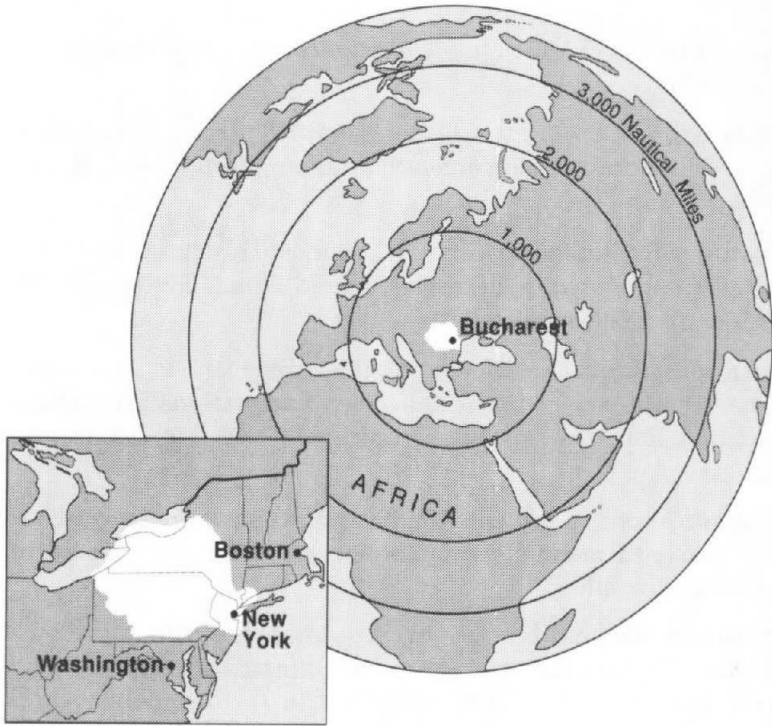
Preface

Like its predecessor, this study is an attempt to treat in a compact and objective manner the dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects of contemporary Romania. Unfortunately, during the intervening months between the completion of research (July 1989) and publication of this work, Romania experienced the most profound political, economic, and social upheaval of its post-World War II history. The introduction briefly chronicles the tumultuous events that transpired between late December 1989 and December 1990. Although the text proper does not address the changes wrought by these events, it provides information that will enable the reader to understand why Romania's move away from communism was simultaneously more turbulent and inconclusive than was the case elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The study provides the context for Romania's "revolution," the violent demise of the detested Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, the displacement of the Romanian Communist Party by the National Salvation Front, the reemergence of long-dormant political parties, and the escalation of interethnic tensions inside the country and with Hungary and the Soviet Union.

Sources of information included the most authoritative English and foreign-language literature, including books, anthologies, scholarly journals, newspapers, and United States and Romanian government publications. An objective description of Romanian society in the late 1980s, however, presented special challenges because of the paucity of reliable statistical data in official Romanian sources and because of the propagandizing mission of the state-controlled press. Each chapter closes with a brief annotated bibliography listing several works for additional reading. Complete bibliographic citations for these and other sources consulted by the authors appear at the end of the book.

Measurements are given in the metric system; a conversion table is provided to assist readers unfamiliar with that system (see table 1, Appendix). Diacritical marks appear on Romanian place names and other words as rendered by the United States Board on Geographic Names. Recurring special terms appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

Country Profile



Country

Formal Name: Socialist Republic of Romania.

Short Form: Romania.

Term for Citizens: Romanians.

Capital: Bucharest.

Geography

Area: 237,499 square kilometers.

Topography: Almost evenly divided among hills, mountains, and plains; mountains dominate center and northwest; plains cover south and east. Highest point, 2,544 meters.

Climate: Transitional from temperate in southwest to continental in northeast. Average annual precipitation, 637 millimeters.

Society

Population: 23,153,475 (July 1989); average annual growth rate 0.44 percent.

Ethnic Groups: 89.1 percent Romanian, 7.8 percent Hungarian, 1.5 percent German, 1.6 percent Ukrainian, Serb, Croat, Russian, Turk, and Gypsy.

Language: Romanian spoken in all regions; Hungarian and German commonly used in Transylvania and Banat. Systematic discrimination against minority languages.

Education: Mandatory attendance, ten years; literacy, 98 percent. Highly centralized. Marxist ideology and nationalistic values stressed at all levels. In 1980s technical and vocational education emphasized.

Religion: About 70 percent Romanian Orthodox, 6 percent Uniate, 6 percent Roman Catholic, 6 percent Protestant, 12 percent unaffiliated or other.

Health and Welfare: Free health care provided by state. Most serious health threats cancer, cardiovascular disease, alcoholism. Infant mortality rate, 25 per 1,000 live births (1989). In 1989 life expectancy for men 67.0 and for women 72.6 years. Pensions inadequate; health care for elderly generally poor. Rural areas neglected.

Economy

Gross National Product: US\$151.3 billion (1988), US\$6,570 per capita, with 2.1 percent growth rate. Industry accounts for 52.7 percent, agriculture 14.9 percent, other sectors 32.4 percent (1987).

Administration: Extremely centralized, directed by communist party. Detailed economic planning. State ownership of most fixed assets.

Fuels and Energy: Once extensive oil and gas reserves nearing depletion. Increasing dependence on imported fuels. Coal reserves large but of poor quality. Coking coal reserves inadequate. Significant hydroelectric potential under development. Nuclear power program lagging badly.

Minerals: Deposits of ferrous and nonferrous ores, salt, gypsum. Increasingly dependent on imported iron ore.

Foreign Trade: Split almost evenly between socialist and non-socialist countries. Large surpluses run during 1980s to repay foreign debt. Major exports metallurgical products, machinery, refined oil products, chemical fertilizers, processed wood products, agricultural commodities. Major imports crude oil, natural gas, iron ore, machinery and equipment, chemicals, foodstuffs.

Industry: Fuels production and processing, metallurgy, chemicals, machine building, forestry, food processing, textiles.

Agriculture: About 91 percent collectivized. Primary crops: corn, wheat, barley, oilseeds, potatoes, sugarbeets, fruits and vegetables. Cattle, sheep, hogs, and poultry widely raised.

Exchange Rate: 14.5 lei per US\$1 in January 1989.

Transportation and Communications

Railroads: 11,221 kilometers in 1986, of which 10,755 kilometers standard gauge, 421 kilometers narrow gauge, 45 kilometers broad gauge; about 3,060 kilometers double-tracked; 3,328 kilometers electrified.

Highways: 72,799 kilometers in 1985, of which 15,762 kilometers concrete, asphalt, stone block; 20,208 kilometers asphalt treated; 27,729 kilometers gravel, crushed stone; and 9,100 kilometers earth.

Inland Waterways: 1,724 kilometers in 1984.

Pipelines: In 1984 2,800 kilometers for crude oil; for refined products, 1,429 kilometers; for natural gas, 6,400 kilometers.

Ports: Constanța, Galați, Brăila, Mangalia accommodate sea-going vessels; Giurgiu, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Orșova principal riverine ports.

Airports: 160 airfields, 15 with runways longer than 2,500 meters. International airports: Bucharest, Constanța, Timișoara, Suceava.

Telecommunications: In 1989, 39 AM, 30 FM radio stations, 38 TV stations; 1 satellite ground station; 3.9 million TV sets, 3.2 million radio receivers. Late 1985, 1,962,681 telephone subscribers.

Government and Politics

Government: 1965 Constitution amended in 1974. Highly centralized and controlled by President Nicolae Ceaușescu and his inner circle. Primary branches Grand National Assembly, State Council, Council of Ministers, judicial system.

Politics: Monopolized by Romanian Communist Party headed by General Secretary Ceaușescu. Power concentrated in Political Executive Committee and its Permanent Bureau and in unique joint party-state agencies. Communists head all central government bodies and local people's councils.

Foreign Relations: Diplomatic relations with 125 countries and Palestine Liberation Organization. Most independent member of Warsaw Treaty Organization. Neutral throughout Sino-Soviet dispute. Relations with West deteriorated in 1980s because of human rights record. Relationship with Hungary extremely tense.

International Agreements: Frequently uncooperative member of Warsaw Treaty Organization and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance; member of United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, World Health Organization, Group of 77. Signatory to Helsinki Accords; refused to abide by final document of Vienna Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, January 1989.

National Security

Armed Forces: Three military districts: Cluj, Bacău, Bucharest. Active-duty forces small (1 soldier per 128 citizens). Large reserve and paramilitary formations. All services controlled by Ministry of National Defense.

Ground Forces: In 1989 numbered 140,000 (two-thirds conscripts). Eight motorized rifle divisions, two tank divisions, four mountain infantry brigades, four airborne regiments.

Air Force: 32,000 personnel in 1989 (less than one-third conscripts). Divided into three tactical divisions, each with two regiments. Air force controls ground-based air defense network of surface-to-air missiles.

Naval Forces: More than 7,500 personnel in 1989, organized into Black Sea Fleet, Danube Squadron, shore-based Coastal Defense. Major naval bases and shipyards Mangalia and Constanța; Danube anchorages at Brăila, Giurgiu, Sulina, Galați, Tulcea.

Border Guards: In 1989 force of 20,000, organized into twelve brigades, equipped as motorized infantry troops.

Equipment: Traditionally supplied by Soviet Union. In 1985 government claimed more than two-thirds produced domestically.

Reserves: In 1989 about 4.5 million men eighteen to fifty years old.

Paramilitary: In 1989 Patriotic Guards (combined national guard and civil defense organization) numbered about 700,000 men and women. Subordinate to Romanian Communist Party and Union of Communist Youth.

Foreign Military Treaties: Member of Warsaw Treaty Organization; no troop maneuvers on Romanian soil after invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Bilateral treaties with Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary.

Internal Security: Ministry of Interior controls municipal and traffic police, fire fighters, largest secret police in Eastern Europe on per capita basis, and 20,000-member special security force guarding communications centers and party offices.



**Județe, Bucharest Municipality,
and Ilfov Agricultural District**

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Alba (17) | Constanta (42) | Mureș (9) |
| Arad (15) | Covasna (20) | Neamț (11) |
| Argeș (28) | Dimbovița (29) | Olt (35) |
| Bacău (13) | Dolj (34) | Prahova (30) |
| Bihor (6) | Galati (22) | Sălaj (7) |
| Bistrița-Năsăud (3) | Giurgiu (37) | Satu Mare (1) |
| Botoșani (5) | Gorj (26) | Sibiu (18) |
| Brăila (32) | Harghita (10) | Suceava (4) |
| Brașov (19) | Hunedoara (16) | Teleorman (36) |
| Bucharest | Ialomița (40) | Timiș (23) |
| Municipality (39) | Iasi (12) | Tulcea (33) |
| Buzău (31) | Ilfov Agricultural | Vaslui (14) |
| Călărași (41) | District (38) | Vâlcea (27) |
| Caras-Severin (24) | Maramures (2) | Vrancea (21) |
| Cluj (8) | Mehedinti (25) | |

Figure 1. Administrative Divisions of Romania, 1989.

Introduction

UNTIL LATE DECEMBER 1989, it appeared that the Socialist Republic of Romania would enter the final decade of the century as one of the few remaining orthodox communist states. Revelling in his recent political triumphs at the Fourteenth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român—PCR), President Nicolae Ceaușescu adamantly refused to bow to international pressure to relax his iron-fisted rule. Ceaușescu cast himself as the last true defender of socialism and rejected the liberalizing reforms adopted by other Eastern European states and the Soviet Union. Instead, his regime unflinchingly continued its Stalinist policies of repression of individual liberties, forced Romanianization of ethnic minorities, destruction of the nation's architectural heritage, and adherence to failed economic policies that had reduced Romania's standard of living to Third World levels.

Despite Ceaușescu's growing international isolation, Romania's state-controlled media continued to lionize the "genius of the Carpathians." The period after 1965 was termed the "golden age of Ceaușescu," an era when Romania purportedly had taken great strides toward its goal of becoming a multilaterally developed socialist state (see Glossary) by the year 2000. The international community regarded the regime's depiction of its achievements as self-serving distortions of reality. But no one could deny that Ceaușescu's long rule had radically changed Romania.

When he came to power in 1965, Ceaușescu inherited a political model that differed little from the Stalinist prototype imposed in 1948. Under his shrewd direction, however, new control mechanisms evolved, giving Romania the most highly centralized power structure in Eastern Europe. After his election to the newly created office of president of the republic in 1974, Ceaușescu officially assumed the duties of head of state while remaining leader of the Romanian Communist Party and supreme commander of the armed forces. Also in 1974, Ceaușescu engineered the abolition of the Central Committee's Standing Presidium, among whose members were some of the most influential individuals in the party. Thereafter, policy-making powers would increasingly reside in the Political Executive Committee and its Permanent Bureau, which were staffed with Ceaușescu's most trusted allies.

Ceaușescu tightened his control of policy making and administration through the mechanism of joint party-state councils, which had no precise counterpart in other communist regimes. The

councils went a step beyond the typical Stalinist pattern of interlocking party and state directorates, in which state institutions preserved at least the appearance of autonomy. The fusion of party and state bodies enabled Ceaușescu to exercise immediate control over many of the functions the Constitution had granted to the Grand National Assembly, the Council of State, the Council of Ministers, the State Planning Committee and other government entities. Five of the nine joint party-state councils that had emerged by 1989 were chaired by Ceaușescu himself or by his wife, Elena.

The appointment of close family members to critical party and government positions was a tactic of power consolidation that Ceaușescu employed throughout his tenure. Indeed, the extent of nepotism in his regime was unparalleled in Eastern Europe. In 1989 at least twenty-seven Ceaușescu relatives held influential positions in the party and state apparatus. Elena Ceaușescu was elected to the Central Committee in 1972 and immediately began amassing power in her own right. From her position as chief of the Party and State Cadres Commission, she was able to dictate organizational and personnel changes throughout the party and the government. And as head of the National Council of Science and Technology, she played a central role in setting economic goals and policy. Ceaușescu's brother, Ilie, became deputy minister of national defense and chief of the Higher Political Council of the Army after an alleged military coup attempt in 1983. Ceaușescu's son, Nicu, despite a playboy reputation, headed the Union of Communist Youth and was a candidate member of the Political Executive Committee. Western observers coined the term "dynastic socialism" to describe the Romanian polity.

Another control mechanism perfected by Ceaușescu was "rotation," a policy applied after 1971 to bolster his personal power at the expense of political institutions. Rotation shunted officials between party and state bureaucracies and between national and local posts, thereby removing Ceaușescu's potential rivals before they were able to develop their own power bases. Although rotation was clearly counterproductive to administrative efficiency and was particularly damaging to the economy, Ceaușescu continued the policy with vigor. In one month in 1987, for example, he dismissed eighteen ministers from the Council of Ministers—about one-third of the government body established by the Constitution to administer all national and local agencies.

In the Stalinist tradition, Ceaușescu exploited a ruthlessly efficient secret police, the Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului—Securitate) and intelligence service to abort challenges to his authority. Relative to the country's population,

these services were the largest in Eastern Europe. And they were perhaps the most effective, judging by the relatively few documented acts of public dissent in Romania as compared with other communist states. Ceaușescu generously funded the secret services and gave them carte blanche to preempt threats to his regime. In direct violation of rights guaranteed by the Constitution, Securitate agents maintained surveillance on private citizens, monitoring their contacts with foreigners, screening their mail, tapping their telephones, breaking into their homes and offices, and arresting and interrogating those suspected of disloyalty to the regime. Prominent dissidents suffered more severe forms of harassment, including physical violence and imprisonment.

In addition to the feared Securitate, Ceaușescu directly controlled a force of some 20,000 special security troops, whose primary mission was to defend party installations and communications facilities. Heavily indoctrinated in Ceaușescu's version of Marxism, these soldiers, in effect, served as a "palace guard." Moreover, as chairman of the Defense Council from its inception in 1969, Ceaușescu could rein in the regular armed forces and minimize the threat of a military coup. Further diminishing the military as a potential rival to his authority, Ceaușescu developed a unique military doctrine that deprofessionalized the regular armed forces and stressed mass participation in a "War of the Entire People."

As Ceaușescu consolidated his power, he was able to pursue his own agenda in economic and foreign policy. For the most part, he continued the classic Stalinist development strategy of his predecessor and mentor, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. The goal of that strategy was economic autarky, which was to be attained through the socialization of assets, the rapid development of heavy industry, the transfer of underemployed rural labor to new manufacturing jobs in urban centers, and the development and exploitation of the nation's extensive natural resources.

Romania's progress along the path of "socialist construction" was acknowledged in 1965 when the country's name was changed from the Romanian People's Republic to the Socialist Republic of Romania. The nationalization of industrial, financial, and transportation assets had been largely accomplished by 1950, and some 90 percent of the farmland had been collectivized by 1962. Whereas industry had produced only about one-third of national income on the eve of World War II, it accounted for almost three-fifths in 1965. Industrial output had risen by 650 percent since 1950. This dramatic growth had been achieved by channeling the lion's share of investment capital to heavy industry while neglecting light industry and agriculture. Industrialization had unleashed a massive

migration from the countryside to the cities, creating the urban proletariat that, according to Marxist theory, was essential for attaining socialism and, ultimately, communism.

During the first twelve years of Ceaușescu's rule, exceptionally high levels of capital accumulation and investment produced one of the most dynamic economic growth rates in the world. The metallurgical, machine-building, and petrochemical industries, which Ceaușescu believed were essential for securing economic independence, showed the most dramatic development. Ceaușescu mobilized the necessary human and material resources to undertake massive public works projects across the country. He resumed construction of the Danube-Black Sea Canal, abandoned by Gheorghiu-Dej in the mid-1950s. Finally opened to traffic in 1984, the canal was the costliest civil-engineering project in Romanian history. Meanwhile, agriculture continued to receive fewer resources than its importance to the economy warranted. The exodus of peasants from the countryside to better-paying urban jobs continued unabated, leaving an aged and increasingly poorly qualified labor force to produce the nation's food.

After 1976 the economy began to falter as Romania failed to make the difficult transition from extensive to intensive development. Although the highly centralized command system had served the country well in the bootstrap industrialization effort, it was poorly suited for managing an increasingly complex and diversified economy. The regime's Stalinist gigantomania had produced sprawling steel and petrochemical plants with capacities far exceeding domestic supplies of raw materials and energy. To repay the West for the technological and financial assistance it had provided in building the plants, Ceaușescu had counted on increased export revenues. But even as the facilities were being built, world market prices for steel and refined oil products collapsed, making repayment of the loans difficult and painful. A combination of negative factors (a devastating earthquake in 1977, a prolonged and severe drought, high interest rates charged by Western creditors, and rising prices for imported crude oil) plunged Romania into a financial crisis.

During the 1980s, Romania's economic problems multiplied. A worsening labor shortage hindered growth, and worker dissatisfaction reached unprecedented levels. A persistent shortage of consumer goods made monetary incentives increasingly meaningless. Wage reforms penalizing individual workers for the failure of their factories to meet production targets proved counterproductive and in fact spurred the traditionally docile labor force to stage strikes and demonstrations. Largely because of labor's demoralization, Romania ranked last among the European members of the Council

for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) in per capita gross national product, and its agriculture ranked twentieth in Europe in terms of output per hectare.

During the 1980s, Ceaușescu's top economic priority was the quickest possible repayment of the foreign debt. His regime took draconian measures to reduce imports and maximize export earnings. Food rationing was reimposed for the first time since the early postwar years, so that agricultural products could be exported for foreign currency. Electricity, heat, gasoline, and numerous other consumer products also were strictly rationed. The Western media began publishing reports of widespread malnutrition and suffering caused by these measures. But the regime's commitment to its policies remained unshaken, and in early 1989 Ceaușescu announced that the debt burden had finally been eliminated. Blaming "usurious" Western financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) and the World Bank (see Glossary), for many of his country's economic difficulties, Ceaușescu proposed, and the Grand National Assembly enacted, legislation banning any agency of the Romanian government from seeking or obtaining foreign credits.

Ceaușescu's obsessive drive to retire the foreign debt at virtually any cost was consistent with a centuries-old theme of Romanian history—a longing for national independence and economic self-sufficiency. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the Romanian lands from earliest history were vulnerable to marauding tribes. Over the centuries, the region was dominated by powerful neighbors, including the Roman, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian empires. These and other foreign powers plundered the natural wealth of the Romanian lands and held the native population in abject poverty. Although a Walachian prince, Michael the Brave, fought a war of national liberation against the Ottoman Empire in the late sixteenth century and, for a short time, united the three Romanian states of Walachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, it was not until the late nineteenth century that an independent, unified Romania finally emerged. But for decades after gaining independence, Romanians remained second-class citizens in their own country. Outside interests continued to control much of the nation's industry and agriculture, and non-Romanian ethnic groups dominated commerce.

Throughout the twentieth century, Romania's leaders repeatedly exploited the nationalistic and xenophobic sentiments that the long history of foreign domination had instilled in their countrymen. During the 1930s, these sentiments gave rise to the violently anti-Semitic and anticommunist Iron Guard, the largest fascist

movement in the Balkans. The Guard promoted the establishment of a pro-German military dictatorship led by General Ion Antonescu, who brought Romania into World War II on the side of the Axis Powers. But his dream of regaining the territories of Bukovina and Bessarabia, annexed by the Soviet Union in the first year of the war, was not to be realized. Indeed, by joining Hitler's forces and attacking the Soviet Union, Antonescu sealed Romania's tragic postwar fate. Occupied by the victorious Red Army, Romania in 1948 suffered a communist takeover and was forced to pay heavy reparations to the Soviet Union.

During the first decade of communist rule, Romania quietly complied with Moscow's foreign policy requirements and joined the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact) and Comecon. Bucharest curried favor with Moscow by strongly endorsing the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, hoping to be rewarded with the removal of Soviet forces from Romanian territory. After Moscow withdrew its troops in 1958, however, Gheorghiu-Dej was emboldened to set an increasingly independent foreign policy. Tensions over Romania's economic development strategy and relationship to Comecon soon emerged. Gheorghiu-Dej's determination to industrialize his country outraged Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who had intended to relegate Romania to the role of supplier of agricultural products and raw materials to the industrialized members of Comecon. To lessen dependence on Comecon, Gheorghiu-Dej established economic relations with noncommunist states and contracted with Western firms to build industrial plants in Romania. During the Sino-Soviet dispute, he supported the Chinese position on the equality of communist states and audaciously offered to mediate the disagreement. And in the famous "April Declaration" of 1964, Gheorghiu-Dej asserted the right of all nations to develop policies in accordance with their own interests and domestic requirements.

Accepting the April Declaration as the guiding principle of his foreign policy, Ceaușescu further distanced Romania from the Soviet bloc. He defied Moscow by establishing diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1967 and by maintaining relations with Israel after the June 1967 War. He denounced the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and thereafter refused to permit Warsaw Pact military maneuvers on Romanian territory. And he brought Romania into such international organizations as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the IMF, and the World Bank. In the early 1970s, Romania claimed the status of a developing nation, thereby gaining trade concessions from the West and fostering relations with the Third

World. Championing the “new economic order,” Romania gained observer status at the conferences of the Nonaligned Movement.

The West enthusiastically welcomed Romania’s emergence as the maverick of the Warsaw Pact and rewarded Ceaușescu’s independent course with the credits and technology needed to modernize the country’s economy. Prominent Western political figures, including Richard Nixon and Charles de Gaulle, made symbolic trips to Bucharest and paid homage to Ceaușescu as an international statesman. When the United States granted most-favored-nation trading status in 1975, the noncommunist world accounted for well over half of Romania’s foreign trade. To enhance his growing international status, Ceaușescu made highly publicized visits to China, Western Europe, the United States, and numerous Third World nations. By 1976 he had visited more than thirty less-developed countries to promote Romanian exports and to secure new sources of raw materials. As a result of these efforts, in 1980 less-developed countries accounted for one-quarter of Romania’s foreign trade.

In the late 1970s, with the onset of Romania’s economic difficulties, particularly its foreign-debt crisis, relations with the West began to deteriorate rapidly. Throughout the following decade, Ceaușescu’s trade policies and domestic programs exhausted the reserves of good will he had built through his defiance of Moscow. Accusing the West of economic imperialism, he slashed imports from the advanced capitalist countries, while selling Romanian goods on their markets at dumping prices.

It was the regime’s human rights record, however, that most damaged relations with the West. As early as the mid-1970s, the United States, West Germany, and Israel protested Romania’s increasingly restrictive emigration policies. The regime attempted to stem the outflow of productive citizens through various forms of intimidation. Applicants were routinely demoted to menial jobs or fired; some were called to active military duty or assigned to public works details; others were interrogated and subjected to surveillance by the Securitate. Concerned for the fate of the large number of ethnic Germans who wanted to leave Romania, West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt travelled to Bucharest and negotiated a program to purchase emigration papers for them. Over the 1978-88 period, West Germany “repatriated” some 11,000 persons annually, paying the equivalent of several thousand United States dollars for each exit visa.

Ceaușescu’s restrictive emigration policies seemingly conflicted with another of his primary goals—assimilation of ethnic groups into a homogeneous, Romanianized population. The tactics used

to achieve that goal grew progressively harsher during the 1980s and further tarnished Romania's international image. The regime's attempts to assimilate the Transylvanian Hungarian community—with nearly 2 million members, the largest national minority in non-Soviet Europe—were particularly controversial and inflamed relations with Budapest. The "Hymn to Romania" propaganda campaign, launched in 1976, glorified the historical contributions of ethnic Romanians in unifying and liberating the nation. Hungarian and German place-names were Romanianized, and history books were revised to ignore key minority figures or to portray them as Romanians. Publishing in minority languages was severely curtailed, and television and radio broadcasts in Hungarian and German were suspended. Educational opportunities for minority students desiring instruction in their native languages were reduced, and Hungarians seeking employment in their ancestral communities encountered hiring discrimination that forced them to leave those communities and settle among ethnic Romanians.

Potentially the greatest threat to the Hungarian community, however, was Ceaușescu's program to "systematize" the countryside. Conceived in the early 1970s—ostensibly to gain productive farmland by eliminating "nonviable" villages—systematization threatened to destroy half of the country's 13,000 villages, including many ancient ethnic Hungarian and German settlements.

Ceaușescu's assimilation campaign forced large numbers of ethnic Hungarians to flee their homeland, triggering large anti-Ceaușescu demonstrations in Budapest. In retaliation, Ceaușescu closed the Hungarian consulate in Cluj-Napoca, the cultural center of the Hungarian community in Transylvania. In early 1989, Hungary filed an official complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, accusing Romania of gross violations of basic human rights. The Swedish representative to the commission cosponsored a resolution with five other Western nations calling for an investigation of Hungary's allegations against the Ceaușescu regime. Earlier in the year, Romania's international reputation had been badly damaged by its conduct at the Vienna Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Failing in its attempt to delete human rights provisions from the conference's final document, the Romanian delegation declared it was not bound by the agreement. This action was condemned not only by Western delegations but also by delegations from some Warsaw Pact states.

Treatment of ethnic minorities was only one of numerous sources of friction between Romania and the rest of the Warsaw Pact during the late 1980s. Despite his country's growing economic vulnerability, Ceaușescu continued to defy Soviet-backed Comecon

initiatives to integrate further the economies of the member states. He rejected the efforts of President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union to create supranational manufacturing enterprises and research and development centers, and he opposed mutual convertibility of the national currencies of the member states. Adamantly rejecting economic decentralization and privatization, Ceaușescu became Comecon's most outspoken critic of Gorbachev's *perestroika* campaign. Despite Ceaușescu's polemics, however, Romania's economy became increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union, which provided all the natural gas, more than half the crude oil, and much of the electricity, iron ore, coking coal, and other raw materials that Romania imported after the mid-1980s. The Romanians gained access to these materials by participating in numerous ventures to develop Soviet natural resources. Moreover, Moscow transferred an ever larger volume of manufacturing technology and know-how to Romanian industry, including state-of-the-art steel-casting and aircraft-manufacturing technologies.

In the late 1980s, Romania's growing reliance on the Soviet Union as a source of raw materials and technology, as well as a market for noncompetitive manufactured goods, placed Ceaușescu in a delicate position. Estranged from the West, Romania could ill afford to antagonize its most important trading partner. Nevertheless, the defiant Ceaușescu did not moderate his criticism of Gorbachev's dramatic reforms. Indeed, the Romanian president had cause for concern, as the peoples of Eastern Europe responded to Gorbachev's cues and demanded liberalization. From the Baltic to the Balkans, in 1989 hardline communist regimes gave way to a new generation of politicians willing to accommodate their populations' desires for democracy and market economies.

Ceaușescu would not willingly yield to the forces of historic change sweeping Eastern Europe. His faith in the massive control structure so carefully erected over the previous quarter century remained unshaken. Indeed, the regime had stifled the scattered voices of dissent and had prevented the emergence of a grass-roots political movement analogous to Poland's Solidarity or Czechoslovakia's Civic Forum. Following his November 1989 reelection for another five-year term as general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, there appeared to be no serious internal threat to Ceaușescu's continued totalitarian rule.

The agent who would galvanize the nation's discontent and hatred for the Ceaușescu regime suddenly appeared in December 1989, in the person of László Tökés, a young Hungarian pastor in Timișoara. Tökés had been persecuted for months by the Securitate for his sermons criticizing the lack of freedom in Romania.

When his congregation physically intervened to prevent the government from evicting the popular pastor, hundreds of other Timișoara residents took to the streets to express their solidarity with the congregation. Inspired by the democratic changes that had occurred elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the swelling crowds defied government orders to disperse and began calling for the end of the Ceaușescu regime.

Believing he could abort the Timișoara rebellion, Ceaușescu ordered the use of deadly force. At a December 17 meeting of the Political Executive Committee, he furiously charged that the uprising had been instigated by Hungarian agents supported by the Soviet Union and the United States. Repeating his order to fire on the demonstrators, Ceaușescu departed for a scheduled three-day visit to Tehran. During his absence, the protest in Timișoara exploded in violence. Although Minister of National Defense Vasile Milea had not obeyed the initial order to use deadly force, by the afternoon of December 17, Securitate forces opened fire, killing and wounding scores of demonstrators. But the rebellion could not be contained by intimidation, and the protestors' bravery won increasing numbers of soldiers to their side.

Word of the Timișoara uprising spread to the rest of the country, thanks in large part to foreign radio broadcasts. When Ceaușescu returned from Iran on December 20, accounts of heavy loss of life in Timișoara had already incited protests in Bucharest. At a televised proregime rally the next day, Ceaușescu addressed a large crowd of supporters assembled in front of the Central Committee headquarters building. As he spoke, a few brave students began unfurling anti-Ceaușescu banners and chanting revolutionary slogans. Dumbfounded by the crowd's rumblings, the aged ruler yielded the microphone to his wife as the television broadcast was interrupted. The once unassailable Ceaușescu regime suddenly appeared vulnerable. As the crowd sang "Romanians Awake," shots rang out. The revolt had claimed its first martyrs in Bucharest.

On the morning of December 22, Ceaușescu again appeared on the balcony of the Central Committee headquarters and tried to address the crowds milling below. Seeing that the situation was now out of his control and that the army was joining the protesters, Ceaușescu and his wife boarded a helicopter and fled the capital, never to return. They were captured several hours later at Cîmpulung, about 100 kilometers northwest of Bucharest (see fig. 1). The desperate fugitives' attempts to bribe their captors failed, and for three days they were hauled about in an armored personnel carrier. Meanwhile, confused battles among various military and Securitate factions raged in the streets. Fighting was especially heavy

near the Bucharest television station, which had become the nerve center of the revolt. The media's grossly exaggerated casualty figures (some reports indicated as many as 70,000 deaths; the actual toll was slightly more than 1,000 killed) convinced citizens that Romania faced a protracted, bloody civil war, the outcome of which could not be predicted. Against this ominous backdrop, a hastily convened military tribunal tried Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu for "crimes against the people" and sentenced them to death by firing squad. On Christmas Day, a jubilant Romania celebrated news of the Ceaușescus' executions and sang long-banned traditional carols.

In the tumultuous hours following the Ceaușescus' flight from Bucharest, the power vacuum was filled by one Ion Iliescu, a former Central Committee secretary and deputy member of the Political Executive Committee who had fallen into disfavor with Ceaușescu. Iliescu took charge of organizing a provisional ruling group, which called itself the National Salvation Front (NSF).

As the fighting subsided after Ceaușescu's death, the NSF proceeded to garner public support through several astute policy decisions. Food exports were suspended, and warehouses of prime meats and other foodstuffs were opened to the long-deprived citizenry. Ceaușescu's energy restrictions on households were lifted, whereas wasteful industrial users were subjected to mandatory conservation. The despised systematization program was halted. Abortions were legalized. And the feared Securitate was placed under military control.

Despite the early popular decisions taken by the NSF, in mid-January, thousands of protesters again took to the streets of Bucharest, demanding that Securitate criminals and Ceaușescu's associates be brought to justice. President Iliescu and his designated prime minister, Petre Roman, placated the crowds with the promise (subsequently revoked) that the PCR would be outlawed. To defuse charges that the NSF had "stolen the revolution" from the people, a Provisional Council of National Unity was formed, ostensibly to give voice to a broader spectrum of political views. The council pledged that free and open elections would be held in April (subsequently postponed until May) and that the NSF would not participate. By late January, however, the NSF announced that it would form a party and would field a slate of candidates.

During the following weeks, the NSF consolidated its control of the political infrastructure it had inherited largely intact from the deposed regime. Supported by entrenched apparatchiks in the media, the postal service, municipal administrations, police

departments, and industrial and farm managements, the NSF was assured of a landslide victory.

More than eighty political parties (many of them single-issue extremist groups) competed in the spring elections. The NSF-dominated media accorded these exotic groups the same limited coverage as the reemergent “historical” parties (the National Peasant Party, the National Liberal Party, and the Social Democratic Party). The historical parties, which had been banned for some four decades, lacked the resources and political savvy to wage effective campaigns. The parties failed to harness the public frustration manifested in frequent spontaneous anti-NSF rallies, some of which involved tens of thousands of disgruntled citizens. The NSF ensured that the opposition parties would not be able to deliver their message to the voters. Opposition candidates were prevented from campaigning in the workplace; the postal system intercepted opposition literature; and NSF propagandists in the media grossly misrepresented the platforms and personal backgrounds of opposition candidates.

The May elections gave the NSF a resounding victory. Presidential candidate Iliescu won more than 85 percent of the popular vote. NSF candidates for the new bicameral legislature collected 92 of 119 seats in the Senate and 263 of 396 seats in the Assembly of Deputies. International observers generally agreed that despite some tampering and intimidation by the NSF, the outcome of the elections reflected the majority will. The abuses of the electoral process, however, had been committed long before the ballots were cast. The National Peasant Party alone reported that during the campaign police had stood by as thugs assaulted party members, killing at least two persons and sending 113 others to hospitals.

The NSF campaign had successfully submerged the communist roots of its leadership while extolling Romanian nationhood and the Romanian Orthodox Church. The NSF had exploited long-simmering interethnic tensions to gain votes. In March these tensions had led to violence in the town of Tîrgu Mureş, the capital of the former Hungarian Autonomous Region. The celebration of the Hungarian national holiday by the town’s Hungarian residents enraged a radical Romanian nationalist organization known as *Vatră Românească* (Romanian Cradle). Reminiscent of the fascist Iron Guard, *Vatră Românească* orchestrated brutal assaults on innocent Hungarians. For hours, the police ignored the violence, which caused eight deaths and more than 300 severe injuries. The NSF sided with *Vatră Românească* in blaming the violence on Hungarian revanchists. When National Liberal and Social Democratic politicians condemned the attacks, *Vatră*

Românească thugs ransacked the headquarters of these opposition parties.

The NSF's reaction to the clashes in *Tîrgu Mureș* was an ominous sign that the Ceaușescu policy of forced Romanianization had survived the "revolution." In subsequent months, the number of ethnic Hungarian refugees fleeing Transylvania reached unprecedented levels. But Hungarians were not the only ethnic group seeking to emigrate; reportedly, half of the approximately 200,000 ethnic Germans residing in Romania at the beginning of 1990 had already departed by September, as had untold thousands of Gypsies.

Soon after his lopsided election victory, President Iliescu ordered the removal of several hundred anti-NSF demonstrators who had occupied Bucharest's Victory Square since April 22. On June 13, a force of about 1,500 policemen and soldiers moved against the peaceful demonstrators, arresting many of them. But as the arrests proceeded, the ranks of the protesters were replenished, and outraged mobs attacked the Bucharest police inspectorate, the Ministry of Interior, the television station, and the offices of the Romanian Intelligence Service (the successor of the Securitate).

Perhaps recalling the army's role in deposing his predecessor, Iliescu did not rely on the military to contain the demonstrations. His national defense minister, Victor Stanculescu, had made it clear that he wanted to keep politics out of the army and the army out of politics. Iliescu appealed to the coal miners of the Jiu Valley to come to Bucharest, as they had done in January, to restore order and save the democratically elected government from "neofascist" elements. Within one day of his appeal, some 10,000 club-wielding miners arrived in Bucharest aboard 27 specially commissioned railroad cars. During a two-day binge of violence, the vigilantes killed an estimated 21 persons and severely injured 650 others. Immediately upon arriving in Bucharest, the miners headed for the offices of the two main opposition parties, which they ransacked. They also attacked the homes of opposition party leaders and assaulted anyone they suspected of being sympathetic to the opposition. Having dispersed the demonstrators, the miners received Iliescu's warm thanks and returned to the Jiu Valley.

The international community universally condemned the Iliescu government's use of violence to suppress dissent. The European Community postponed signing a trade and economic cooperation agreement with Romania. The United States government withheld all nonhumanitarian aid and boycotted the June 25 inauguration of President Iliescu. Bucharest somewhat rehabilitated its international standing by supporting the boycott against Iraq

following that country's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The European Community heads of state, meeting in Rome in December 1990, voted to extend emergency food and medical aid to Romania and to consider compensating Bucharest for the economic hardship caused by its support of sanctions against Iraq. The United States government supported this assistance but continued to withhold most-favored-nation trading status in light of Bucharest's unsatisfactory pace of democratization and suspect human rights record.

The international community and many Romanian citizens believed that the chief perpetrator of human rights abuses during the Ceaușescu era, the infamous Securitate, continued to operate, even though it officially had been disbanded in early 1990. In February, some 3,000 army officers, cadets, and conscripts demonstrated in Bucharest to protest the presence of more than 6,000 Securitate officers in their midst. But the government responded to such protests with only token prosecution of former Securitate agents known to have committed crimes before and during the revolt. As of late December 1990, no independent commissions had investigated securitate abuses. Moreover, the NSF had established the Romanian Intelligence Service, which employed many former Securitate members. And following the June demonstrations, when Iliescu found he could not rely on the army to rescue his government, a gendarmerie reminiscent of Ceaușescu's Patriotic Guards was created.

The NSF's unwillingness to purge former Securitate agents and other close associates of Ceaușescu confirmed many Romanians' suspicions that their revolution had been hijacked by a neocomunist cabal. By October, the growing perception that the NSF had exploited the spontaneous uprising in Timișoara to disguise a palace coup gave rise to an umbrella opposition group demanding the government's resignation. Known as Civic Alliance, the loose coalition of intellectuals, monarchists, labor activists, and various other interest groups claimed a membership of nearly one million. In mid-November, Civic Alliance organized the largest nationwide demonstrations since Ceaușescu's overthrow. Some 100,000 persons in Bucharest and tens of thousands in Brașov marched to protest the continued presence of communists in the government and to express outrage over sharp price increases for consumer goods. The demonstrations forced the government to postpone the second phase of its price-adjustment program (initiated largely to satisfy IMF requirements for economic assistance).

Despite the government's concessions on price hikes, however, Civic Alliance, student groups, and labor union leaders continued to organize antigovernment demonstrations and strikes

throughout the country. Teamsters, airline workers, teachers, medical personnel, and factory workers joined student-led protests, which became increasingly disruptive. Civic Alliance and the major opposition parties in parliament called for a government of national unity, new elections, and a referendum on the country's future form of government. Some members of Civic Alliance called for the restoration of King Michael to the throne that he had been forced to abdicate in 1947. Living in exile near Geneva, Michael declared himself willing and able to serve Romania as a stabilizing force during its transition to democracy.

The political ferment threatening to bring down the Iliescu government in late 1990 was fired by Romania's unmitigated economic misery and a pervasive sense that life would only get worse. The NSF government had inherited a decrepit economy struggling with an obsolete capital stock, underdeveloped transport system, severe energy and raw materials shortages, demoralized labor force, declining exports, and a desperate need for Western financial and technical assistance.

The economic decline accelerated during 1990, and as winter approached, Romanians faced many of the same hardships they had known during the worst years of the Ceaușescu regime. Preliminary estimates indicated a decrease in GNP of between 15 percent and 20 percent, a 20-percent decline in labor productivity, and a 43-percent reduction in exports. Declining fuel and electricity production was particularly worrisome because of reductions in Soviet deliveries and the shortage of hard currency needed to purchase energy elsewhere. Furthermore, Romania's support of United Nations sanctions against Baghdad during the Persian Gulf crisis cut off that important source of crude oil. Before the sanctions were imposed, Iraq had been delivering oil to repay its US\$ 1.5 billion debt to Bucharest.

The NSF's early attempts to win support by raising personal consumption levels resulted in the rapid depletion of inventories and generated a large trade deficit. Its decision to raise wages and shorten the work week caused severe inflation and lowered labor discipline. The rise in personal incomes badly outstripped the availability of consumer goods, so that anything of potential barter or resale value was instantly bought up as soon as it appeared on the store shelves.

The government addressed Romania's daunting economic problems with a tentative and ineffective reform program, fearing that citizens would not tolerate the sacrifices that a "shock-therapy" approach would require. Peasants on cooperative and state farms were granted slightly larger plots, and prices at farmers' markets

were officially decontrolled. To encourage creation of small businesses, especially in the service sector, private individuals were given the legal right to employ as many as twenty persons. In addition, an agency was set up to administer the privatization of state assets.

As Romania's economic deterioration accelerated, Prime Minister Roman assumed greater personal control of reform efforts. In October he addressed a special session of parliament and requested exceptional powers to implement a more radical reform program. In addition to the aforementioned price hikes on various consumer goods and services, which were supposed to be cushioned by compensatory payments to the nonworking population, Roman's plan called for replacing the leu (for value of the leu—see Glossary) in 1991 with a new monetary unit at the rate of ten to one to absorb some of the surplus lei in circulation. The new currency gradually would be made convertible, thereby attracting foreign investment. Roman indicated that the government would also remove surplus money from circulation by allowing private citizens to buy land, state-owned housing, and stocks and bonds.

In late 1990, Roman's reform program appeared to have almost no chance of succeeding. Public outrage had thwarted the attempt to establish more realistic prices. The government had failed to overcome bureaucratic inertia on the part of anti-reform officials and managers fearful of losing their special privileges. More importantly, the government's loss of legitimacy with the people and the threat of a potentially violent "second revolution" left Romania's future course in grave doubt.

December 26, 1990

Ronald D. Bachman

Chapter 1. Historical Setting



*Alexandru Ioan Cuza, prince of the United Principalities of Moldavia
and Walachia (1859-66)*

THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, later renamed the Socialist Republic of Romania, came into being in 1948 when the country's communist party, under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, consolidated its power and promulgated a Soviet-style constitution. Romania, in spite of its fierce prewar anticommunism and long antipathy toward tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, became one of the first East European states to suffer a Soviet-sponsored communist takeover after World War II. For nearly a decade after the war, Romania obediently followed Moscow's lead, but in the late 1950s Gheorghiu-Dej defied a Soviet attempt to make his country a "breadbasket" for the East bloc and insisted on continuing his country's rapid industrial expansion. The Romanian leader also developed an independent foreign policy and launched a campaign promoting Romanian nationalism. Nicolae Ceaușescu succeeded Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965 and continued his mentor's policies. Ceaușescu, however, appended to them an extravagant cult of personality that once promoted him as Romania's "secular god" and heir to the wisdom of Romanian rulers from ages past.

Romanians descend from the Dacians, an ancient people who fell under Rome's dominance in the first century A.D., intermarried with Roman colonists, and adopted elements of Roman culture, including a Vulgar Latin that evolved into today's Romanian. Barbarian tribes forced the Romans out of Dacia in 271. In the eleventh century the Magyars, the ancestors of today's Hungarians, settled the mountainous heart of ancient Dacia, Transylvania. Hungarian historians claim that Transylvania was almost uninhabited when the Magyars arrived; Romanians, however, assert that their ancestors remained in Transylvania after Rome's exodus and that Romanians constitute the region's aboriginal inhabitants. This disagreement was the germ of a conflict that poisoned relations between Romanians and Hungarians throughout the twentieth century.

For thousands of years, Romania suffered from an unfortunate location astride the invasion routes of migrating hordes and the frontiers of ambitious empires that plundered its wealth and enslaved its people. For centuries Transylvania, with its repressed Romanian majority, was a semi-autonomous part of Hungary. Romanians fleeing Transylvania founded the independent principalities of Walachia and Moldavia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Ottoman Empire dominated all three regions from

the sixteenth to the late seventeenth century, when Austria's Habsburgs gained full control of Transylvania. Walachia and Moldavia came under Russian protection soon afterward and remained under Russian influence until the Crimean War (1853–56) ended the protectorate. In 1859 Walachia and Moldavia merged to form Romania, and in 1881 its prince renounced Turkish suzerainty and Romania became a kingdom. Austria reunited Transylvania and Hungary in 1867, but the union lasted only until the end of World War I, when Romania acquired Transylvania. World War II brought dismemberment of Greater Romania, and the country sided with Germany hoping to regain its lost territories. In 1943 the Red Army crushed Romanian forces before Stalingrad, and in 1944 Romania's King Michael overthrew the country's radical right-wing premier and signed an armistice with the Soviet Union. Moscow forced Michael to appoint a communist sympathizer to lead the government in 1945, and three years later Romania found itself under strict communist control.

Early History from Prehistory to the Eleventh Century

Man first appeared in the lands that now constitute Romania during the Pleistocene Epoch, a period of advancing and receding glacial ice that began about 600,000 years ago. Once the glaciers had withdrawn completely, a humid climate prevailed in the area and thick forests covered the terrain. During the Neolithic Age, beginning about 5500 B.C., Indo-European people lived in the region. The Indo-Europeans gave way to Thracian tribes, who in later centuries inhabited the lands extending from the Carpathian Mountains southward to the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. Today's Romanians are in part descended from the Getae, a Thracian tribe that lived north of the Danube River.

The Getae

During the Bronze Age (roughly 2200 to 1200 B.C.), Thraco-Getian tribesmen engaged in agriculture and stock raising and traded with peoples who lived along the Aegean Seacoast. Early in the Iron Age, about 1200 B.C., pastoral activities began to dominate their economic life. Thraco-Getian villages, which consisted of up to 100 small, rectangular dwellings constructed from wood or reeds and earthen mortar with straw roofs, multiplied and became more crowded. Before the seventh century B.C., Greeks founded trading colonies on the coast of the Black Sea at Istria, near the mouth of the Danube at Callatis (present-day Mangalia), and at Tomi (present-day Constanța). Greek culture also made a deep impression on the seacoast and riverbank Thraco-Getian villages, where



*Greek ruins at Istria
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

the way of life developed more rapidly than in less accessible areas. Toward the end of the seventh century B.C., wheel-formed pottery began replacing crude hand-modeled ware in the coastal region. The use of Greek and Macedonian coins spread through the area, and the Thraco-Getae exchanged grain, cattle, fish, honey, and slaves with the Greeks for oils, wines, precious materials, jewelry, and high-quality pottery. By the sixth century B.C., this trade was affording the Thraco-Getian ruling class many luxuries.

Originally polytheistic nature-worshippers, the Thraco-Getae developed a sun cult and decorated their artwork with sun symbols. Herodotus, a Greek historian, reports that the Getae worshipped a god named Zalmoxis, a healing thunder god who was master of the cloudy sky; however they did not depict Zalmoxis in any plastic form. The people offered agricultural products and animals as sacrifices and also cremated their dead, sealed the ashes in urns, and buried them.

The Getae had commercial contact as well as military conflicts with many peoples besides the Greeks. The Roman poet, Ovid, who was exiled to Tomi, writes that for many years Getian tribesmen would steer their plows with one hand and hold a sword in the other to protect themselves against attacks by Scythian horsemen from the broad steppe lands east of the Dniester River. In 513 B.C. Darius the Great marched his Persian army through

Getian territory before invading Scythia. Legend holds that when Philip of Macedonia attacked the Getae in the fourth century B.C., they sent out against him priests robed in white and playing lyres. Philip's son, Alexander the Great, led an expedition northward across the Danube in 335 B.C., and from about 300 B.C. Hellenic culture heavily influenced the Getae, especially the ruling class. Bands of Celtic warriors penetrated Transylvania after 300 B.C., and a cultural symbiosis arose where the Celts and Getae lived in close proximity.

By about 300 B.C., the Lower Danube Getae had forged a state under the leadership of Basileus Dromichaites, who repulsed an attack by Lysimachus, one of Alexander the Great's successors. Thereafter, native Getian leaders protected the coastal urban centers, which had developed from Greek colonies. From 112 to 109 B.C. the Getae joined the Celts to invade Roman possessions in the western Balkans. Then in 72 B.C., the Romans launched a retaliatory strike across the Danube but withdrew because, one account reports, the soldiers were "frightened by the darkness of the forests." During the third and second centuries B.C., the Getae began mining local iron-ore deposits and iron metallurgy spread throughout the region. The ensuing development of iron plowshares and other implements led to expanded crop cultivation.

As decades passed, Rome exercised stronger influence on the Getae. Roman merchants arrived to exchange goods, and the Getae began counterfeiting Roman coins. In the middle of the first century B.C., the Romans allied with the Getae to defend Moesia, an imperial province roughly corresponding to present-day northern Bulgaria, against the Sarmatians, a group of nomadic Central Asian tribes. Roman engineers and architects helped the Getae construct fortresses until the Romans discovered that the Getae were preparing to turn against them. Burebista, a Getian king who amassed formidable military power, routed the Celts, forced them westward into Pannonia, and led large armies to raid Roman lands south of the Danube, including Thrace, Macedonia, and Illyria. Burebista offered the Roman general, Pompey, support in his struggle against Julius Caesar. Caesar apparently planned to invade Getian territory before his assassination in 44 B.C.; in the same year Getian conspirators murdered Burebista and divided up his kingdom. For a time Getian power waned, and Emperor Octavius expelled the Getae from the lands south of the Danube. The Getae continued, however, to interfere in Roman affairs, and the Romans in turn periodically launched punitive campaigns against them.

By 87 A.D. Decebalus had established a new Getian state, constructed a system of fortresses, and outfitted an army. When

*Statue of Romulus and Remus
Cluj-Napoca
Courtesy Scott Edelman*



Trajan became Roman emperor in 98 A.D., he was determined to stamp out the Getian menace and take over the Getae's gold and silver mines. The Romans laid down a road along the Danube and bridged the river near today's Drobeta-Turnu Severin. In 101 A.D. Trajan launched his first campaign and forced Decebalus to sue for peace. Within a few years, however, Decebalus broke the treaty, and in 105 A.D. Trajan began a second campaign. This time, the Roman legions penetrated to the heart of Transylvania and stormed the Getian capital, Sarmizegetusa (present-day Grădiștea Muncelului); Decebalus and his officers committed suicide by drinking hemlock before the Romans could capture them. Rome memorialized the victory by raising Trajan's Column, whose bas-reliefs show scenes of the triumph.

Roman Dacia

From the newly conquered land, Trajan organized the Roman province of Dacia, whose capital, Ulpia Trajana, stood on the site of Sarmizegetusa. Many Getae resisted Roman authority and some fled northward, away from the centers of Roman rule. Trajan countered local insurrection and foreign threat by stationing two legions and a number of auxiliary troops in Dacia and by colonizing the province with legionnaires, peasants, merchants, artisans, and officials from lands as far off as Gaul, Spain, and Syria. Agriculture

and commerce flourished, and the Romans built cities, fortresses, and roads that stretched eastward into Scythia.

In the next 200 years, a Dacian ethnic group arose as Roman colonists commingled with the Getae and the coastal Greeks. Literacy spread, and Getae who enlisted in the Roman army learned Latin. Gradually a Vulgar Latin tongue superseded the Thracian language in commerce and administration and became the foundation of modern Romanian. A religious fusion also occurred. Even before the Roman invasion, some Getae worshiped Mithras, the ancient Persian god of light popular in the Roman legions. As Roman colonization progressed, worshipers faithful to Jupiter, Diana, Venus, and other gods and goddesses of the Roman pantheon multiplied. The Dacians, however, retained the Getian custom of cremation, though now, amid the ashes they sometimes left a coin for Charon, the mythological ferryman of the dead.

The Age of the Great Migrations

During the two centuries of Roman rule, Getian insurgents, Goths, and Sarmatians harassed Dacia, and by the middle of the third century A.D. major migrations of barbarian tribes had begun. In 271 A.D. Emperor Aurelian concluded that Dacia was overexposed to invasion and ordered his army and colonists to withdraw across the Danube. Virtually all the soldiers, imperial officials, and merchants departed; scholars, however, presume that many peasants remained. Those Dacians who departed spread over the Balkans as far as the Peloponnese, where their descendants, the Kutzovlachs, still live.

Without Rome's protection, Dacia became a conduit for invading tribes who, targeting richer lands further west and south, plundered Dacian settlements in passing. Dacian towns were abandoned, highwaymen menaced travelers along crumbling Roman roads, and rural life decayed. The Visigoths, Huns, Ostrogoths, Gepids, and Lombards swept over the land from the third to the fifth centuries, and the Avars arrived in the sixth, along with a steady inflow of Slavic peasants. Unlike other tribes, the Slavs settled the land and intermarried with the Dacians. In 676 the Bulgar Empire absorbed a large portion of ancient Dacia.

The migration period brought Dacia linguistic and religious change. The Dacians assimilated many Slavic words into their lexicon and, although modern Romanian is a Romance language, some linguists estimate that half of its words have Slavic roots. Baptism of the Dacians began around 350 A.D. when Bishop Ulfilas preached the Arian heresy north of the Danube. Soon after saints Cyril and Methodius converted the Bulgars to Christianity in 864,

Dacia's Christians adopted the Slavonic rite and became subject to the Bulgarian metropolitan at Ohrid. The Slavonic rite would be maintained until the seventeenth century, when Romanian became the liturgical language.

Transylvania, Walachia, and Moldavia from the Eleventh Century to the Seventeenth Century

No written or architectural evidence bears witness to the presence of "proto-Romanians" in the lands north of the Danube during the millennium after Rome's withdrawal from Dacia. This fact has fueled a centuries-long feud between Romanian and Hungarian historians over Transylvania. The Romanians assert that they are the descendants of Latin-speaking Dacian peasants who remained in Transylvania after the Roman exodus, and of Slavs who lived in Transylvania's secluded valleys, forests, and mountains, and survived there during the tumult of the Dark Ages. Romanian historians explain the absence of hard evidence for their claims by pointing out that the region lacked organized administration until the twelfth century and by positing that the Mongols destroyed any existing records when they plundered the area in 1241. Hungarians assert, among other things, that the Roman population quit Dacia completely in 271, that the Romans could not have made a lasting impression on Transylvania's aboriginal population in only two centuries, and that Transylvania's Romanians descended from Balkan nomads who crossed northward over the Danube in the thirteenth century and flowed into Transylvania in any significant numbers only after Hungary opened its borders to foreigners.

The Magyars' Arrival in Transylvania

In 896 the Magyars, the last of the migrating tribes to establish a state in Europe, settled in the Carpathian Basin. A century later their king, Stephen I, integrated Transylvania into his Hungarian kingdom. The Hungarians constructed fortresses, founded a Roman Catholic bishopric, and began proselytizing Transylvania's indigenous people. There is little doubt that these included some Romanians who remained faithful to the Eastern Orthodox Church after the East-West Schism. Stephen and his successors recruited foreigners to join the Magyars in settling the region. The foreign settlers included people from as far off as Flanders; Szeklers, a Magyar ethnic group; and even Teutonic Knights returned from Palestine, who founded the town of Braşov before a conflict with the king prompted their departure for the Baltic region in 1225 (see *Historical and Geographic Distribution*, ch. 2). Hungary's kings reinforced the foreigners' loyalty by granting them land, commercial privileges,

and considerable autonomy. Nobility was restricted to Roman Catholics and, while some Romanian noblemen converted to the Roman rite to preserve their privileges, most of the Orthodox Romanians became serfs.

In 1241 the Mongols invaded Transylvania from the north and east over the Carpathians. They routed King Béla IV's forces, laid waste Transylvania and central Hungary, and slew much of the populace. When the Mongols withdrew suddenly in 1242, Béla launched a vigorous reconstruction program. He invited more foreigners to settle Transylvania and other devastated regions of the kingdom, granted loyal noblemen lands, and ordered them to build stone fortresses. Béla's reconstruction effort and the fall of the Árpád Dynasty in 1301 shifted the locus of power in Hungary significantly. The royal fortunes declined, and rival magnates carved out petty kingdoms, expropriated peasant land, and stiffened feudal obligations. Transylvania became virtually autonomous. As early as 1288 Transylvania's noblemen convoked their own assembly, or Diet. Under increasing economic pressure from unrestrained feudal lords and religious pressure from zealous Catholics, many Romanians emigrated from Transylvania eastward and southward over the Carpathians.

Origins of Walachia and Moldavia

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Transylvanian émigrés founded two principalities, Walachia (see Glossary) and Moldavia (see Glossary). Legend says that in 1290 Negru-Vodă, a leading Romanian nobleman (*voivode*, see Glossary), left Făgăraș in southern Transylvania with a group of nobles and founded "țara Românească" on the lands between the southern Carpathians and the Danube. (The name "țara Românească" means "Romanian land," here, actually "Walachia"; the word "Walachia" is derived from the Slavic word *vlach*, which is related to the Germanic *walh*, meaning "foreigner.") A second legend holds that a Romanian *voivode* named Dragoș crossed the Carpathians and settled with other Romanians on the plain between the mountains and the Black Sea. They were joined in 1349 by a Transylvanian *voivode* named Bogdan, who revolted against his feudal overlord and settled on the Moldova River, from which Moldavia derives its name. Bogdan declared Moldavia's independence from Hungary a decade later. The remaining Romanian nobles in Transylvania eventually adopted the Hungarian language and culture; Transylvania's Romanian serfs continued to speak Romanian and clung to Orthodoxy but were powerless to resist Hungarian domination.

Walachia and Moldavia steadily gained strength in the fourteenth century, a peaceful and prosperous time throughout southeastern Europe. Prince Basarab I of Walachia (ca. 1330–52), despite defeating King Charles Robert in 1330, had to acknowledge Hungary's sovereignty. The Eastern Orthodox patriarch in Constantinople, however, established an ecclesiastical seat in Walachia and appointed a metropolitan. The church's recognition confirmed Walachia's status as a principality, and Walachia freed itself from Hungarian sovereignty in 1380.

The princes of both Walachia and Moldavia held almost absolute power; only the prince had the power to grant land and confer noble rank. Assemblies of nobles, or boyars, and higher clergy elected princes for life, and the absence of a succession law created a fertile environment for intrigue. From the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century, the principalities' histories are replete with overthrows of princes by rival factions often supported by foreigners. The boyars were exempt from taxation except for levies on the main sources of agricultural wealth. Although the peasants had to pay a portion of their output in kind to the local nobles, they were never, despite their inferior position, deprived of the right to own property or resettle.

Walachia and Moldavia remained isolated and primitive for many years after their founding. Education, for example, was nonexistent, and religion was poorly organized. Except for a rare market center, there were no significant towns and little circulation of money. In time, however, commerce developed between the lands of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region. Merchants from Genoa and Venice founded trading centers along the coast of the Black Sea where Tatars, Germans, Greeks, Jews, Poles, Ragusans, and Armenians exchanged goods. Walachians and Moldavians, however, remained mainly agricultural people.

In Transylvania economic life rebounded quickly after the Mongol invasion. New farming methods boosted crop yields. Craftsmen formed guilds as artisanry flourished; gold, silver, and salt mining expanded; and money-based transactions replaced barter. Though townspeople were exempt from feudal obligations, feudalism expanded and the nobles stiffened the serfs' obligations. The serfs resented the higher payments; some fled the country, while others became outlaws. In 1437 Romanian and Hungarian peasants rebelled against their feudal masters. The uprising gathered momentum before the Magyar, German, and Szekler nobles in Transylvania united forces and, with great effort, successfully quelled the revolt. Afterwards, the nobles formed the Union of Three Nations, jointly pledging to defend their privileges against any power except

that of Hungary's king. The document declared the Magyars, Germans, and Szeklers the only recognized nationalities in Transylvania; henceforth, all other nationalities there, including the Romanians, were merely "tolerated." The nobles gradually imposed even tougher terms on their serfs. In 1437, for example, each serf had to work for his lord one day per year at harvest time without compensation; by 1514 serfs had to work for their lord one day per week using their own animals and tools.

The Ottoman Invasions

In the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Turks expanded their empire from Anatolia to the Balkans. They crossed the Bosphorus in 1352 and crushed the Serbs at Kosovo Polje, in the south of modern-day Yugoslavia, in 1389. Tradition holds that Walachia's Prince Mircea the Old (1386-1418) sent his forces to Kosovo to fight beside the Serbs; soon after the battle Sultan Bayezid marched on Walachia and imprisoned Mircea until he pledged to pay tribute. After a failed attempt to break the sultan's grip, Mircea fled to Transylvania and enlisted his forces in a crusade called by Hungary's King Sigismund. The campaign ended miserably: the Turks routed Sigismund's forces in 1396 at Nicopolis in present-day Bulgaria, and Mircea and his men were lucky to escape across the Danube. In 1402 Walachia gained a respite from Ottoman pressure as the Mongol leader Tamerlane attacked the Ottomans from the east, killed the sultan, and sparked a civil war. When peace returned, the Ottomans renewed their assault on the Balkans. In 1417 Mircea capitulated to Sultan Mehmed I and agreed to pay an annual tribute and surrender territory; in return the sultan allowed Walachia to remain a principality and to retain the Eastern Orthodox faith.

After Mircea's death in 1418, Walachia and Moldavia slid into decline. Succession struggles, Polish and Hungarian intrigues, and corruption produced a parade of eleven princes in twenty-five years and weakened the principalities as the Ottoman threat waxed. In 1444 the Ottomans routed European forces at Varna in contemporary Bulgaria. When Constantinople succumbed in 1453, the Ottomans cut off Genoese and Venetian galleys from Black Sea ports, trade ceased, and the Romanian principalities' isolation deepened. At this time of near-desperation, a Magyarized Romanian from Transylvania, János Hunyadi, became regent of Hungary. Hunyadi, a hero of the Ottoman wars, mobilized Hungary against the Turks, equipping a mercenary army funded by the first tax ever levied on Hungary's nobles. He scored a resounding victory

over the Turks before Belgrade in 1456, but died of plague soon after the battle.

In one of his final acts, Hunyadi installed Vlad Țepeș (1456–62) on Walachia's throne. Vlad took abnormal pleasure in inflicting torture and watching his victims writhe in agony. He also hated the Turks and defied the sultan by refusing to pay tribute. In 1461 Hamsa Pasha tried to lure Vlad into a trap, but the Walachian prince discovered the deception, captured Hamsa and his men, impaled them on wooden stakes, and abandoned them. Sultan Mohammed later invaded Walachia and drove Vlad into exile in Hungary. Although Vlad eventually returned to Walachia, he died shortly thereafter, and Walachia's resistance to the Ottomans softened.

Moldavia and its prince, Stephen the Great (1457–1504), were the principalities' last hope of repelling the Ottoman threat. Stephen drew on Moldavia's peasantry to raise a 55,000-man army and repelled the invading forces of Hungary's King Mátyás Corvinus in a daring night attack. Stephen's army invaded Walachia in 1471 and defeated the Turks when they retaliated in 1473 and 1474. After these victories, Stephen implored Pope Sixtus IV to forge a Christian alliance against the Turks. The pope replied with a letter naming Stephen an "Athlete of Christ," but he did not heed Stephen's calls for Christian unity. During the last decades of Stephen's reign, the Turks increased the pressure on Moldavia. They captured key Black Sea ports in 1484 and burned Moldavia's capital, Suceava, in 1485. Stephen rebounded with a victory in 1486 but thereafter confined his efforts to secure Moldavia's independence to the diplomatic arena. Frustrated by vain attempts to unite the West against the Turks, Stephen, on his deathbed, reportedly told his son to submit to the Turks if they offered an honorable suzerainty. Succession struggles weakened Moldavia after his death.

In 1514 greedy nobles and an ill-planned crusade sparked a widespread peasant revolt in Hungary and Transylvania. Well-armed peasants under György Dózsa sacked estates across the country. Despite strength of numbers, however, the peasants were disorganized and suffered a decisive defeat at Timișoara. Dózsa and the other rebel leaders were tortured and executed. After the revolt, the Hungarian nobles enacted laws that condemned the serfs to eternal bondage and increased their work obligations. With the serfs and nobles deeply alienated from each other and jealous magnates challenging the king's power, Hungary was vulnerable to outside aggression. The Ottomans stormed Belgrade in 1521, routed a feeble Hungarian army at Mohács in 1526, and conquered Buda in 1541. They installed a pasha to rule over central Hungary;

Transylvania became an autonomous principality under Ottoman suzerainty; and the Habsburgs assumed control over fragments of northern and western Hungary.

After Buda's fall, Transylvania, though a vassal state of the Sublime Porte (as the Ottoman government was called, see Glossary), entered a period of broad autonomy. As a vassal, Transylvania paid the Porte an annual tribute and provided military assistance; in return, the Ottomans pledged to protect Transylvania from external threat. Native princes governed Transylvania from 1540 to 1690. Transylvania's powerful, mostly Hungarian, ruling families, whose position ironically strengthened with Hungary's fall, normally chose the prince, subject to the Porte's confirmation; in some cases, however, the Turks appointed the prince outright. The Transylvanian Diet became a parliament, and the nobles revived the Union of Three Nations, which still excluded the Romanians from political power. Princes took pains to separate Transylvania's Romanians from those in Walachia and Moldavia and forbade Eastern Orthodox priests to enter Transylvania from Walachia.

The Protestant Reformation spread rapidly in Transylvania after Hungary's collapse, and the region became one of Europe's Protestant strongholds. Transylvania's Germans adopted Lutheranism, and many Hungarians converted to Calvinism. However, the Protestants, who printed and distributed catechisms in the Romanian language, failed to lure many Romanians from Orthodoxy. In 1571 the Transylvanian Diet approved a law guaranteeing freedom of worship and equal rights for Transylvania's four "received" religions: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian. The law was one of the first of its kind in Europe, but the religious equality it proclaimed was limited. Orthodox Romanians, for example, were free to worship, but their church was not recognized as a received religion.

Once the Ottomans conquered Buda, Walachia and Moldavia lost all but the veneer of independence and the Porte exacted heavy tribute. The Turks chose Walachian and Moldavian princes from among the sons of noble hostages or refugees at Constantinople. Few princes died a natural death, but they lived enthroned amid great luxury. Although the Porte forbade Turks to own land or build mosques in the principalities, the princes allowed Greek and Turkish merchants and usurers to exploit the principalities' riches. The Greeks, jealously protecting their privileges, smothered the developing Romanian middle class.

The Romanians' final hero before the Turks and Greeks closed their stranglehold on the principalities was Walachia's Michael the



*Clock tower in Sighișoara, birthplace of Vlad Tepeș and one of the most picturesque Romanian towns
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

Brave (1593–1601). Michael bribed his way at the Porte to become prince. Once enthroned, however, he rounded up extortionist Turkish lenders, locked them in a building, and burned it to the ground. His forces then overran several key Turkish fortresses. Michael's ultimate goal was complete independence, but in 1598 he pledged fealty to Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II. A year later, Michael captured Transylvania, and his victory incited Transylvania's Romanian peasants to rebel. Michael, however, more interested in endearing himself to Transylvania's nobles than in supporting defiant serfs, suppressed the rebels and swore to uphold the Union of Three Nations. Despite the prince's pledge, the nobles still distrusted him. Then in 1600 Michael conquered Moldavia. For the first time a single Romanian prince ruled over all Romanians, and the Romanian people sensed the first stirring of a national identity. Michael's success startled Rudolf. The emperor incited Transylvania's nobles to revolt against the prince, and Poland simultaneously overran Moldavia. Michael consolidated his forces in Walachia, apologized to Rudolf, and agreed to join Rudolf's general, Giörgio Basta, in a campaign to regain Transylvania from recalcitrant Hungarian nobles. After their victory, however, Basta executed Michael for alleged treachery. Michael the Brave grew more impressive in legend than in life, and his short-lived unification of the Romanian lands later inspired the Romanians to struggle for cultural and political unity.

In Transylvania Basta's army persecuted Protestants and illegally expropriated their estates until Stephen Bocskay (1605–07), a former Habsburg supporter, mustered an army that expelled the imperial forces. In 1606 Bocskay concluded treaties with the Habsburgs and the Turks that secured his position as prince of Transylvania, guaranteed religious freedom, and broadened Transylvania's independence. After Bocskay's death and the reign of the tyrant Gabriel Báthory (1607–13), the Porte compelled the Transylvanians to accept Gábor Bethlen (1613–29) as prince. Transylvania experienced a golden age under Bethlen's enlightened despotism. He promoted agriculture, trade, and industry, sank new mines, sent students abroad to Protestant universities, and prohibited landlords from denying an education to children of serfs. After Bethlen died, however, the Transylvanian Diet abolished most of his reforms. Soon György Rákóczi I (1630–40) became prince. Rákóczi, like Bethlen, sent Transylvanian forces to fight with the Protestants in the Thirty Years' War; and Transylvania gained mention as a sovereign state in the Peace of Westphalia. Transylvania's golden age ended after György Rákóczi II (1648–60) launched an ill-fated attack on Poland without the prior approval of the Porte or

*St. Michael's Church and
statue of Mátyás Corvinus,
Cluj-Napoca
Courtesy Scott Edelman*



Transylvania's Diet. A Turkish and Tatar army routed Rákóczi's forces and seized Transylvania. For the remainder of its independence, Transylvania suffered a series of feckless and distracted leaders, and throughout the seventeenth century Transylvania's Romanian peasants lingered in poverty and ignorance.

During Michael the Brave's brief tenure and the early years of Turkish suzerainty, the distribution of land in Walachia and Moldavia changed dramatically. Over the years, Walachian and Moldavian princes made land grants to loyal boyars in exchange for military service so that by the seventeenth century hardly any land was left. Boyars in search of wealth began encroaching on peasant land and their military allegiance to the prince weakened. As a result, serfdom spread, successful boyars became more courtiers than warriors, and an intermediary class of impoverished lesser nobles developed. Would-be princes were forced to raise enormous sums to bribe their way to power, and peasant life grew more miserable as taxes and exactions increased. Any prince wishing to improve the peasants' lot risked a financial shortfall that could enable rivals to out-bribe him at the Porte and usurp his position.

In 1632 Matei Basarab (1632-54) became the last of Walachia's predominant family to take the throne; two years later, Vasile Lupu (1634-53), a man of Albanian descent, became prince of Moldavia. The jealousies and ambitions of Matei and Vasile sapped the strength of both principalities at a time when the Porte's power

began to wane. Coveting the richer Walachian throne, Vasile attacked Matei, but the latter's forces routed the Moldavians, and a group of Moldavian boyars ousted Vasile. Both Matei and Vasile were enlightened rulers, who provided liberal endowments to religion and the arts, established printing presses, and published religious books and legal codes.

Transylvania under the Habsburgs, 1688–1867

In 1683 Jan Sobieski's Polish army crushed an Ottoman army besieging Vienna, and Christian forces soon began the slow process of driving the Turks from Europe. In 1688 the Transylvanian Diet renounced Ottoman suzerainty and accepted Austrian protection. Eleven years later, the Porte officially recognized Austria's sovereignty over the region. Although an imperial decree reaffirmed the privileges of Transylvania's nobles and the status of its four "recognized" religions, Vienna assumed direct control of the region and the emperor planned annexation. The Romanian majority remained segregated from Transylvania's political life and almost totally enserfed; Romanians were forbidden to marry, relocate, or practice a trade without the permission of their landlords. Besides oppressive feudal exactions, the Orthodox Romanians had to pay tithes to the Roman Catholic or Protestant church, depending on their landlords' faith. Barred from collecting tithes, Orthodox priests lived in penury, and many labored as peasants to survive.

The Uniate Church

Under Habsburg rule, Roman Catholics dominated Transylvania's more numerous Protestants, and Vienna mounted a campaign to convert the region to Catholicism. The imperial army delivered many Protestant churches to Catholic hands, and anyone who broke from the Catholic church was liable to receive a public flogging. The Habsburgs also attempted to persuade Orthodox clergymen to join the Uniate Church, which retained Orthodox rituals and customs but accepted four key points of Catholic doctrine and acknowledged papal authority. Jesuits dispatched to Transylvania promised Orthodox clergymen heightened social status, exemption from serfdom, and material benefits. In 1699 and 1701, Emperor Leopold I decreed Transylvania's Orthodox Church to be one with the Roman Catholic Church; the Habsburgs, however, never intended to make the Uniate Church a "received" religion and did not enforce portions of Leopold's decrees that gave Uniate clergymen the same rights as Catholic priests. Despite an Orthodox synod's acceptance of union, many Orthodox clergy and faithful rejected it.

In 1711, having suppressed an eight-year rebellion of Hungarian nobles and serfs, the empire consolidated its hold on Transylvania, and within several decades the Uniate Church proved a seminal force in the rise of Romanian nationalism. Uniate clergymen had influence in Vienna; and Uniate priests schooled in Rome and Vienna acquainted the Romanians with Western ideas, wrote histories tracing their Daco-Roman origins, adapted the Latin alphabet to the Romanian language, and published Romanian grammars and prayer books. The Uniate Church's seat at Blaj, in southern Transylvania, became a center of Romanian culture.

The Romanians' struggle for equality in Transylvania found its first formidable advocate in a Uniate bishop, Inocențiu Micu Klein, who, with imperial backing, became a baron and a member of the Transylvanian Diet. From 1729 to 1744 Klein submitted petitions to Vienna on the Romanians' behalf and stubbornly took the floor of Transylvania's Diet to declare that Romanians were the inferiors of no other Transylvanian people, that they contributed more taxes and soldiers to the state than any of Transylvania's "nations," and that only enmity and outdated privileges caused their political exclusion and economic exploitation. Klein fought to gain Uniate clergymen the same rights as Catholic priests, reduce feudal obligations, restore expropriated land to Romanian peasants, and bar feudal lords from depriving Romanian children of an education. The bishop's words fell on deaf ears in Vienna; and Hungarian, German, and Szekler deputies, jealously clinging to their noble privileges, openly mocked the bishop and snarled that the Romanians were to the Transylvanian body politic what "moths are to clothing." Klein eventually fled to Rome where his appeals to the pope proved fruitless. He died in a Roman monastery in 1768. Klein's struggle, however, stirred both Uniate and Orthodox Romanians to demand equal standing. In 1762 an imperial decree established an organization for Transylvania's Orthodox community, but the empire still denied Orthodoxy equality even with the Uniate Church.

The Reign of Joseph II

Emperor Joseph II (1780-90), before his accession, witnessed the serfs' wretched existence during three tours of Transylvania. As emperor he launched an energetic reform program. Steeped in the teachings of the French Enlightenment, he practiced "enlightened despotism," or reform from above designed to preempt revolution from below. He brought the empire under strict central control, launched an education program, and instituted religious tolerance, including full civil rights for Orthodox Christians. In

1784 Transylvanian serfs under Ion Ursu, convinced they had the emperor's support, rebelled against their feudal masters, sacked castles and manor houses, and murdered about 100 nobles. Joseph ordered the revolt repressed but granted amnesty to all participants except Ursu and other leaders, whom the nobles tortured and put to death before peasants brought to witness the execution. Joseph, aiming to strike at the rebellion's root causes, emancipated the serfs, annulled Transylvania's constitution, dissolved the Union of Three Nations, and decreed German the official language of the empire. Hungary's nobles and Catholic clergy resisted Joseph's reforms, and the peasants soon grew dissatisfied with taxes, conscription, and forced requisition of military supplies. Faced with broad discontent, Joseph rescinded many of his initiatives toward the end of his life.

Joseph II's Germanization decree triggered a chain reaction of national movements throughout the empire. Hungarians appealed for unification of Hungary and Transylvania and Magyarization of minority peoples. Threatened by both Germanization and Magyarization, the Romanians and other minority nations experienced a cultural awakening. In 1791 two Romanian bishops—one Orthodox, the other Uniate—petitioned Emperor Leopold II (1790-92) to grant Romanians political and civil rights, to place Orthodox and Uniate clergy on an equal footing, and to apportion a share of government posts for Romanian appointees; the bishops supported their petition by arguing that Romanians were descendants of the Romans and the aboriginal inhabitants of Transylvania. The emperor restored Transylvania as a territorial entity and ordered the Transylvanian Diet to consider the petition. The Diet, however, decided only to allow Orthodox believers to practice their faith; the deputies denied the Orthodox Church recognition and refused to give Romanians equal political standing beside the other Transylvanian nations.

Leopold's successor, Francis I (1792-1835), whose almost abnormal aversion to change and fear of revolution brought his empire four decades of political stagnation, virtually ignored Transylvania's constitution and refused to convoke the Transylvanian Diet for twenty-three years. When the Diet finally reconvened in 1834, the language issue reemerged as Hungarian deputies proposed making Magyar the official language of Transylvania. In 1843 the Hungarian Diet passed a law making Magyar Hungary's official language, and in 1847 the Transylvanian Diet enacted a law requiring the government to use Magyar. Transylvania's Romanians protested futilely.

The Revolution of 1848

In early 1848, revolution erupted in Europe, and by March it had ignited both Austria and Hungary. Hungary's Diet seized the opportunity to enact a comprehensive legislative program that, in effect, extricated the country from the Middle Ages. The Diet abolished serfdom and feudal privileges and proclaimed freedom of the press and religion. The Diet's reform legislation also provided for the union of Transylvania and Hungary. In April Emperor Ferdinand V (1835–48) swore to uphold the reforms, and on May 29, with a crowd in the street shouting "Union or Death!" the Transylvanian Diet voted for unification. Romanians had no voice in the decision.

Unification galvanized Romanian opposition. Thousands of peasants and miners gathered in Blaj to denounce union with Hungary and call for proportionate representation of Romanians in Transylvania's Diet and an end to ethnic oppression. Warfare began in September between Hungarian troops and imperial forces, and a month later Romanian troops under Austrian command battled the Hungarians in Transylvania. The Romanians sided with the Austrians, believing that the emperor would grant them equal rights in reward for their loyalty. Both sides committed atrocities, and for several months the Hungarians were victorious. In June 1849, however, the tsar heeded an appeal from Emperor Franz Joseph (1848–1916) and sent in Russian troops, who extinguished the revolution.

After quashing the revolution, Austria imposed a repressive regime on Hungary and ruled Transylvania directly through a military governor. German again became the official language, but the Austrians reinstated neither serfdom nor the nobles' monopoly on land ownership or tax-exempt status. Austria also abolished the Union of Three Nations and granted the Romanians citizenship. Former feudal lords hesitated to give up their land, however, and most of the newly freed serfs became sharecroppers on inferior land that barely yielded subsistence. These dismal conditions uprooted many Romanian families, who crossed into Walachia and Moldavia searching for better lives.

Unification of Transylvania and Hungary

In 1863 Franz Joseph convened the Transylvanian Diet. Hungarian deputies boycotted the session because Franz Joseph had not convened it in accordance with the 1848 laws, and Romanian and German deputies held the majority. The rump Diet passed laws that underscored Transylvania's autonomy and equal status

for the Romanian, Hungarian, and German languages. Transylvania's Romanians at last joined the Magyars, Szeklers, and Germans as the fourth Transylvanian "nation," and the Romanian Orthodox Church became a received religion. Franz Joseph later permitted Transylvania's Orthodox Church to separate from the Serbian Patriarchate. Romanian literary figures soon founded the Association for the Cultivation of Romanian Language and Literature, which became a focal point of Romanian cultural life in Transylvania.

Romanians enjoyed equal status in Transylvania for only a short time. The need to shore up the weakening empire pressed Vienna toward compromise with Budapest. In 1865 Franz Joseph convened a second Transylvanian Diet, this time with a Hungarian majority, which abrogated the 1863 legislation and endorsed unification of Hungary and Transylvania. Defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1866 further revealed Austria's weakness, and in 1867 Franz Joseph agreed to the *Ausgleich*, a compromise whereby Austria and Hungary joined to form the Dual Monarchy—two sovereign states with a unified foreign policy.

Walachia and Moldavia under the Russian Protectorate, 1711–1859

The Phanariot Princes

At the turn of the eighteenth century, Peter the Great's Russia supplanted Poland as the predominant power in eastern Europe and began exerting its influence over Walachia and Moldavia. The Orthodox tsar announced a policy of support for his coreligionists within the Ottoman Empire, and Romanian princes in Walachia and Moldavia began looking to Russia to break the Turkish yoke. Peter's ill-fated attempt to seize Moldavia in 1711 had the support of both Romanian princes. After the Turks expelled the Russian forces, the sultan moved to strengthen his hold on the principalities by appointing Greeks from Constantinople's Phanar, or "Lighthouse," district as princes. These "Phanariot" princes, who purchased their positions and usually held them briefly until a higher bidder usurped them, were entirely dependent upon their Ottoman overlords. Within the principalities, however, their rule was absolute and the Porte expected them to leech out as much wealth from their territories as possible in the least time.

Exploitation, corruption, and the Porte's policy of rapidly replacing Phanariot princes wreaked havoc on the principalities' social and economic conditions. The boyars became sycophants; severe exactions and heavy labor obligations forced the peasantry to the

brink of starvation; and foreigners monopolized trade. The only benevolent Phanariot prince was Constantine Mavrocordato, who ruled as prince of Walachia six times and of Moldavia four times between 1739 and 1768. Mavrocordato attempted drastic reforms to staunch peasant emigration. He abolished several taxes on the boyars and clergy, freed certain classes of serfs, and provided the peasants sufficient land, pasturage, and wood for fuel. Mavrocordato also published books, founded schools, and required priests to be literate. These reforms, however, proved ephemeral; discomfited boyars undermined Mavrocordato's support at the Porte, and he was locked away in a Constantinople prison.

The Russian Protectorate

Russia's influence waxed in Walachia and Moldavia as Ottoman power waned. In 1739 and 1769 the Russians briefly occupied the principalities. Then in 1774, Catherine the Great agreed to return Moldavia, Walachia, and Bessarabia (see Glossary) to the Turks, but she obtained the right to represent Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire and oversee the principalities' internal affairs; Austria complained that the agreement rewarded Russia too favorably and annexed northern Bukovina (see Glossary), part of Moldavia. In 1787 the Russian army again marched into the principalities, but a stalemate gripped forces on all fronts and in 1792 the empress and sultan agreed to reaffirm existing treaties. In 1802 the Porte agreed to halt the rapid turnover of Phanariot princes; henceforth, the princes would reign for seven-year terms and could not be dethroned without Russian approval.

In 1806 forces of Tsar Alexander I reoccupied the principalities, and the Romanian peasants were subjected to forced requisitions, heavy labor obligations, and real threats of exile to Siberia. As a result, the Romanians, who once had looked to the tsar for liberation, developed an abiding mistrust of the Russians that would deepen in the next century. In 1812 Russia and the Porte signed the Peace of Bucharest, which returned the principalities to the Ottomans and secured Russia's southern flank during Napoleon's invasion; Russia, however, annexed Bessarabia and retained its right to interfere in the principalities' affairs. Despite Russia's concessions, the treaty so displeased the sultan that he had his negotiators beheaded.

In 1821 Greek nationalists headquartered in Odessa took control of Moldavia as the first step in a plan to extricate Greece from Ottoman domination. Phanariot rule in Walachia and Moldavia led the Greek nationalists to view the principalities as possible components of a renascent Byzantine Empire. The insurgency's leader,

Alexander Ypsilanti, a general in the Russian army and son of a Phanariot prince, enjoyed the support of some Greek and Romanian boyars in the principalities; after more than a century of extortion, however, most Romanians resented the Phanariots and craved the end of Greek control. Tudor Vladimirescu, a peasant-born Romanian whose wits and military skill had elevated him to boyar rank, assumed power in Walachia in an anti-Phanariot national uprising directed at establishing a Romanian government under Ottoman suzerainty. Russia denounced both Ypsilanti and Vladimirescu. The two rebel leaders argued in Bucharest; afterwards, Greek officers shot the Romanian, mutilated his body, and dumped it into a pond, an act that also ended Romanian resistance, which evaporated after Vladimirescu's death. Then the Turks, with Russia's approval, attacked the principalities, scattered the Greek forces, and chased Ypsilanti into Transylvania. The Greek rebellion shocked the Porte, which no longer appointed Phanariot princes to the Walachian and Moldavian thrones and chose instead native Romanians.

Later, in 1826, an internal crisis forced the sultan to accede to Russia's demand for greater influence in the principalities. The Porte gave Russia the right of consultation regarding changes on the two thrones; this concession assured Russia predominant influence at Bucharest and Iași. Russia again invaded the principalities during the Russo-Turkish War of 1828, which resulted in the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople. The treaty provided for Russian occupation of the principalities until the Ottomans had fully paid an indemnity, the election of native Romanian princes for life, and an independent national administration and freedom of worship and commerce under Russian protection. Despite the fact that the Porte remained the principalities' suzerain and could exact a fixed tribute and direct certain aspects of foreign policy, the sultan could neither reject nor remove a prince without Russian consent.

During Russia's occupation, a capable administrator, Count Pavel Kiselev, improved health conditions, organized a well-disciplined police force, built up grain reserves, and oversaw the drafting and ratification of the principalities' first fundamental laws, the *Règlement Organique*. Russia used these charters to co-opt Romanian boyars by protecting their privileges, including their tax-exempt status and oligarchic control of the government. However flawed, the charters gave Romanians their first taste of government by law. The *Règlement* provided for elected assemblies of boyars to choose each prince, reformed the principalities' judicial systems, and established public education. At the same time, the documents' economic provisions enabled the boyars to stiffen peasant obligations and reduced the peasants' freedom of mobility.

After Russia's withdrawal in 1834, Walachia and Moldavia entered a period of self-government during which Russia guaranteed the privileges that the Ottomans had granted. During this period, the principalities' economic condition was bleak. For example a traveler to Walachia in 1835 reported seeing no manor houses, bridges, windmills, or inns and no furniture or utensils in peasant huts. In the mid-nineteenth century, Jews from Galicia began dominating trade, crafts, and money lending in the principalities. A native-Romanian bourgeoisie was virtually nonexistent. The boyars grew rich through the Black Sea wheat trade, using Jews as middlemen, but the peasants reaped few benefits. Beginning in the 1840s, construction of the first major roadways linked the principalities, and in 1846 Gheorghe Bibescu (1842-48), the Paris-educated prince of Walachia, agreed with Moldavia's Prince Mihai Sturdza (1834-49) to dismantle customs barriers between the principalities, marking the first concrete move toward unification.

The uprising of Transylvania's Romanian peasants during the 1848 European revolutions ignited Romanian national movements in Walachia and Moldavia. In Moldavia, Sturdza quashed the revolution overnight by arresting its leaders. In Walachia, however, a majority of the younger generation was averse to Russian and boyar dominance. Revolutionary platforms called for universal suffrage, equal rights, unification of the two principalities, and freedom of speech, association, and assembly. Although he sympathized with the revolutionary movement, Bibescu lacked the courage to lead it. After naming a revolutionary cabinet and signing a new constitution, he fled into Transylvania. The new government of Walachia quickly affirmed its loyalty to the Porte and appealed to Austria, France, and Britain for support, hoping to avert a Russian invasion. The government also formed a committee composed equally of boyars and peasants to discuss land reform. Shocked by the revolution's success in Europe and fearful that it might spread into Russia, the tsar invaded Moldavia and pressured the Porte to crush the rebels in Bucharest. Dissatisfied with Turkey's weak resolve, Russia invaded Walachia and restored the *Règlement*. After 1849 the two empires suppressed the boyar assemblies in Walachia and Moldavia and limited the tenure of their princes to seven years.

The Crimean War and Unification

Russia withdrew from Walachia and Moldavia in 1851 but returned yet again in the summer of 1853, thus precipitating the Crimean War. In 1854 Franz Joseph and the sultan forced Tsar Nicholas I to withdraw his troops from the principalities, and

imperial and Ottoman soldiers soon occupied them. Russia's defeat in the Crimea forced the tsar to seek peace, affirmed in 1856 by the Treaty of Paris. De jure Ottoman suzerainty over the principalities continued after the treaty, which abolished the Russian protectorate and replaced it with a joint European guarantee. The treaty also freed navigation on the Danube and forced Russia to cede part of southern Bessarabia, which included control of the river's mouth, to Moldavia.

The year 1856 began the active campaign for union of Walachia and Moldavia. The movement had the support of France, because many Romanian revolutionaries took refuge there after 1848 and lobbied Napoleon III to press for unification; Austria, Britain, and the Ottomans, however, opposed the unification effort, while Russia opted to let the Romanians decide. In 1857 the Porte manipulated an election of delegates to special assemblies charged with discussing unification; the few voters casting ballots elected representatives opposing union. An international crisis followed, and Napoleon III, with Russian and British support, finally pressured the Ottomans to nullify the results and hold new, untainted elections, which returned a huge majority of delegates in favor of unification. These delegates immediately called for autonomy, a constitutional government, and a foreign prince to rule the unified principalities. Despite the election results, an international conference in Paris in 1858 reaffirmed separation of Walachia and Moldavia under Ottoman sovereignty, but it allowed for a common coinage and uniform laws and titled the two states the "United Principalities." The Romanians themselves overcame the imposed separation in 1859 when the separate assemblies at Bucharest and Iași unanimously elected the same man, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, governor of both principalities. Distracted by war in Italy, the leading European nations yielded to a *fait accompli* and accepted unification, and Cuza (1859–66) became prince.

Romania and Transylvania to the End of World War I, 1861–1919

After discussions in Paris, the European powers and the Ottoman Empire ratified Cuza's election, and the United Principalities officially became Romania in 1861. Almost immediately Cuza initiated a reform program. Encountering resistance from oligarchic boyars, the prince appealed to the masses and held a referendum that approved constitutional provisions giving him broad powers to implement his program. The government improved roads, founded the universities of Bucharest and Iași, banned the

use of Greek in churches and monasteries, and secularized monastic property. Cuza also signed an agrarian law that eliminated serfdom, tithes, and forced labor and allowed peasants to acquire land. Unfortunately, the new holdings were often too expensive for the peasants and too small to provide self-sufficiency; consequently the peasantry's lot deteriorated.

Cuza's reforms alienated both the boyars and Romania's mostly Greek clergy, and government corruption and the prince's own moral turpitude soon eroded his popularity. In 1865 an uprising broke out in Bucharest. Afterward, animosity toward the prince united the leaders of Romania's two political parties, the pro-German Conservatives, backed by the boyars and clergy, and the pro-French Liberals, who found support in the growing middle class and favored agrarian reform. On February 23, 1866, army officers loyal to the country's leading boyars awoke Cuza and his mistress, forced the prince to abdicate, and escorted him from the capital. The next morning street placards in Bucharest announced the prince's departure and rule by a regency pending the election of a foreign prince.

Romania under Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen

With the tacit support of Napoleon III, Ion Brătianu, the leader of Romania's Liberals, nominated Prince Charles of southern Germany's Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen family as the new prince. Over objections from the other European powers, the Romanians elected the twenty-seven-year-old prince, who, disguised as a salesman, traveled through Austria by second-class rail and steamboat to accept the throne.

Charles (1866–1914) worked to provide Romania with efficient administration. In July 1866, the principality gained a new constitution that established a bicameral legislature, gave the prince power to veto legislation, proclaimed equality before the law, and contained guarantees of freedom of religion, speech, and assembly. Most of the constitution's civil-rights provisions, however, were not enforced, and it extended voting rights only to the landed aristocracy and clergy. The document also limited naturalization to Christians, a measure aimed at denying civil rights to Jews living in or migrating to the principality. The Romanian Orthodox Church became the official state religion. Charles, a Roman Catholic, pledged to raise his successor in the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Franco-Prussian War in 1870 precipitated a political crisis as Francophile Liberal Party members denounced Romania's German prince. In August, pro-French activists led an abortive revolt

against Charles at Ploiești. Although the government quickly suppressed the uprising, a jury acquitted the leaders. A scandal erupted when a Prussian-Jewish contractor bungled construction of key Romanian rail links and defaulted on interest payments to Prussian bondholders; the Liberals denounced Charles for pledging to back the bonds. In March 1871 the Bucharest police looked on as an angry crowd attacked a hall in which Germans had gathered to celebrate Prussian war victories. A day later, Charles handed his abdication to the regents who had installed him. They convinced the prince to remain on the throne, however, and mustered conservative forces to support him.

Charles backed Russia during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78. He allowed Russian troops to transit Romania and personally led the Romanian army to aid Russian forces bogged down before Plevna, in the north of present-day Bulgaria. Finally, after the Ottomans' defeat, Charles proclaimed Romania's independence, ending five centuries of vassalage. Despite the Romanian army's heroism at Plevna, Russia refused to allow Romania to participate in peace negotiations or in the 1878 Congress of Berlin. At Berlin, Russia gained southern Bessarabia from Romania and as recompense offered northern Dobruja (see Glossary), a barren land between the Danube and the Black Sea south of the river's delta then inhabited mostly by Turks, Bulgars, and gypsies (see fig. 2). The Congress agreed to recognize Romania's declared independence, but only if Romania acceded to Russia's annexation of Bessarabia and repealed laws that discriminated against Jews. Romania agreed, and, though its amendments to the discriminatory laws left many loopholes, the European powers in 1880 recognized Romania's independence. The tsar later denied Romania the fortress of Silistra, the strategic key to Dobruja on the south bank of the Danube, thereby deepening Romania's distrust of Russia.

In 1881 the parliament proclaimed Romania a kingdom, and Charles was crowned in Bucharest's cathedral with a crown fashioned from an Ottoman cannon seized at Plevna. Romania enjoyed relative peace and prosperity for the next three decades, and the policies of successive Conservative and Liberal governments varied little. Walachian wells began pumping oil; a bridge was built across the Danube at Cernavodă (in Dobruja); and new docks rose at Constanța. Foreign trade more than tripled between 1870 and 1898, and by 1900 the new kingdom had 14,000 kilometers of roadway and 3,100 kilometers of railroad. Charles equipped a respectable army, and peasant children filled newly constructed rural schoolrooms. Romania borrowed heavily to finance development,

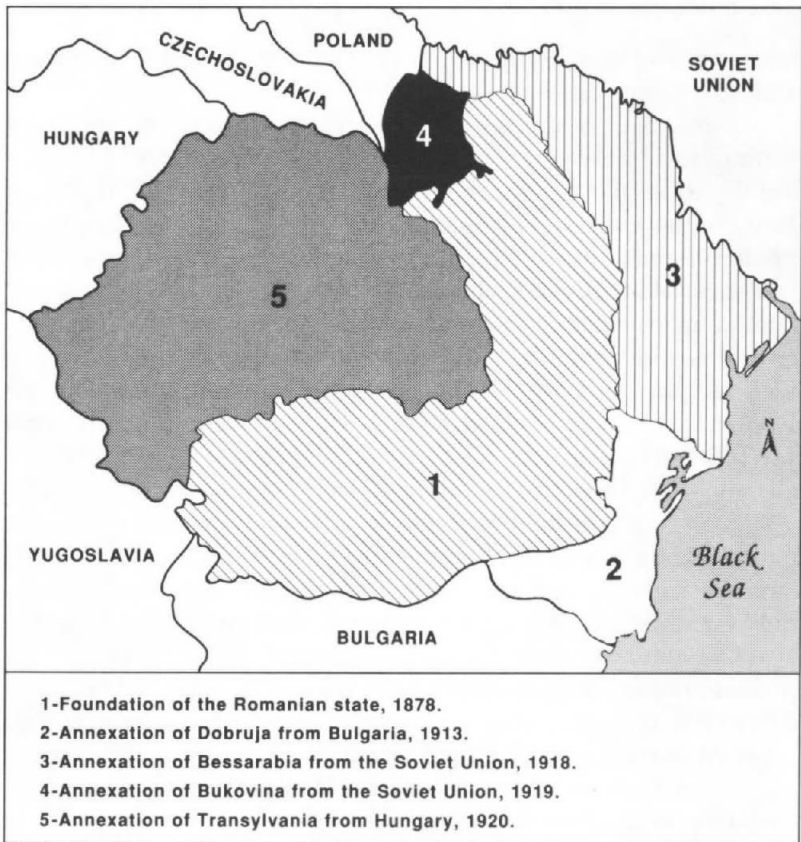
however, and most of the population continued to live in penury and ignorance.

Mistreatment of the Jewish minority and inequitable land distribution also were persistently troublesome issues. Jews had begun immigrating into Romania in numbers after the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople, crowding into northern Moldavia and making Iași a predominantly Jewish city. In 1859 about 118,000 Jews lived in Moldavia and 9,200 in Walachia; by 1899 Moldavia's Jewish population had grown to 201,000 and Walachia's to 68,000. Economic rivalry precipitated riots and attacks on synagogues and Jews. The Liberal Party, supported by the increasing numbers of middle-class Romanians, strove to eliminate Jewish competition. Many rural Jews fled to the cities or abroad, and legal restrictions prevented all but a few Jews from gaining Romanian citizenship.

Bloody confrontations over inequitable land distribution brought partial agrarian reform. In the late nineteenth century about 2,000 landowners controlled over half of Romania's land; peasants held only one-third of the acreage. Beside limited ownership, peasants also had little representation in government. Their discontent exploded in 1888 and prompted an ineffective land reform. In 1907 peasants revolted even more violently in Moldavia, where they attacked Jewish middlemen, pillaged large estates, battled the army, and attempted to march on Bucharest. The government called out the army to quell the disorder, in which at least 10,000 peasants died. After the revolt, the government dispersed some 4 million hectares of land to the peasants in parcels of 1 to 61 hectares; large landowners retained about 3 million hectares.

An almost obsessive distrust of Russia prompted Charles to sign a secret treaty of alliance with Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy in 1883. Thus Charles' kingdom became one of the Central Powers. Romania openly fortified military defenses along its Russian border and left unprotected the Transylvanian mountain passes into Hungary. However, Charles withheld knowledge of the pact even from successive premiers and foreign ministers until 1914. For years the king kept Romania's only copy of the treaty locked in his personal safe at the royal summer retreat.

Romania's alliance with Austria-Hungary did little to ease the strain in relations between the two countries that Hungary was creating with its efforts to Magyarize Transylvania's Romanian majority. Romanian nationalism smoldered in Transylvania during the period of the Dual Monarchy. The National Party advocated restoration of Transylvania's historic autonomy; Hungary, however, opposed both autonomy and any expanded voting rights that would give Romanians the region's dominant voice. By the



Source: Based on information from Eugene Horvath, *Transylvania and the History of the Romanians*, Astor, Florida, 1976.

Figure 2. Boundaries of Romania from the Congress of Berlin, 1878, to the Treaty of Trianon, 1920

turn of the century, Bucharest's calls for unification of Romanians in Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia grew stronger.

The Balkan Wars and World War I

After the 1907 peasant uprising, foreign events shaped Romania's political agenda. In 1908 Austria annexed Bosnia, a clear indication that Vienna sought to destroy Serbia. A year later Ionel Brătianu, son of the former Liberal Party leader, became Romania's prime minister. Brătianu feared that Bulgarian expansion might upset the Balkan balance of power and sought compensation for any potential Bulgarian gains at the Ottomans' expense.

Then in October 1912, the First Balkan War erupted. Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece scored quick victories over Ottoman forces, and Bulgarian forces drove to within thirty-three kilometers of Constantinople. Romania called on Sofia to hand over the fortress of Silistra; Bulgaria's foreign minister, however, offered only minor border changes, which excluded Silistra, and assurances for the rights of the Kutzovlachs in Macedonia and northern Greece. After the war, Romania threatened to occupy Bulgarian territory, but a British proposal for arbitration prevented hostilities. The resulting May 1913 Protocol of St. Petersburg awarded Romania control of Silistra; the protocol did not satisfy Bucharest's appetite for territory, however, and Sofia considered the award excessive.

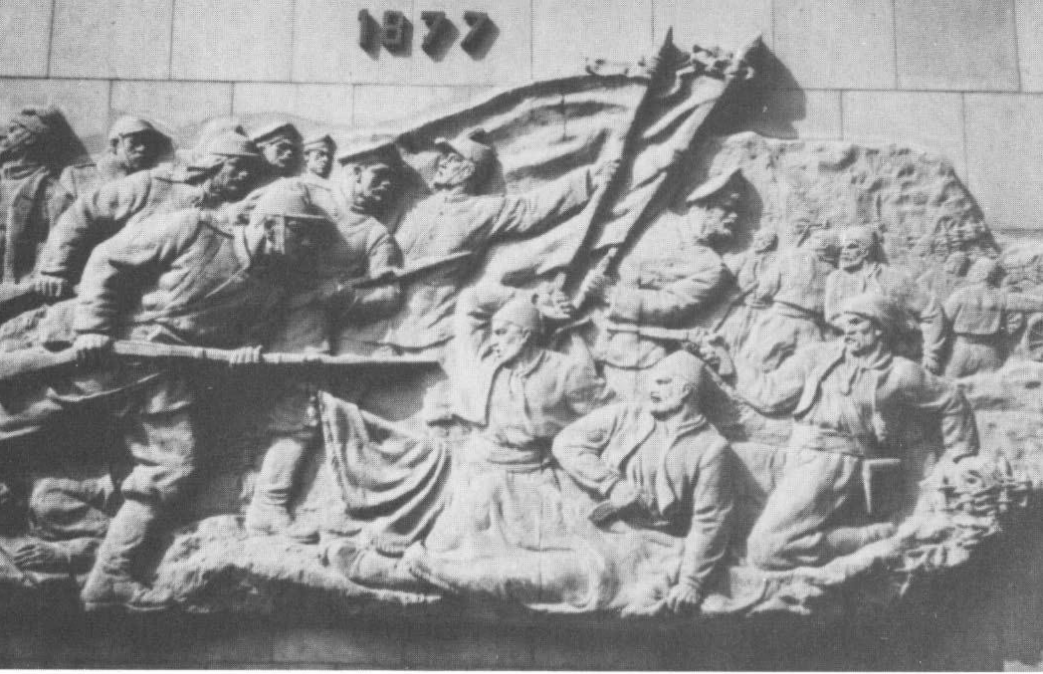
On June 28, 1913, the Second Balkan War broke out when Bulgaria launched an unsuccessful surprise attack on Serbia and Greece. The Ottomans joined in the fighting against Bulgaria, and Romania's army marched into southern Dobruja before turning toward Sofia. The warring states signed an armistice on July 30, 1913, and in the subsequent Treaty of Bucharest, Romania retained Silistra and other strategic areas of Dobruja. During the invasion of Bulgaria, large numbers of Romanian soldiers saw firsthand Bulgaria's abundant peasant holdings and more advanced farming methods and noted the absence of wealthy landowners and rapacious middlemen. Brătianu's Liberal Party tapped the resulting impatience of Romania's peasantry by making land and franchise reform the thrust of its new program; they proved an unstoppable combination against the Conservatives. In January 1914, the Liberals rose to power and convoked a constituent assembly to elaborate agrarian and electoral reform programs.

When Brătianu became premier, he learned that Charles had renewed the secret treaty with the other Central Powers in 1913 despite the fact that the king knew the treaty would enjoy no popular support because of Hungary's continuing efforts to Magyarize Transylvania's Romanians. On June 28, 1914, a Bosnian Serb assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne and the Dual Monarchy's most ardent supporter of the rights of Transylvania's Romanians. Within days Austria presented Serbia with an ultimatum that made war inevitable. At first, King Charles felt the secret treaty did not bind Romania to declare war on Serbia for a quarrel that Austria-Hungary had provoked with its ultimatum. The Central Powers, eager to have Charles mobilize Romania's forces against Russia, evoked the king's German ancestry and tempted him with a promise to restore Bessarabia; at the same time, Russia offered Transylvania to Romania if it would join the Triple Entente, the military alliance of Great Britain,

France, and Russia set up to counter the Central Powers. At a meeting of government and opposition-party leaders deciding Romania's course of action, Charles advocated joining the Central Powers. But upon hearing about Charles' secret, unconstitutional treaty, virtually all the government leaders rejected the king's proposal and opted for a wait-and-see policy. Romanian public opinion adamantly backed the French, and Bucharest crowds cheered after the French checked the German advance at the Marne River.

King Charles, infirm and disconsolate that Romania did not honor his secret treaty, died in October 1914. If it had not been for the war, Romanians would have grieved for the end of a forty-eight-year reign that had brought them the most prosperous and peaceful period in their entire history. Charles's successor, Ferdinand (1914-27), and Brătianu chose to conserve Romania's resources and continue playing a waiting game until they could discern the outcome of the war. In November Hungary tried to dissipate Romania's animosity by announcing a number of reforms benefiting Transylvania's ethnic Romanians, but even Germany termed the measures inadequate. In October 1915, Romania's rival, Bulgaria, joined the Central Powers and, in unison with Germany, attacked Serbia. Russian victories in Galicia in 1916, Allied promises of territory, and fear of Germany finally convinced Romania to join the war on the side of Britain, Russia, France, and Italy. On August 27, 1916, Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary. Confident of victory, Romanian troops crossed into Transylvania. Their campaign stalled, however, and German and Austrian forces counterattacked, drove the Romanian army and thousands of refugees back over the Carpathian passes, and in December occupied Bucharest. Bulgarian forces also invaded from across the Danube, and Russian reinforcements sent to Romania's aid proved feckless. Meanwhile, Ferdinand and his ministers fled to Iași, where the Romanian army regrouped under a French military mission, achieved several victories over Central Powers forces, and held a line along the Siret River.

In February 1917, revolution erupted in Russia's capital, Petrograd. In an effort to preempt the appeal of Bolshevik propaganda, the Romanian government in July 1917 enacted a land reform program and an election law providing for universal suffrage, proportional representation, and obligatory participation in elections. By late summer, Russia's defenses had collapsed, and its soldiers were openly fraternizing with the enemy. In November the Bolsheviks staged a coup d'état that overthrew Russia's provisional government. Romania's leaders refused to participate



*Bas relief celebrating Romanian independence from the Turks, outside
Casa Armatei in Bucharest
Courtesy Karen Friedel
Statue of Michael the Brave, Bucharest
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

in the subsequent German-Soviet armistice negotiations; once the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, however, Romania had little choice but to agree to a preliminary armistice. In December Romanian nationalists in Bessarabia convened a representative national assembly that proclaimed the creation of the Democratic Federative Moldavian Republic and appealed to the Iași government and Entente countries for help in repulsing Bolshevik forces. In April 1918, the Bessarabian assembly requested annexation to Romania, and Romanian troops entered the province.

A new Romanian premier, the pro-German Alexandru Marghiloman, signed the Treaty of Bucharest with the Central Powers on May 7, 1918. Under the treaty, Romania lost all of Dobruja to Bulgaria and a joint administration of the Central Powers; Hungary gained territory in the Carpathians; Romania had to compensate the Central Powers for debts and damages; and the Central Powers claimed a nine-year monopoly on Romania's agricultural output and assumed control of the Danube and Romania's oilfields, railroads, wharves, and other economic assets. The Central Powers intended to ruin Romania's economy, and Hungary launched an all-out effort to create a wholly Magyarized zone along Transylvania's Romanian border and undermine the Orthodox and Uniate churches.

By mid-1918 the tide of the war had turned and engulfed the Central Powers. Bulgaria soon capitulated, Austria-Hungary was disintegrating, and Germany was retreating on the Western Front. The leaders of Transylvania's National Party met and drafted a resolution invoking the right of self-determination, and a movement began for the unification of Transylvania with Romania. In November near-anarchy gripped Hungary, and the Romanian National Central Council, which represented all the Romanians of Transylvania, notified the Budapest government that it had assumed control of twenty-three Transylvanian counties and parts of three others. A similar Romanian national council in northern Bukovina announced its union with Romania, and Bessarabia's government also voted for unification. In Romania itself, King Ferdinand appointed a new government that repealed all laws enacted under Marghiloman's administration. On November 8, Romania declared war on Germany and forced enemy troops from Walachia. The king returned to Bucharest on November 30, and Romanian units occupied most of Transylvania by December 1. A mass assembly later that month in Alba Iulia (southern Transylvania), passed a resolution calling for unification of all Romanians in a single state.

Greater Romania and the Occupation of Budapest

In late 1918 Romanian leaders traveled to Paris to forward the kingdom's broad territorial claims at the upcoming peace conference, which opened on January 18, 1919. At the conference, Romania insisted that the Allies respect the principle of national self-determination and fulfill the territorial promises made in 1916 that had brought Romania into the war on the side of the Allies. The Allies had promised Romania the Banat (see Glossary), a fertile agricultural region bounded by the Tisza, Mureș, and Danube rivers, which Serbia also claimed because of the region's large Slavic population. The conference participants supported almost all of Romania's claims, including those to Transylvania, Bessarabia, and northern Bukovina, but arbiters finally partitioned the Banat between Romania and Serbia.

In March 1919, the French head of the Entente mission in Budapest handed Mihály Károlyi, the fledgling Hungarian republic's leftist president, a diplomatic note dictating the last in a series of border rectifications that stripped Hungary of large swaths of its traditional lands. Károlyi resigned in disgust and turned power over to a coalition of social democrats and communists, who promised that the Soviet Union would help Hungary restore its prewar borders. The communists, under Béla Kun, immediately seized control and announced the founding of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. In late May, Kun backed his promises to restore Hungary's lost territories with military action against Czechoslovakia. When the French threatened to retaliate, Kun turned his army on Romania. Romanian units, however, penetrated Hungarian lines on July 30, occupied and looted Budapest, and scattered the members of Kun's government. When the Romanian troops finally departed Budapest at the beginning of 1920, they took extensive booty, including food, trucks, locomotives and railroad cars, and factory equipment, in revenge for the Central Powers' plundering of Romania during the war.

Romania's occupation of Budapest deepened ongoing Hungarian bitterness at the Paris conference against Brătianu, who stubbornly opposed the partition of the Banat and provisions of the treaties guaranteeing rights of minority ethnic groups. When Brătianu resigned rather than accept the treaty with Austria, King Ferdinand appointed a nonpartisan government and called for elections. In 1919 Romanians voted in the country's first free elections and swept away the Liberals' artificial parliamentary majority. Victory went to Iuliu Maniu's National Party, the major prewar Romanian party in Transylvania, which quickly carved out a niche

in the political life of Greater Romania (see Glossary) by attracting peasant support in the Old Kingdom, the territories of pre-World War I Romania. Maniu's colleague, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, became premier and rapidly signed the treaties. Vaida-Voevod ran the government until 1920, when the king named General Alexandru Averescu premier.

Greater Romania to the End of World War II, 1920-45

Two postwar agreements that Romania signed, the Treaty of Saint-Germain with Austria and the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, more than doubled Romania's size, adding Transylvania, Dobruja, Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, and part of the Banat to the Old Kingdom. The treaties also fulfilled the centuries-long Romanian dream of uniting all Romanians in a single country. Although the newly acquired regions brought added wealth and doubled the country's population to 16 million, they also introduced foreign nationalities, cultures, and social and political institutions that proved difficult to integrate with those of the Old Kingdom. These differences aroused chauvinism, exacerbated anti-Semitism, and fueled discrimination against Hungarians and other minorities. In the foreign arena, Romania faced Hungarian, Soviet, and Bulgarian demands for restoration of territories lost under the treaties; Romania geared its interwar network of alliances toward maintaining its territorial integrity.

King Ferdinand's fear of revolution and wartime promises of land reform prompted the enactment of agrarian reform laws between 1917 and 1921 that provided for the expropriation and distribution of large estates in the Old Kingdom and new territories. The reform radically altered the country's land-distribution profile as the government redistributed arable land belonging to the crown, boyars, church institutions, and foreign and domestic absentee landlords. When the reform measures were completed, the government had distributed 5.8 million hectares to about 1.4 million peasants; and peasants with ten hectares or less controlled 60 percent of Romania's tilled land. Former owners of the expropriated lands received reimbursement in long-term bonds; peasants were to repay the government 65 percent of the expropriation costs over twenty years. The land reforms suffered from corruption and protracted lawsuits and did not give rise to a modern, productive agricultural sector. Rather, ignorance, overpopulation, lack of farm implements and draft animals, too few rural credit institutions, and excessive division of land kept many of the rural areas mired

in poverty. Expropriation of Hungarian-owned property in Transylvania and the Banat created social tensions and further embittered relations with Hungary.

In October 1922, Ferdinand became king of Greater Romania, and in 1923 Romania adopted a new constitution providing for a highly centralized state. A chamber of deputies and a senate made up the national legislature, and the king held the power to appoint prime ministers. The constitution granted males suffrage and equal political rights, eliminated the Romanian Orthodox Church's legal supremacy, gave Jews citizenship rights, prohibited foreigners from owning rural land, and provided for expropriation of rural property and nationalization of the country's oil and mineral wealth. The constitution's liberal civil rights guarantees carried dubious force, however, and election laws allowed political bosses to manipulate vote tallies easily. The constitution enabled Bucharest to dominate Transylvania's affairs, which further fueled resentment in the region.

The war and the land reform obliterated Romania's pro-German, boyar-dominated Conservative Party. Brătianu's Liberal Party, which represented the country's industrial, financial, and commercial interests, controlled the government through rigged elections from 1922 to 1928. The Liberal government's corruption and Brătianu's hard-handed measures eroded the party's popularity. In 1926 Maniu's National Party and the Peasant Party, one of the political remnants of the Old Kingdom, merged to form the National Peasant Party. Taking full advantage of a broadened franchise, the new party soon rivaled the Liberals. The Social Democratic Party was Romania's strongest working-class party, but the country's labor movement was weak and Social Democratic candidates never collected enough votes to win the party more than a few seats in parliament. Despite this meager showing, a faction of Social Democrats in 1921 founded the Communist Party. Communist agitators worked among Romania's industrial workers, especially ethnic minorities in the newly acquired territories, before the government banned the party in 1924. Communism was unpopular in Romania between the wars, partly because Romanians feared the Soviet Union's threat to reclaim Bessarabia; Moscow even directed Romania's communists to advocate detachment of Romania's newly won territories.

Complicating an already unstable situation, the royal family in the mid-1920s suffered a scandal when Crown Prince Carol, exhibiting a Phanariot's love of pleasure, married a Greek princess but continued a long-term liaison with a stenographer. Rather than obey Ferdinand's command to break off his love affair, in 1927

Carol abdicated his right to the throne in favor of his six-year-old son Michael and went to Paris in exile. Ferdinand died within several months, and a regency ruled for Michael. The Liberal Party lost control of the government to the National Peasant Party in fair elections after Brătianu's death in 1927, and Maniu soon invited Prince Carol to return to his homeland. In 1930 Carol returned, and Romania's parliament proclaimed him king. King Carol (1930-40) proved an ambitious leader, but he surrounded himself with corrupt favorites and, to Maniu's dismay, continued his extramarital affair. Maniu soon lost faith in the monarch he had brought out of exile and resigned the premiership. In 1931 Carol ousted the National Peasant Party and named a coalition government under Nicolae Iorga, a noted historian. The National Peasant Party regained power in 1932, only to lose it again to the Liberals a year later.

The Agrarian Crisis and the Rise of the Iron Guard

Romania's economy boomed during the interwar period. The government raised revenue by heavy taxation of the agricultural sector and, after years of Liberal Party hesitation, began admitting foreign capital to finance new electric plants, mines, textile mills, foundries, oil wells, roads, and rail lines. Despite the industrial boom, however, Romania remained primarily an agricultural country. In 1929, when the New York Stock Exchange crashed, world grain prices collapsed, and Romania plunged into an agricultural crisis. Thousands of peasant landholders fell into arrears, and the government enacted price supports and voted a moratorium on agricultural debts to ease their plight. In 1931 Europe suffered a financial crisis, and the flow of foreign capital into Romania dried up. Worse yet, the new industries could not absorb all the peasants who left their villages in search of work resulting in high unemployment. When recovery began in 1934, the government used domestic capital to fund new industries, including arms manufacturing, to pull out of the agricultural slump. The depression slowed capacity growth, but industrial production actually increased 26 percent between 1931 and 1938, a period when practically all the world's developed countries were suffering declines.

In the early 1930s the Iron Guard, a macabre political cult consisting of malcontents, unemployed university graduates, thugs, and anti-Semites, began attracting followers with calls for war against Jews and communists. Peasants flocked to the Iron Guard's ranks, seeking scapegoats for their misery during the agrarian crisis, and the Iron Guard soon became the Balkans' largest fascist party. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the Iron Guard's leader who once

used his bare hands to kill Iași's police chief, dubbed himself Capitanul, a title analogous to Adolf Hitler's *Der Führer* and Benito Mussolini's *Il Duce*. Codreanu's henchmen marched through Romania's streets in boots and green shirts with small bags of Romanian soil dangling from their necks. Codreanu goaded the Iron Guards to kill his political opponents, and during "purification" ceremonies Guard members drew lots to choose assassins.

After an Iron Guard assassinated Premier Ion Duca of the National Liberal Party in 1933, Romania's governments turned over in rapid succession, exacerbating general discontent. Iron Guards battled their opponents in the streets, and railroad workers went on strike. The government violently suppressed the strikers and imprisoned Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and other Communists who would later rise to the country's most powerful offices.

In December 1937, when the National Liberals were voted out of office, King Carol handed the government to a far-right coalition that soon barred Jews from the civil service and army and forbade them to buy property and practice certain professions. Continuing turmoil and foreign condemnation of the government's virulent anti-Semitism drove Carol in April 1938 to suspend the 1923 constitution, proclaim a royal dictatorship, and impose rigid censorship and tight police surveillance. Carol's tolerance for the Iron Guard's violence wore thin, and on April 19 the police arrested and imprisoned Codreanu and other Iron Guard leaders and cracked down on the rank and file. In November police gunned down Codreanu and thirteen Iron Guards, alleging that they were attempting to escape custody.

Codreanu's violent activities were endorsed and funded by Nazi Germany, which by the late 1930s was able to apply enormous military and economic leverage on Bucharest. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, however, Romania's foreign policy had been decidedly anti-German. In 1920 and 1921, Romania had joined with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia to form the Little Entente, agreeing to work against a possible Habsburg restoration and oppose German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian efforts to seek treaty revisions. France had backed the agreement because it hemmed in Germany along its eastern frontiers, and the three Little Entente nations had signed bilateral treaties with France between 1924 and 1927. In February 1934, Romania had joined Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Greece to form the Balkan Entente, a mutual-defense arrangement intended to contain Bulgaria's territorial ambitions. By the mid-1930s, however, support for Romania's traditional pro-French policy waned, and right-wing forces clamored for closer relations

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with Nazi Germany; at the same time League of Nations-imposed trade sanctions against Italy were costing the Balkan countries dearly. Germany seized the opportunity to strengthen its economic influence in the region; it paid a premium for agricultural products and soon accounted for about half of Romania's total imports and exports. The Little Entente weakened in 1937, when Yugoslavia signed a bilateral pact with Bulgaria, and Hitler gutted it altogether in September 1938, when he duped Britain and France into signing the Munich Agreement, which allowed Germany to annex Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland. After Munich, Romania and Yugoslavia had no choice but appease Hitler. On March 23, 1939, Romania and Germany signed a ten-year scheme for Romanian economic development that allowed Germany to exploit the country's natural resources.

World War II

On April 13, 1939, France and Britain pledged to ensure the independence of Romania, but negotiations on a similar Soviet guarantee collapsed when Romania refused to allow the Red Army to cross its frontiers. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a nonaggression pact containing a secret protocol giving the Soviet Union the Balkans as its sphere of influence. Freed of any Soviet threat, Germany invaded Poland on September 1 and ignited World War II. The Nazi-Soviet pact and Germany's three-week blitzkrieg against Poland panicked Romania, which granted refuge to members of Poland's fleeing government. Romania's premier, Armand Călinescu, proclaimed neutrality, but Iron Guards assassinated him on September 21. King Carol tried to maintain neutrality for several months more, but France's surrender and Britain's retreat from Europe rendered meaningless their assurances to Romania, and therefore Carol needed to strike a deal with Hitler.

Romania suffered three radical dismemberments in the first year of the war that tore away some 100,000 square kilometers of territory and 4 million people. On June 26, 1940, the Soviet Union gave Romania a twenty-four-hour ultimatum to return Bessarabia and cede northern Bukovina, which had never been a part of Russia; after Germany's ambassador in Bucharest advised Carol to submit, the king had no other option. In August Bulgaria reclaimed southern Dobruja with German and Soviet backing. In the same month, the German and Italian foreign ministers met with Romanian diplomats in Vienna and presented them with an ultimatum to accept the retrocession of northern Transylvania to Hungary; Carol again conceded. These territorial losses shattered

the underpinnings of Carol's power. On September 6, 1940, the Iron Guard, with the support of Germany and renegade military officers led by the premier, General Ion Antonescu, forced the king to abdicate. Carol and his mistress again went into exile, leaving the king's nineteen-year-old son, Michael V (1940-47), to succeed him.

Antonescu soon usurped Michael's authority and brought Romania squarely into the German camp. His new government quickly enacted stricter anti-Semitic laws and restrictions on Jewish, Greek, and Armenian businessmen; widespread bribery of poor and corrupt Romanian officials, however, somewhat mitigated their harshness. With Antonescu's blessing, the Iron Guard unleashed a reign of terror. In November 1940, Iron Guards thirsty for vengeance broke into the Jilava prison and butchered sixty-four prominent associates of King Carol on the same spot where Codreanu had been shot. They also massacred Jews and tortured and murdered Nicolae Iorga. Nazi troops, who began crossing into Romania on October 8, soon numbered over 500,000; and on November 23 Romania joined the Axis Powers. Hitler now cast Romania in the role of regular supplier of fuel and food to the Nazi armies. Because the Iron Guard's disruptive violence no longer served Hitler's ends, German and Romanian soldiers began rounding up and disarming ill-disciplined members. In January 1941, however, the Iron Guard rebelled and street battles erupted. During this fighting, Iron Guards murdered 120 helpless Jews and mutilated their bodies. German and Romanian troops finally crushed the Iron Guard after several weeks.

On June 22, 1941, German armies with Romanian support attacked the Soviet Union. German and Romanian units conquered Bessarabia, Odessa, and Sevastopol, then marched eastward across the Russian steppes toward Stalingrad. Romania welcomed the war. In a morbid competition with Hungary to curry Hitler's favor and hoping to regain northern Transylvania, Romania mustered more combat troops for the Nazi war effort than all of Germany's other allies combined. Hitler rewarded Romania's loyalty by returning Bessarabia and northern Bukovina and by allowing Romania to annex Soviet lands immediately east of the Dniester, including Odessa. Romanian jingoists in Odessa even distributed a geography showing that the Dacians had inhabited most of southern Russia.

During the war, Antonescu's regime severely oppressed the Jews in Romania and the conquered territories. In Moldavia, Bukovina, and Bessarabia, Romanian soldiers carried out brutal pogroms. Troops herded at least 200,000 Jews from Bukovina and

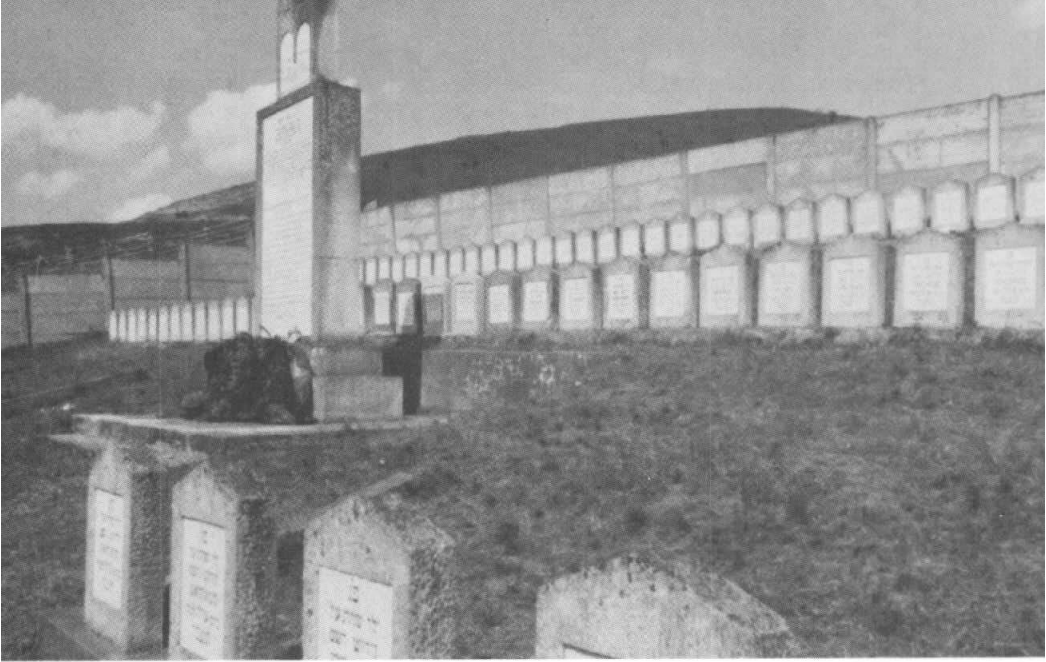
Bessarabia—who were considered Soviet traitors—across the Dniester and into miserable concentration camps where many starved or died of disease or brutality. During the war, about 260,000 Jews were killed in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and in the camps across the Dniester; Hungary's Nazi government killed or deported about 120,000 of Transylvania's 150,000 Jews in 1944. Despite rampant anti-Semitism, most Romanian Jews survived the war. Germany planned mass deportations of Jews from Romania, but Antonescu balked. Jews acted as key managers in Romania's economy, and Antonescu feared that deporting them en masse would lead to chaos; in addition, the unceasing personal appeals of Wilhelm Filderman, a Jewish leader and former classmate of Antonescu, may have made a crucial difference.

Romania supplied the Nazi war effort with oil, grain, and industrial products, but Germany was reluctant to pay for the deliveries either in goods or gold. As a result, inflation skyrocketed in Romania, and even government officials began grumbling about German exploitation. Romanian-Hungarian animosities also undermined the alliance with Germany. Antonescu's government considered war with Hungary over Transylvania an inevitability after the expected final victory over the Soviet Union. In February 1943, however, the Red Army decimated Romania's forces in the great counteroffensive at Stalingrad, and the German and Romanian armies began their retreat westward. Allied bombardment slowed Romania's industries in 1943 and 1944 before Soviet occupation disrupted transportation flows and curtailed economic activity altogether.

Armistice Negotiations and Soviet Occupation

By mid-1943 the leaders of Romania's semi-legal political opposition were in secret contact with the Western Allies and attempting to negotiate the country's surrender to Anglo-American forces in order to avoid Soviet occupation. Mihai Antonescu, Romania's foreign minister, also contacted the Allies at about the same time. Western diplomats, however, refused to negotiate a separate peace without Soviet participation, and the Soviet Union delayed an armistice until the Red Army had crossed into the country in April 1944.

In June 1943 the National Peasants, National Liberals, Communists, and Social Democrats, responding to a Communist Party proposal, formed the Blocul Național Democrat (National Democratic Bloc—BND), whose aim was to extricate Romania from the Nazi war effort. On August 23 King Michael, a number of army officers, and armed Communist-led civilians supported



*Memorial to Jews massacred at Sărmaș in 1944
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

by the BND locked Ion Antonescu into a safe and seized control of the government. The king then restored the 1923 constitution and issued a cease-fire just as the Red Army was penetrating the Moldavian front. The coup speeded the Red Army's advance, and the Soviet Union later awarded Michael the Order of Victory for his personal courage in overthrowing Antonescu and putting an end to Romania's war against the Allies. Western historians uniformly point out that the Communists played only a supporting role in the coup; postwar Romanian historians, however, ascribe to the Communists the decisive role in Antonescu's overthrow.

Michael named General Constantin Sănătescu to head the new government, which was dominated by the National Peasant Party and National Liberal Party. Sănătescu appointed Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, a Communist Party Central Committee member, minister of justice. Pătrășcanu thus became the first Romanian communist to hold high government office.

The Red Army occupied Bucharest on August 31, 1944. In Moscow on September 12, Romania and the Soviet Union signed an armistice on terms Moscow virtually dictated. Romania agreed to pay reparations, repeal anti-Jewish laws, ban fascist groups, and retrocede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union. Representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain established an Allied Control Commission in Bucharest, but

the Soviet military command exercised predominant authority. By the time hostilities between Romania and the Soviet Union ended, Romania's military losses had totaled about 110,000 killed and 180,000 missing or captured; the Red Army also transported about 130,000 Romanian soldiers to the Soviet Union, where many perished in prison camps. After its surrender, Romania committed about fifteen divisions to the Allied cause under Soviet command. Before the end of hostilities against Germany, about 120,000 Romanian troops perished helping the Red Army liberate Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

The armistice obligated Romania to pay the Soviet Union US\$300 million in reparations. Moscow, however, valued the goods transferred as reparations at low 1938 prices, which enabled the Soviet Union to squeeze two to three times more goods from Romania than it would have been entitled to at 1944 prices. The Soviet Union also reappropriated property that the Romanians had confiscated during the war, requisitioned food and other goods to supply the Red Army during transit and occupation of the country, and expropriated all German assets in the country. Estimates of the total booty reach the equivalent of US\$2 billion.

Postwar Romania, 1944–85

On October 9, 1944, British prime minister Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin met in Moscow. Without President Franklin D. Roosevelt's knowledge, Churchill offered Stalin a list of Balkan and Central European countries with percentages expressing the "interest" the Soviet Union and other Allies would share in each—including a 90 percent Soviet preponderance in Romania. Stalin, ticking the list with a blue pencil, accepted the deal. In early February 1945, however, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agreed at Yalta to a declaration condemning "spheres of influence" and calling for free elections as soon as possible in Europe's liberated countries. The Soviet leader considered the percentage agreement key to the region's postwar order and gave greater weight to it than to the Yalta declarations; the United States and Britain considered the Yalta accord paramount. The rapid communist takeover in Romania provided one of the earliest examples of the significance of this disagreement and contributed to the postwar enmity between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union.

In late 1944, the political parties belonging to the BND organized openly for the first time since King Carol had banned political activity in 1938. The key political forces were: Maniu's National Peasants, who enjoyed strong support in the villages and had the backing of democratic members of the middle class, rightists,

nationalists, and intellectuals; the Social Democrats, who were backed by workers and leftist intellectuals; and the Communists, who had reemerged after two decades underground. The National Liberals still campaigned, but their leaders' close association with King Carol and quiet support for Antonescu compromised the party and it never recovered its prewar influence.

Romania's Communist Party at first attracted scant popular support, and its rolls listed fewer than 1,000 members at the war's end. Recruitment campaigns soon began netting large numbers of workers, intellectuals, and others disillusioned by the breakdown of the country's democratic experiment and hungry for radical reforms; many opportunists, including former Iron Guards, also crowded the ranks. Two rival factions competed for party leadership: the Romanian faction, which had operated underground during the war years; and the "Muscovites," primarily intellectuals and nonethnic Romanians who had lived out the war in Moscow and arrived in Romania on the Red Army's heels. The leaders of the Romanian faction were Pătrășcanu, the intellectual prewar defense lawyer who became the minister of justice, and Gheorghe Gheorghiu, an activist railway worker who added Dej to his surname in memory of the Transylvanian town where he had been long imprisoned. The Muscovite leaders included Ana Pauker, the daughter of a Moldavian rabbi, who reportedly had denounced her own husband as a Trotskyite, and Vasile Luca, a Transylvanian Szekler who had become a Red Army major. Neither faction was a disciplined, coherent organization; in fact, immediately after the war the Romanian Communist Party resembled more a confederation of fiefdoms run by individual leaders than the tempered, well-sharpened political weapon Lenin had envisioned. The party probably would not have survived without Soviet backing.

Soviet control handicapped the Romanian government's efforts to administer the country. The National Peasants called for immediate elections, but the Communists and Soviet administrators, fearful of embarrassment at the polls, checked the effort. In October 1944, the Communists, Social Democrats, and the Plowmen's Front and other Communist front organizations formed the *Frontul Național Democrat* (National Democratic Front—FND) and launched a campaign to overthrow Sănătescu's government and gain power. The Communists demanded that the government appoint more pro-Communist officials, and the left-wing press inveighed against Sănătescu, charging that hidden reactionary forces supported him. Sănătescu succumbed to the pressure and resigned in November 1944; King Michael persuaded him to form a second government, but it too collapsed in a matter of weeks.

After Sănătescu's fall, the king summoned General Nicolae Rădescu to form a new government. Rădescu appointed a Communist, Teohari Georgescu, undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior; Georgescu in turn began introducing Communists into the police and security forces.

Chaos erupted in Romania, and civil war seemed imminent just days after the Yalta conference had adjourned. Communist leaders, with Soviet backing, launched a vehement anti-Rădescu campaign that included halting publication of National Peasant and National Liberal newspapers. On February 13, 1945, Communists demonstrated outside the royal palace. Six days later Communist Party and National Peasant loyalists battled in Bucharest, and demonstrations degenerated to street brawls. The Soviet authorities demanded that Rădescu restore calm but barred him from using force. On February 24, Communist thugs shot and killed several pro-FND demonstrators; Communist leaders, branding Rădescu a murderer, charged that government troops carried out the shootings. On February 26 Rădescu, citing the Yalta declarations, retaliated by scheduling elections. The next day, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, Andrei Vyshinsky, rushed to Bucharest to engineer a final FND takeover. After a heated exchange, Vyshinsky presented King Michael an ultimatum—either to appoint Petru Groza, a Communist sympathizer, to Rădescu's post or to risk Romania's continued existence as an independent nation. Vyshinsky sugared the medicine by offering Romania sovereignty over Transylvania if the king agreed. Portents of a takeover appeared in Bucharest: Red Army tanks surrounded Michael's palace, and Soviet soldiers disarmed Romanian troops and occupied telephone and broadcasting centers. The king, lacking Western support, yielded. Rădescu, who lashed out at Communist leaders as "hyenas" and "foreigners without God or country," fled to the British mission. Meanwhile, Western diplomats feared that the Soviet Union would annex Romania outright.

Petru Groza's Premiership

Groza's appointment amounted to a de facto Communist takeover. Groza named Communists to head the army and the ministries of interior, justice, propaganda, and economic affairs. The government included no legitimate members of the National Peasant Party or National Liberal Party; rather, the Communists drafted opportunistic dissidents from these parties, heralded them as the parties' legitimate representatives, and ignored or harassed genuine party leaders. On March 9, 1945, Groza announced that Romania had regained sovereignty over northern Transylvania,

and in May and June the government prosecuted and executed Ion Antonescu, Mihai Antonescu, and two generals as war criminals.

At the Potsdam Conference in July and August 1945, the United States delegation protested that the Soviet Union was improperly implementing the Yalta declarations in Romania and called for elections to choose a new government. The Soviet Union, however, refused even to discuss the question, labeling it interference in Romania's internal affairs. The Soviet Union instead called for the United States, Britain, and France to recognize Groza's government immediately, but they refused. The Potsdam agreement on Southeastern Europe provided for a council of foreign ministers to negotiate a peace treaty to be concluded with a recognized, democratic Romanian government. The agreement prompted King Michael to call for Groza to resign because his government was neither recognized nor democratic. When Groza refused to step down, the king retaliated by retiring to his summer home and withholding his signature from all legislative acts or government decrees.

In October 1945, Romania's Communist Party held its first annual conference, at which the two factions settled on a joint leadership. Though the Soviet Union favored the Muscovites, Stalin backed Gheorghiu-Dej's appointment as party secretary. Pauker, Luca, and Georgescu emerged as the party's other dominant leaders. The party's rolls swelled to 717,490 members by mid-1946, and membership exceeded 800,000 by 1947.

At a December 1945 meeting of foreign ministers in Moscow, the United States denounced Romania's regime as authoritarian and nonrepresentative and called for Groza to name legitimate members of the opposition parties to cabinet posts. Stalin agreed to make limited concessions, but the West received no guarantees. Groza named one National Peasant and one National Liberal minister, but he denied them portfolios and FND ministers hopelessly outnumbered them in the cabinet. Assured by Groza's oral promises that his government would improve its human- and political-rights record and schedule elections, the United States and Britain granted Romania diplomatic recognition in February 1946, before elections took place.

The Communists did all in their power to fabricate an election rout. Communist-controlled unions impeded distribution of opposition-party newspapers, and Communist hatchet men attacked opposition political workers at campaign gatherings. In March the Communists engineered a split in the Social Democratic Party and began discrediting prominent figures in the National Peasant and National Liberal Parties, labeling them reactionary, profascist, and

anti-Soviet and charging them with undermining Romania's economy and national unity. On November 19, 1946, Romanians cast ballots in an obviously rigged election. Groza's government claimed the support of almost 90 percent of the voters. The Communists, Social Democrats, and other leftist parties claimed 379 of the assembly's 414 seats; the National Peasant Party took 32; the National Liberals, 3. Minority-party legislators soon abandoned the new parliament or faced a ban on their participation. The regime turned a deaf ear to United States and British objections and protested against their "meddling" in Romania's internal affairs.

During its first weeks in power, Groza's government undertook an extensive land reform that limited private holdings to 50 hectares, expropriated 1.1 million hectares, and distributed most of the land to about 800,000 peasants. In May 1945, Romania and the Soviet Union signed a long-term economic agreement that provided for the creation of joint-stock companies, or Sovroms, through which the Soviet Union controlled Romania's major sources of income, including the oil and uranium industries. The Sovroms were tax exempt and Soviets held key management posts.

Allied aerial bombardment and ground fighting during the war had inflicted serious damage to Romania's productive capacity, particularly to the most developed sector—oil production and refining. Furthermore, the excessive post-war reparations to the Soviet Union and Soviet exploitation of the Sovroms overburdened the country's economy. In 1946 Romanian industries produced less than half of their prewar output, inflation and drought exacted a heavy toll, and for the first time in 100 years Moldavia suffered a famine. By mid-1947 Romania faced economic chaos. Foreign aid, including United States relief, helped feed the population. The government printed money to repay the public debt, bought up the nation's cereal crop, confiscated store and factory inventories, and laid off workers. Romania, like the other East European countries under Soviet domination, refused to participate in the Marshall Plan for the economic reconstruction of Europe, complaining that it would constitute interference in internal affairs.

In February 1947, the Allies and Romania signed the final peace treaty in Paris. The treaty, which did not include Romania as a co-belligerent country, reset Romania's boundaries. Transylvania, with its Hungarian enclaves, returned to Romania; Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, with their Romanian majorities, again fell to the Soviet Union; and Bulgaria kept southern Dobruja. The treaty bound Romania to honor human and political rights, including freedom of speech, worship, and assembly, but from the first, the Romanian government treated these commitments as dead letters.

The treaty also set a ceiling on the size of Romania's military and called for withdrawal of all Soviet troops except those needed to maintain communication links with the Soviet forces then occupying Austria.

Elimination of Opposition Parties

Announcement of the Marshall Plan, expulsion of communists from the French and Italian governments in 1947, and consolidation of the Western bloc unnerved Stalin. Anticommunist forces, though in disarray, still lurked in Eastern Europe; most of the region's communist governments and parties enjoyed meager popular support; and the Polish, Czechoslovak, Bulgarian, and Yugoslav communist parties began pursuing independent lines regarding acceptance of Marshall Plan aid and formation of a Balkan confederation. Fearing the Soviet Union might lose its grasp on Eastern Europe, Stalin abandoned his advocacy of "national roads to socialism" and pushed for establishment of full communist control in Eastern Europe with strict adherence to Moscow's line. To further this goal, in September 1947 the Soviet Union and its satellites founded the Cominform, an organization linking the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the communist parties of Eastern Europe, Italy, and France.

In the second half of 1947, the Romanian Communists unleashed full fury against the country's other political parties, arresting numerous opposition politicians and driving others into exile. The government dissolved the National Peasant Party and National Liberal Party, and in October prosecutors brought Iuliu Maniu, his deputy, Ion Mihalache, and other political figures to trial for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the government. Maniu and Mihalache received life sentences; in 1956 the government reported that Maniu had died in prison four years earlier. In late 1947, the Communists struck against their fellow travelers, ousting the opportunistic members of the main opposition parties who had cooperated in the Communists' takeover. A terror campaign claimed many lives and filled prisons and work camps. After ridding themselves of all active political opponents, Groza and Gheorghiu-Dej met with King Michael in December 1947 and threatened him with a government strike and possible civil war unless he abdicated. After several refusals, the king submitted.

The Romanian Communist Party and one wing of the Social Democratic Party merged in early 1948 to form the Romanian Workers' Party (Partidul Muncitoresc Român—PMR). Communists held the party's key leadership posts and used the principle of democratic centralism to silence former Social Democrats. The

PMR's First Party Congress, in February 1948, chose the triumvirate of Gheorghiu-Dej, Luca, and Pauker to head the Central Committee; Gheorghiu-Dej remained general secretary but still lacked the power to dominate the others. The Congress also transformed the National Democratic Front into the Popular Democratic Front, the party's umbrella front organization. In the same month, the Soviet Union and Romania signed a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance.

The Romanian People's Republic

In March 1948 the government held elections that for the final time included the facade of opposition-party participation; the Popular Democratic Front took 405 of the 414 seats. On April 13, 1948, the new National Assembly proclaimed the creation of the Romanian People's Republic and adopted a Stalinist constitution. The assembly ostensibly became the supreme organ of state authority; in reality, however, the Communist Party's Politburo and the state Council of Ministers held the reins of power. The constitution also listed civil and political rights and recognized private property, but the authorities soon renounced the separation of the judiciary and executive and established the Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului), commonly known as the Securitate, Romania's secret police (see Security and Intelligence Services, ch. 5). In 1949 acts considered dangerous to society became punishable even if the acts were not specifically defined by law as crimes, and economic crimes became punishable by death. The central government also created and staffed local "people's councils" to further tighten its hold on the country (see Local Government, ch. 4).

In June 1948, the national assembly enacted legislation to complete the nationalization of the country's banks and most of its industrial, mining, transportation, and insurance companies. Within three years the state controlled 90 percent of Romania's industry. The nationalization law provided reimbursement for business owners, but repayments never materialized. In July 1948, the government created a state planning commission to control the economy, and in January 1949 Romania joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon—see Glossary), an organization designed to further economic cooperation among the Soviet satellites.

Romania launched an ambitious program of forced industrial development at the expense of agriculture and consumer-goods production. In the First Five-Year Plan (1951-55), planners earmarked 57 percent of all investment for industry, allotted 87 percent

of industrial investment to heavy industry, and promised the workers an 80 percent improvement in their standard of living by 1955. The government began construction of the Danube-Black Sea Canal, a project of monumental proportions and questionable utility.

In 1949 the government initiated forced agricultural collectivization to feed the growing urban population and generate capital. The state appropriated land, prodded peasants to join collective farms, and equipped machine stations (see *Farm Organization*, ch. 3) to do mechanized work for the collective farms. Government forces besieged rural areas and arrested about 80,000 peasants for being private farmers or siding with private farmers, who were reviled as “class enemies”; about 30,000 people eventually faced public trial. Forced collectivization brought Romania food shortages and reduced exports, and by late 1951 the government realized it lacked the tractors, equipment, and trained personnel for successful rapid collectivization. The forced collectivization campaign produced only about 17 percent state ownership of Romania’s land. The authorities shifted to a policy of slow collectivization and cooperativization, allowing peasants to retain their land but requiring delivery to the state of a portion of their output. Large compulsory-delivery quotas drove many peasants from the land to higher-paying jobs in industry.

Industrialization proceeded quickly and soon began reshaping the country’s social fabric. Although Romania remained a predominantly agricultural country, the percentage of industrial workers increased as peasants left the fields and villages for factory jobs and overcrowded city apartments. Trade school and university graduates also flocked to the cities. By 1953 government decrees had made most professionals state employees, eliminated private commerce, and bankrupted the commercial bourgeoisie.

In 1948 the regime determined to reform the social structure and inculcate “socialist” values. The authorities tackled illiteracy, but they also severed links with Western culture, jailed teachers and intellectuals, introduced compulsory Russian-language instruction, rewrote Romania’s history to highlight Russia’s contributions, and redefined the nation’s identity by glossing over its Western roots and stressing Slavic influences. Party leaders ordered writers and artists to embrace socialist realism and commanded teachers to train children for communal life. The state transformed the Romanian Orthodox Church into a government-controlled organization, supervised Roman Catholic schools, jailed Catholic clergy, merged the Uniate and Orthodox churches, and seized Uniate church property. After 1948 Stalin encouraged anti-Semitism and the

Romanian regime restricted Jewish religious observances and harassed and imprisoned Jews who wished to emigrate to Israel. Despite this pressure, however, a third of Romania's Jews had emigrated by 1951.

On June 28, 1948, the Yugoslav-Soviet rift broke into the open when the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia. Gheorghiu-Dej enthusiastically joined in the attack on Yugoslavia's defiant leader, Josip Broz Tito, and the Cominform transferred its headquarters from Belgrade to Bucharest. Romania sheltered fleeing anti-Tito Yugoslavs, beamed propaganda broadcasts into Yugoslavia denouncing Tito, and called on Yugoslav communists to revolt. Tito's successful defiance of Stalin triggered a purge of East European communists who had approved Titoist or "national" approaches to communism.

Romania's purge of Titoists provided cover for a major internal power struggle. The authorities imprisoned Pătrășcanu as a "national deviationist" and friend to war criminals. In 1949 the party purged its rolls of 192,000 members. The Muscovite party leaders fell next. In 1951 Pauker and Luca celebrated Gheorghiu-Dej as the party's sole leader, but in May 1952 Pauker, Luca, and Georgescu lost their party and government positions. A month later, Gheorghiu-Dej shunted Groza into a ceremonial position and assumed both the state and party leadership. The government soon promulgated a new constitution that incorporated complete paragraphs of the Soviet constitution and designated for the PMR a role analogous to that of the CPSU in the Soviet Union—the "leading political force" in the state and society. In 1954 the military tried and shot several "deviationists" and "spies," including Pătrășcanu.

Through the purge, Gheorghiu-Dej established a unified party leadership of Romanian nationals and forged a loyal internal apparatus to implement his policies. Gheorghiu-Dej elevated young protégés, including Nicolae Ceaușescu, a former shoemaker's apprentice who had joined the party at age fourteen and had met Gheorghiu-Dej in prison during the war, and Alexandru Drăghici, who later became interior minister. The PMR's unity allowed it successfully to assert its interests over Moscow's in the next decade.

The Post-Stalin Era

After Stalin died in March 1953, Gheorghiu-Dej forged a "New Course" for Romania's economy. He slowed industrialization, increased consumer-goods production, closed Romania's largest labor camps, abandoned the Danube-Black Sea Canal project,

halted rationing, and hiked workers' wages. Romania and the Soviet Union also dissolved the Sovroms.

Soon after Stalin's death, Gheorghiu-Dej also set Romania on its so-called "independent" course within the East bloc. Gheorghiu-Dej identified with Stalinism, and the more liberal Soviet regime threatened to undermine his authority. In an effort to reinforce his position, Gheorghiu-Dej pledged cooperation with any state, regardless of political-economic system, as long as it recognized international equality and did not interfere in other nations' domestic affairs. This policy led to a tightening of Romania's bonds with China, which also advocated national self-determination.

In 1954 Gheorghiu-Dej resigned as the party's general secretary but retained the premiership; a four-member collective secretariat, including Ceaușescu, controlled the party for a year before Gheorghiu-Dej again took up the reins. Despite its new policy of international cooperation, Romania joined the Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact) in 1955, which entailed subordinating and integrating a portion of its military into the Soviet military machine. Romania later refused to allow Warsaw Pact maneuvers on its soil and limited its participation in military maneuvers elsewhere within the alliance.

In 1956 the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, denounced Stalin in a secret speech before the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. Gheorghiu-Dej and the PMR leadership were fully braced to weather de-Stalinization. Gheorghiu-Dej made Pauker, Luca, and Georgescu scapegoats for the Romanian communists' past excesses and claimed that the Romanian party had purged its Stalinist elements even before Stalin had died.

In October 1956, Poland's communist leaders refused to succumb to Soviet military threats to intervene in domestic political affairs and install a more obedient politburo. A few weeks later, the communist party in Hungary virtually disintegrated during a popular revolution. Poland's defiance and Hungary's popular uprising inspired Romanian students and workers to demonstrate in university and industrial towns calling for liberty, better living conditions, and an end to Soviet domination. Fearing the Hungarian uprising might incite his nation's own Hungarian population to revolt, Gheorghiu-Dej advocated swift Soviet intervention, and the Soviet Union reinforced its military presence in Romania, particularly along the Hungarian border. Although Romania's unrest proved fragmentary and controllable, Hungary's was not, so in November Moscow mounted a bloody invasion of Hungary.

After the Revolution of 1956, Gheorghiu-Dej worked closely with Hungary's new leader, János Kádár. Although Romania initially

took in Imre Nagy, the exiled former Hungarian premier, it returned him to Budapest for trial and execution. In turn, Kádár renounced Hungary's claims to Transylvania and denounced Hungarians there who had supported the revolution as chauvinists, nationalists, and irredentists. In Transylvania, for their part, the Romanian authorities merged Hungarian and Romanian universities at Cluj and consolidated middle schools. Romania's government also took measures to allay domestic discontent by reducing investments in heavy industry, boosting output of consumer goods, decentralizing economic management, hiking wages and incentives, and instituting elements of worker management. The authorities eliminated compulsory deliveries for private farmers but reaccelerated the collectivization program in the mid-1950s, albeit less brutally than earlier. The government declared collectivization complete in 1962, when collective and state farms controlled 77 percent of the arable land.

Despite Gheorghiu-Dej's claim that he had purged the Romanian party of Stalinists, he remained susceptible to attack for his obvious complicity in the party's activities from 1944 to 1953. At a plenary PMR meeting in March 1956, Miron Constantinescu and Iosif Chişinevschi, both Politburo members and deputy premiers, criticized Gheorghiu-Dej. Constantinescu, who advocated a Khrushchev-style liberalization, posed a particular threat to Gheorghiu-Dej because he enjoyed good connections with the Moscow leadership. The PMR purged Constantinescu and Chişinevschi in 1957, denouncing both as Stalinists and charging them with complicity with Pauker. Afterwards, Gheorghiu-Dej faced no serious challenge to his leadership. Ceauşescu replaced Constantinescu as head of PMR cadres.

Gheorghiu-Dej's Defiance of Khrushchev

Khrushchev consolidated his power in the Soviet Union by ousting the so-called "anti-party" group in July 1957. A year later Gheorghiu-Dej, with Chinese support, coaxed the Soviet Union into removing its forces from Romanian soil. Khrushchev's consolidation freed his hands to revive Comecon and advocate specialization of its member countries. Part of his plan was to relegate Romania to the role of supplying agricultural products and raw materials to the more industrially advanced Comecon countries. Gheorghiu-Dej, a long-time disciple of rapid industrialization and, since 1954, a supporter of "national" communism, opposed Khrushchev's plan vehemently. Romanian-Soviet trade soon slowed to a trickle. With no Soviet troops in Romania to intimidate him; Gheorghiu-Dej's defiance stiffened, and his negotiators began

bringing home Western credits to finance purchases of technology for Romania's expanding industries. Khrushchev apparently sought to undermine Gheorghiu-Dej within the PMR and considered military intervention to unseat him. The Romanian leader countered by attacking anyone opposed to his industrialization plans and by removing Moscow-trained officials and appointing loyal bureaucrats in their place. The November 1958 PMR plenum asserted that Romania had to strengthen its economy to withstand external pressures. Industrialization, collectivization, improved living standards, and trade with the West became the focal points of the party's economic policy.

The Sino-Soviet split, which Khrushchev announced at the PMR's 1960 congress, and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis increased Gheorghiu-Dej's room to maneuver without risking a complete rupture with Moscow. At a Comecon meeting in February 1963, Romania revealed its independent stance by stating publicly that it would not modify its industrialization program for regional integration. In subsequent months, the Romanian and Albanian media were the only official voices in Eastern Europe to report China's attack on Soviet policy. Also Gheorghiu-Dej and Tito established a rapprochement and broke ground for a joint Yugoslav-Romanian hydroelectric project. In 1964 the PMR issued the "April Declaration," rejecting the Soviet Union's hegemony in the communist bloc and proclaiming Romania's autonomy. After the April Declaration, Romanian diplomats set out to construct loose alliances with countries of the international communist movement, Third World, and the West. China and Yugoslavia became its closest partners in the communist world; Hungary and the Soviet Union were its main communist opponents.

At home, the PMR maintained a firm grip on authority but granted amnesties to former "class enemies" and "chauvinists" and admitted to its ranks a broader range of individuals. Gheorghiu-Dej ordered "de-Russification" and nationalistic "Romanianization" measures to drum up mass support for his defiance of Moscow and deflect criticism of his own harsh domestic economic policies. Bucharest's Institute for Russian Studies metamorphosed into a foreign-languages institute, and Russian-language instruction disappeared from Romanian curricula. To promote Romanian culture, official historians resurrected Romanian heroes; the PMR published an anti-Russian anthology of Karl Marx's articles denouncing tsarist Russia's encroachments on Romania and backing Romania's claim to Bessarabia; workmen stripped Russian names from street signs and buildings. Cultural exchanges with the West multiplied; jamming of foreign radio broadcasts ceased;

and Romania began siding against the Soviet Union in United Nations (UN) votes. The Romanianization campaign also ended political and cultural concessions granted to the Hungarian minority during early communist rule; subsequently Hungarians suffered extensive discrimination.

The Ceaușescu Succession

In March 1965 Gheorghiu-Dej died. A triumvirate succeeded him: Ceaușescu, the party's first secretary; Chivu Stoica, the state council president; and Ion Gheorghe Maurer, premier. Ceaușescu wasted little time consolidating power and eliminating rivals. Alexandru Drăghici, his main rival, lost his interior ministry post in 1965 and PMR membership in 1968. After Drăghici's removal, Ceaușescu began accumulating various party and government positions, including state council president and supreme military commander, so that by the Tenth Party Congress in 1969, Ceaușescu controlled the Central Committee and had surrounded himself with loyal subordinates.

Ceaușescu, like Gheorghiu-Dej, preached national communism, and he redoubled the Romanianization effort. In 1965 the PMR was renamed the Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român—PCR) in conjunction with the leadership's elevation of Romania from the status of a people's democracy to a socialist republic, a distinction ostensibly marking a leap forward along the path toward true communism. The leadership also added a strong statement of national sovereignty to the preamble of the new Constitution. By 1966 Ceaușescu had ceased extolling the Soviet Union's "liberation" of Romania and recharacterized the Red Army's wartime action there as "weakening fascism" and "animating" the Romanians to liberate the country from fascist dominance. Romanians heeded the nationalist appeal, but Ceaușescu so exaggerated the effort that a cult of personality developed. Propagandists, striving to cast Ceaușescu as the embodiment of all ancestral courage and wisdom, even staged meetings between Ceaușescu and actors portraying Michael the Brave, Stephen the Great, and other national heroes.

Romania's divergence from Soviet policies widened under Ceaușescu. In 1967 Romania recognized the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and maintained diplomatic relations with Israel after the June 1967 War. In August 1968, Ceaușescu visited Prague to lend support to Alexander Dubček's government. Romania denounced the Soviet Union for ordering the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, and Ceaușescu met Tito twice after the invasion to discuss a common defense against a possible

Bulgarian-Soviet military action and reassert their insistence on full autonomy, equal national rights, and noninterference. Popular acceptance of Ceaușescu's regime peaked during his defiance of the Soviet Union following the invasion of Czechoslovakia; most Romanians believed his actions had averted Soviet reoccupation of their country.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, thanks mostly to ample domestic energy and raw-material production, easily tapped labor reserves, forced savings, Western trade concessions, and large foreign credits, Romania enjoyed perhaps its most prosperous economic years since World War II. Although industrial production had tripled in the decade up to 1965, the inefficiencies of central planning and inadequate worker incentives signalled future problems. In 1969 the regime launched an ephemeral economic reform that promised to increase efficiency and boost incentives by decentralizing economic control, allowing private enterprise greater freedom, and increasing supplies of consumer goods. Ceaușescu soon halted decentralization, however, and renewed the effort to develop heavy industry.

During his early years in power, Ceaușescu sought to present himself as a reformer and populist champion of the common man. Purge victims began returning home; contacts with the West multiplied; and artists, writers, and scholars found new freedoms. In 1968 Ceaușescu openly denounced Gheorghiu-Dej for deviating from party ideals during Stalin's lifetime. After consolidating power, however, Ceaușescu regressed. The government again disciplined journalists and demanded the allegiance of writers and artists to socialist realism. As a result of his China visit in 1971, Ceaușescu launched his own version of the Cultural Revolution, spawning volumes of sycophantic, pseudohistorical literature and suppressing dissidents.

In the early 1970s, Ceaușescu painstakingly concentrated power at the apex of the political pyramid. The arrest, and probable execution, of the Bucharest garrison's commanding officer in 1971, possibly for planning to oust Ceaușescu, prompted an overhaul of the military and security forces. After his China trip, Ceaușescu removed Premier Maurer and thousands of managers and officials who advocated or implemented the earlier economic reform, and he replaced them with his protégés. In 1972 the government adopted the principle of cadre rotation, making the creation of power bases opposed to Ceaușescu impossible. In accordance with the PCR's claim that it had ceased being an organization of a few committed operatives and become a mass party "organically implanted in all cells of life," Ceaușescu began blending party and state structures and named individuals to hold dual party and state posts. In 1973

Ceașescu's wife, Elena, became a member of the Politburo, and in 1974 voters "elected" Ceașescu president of the republic.

Dynastic Socialism and the Economic Downturn

The Eleventh Party Congress in 1974 signaled the beginning of a regime based on "dynastic socialism." Ceașescu placed members of his immediate family—including his wife, three brothers, a son, and a brother-in-law—in control of defense, internal affairs, planning, science and technology, youth, and party cadres. Hagiographers began portraying Ceașescu as the greatest genius of the age and Elena as a world-renowned thinker.

Having assumed a cloak of infallibility, Ceașescu was unchecked by debate on his economic initiatives. He launched monumental, high-risk ventures, including huge steel and petrochemical plants, and restarted work on the Danube-Black Sea Canal. The government boosted investment and redeployed laborers from agriculture to industry. Central economic controls tightened, and imports of foreign technology skyrocketed.

In 1971 Romania joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and in 1972 it became the first Comecon country to join the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) and World Bank (see Glossary), which broadened its access to hard-currency credit markets. Romania also supplied doctored statistics to the UN, thereby gaining the status of an undeveloped country, and, after 1973, receiving preferential treatment in trade with developed countries.

Halfway through the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1976–80), the economy faltered. All manpower reserves had been tapped; shortages of consumer goods sapped worker enthusiasm; and low labor productivity dulled the effectiveness of relatively modern industrial facilities. After decades of growth, oil output began to decline; the downturn forced Romania to import oil at prices too high to allow its huge new petrochemical plants to operate profitably. Coal, electricity, and natural-gas production also fell short of plan targets, creating chaos throughout the economy. A devastating earthquake, drought, higher world interest rates, soft foreign demand for Romanian goods, and higher prices for petroleum imports pushed Romania into a balance-of-payments crisis. In 1981 Romania followed Poland in becoming the second Comecon country to request rescheduling of its hard-currency debts, notifying bankers in a telex from Bucharest that it would make no payments on its arrears or on the next year's obligations without a rescheduling agreement.

Ceașescu imposed a crash program to pay off the foreign debt. The government cut imports, slashed domestic electricity usage,

enacted stiff penalties against hoarding, and squeezed its farms, factories, and refineries for exports. Ceaușescu's debt-reduction policies caused average Romanians terrible hardship. The regime's demand for foodstuff exports resulted in severe shortages of bread, meat, fruits, and vegetables—Ceaușescu even touted a "scientific" diet designed to benefit the populace through reduced meat consumption. The authorities limited families to one forty-watt bulb per apartment, set temperature restrictions for apartments, and enforced these restrictions through control squads. Slowly, however, Romania chipped away at its debt (see *Retirement of the Foreign Debt*, ch.3).

Romania's foreign policy in the 1970s and early 1980s consisted of propagating its message of autonomy and noninterference and explicitly rejecting the "Brezhnev Doctrine," named after Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, who asserted the Soviet Union's right to intervene in satellite countries if it perceived a threat to communist control or fulfillment of Warsaw Pact commitments. In 1972 Romania redirected its military defenses to counter possible aggression by the Warsaw Pact countries, especially the Soviet Union. Romania continued to express resentment for the loss of Bessarabia, condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and ignored the Soviet-led boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Soviet leaders used proxy countries, especially Hungary, to criticize Romania's foreign and domestic policies, especially its nationalism. Romania's intensified persecution of Transylvania's Hungarians further aggravated relations with Hungary, and Ceaușescu's bleak human rights record eroded much of the credibility Romania had won in the late 1960s through its defiance of Moscow.

Despite the population's extreme privation, at the Thirteenth Party Congress in November 1984 the PCR leadership again emphasized order, discipline, political and cultural centralism, central planning, and Ceaușescu's cult of personality. By then the cult had gained epic dimensions. Ceaușescu had assumed the status of Stephen the Great's spiritual descendant and protector of Western civilization. In the severe winter of 1984–85, however, Bucharest's unlit streets were covered with deep, ruddy ice and carried only a few trucks and buses. The authorities banned automobile traffic, imposed military discipline on workers in the energy field, and shut off heat and hot water, even in hotels and foreign embassies. Shoppers queued before food stores, and restaurant patrons huddled in heavy coats to sip lukewarm coffee and chew fatty cold cuts. Although the Romanian people endured these hardships with traditional stoicism, a pall of hopelessness had descended on the

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country, and official proclamations of Romania's achievements during the "golden age of Ceaușescu" had a hollow ring.

* * *

Still the most comprehensive history of Romania is R. W. Seton-Watson's *History of the Roumanians*, which provides detailed descriptions of the international forces shaping Romania's development to the end of World War I. Poignant details enhance Robert Lee Wolff's *The Balkans in Our Time*, concentrating on Romania's history, especially from unification to the late 1940s; René Ristelhueber's *A History of the Balkan Peoples* also scans the main points in Romania's contribution to Balkan history. The Romanian-Hungarian conflict over Transylvania has spawned numerous studies, including Keith Hitchins's clearly written *The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania* and, from a Romanian point of view, Stefan Pascu's *A History of Transylvania*. Much of Vasile Pârvan's classic *Dacia* is now dated, but Dumitru Berciu's *Romania* describes the pre-Roman culture of the region. Ghita Ionescu's *Communism in Rumania* details the communist takeover in Romania. William E. Crowther's *The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism* and Michael Shafir's *Romania: Politics, Economics, and Society* track postwar Romanian economic policy, Gheorghiu-Dej's defiance of Khrushchev, and Ceaușescu's rise to power. Trond Gilberg's article "Romania's Growing Difficulties" depicts Ceaușescu's cult of personality and the human cost of Romania's economic policies of the 1970s and 1980s. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment



Typical Romanians

ROMANIAN SOCIETY at the close of the 1980s was the product of more than forty years of communist rule that had two primary objectives—the industrialization of the economy at all costs and the establishment of socialism (see Glossary). Both of these objectives forced far-reaching changes in popular values, changes wrought by a highly centralized government that concentrated power in the hands of a very small political elite. This ruling elite brooked no opposition to its program for economic development and the simultaneous destruction of national values and institutions in favor of those dictated by Marxist ideology. Socialism's tighter political control made for more effective mobilization of the country's resources and, at the same time, initiated massive social mobility. Education, as the chief vehicle of upward mobility, was made widely available, and rapid economic growth created a tremendous expansion of opportunities. The result was a new social order that gave preeminence to the working class and to manual labor over nonmanual.

To be sure, the monopoly of power by an elite few was in large part responsible for the swift modernization that took place in the first decades under socialism. But such political centralism was accompanied by cultural centralism that severely curtailed the liberties of individuals and social groups. This restriction became particularly evident under the cult of personality that developed around Nicolae Ceaușescu, who dominated politics after the late 1960s. Later years under Ceaușescu marked Romanian society with a Stalinesque oppression that meant government regulation of the most minute aspects of daily life and growing police repression. In addition, largely because economic reality had been subordinated to Ceaușescu's personal political goals, the promising degree of modernization achieved in the early years of socialism gave way to an almost bizarre process of demodernization that impoverished the nation. This process was accompanied by increased terror and repression, resulting in an atomized society in which people struggled to survive by turning inward to themselves and their families.

The regime's program of enforced austerity and resulting demodernization flew in the face of the greater equality and material wealth promised by socialism. Egalitarian values had indeed gained widespread popular acceptance. But even if claims of equal distribution of material benefits were true, they fell flat in light of the fact that there was very little to distribute. Moreover, evidence of

unequal distribution abounded, as the political elite took greater rewards and were least affected by the deprivation their policies caused. Corruption was rampant, and only those who “knew someone” and had the wherewithal to bribe the appropriate person could obtain even the most basic goods and services. Claims of equalization of status also were suspect. Social ranking, as developed in the minds of individual citizens as opposed to the hierarchy proclaimed and directed by the regime, decidedly preferred non-manual labor over manual and urban over rural occupations. In the late 1980s, the massive upward mobility experienced earlier appeared unlikely to be repeated, and society showed signs of a hardening stratification. Egalitarian values inculcated under socialist rule had created aspirations that the regime failed to meet, and discontent at every level of society was evidence of the growing frustration associated with that failure.

Physical Environment

Boundaries and Geographical Position

With an area of 237,499 square kilometers, Romania is slightly smaller than the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and is the twelfth largest country in Europe. Situated in the north-eastern portion of the Balkan Peninsula, the country is halfway between the equator and the North Pole and equidistant from the westernmost part of Europe—the Atlantic Coast—and the most easterly—the Ural Mountains. Of its 3,195 kilometers of border, Romania shares 1,332 kilometers with the Soviet Union to the east and north. Bulgaria lies to the south, Yugoslavia to the southwest, and Hungary to the west. In the southeast, 245 kilometers of Black Sea coastline provide an important outlet to the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Traditionally Romania is divided into several historic regions that no longer perform any administrative function. Dobruja (see Glossary) is the easternmost region, extending from the northward course of the Danube to the shores of the Black Sea. Moldavia (see Glossary) stretches from the Eastern Carpathians to the Prut River on the Soviet border. Walachia (see Glossary) reaches south from the Transylvanian Alps to the Bulgarian border and is divided by the Olt River into Oltenia on the west and Muntenia on the east. The Danube forms a natural border between Muntenia and Dobruja. The west-central region, known as Transylvania (see Glossary), is delimited by the arc of the Carpathians, which separates it from the Maramureş region in the northwest; by the Crişana area, which borders Hungary in the west; and by the Banat (see Glossary)

region of the southwest, which adjoins both Hungary and Yugoslavia. It is these areas west of the Carpathians that contain the highest concentrations of the nation's largest ethnic minorities—Hungarians, Germans, and Serbs.

Romania's exterior boundaries are a result of relatively recent events (see fig. 2). At the outbreak of World War I, the country's territory included only the provinces of Walachia, Moldavia, and Dobruja. This area, known as the Regat or the Old Kingdom, came into being with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. At the end of World War I, Romania acquired Transylvania and the Banat. Some of this territory was lost during World War II, but negotiations returned it to Romania. Although this acquisition united some 85 percent of the Romanian-speaking population of Eastern Europe into one nation, it left a considerable number of ethnic Hungarians under Romanian rule. Disputes between Hungary and Romania regarding this territory would surface regularly, as both considered the region part of their national heritage. Questions were also periodically raised as to the historical validity of the Soviet-Romanian border. Bukovina (see Glossary) and Bessarabia (see Glossary), former Romanian provinces where significant percentages of the population are Romanian-speaking, have been part of the Soviet Union since the end of World War II. Despite ongoing and potential disputes, however, it was unlikely in 1989 that Romania's borders would be redrawn in the foreseeable future.

Topography

Romania's natural landscape (see fig. 3) is almost evenly divided among mountains (31 percent), hills (33 percent), and plains (36 percent). These varied relief forms spread rather symmetrically from the Carpathian Mountains, which reach elevations of more than 2,400 meters, to the Danube Delta, which is just a few meters above sea level.

The arc of the Carpathians extends over 1,000 kilometers through the center of the country, covering an area of 70,000 square kilometers. These mountains are of low to medium altitude and are no wider than 100 kilometers. They are deeply fragmented by longitudinal and transverse valleys and crossed by several major rivers. These features and the fact that there are many summit passes—some at altitudes up to 2,256 meters—have made the Carpathians less of a barrier to movement than have other European ranges. Another distinguishing feature is the many eroded platforms that provide tableland at relatively high altitudes. There are permanent settlements here at above 1,200 meters.

Romania's Carpathians are differentiated into three ranges: the Eastern Carpathians, the Southern Carpathians or Transylvanian Alps, and the Western Carpathians. Each of these ranges has important distinguishing features. The Eastern Carpathians are composed of three parallel ridges that run from northwest to southeast. The westernmost ridge is an extinct volcanic range with many preserved cones and craters. The range has many large depressions, in the largest of which the city of Braşov is situated. Important mining and industrial centers as well as agricultural areas are found within these depressions. The Eastern Carpathians are covered with forests—some 32 percent of the country's woodlands are there. They also contain important ore deposits, including gold and silver, and their mineral water springs feed numerous health resorts.

The Southern Carpathians offer the highest peaks at Moldoveanu (2,544 meters) and Negoiu (2,535 meters) and more than 150 glacial lakes. They have large grassland areas and some woodlands but few large depressions and subsoil resources. The region was crisscrossed by an ancient network of trans-Carpathian roads, and vestiges of the old Roman Way are still visible. Numerous passes and the valleys of the Olt, Jiu, and Danube rivers provide routes for roads and railways through the mountains. The Western Carpathians are the lowest of the three ranges and are fragmented by many deep structural depressions. They have historically functioned as "gates," which allow easy passage but can be readily defended. The most famous of these is the Iron Gate on the Danube. The Western Carpathians are the most densely settled, and it is in the northernmost area of this range, the Apuseni Mountains, that permanent settlements can be found at the highest altitudes.

Enclosed within the great arc of the Carpathians lie the undulating plains and low hills of the Transylvanian Plateau—the largest tableland in the country and the center of Romania. This important agricultural region also contains large deposits of methane gas and salt. To the south and east of the Carpathians, the Sub-Carpathians form a fringe of rolling terrain ranging from 396 to 1,006 meters in elevation. This terrain is matched in the west by the slightly lower Western Hills. The symmetry of Romania's relief continues with the Getic Tableland to the south of the Sub-Carpathians, the Moldavian Tableland in the east between the Sub-Carpathians and the Prut River, and the Dobrujan Tableland in the southeast between the Danube and the Black Sea. The Sub-Carpathians and the tableland areas provide good conditions for human settlement and are important areas for fruit growing, viticulture, and other agricultural activity. They also contain large deposits of brown coal and natural gas.

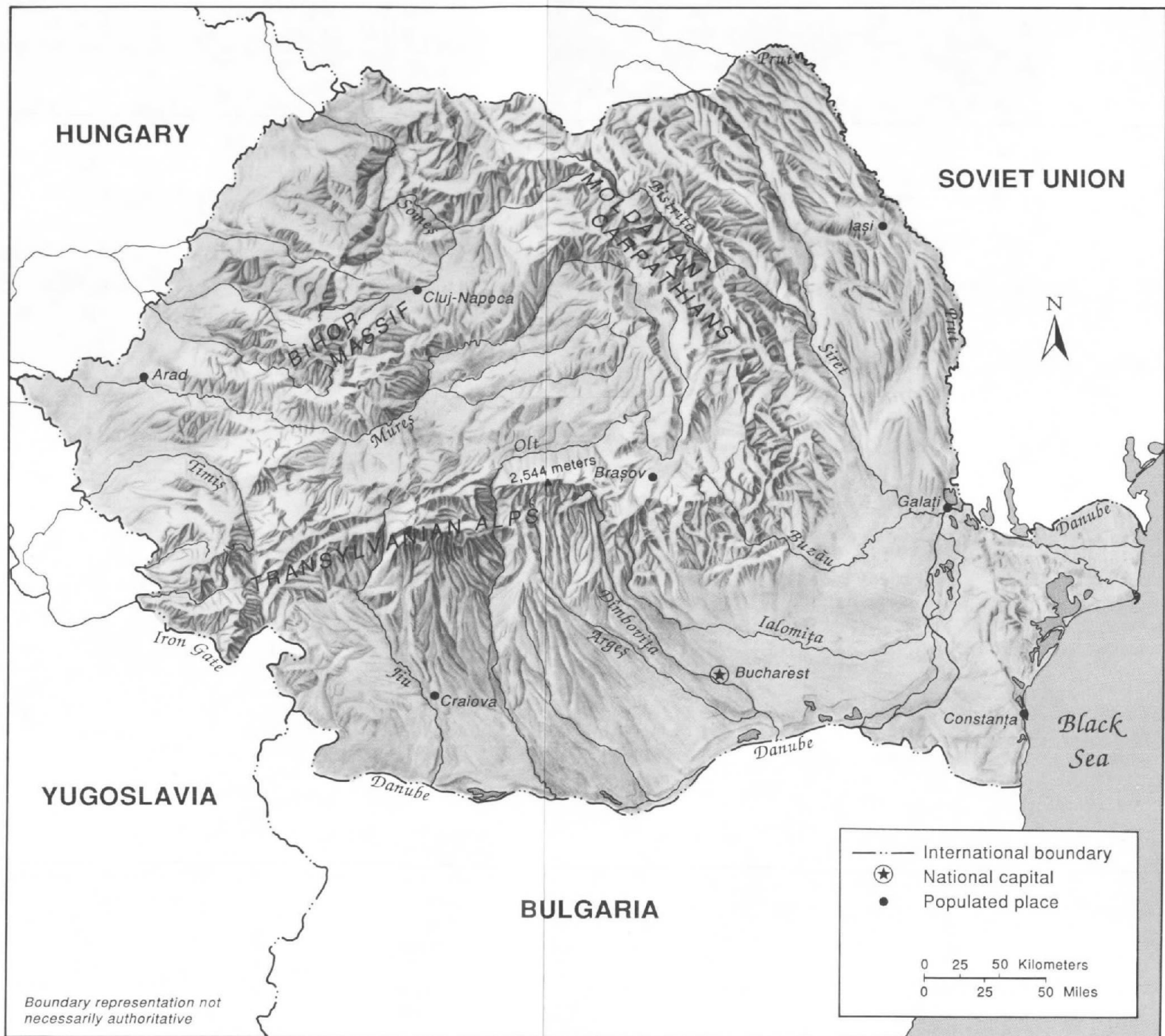


Figure 3. Topography and Drainage

Beyond the Carpathian foothills and tablelands, the plains spread south and west. In the southern parts of the country, the lower Danube Plain is divided by the Olt River; east of the river lies the Romanian Plain, and to the west is the Oltenian or Western Plain. The land here is rich with chernozemic soils and forms Romania's most important farming region. Irrigation is widely used, and marshlands in the Danube's floodplain have been diked and drained to provide additional tillable land.

Romania's lowest land is found on the northern edge of the Dobruja region in the Danube Delta. The delta is a triangular swampy area of marshes, floating reed islands, and sandbanks, where the Danube ends its trek of almost 3,000 kilometers and divides into three frayed branches before emptying into the Black Sea. The Danube Delta provides a large part of the country's fish production, and its reeds are used to manufacture cellulose. The region also serves as a nature preserve for rare species of plant and animal life including migratory birds.

After entering the country in the southwest at Baziaș, the Danube travels some 1,000 kilometers through or along Romanian territory, forming the southern frontier with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Virtually all of the country's rivers are tributaries of the Danube, either directly or indirectly, and by the time the Danube's course ends in the Black Sea, they account for nearly 40 percent of the total discharge. The most important of these rivers are the Mureș, the Olt, the Prut, the Siret, the Ialomița, the Someș, and the Argeș. Romania's rivers primarily flow east, west, and south from the central crown of the Carpathians. They are fed by rainfall and melting snow, which causes considerable fluctuation in discharge and occasionally catastrophic flooding. In the east, river waters are collected by the Siret and the Prut. In the south, the rivers flow directly into the Danube, and in the west, waters are collected by the Tisza on Hungarian territory.

The Danube is by far Romania's most important river, not only for transportation, but also for the production of hydroelectric power. One of Europe's largest hydroelectric stations is located at the Iron Gate, where the Danube surges through the Carpathian gorges. The Danube is an important water route for domestic shipping, as well as international trade. It is navigable for river vessels along its entire Romanian course and for seagoing ships as far as the port of Brăila. An obvious problem with the use of the Danube for inland transportation is its remoteness from most of the major industrial centers. Moreover, marshy banks and perennial flooding impede navigation in some areas.

Climate

Because of its position on the southeastern portion of the European continent, Romania has a climate that is transitional between temperate and continental. Climatic conditions are somewhat modified by the country's varied relief. The Carpathians serve as a barrier to Atlantic air masses, restricting their oceanic influences to the west and center of the country, where they make for milder winters and heavier rainfall. The mountains also block the continental influences of the vast plain to the north in the Soviet Union, which bring frosty winters and less rain to the south and southeast. In the extreme southeast, Mediterranean influences offer a milder, maritime climate. The average annual temperature is 11°C in the south and 8°C in the north. In Bucharest, the temperature ranges from -29°C in January to 29°C in July, with average temperatures of -3°C in January and 23°C in July. Rainfall, although adequate throughout the country, decreases from west to east and from mountains to plains. Some mountainous areas receive more than 1,010 millimeters of precipitation each year. Annual precipitation averages about 635 millimeters in central Transylvania, 521 millimeters at Iași in Moldavia, and only 381 millimeters at Constanța on the Black Sea.

Population

Demographic History

Romania's Carpathian-dominated relief, geographic position at the crossroads of major continental migration routes, and the turbulent history associated with that position adversely affected population development. The region had 8.9 million inhabitants in 1869, 11.1 million in 1900, 14.3 million in 1930, 15.8 million in 1948, and 23.2 million in 1989.

Annual birthrates remained as high as 40 per 1,000 well into the 1920s, whereas mortality rates, although declining, were still well above 20 per 1,000. Children under five accounted for half of all deaths. During the interwar years, death rates remained high, primarily because of infant mortality rates of 18-20 percent. In fact, throughout the 1930s, Romania had the highest birth, death, and infant mortality rates in Europe. The annual natural population increase fell from 14.8 per 1,000 in 1930 to 10.1 per 1,000 in 1939. These figures conceal considerable regional variation. Birthrates in the Old Kingdom regions of Walachia and Moldavia were much higher than in the former Hungarian territories, which had already begun to decline in the nineteenth century.

Demographic development in the immediate postwar period continued to show a drop in the annual growth rates. Population losses occurred through excessive mortality, reduced natality, and migration, not only because of World War II but also because of subsequent Soviet occupation. Extensive pillage by the Red Army and exorbitant demands for restitution by the Soviets squeezed the peasants, resulting in harvest failures in 1945 and 1946 and severe famine in 1947. In that year, 349,300 deaths were reported, compared with 248,200 the following year. A birthrate of 23.4 per 1,000 and a death rate of 22 per 1,000 resulted in a very low natural increase of 1.4 per 1,000, the lowest ever recorded in Romania's tumultuous history. In the 1950s, recovery from the war brought the birthrate up to 25.6 per 1,000 and the death rate down sharply to 9.9 per 1,000. In 1955 the annual natural rate of increase was 15.9 per 1,000. Again, there were significant regional variations, with Moldavia, Dobruja, and parts of Transylvania showing a higher increase, whereas the Crişana and Banat regions showed very little growth and in some cases even declined.

From a peak of 15.9 per 1,000 in 1955, the rate of natural increase declined rapidly to 6.1 per 1,000 in 1966. Several factors combined to produce this slump, not least of all a law introduced in 1957 that provided abortion on demand. Access to free abortion, coupled with the scarcity of contraceptives and the fact that society did not generally condemn it, made abortion the primary means of fertility control. After the 1957 law was enacted, abortions soon outnumbered live births by a wide margin, with the ratio of abortions to live births reaching four to one by 1965. It was not unusual for a woman to terminate as many as twenty or more pregnancies by abortion.

It was not the easy access to abortion, however, but the reasons behind the decision not to bear children that contributed most to falling birthrates. During this period, a virtual transformation of society was under way. Education levels rose dramatically, and urbanization and industrialization proceeded at a breakneck pace. As they had in other countries, these developments brought lower fertility rates. Women were staying in school longer and putting off having children. Urban areas, where the decline in birthrates was most pronounced, provided cramped and overcrowded housing conditions that were not conducive to the large families of the past. Moreover, communist ideology emphasized the equal participation of women in socialist production as the only road to full equality. Industrialization brought more and more women into the work force, not only for ideological reasons, but also to ease rising

labor shortages. Fewer and fewer women made the decision to take on the double burden of a full work week and raising children.

Demographic Policy

With a political system in place that made long-range planning the cornerstone of economic growth, demographic trends took on particular significance. As development proceeded, so did disturbing demographic consequences. It soon became apparent that the country was approaching zero population growth, which carried alarming implications for future labor supplies for further industrialization. The government responded in 1966 with a decree that prohibited abortion on demand and introduced other pronatalist policies to increase birthrates. The decree stipulated that abortion would be allowed only when pregnancy endangered the life of a woman or was the result of rape or incest, or if the child was likely to have a congenital disease or deformity. Also an abortion could be performed if the woman was over forty-five years of age or had given birth to at least four children who remained under her care. Any abortion performed for any other reason became a criminal offense, and the penal code was revised to provide penalties for those who sought or performed illegal abortions.

Other punitive policies were introduced. Men and women who remained childless after the age of twenty-five, whether married or single, were liable for a special tax amounting to between 10 and 20 percent of their income. The government also targeted the rising divorce rates and made divorce much more difficult. By government decree, a marriage could be dissolved only in exceptional cases. The ruling was rigidly enforced, as only 28 divorces were allowed nationwide in 1967, compared with 26,000 the preceding year.

Some pronatalist policies were introduced that held out the carrot instead of the stick. Family allowances paid by the state were raised, with each child bringing a small increase. Monetary awards were granted to mothers beginning with the birth of the third child. In addition, the income tax rate for parents of three or more children was reduced by 30 percent.

Because contraceptives were not manufactured in Romania, and all legal importation of them had stopped, the sudden unavailability of abortion made birth control extremely difficult. Sex had traditionally been a taboo subject, and sex education, even in the 1980s, was practically nonexistent. Consequently the pronatalist policies had an immediate impact, with the number of live births rising from 273,687 in 1966 to 527,764 in 1967—an increase of 92.8 percent. Legal abortions fell just as dramatically with only 52,000 performed in 1967 as compared to more than 1 million in 1965.

This success was due in part to the presence of police in hospitals to ensure that no illegal abortions would be performed. But the policy's initial success was marred by rising maternal and infant mortality rates closely associated with the restrictions on abortion.

The increase in live births was short-lived. After the police returned to more normal duties, the number of abortions categorized as legal rose dramatically, as did the number of spontaneous abortions. The material incentives provided by the state, even when coupled with draconian regulation and coercion, were not enough to sustain an increase in birthrates, which again began to decline. As the rate of population growth declined, the government continued efforts to increase birthrates. In 1974 revisions in the labor code attempted to address the problem by granting special allowances for pregnant women and nursing mothers, giving them a lighter work load that excluded overtime and hazardous work and allowed time off to care for children without loss of benefits.

The Ceaușescu regime took more aggressive steps in the 1980s. By 1983 the birthrate had fallen to 14.3 per 1,000, the rate of annual increase in population had dipped to 3.7 per 1,000, and the number of abortions (421,386) again exceeded the number of live births (321,489). Ceaușescu complained that only some 9 percent of the abortions performed had the necessary medical justification. In 1984 the legal age for marriage was lowered to fifteen years for women, and additional taxes were levied on childless individuals over twenty-five years of age. Monthly gynecological examinations for all women of childbearing age were instituted, even for pubescent girls, to identify pregnancies in the earliest stages and to monitor pregnant women to ensure that their pregnancies came to term. Miscarriages were to be investigated and illegal abortions prosecuted, resulting in prison terms of one year for the women concerned and up to five years for doctors and other medical personnel performing the procedure. Doctors and nurses involved in gynecology came under increasing pressure, especially after 1985, when "demographic command units" were set up to ensure that all women were gynecologically examined at their place of work. These units not only monitored pregnancies and ensured deliveries but also investigated childless women and couples, asked detailed questions about their sex lives and the general health of their reproductive systems, and recommended treatment for infertility.

Furthermore, by 1985 a woman had to have had five children, with all five still under her care, or be more than forty-five years old to qualify for an abortion. Even when an abortion was legally justified, after 1985 a party representative had to be present to

authorize and supervise the procedure. Other steps to increase material incentives to have children included raising taxes for childless individuals, increasing monthly allowances to families with children by 27 percent, and giving bonuses for the birth of the second and third child.

Although government expenditures on material incentives rose by 470 percent between 1967 and 1983, the birthrate actually decreased during that time by 40 percent. After 1983, despite the extreme measures taken by the regime to combat the decline, there was only a slight increase, from 14.3 to 15.5 per 1,000 in 1984 and 16 per 1,000 in 1985. After more than two decades of draconian anti-abortion regulation and expenditures for material incentives that by 1985 equalled half the amount budgeted for defense, Romanian birthrates were only a fraction higher than those rates in countries permitting abortion on demand.

Romanian demographic policies continued to be unsuccessful largely because they ignored the relationship of socioeconomic development and demographics. The development of heavy industry captured most of the country's investment capital and left little for the consumer goods sector. Thus the woman's double burden of child care and full-time work was not eased by consumer durables that save time and labor in the home. The debt crisis of the 1980s reduced the standard of living to that of a Third World country, as Romanians endured rationing of basic food items and shortages of other essential household goods, including diapers. Apartments were not only overcrowded and cramped, but often unheated. In the face of such bleak conditions, increased material incentives that in 1985 amounted to approximately 3.61 lei (for value of the leu—see Glossary) per child per day—enough to buy 43 grams of preserved milk—were not enough to overcome the reluctance of Romanian women to bear children.

In 1989 abortion remained the only means of fertility control available to an increasingly desperate population. The number of quasi-legal abortions continued to rise, as women resorted to whatever means necessary to secure permission for the procedure. Women who failed to get official approval were forced to seek illegal abortions, which could be had for a carton of Kent cigarettes.

Despite the obvious reluctance of women to bear children because of socioeconomic conditions, the Ceaușescu regime continued its crusade to raise birthrates, using a somewhat more subliminal approach. In 1986 mass media campaigns were launched, extolling the virtues of the large families of the past and of family life in general. Less subtle were the pronouncements that procreation was the patriotic duty and moral obligation of all citizens. The campaign

called for competition among *judete* (counties, see Glossary) for the highest birthrates and even encouraged single women to have children despite the fact that illegitimacy carried a considerable social stigma.

The new approach, like previous attempts, met with little success. In early 1988, demographic policies were again on the political drawing board, as the Political Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR, see Glossary) ordered the Ministry of Health to produce a "concrete program" for increasing the birthrate. The regime's drastic and even obsessive response to the low birthrates appears to have been unwarranted. Death rates steadily declined during this period, and in 1965, when the crusade began, there was little evidence of an impending demographic crisis. Romania's rate of natural population increase of 6 per 1,000 was considerably higher than that of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) at 3 per 1,000 and Hungary's 2.4 per 1,000. In 1984 Romania compared even more favorably with a rate of natural increase of 3.9 per 1,000 as opposed to East Germany's 0.4 and Hungary's -2 per 1,000.

Settlement Structure

Romania's population, which reached 23 million in 1987, was distributed quite unevenly across the country. In 1985 some 56 percent of the population lived on the plains, where population density exceeded 150 inhabitants per square kilometer. The national average was about 92 inhabitants per square kilometer. Some 38 percent lived in the hilly regions, mostly in the foothills of the Carpathians. The mountainous regions had the lowest density, although many of the country's earliest settlements were built in the higher elevations of the Sub-Carpathian depressions adjoining the mountains, which offered protection from invaders. Until relatively recently, population densities were higher in the Carpathian foothills of Walachia than on the plains themselves. In addition to the thinly populated mountains, the waterlogged region of Dobruja continued to have a low population density, with fewer than fifty inhabitants per square kilometer.

Traditional Settlement Patterns

Romania remained a predominantly rural country until well after World War II, with most of the population living in villages and working in agriculture. Just before the war, more than 15,000 villages were spread out over the territory between the Danube Delta and the Carpathians, where more than three-quarters of the population resided. Many of the villages were little changed by

contemporary events, at least in appearance, and continued to be categorized into three types, depending on the terrain they occupied. Village settlements on the plains tended to be large and concentrated; most were involved in agriculture, primarily in cultivating cereals and raising livestock. In the hilly regions, settlements were more scattered. Here the main activities were fruit and wine production, and homesteads were generally surrounded by vineyards and orchards. At higher altitudes, settlements were mainly involved in raising livestock and in lumbering, and the villages were even more dispersed.

Romania's first urban settlements were founded by the Greeks on the Black Sea Coast at Tomi (now Constanța) and Kallatis (now Mangalia). Roman occupation brought urban settlements to the plains and mountains, and many towns were founded on ancient Dacian settlement sites. These towns were situated at strategic and commercial vantage points, and their importance endured long after the Romans had departed. Cluj-Napoca, Alba-Iulia, and Drobeta-Turnu Severin are among the major cities with Dacian roots and Roman development. During the Middle Ages, as trade between the Black Sea and Central Europe developed, a number of settlements grew into important trade centers, including Brașov, Sibiu, and Bucharest.

Despite some ancient urban roots, most of Romania's urban development came late. In 1948 only three cities had more than 100,000 inhabitants, and the total urban population was only 3.7 million. By 1970 thirteen cities had populations of more than 100,000, the population of Bucharest alone had increased by some 507,000, and the total urban population had reached 8.2 million. The urban population increased from 23.4 percent of the total population in 1948 to 41 percent in 1970.

This increased urbanization was not simply a consequence of the development of nonagricultural activities; for the most part it was centrally directed by the PCR under the guiding influence of Marxist concepts. According to Marxism, urbanization has important intrinsic value that aids in the creation of a socialist society, and urban areas are economically, socially, and culturally superior. Urbanization based on the development of industry enables the state to transform society and eradicate the differences between rural and urban life.

Romanian urbanization did not result in a large number of new cities spread evenly throughout the country. Although the number of cities rose from 183 in 1956 to 236 in 1977, and the proportion of the population living in urban areas increased to 47 percent, most of this growth came in the old towns, some of which doubled,

tripled, and even quadrupled their prewar populations. Bucharest far exceeded all other cities in growth and by 1975 was approaching 2 million inhabitants—19.9 percent of the total urban population. Meanwhile the number of cities with populations of more than 100,000 had grown to eighteen, accounting for another 35.7 percent of the urban population. Thus by 1978 more than half of the country's total urban population lived in just 19 of Romania's 236 urban areas.

Rural-Urban Migration

Romania's cities swelled not from natural increase but from migration. Already by 1966, almost one-third of the population resided in places where they had not been born, and fully 60 percent of the residents of the seven largest cities had been born elsewhere. Collectivization cut ties to the land, forcing the young and able-bodied to factories in the major cities (see *Agriculture*, ch. 3). Industrialization proceeded apace, focusing on rapid accumulation and quick return on investment, thus favoring towns with plants and infrastructure already in place. During the period from 1968 to 1973, nearly 2 million people migrated from one location to another, with rural-urban migrants a clear two-thirds majority.

Although the rate of natural increase in urban places continued to be largely insignificant, migrant-based urban growth was sustained, and rural areas lost population. Net population loss in the countryside grew from 6.3 per 1,000 in 1968 to 9.8 per 1,000 in 1973. Most of the movement was intraregional, drawing people away from small villages in the mountains and agricultural areas in the southern and western plains. Migration losses were particularly heavy in Moldavia, Muntenia, and Maramureş.

Attempts to control migration to major cities were made as early as the early 1950s. With the advent of communist power, all Romanians fourteen years of age or older were issued identity cards, which indicated place of residence. Subsequently, restrictions were placed on establishing legal residence in the larger towns. To take up residence in any new place, it became necessary to obtain a visa from the local police. Only a few reasons could justify the issuance of the necessary visa. Work could suffice as a reason to move to a "closed city" only if the applicant's commuting distance exceeded thirty kilometers—and then only if a legal resident of that city could not be found to fill the position. A few family-associated reasons were considered valid. Newly married couples could obtain visas if one of the spouses had been a legal resident before marriage. Dependent children were permitted to join their parents, and

until the 1980s, pensioners could move in with their children. Later, the elderly were prevented from joining their children.

Government restrictions, however, were not effective in controlling migration to the large closed cities. On the contrary, official estimates of population growth in those cities during the 1966-77 period, as compared to growth actually realized, suggest an amazing lack of awareness, much less direct control of population movements. Predictions for 1977 populations in those cities, based on 1966 census data adjusted for births, deaths, and registered migration, were in every case underestimated—on the average by 14 percent. The population of Bucharest, where one might expect the most effective control, was underestimated by some 200,000 inhabitants.

Systematization: A Settlement Strategy

Romania's extremely uneven development became increasingly problematic. From an ideological standpoint, the growing disparity between rural and urban life was unacceptable. And uncontrolled rural-urban migration placed considerable strain on the cities, and left the countryside with an agricultural work force composed increasingly of women, the elderly, and children.

The government responded in 1972 with a program for rural resettlement aimed at stemming the tide to the cities by extending modern facilities into the countryside, where a network of new industrial enterprises was to be established. With the ultimate goal of a "multilaterally developed socialist society," this ambitious program, called "systematization," was to dramatically change the face of rural Romania. Officially initiated in 1974, the program called for doubling the number of cities by 1990. Some 550 villages were selected to receive money and materials necessary for their conversion to urban industrial centers. The program called for investments in schools, medical clinics, new housing, and new industry.

At the same time, plans were made for the remainder of the country's 13,000 villages. Here the traditional settlement pattern presented obstacles to plans for modernization. The majority of these villages had fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, and many had fewer than 500, while plans for rural resettlement set the optimal village population at 3,000—the number of inhabitants necessary to warrant expenditures for housing and services. Accordingly, villages with few prospects for growth were labeled "irrational" and "nonviable." In the 1970s, some 3,000 villages in this category were to be minimally serviced and gradually phased out, and others were scheduled to be forcibly dissolved and relocated. The rural population would then be concentrated in the "viable" villages, where

plans for modernization and industrialization could be more effectively implemented and investments in infrastructure more profitably used.

Although systematization plans were drawn up for virtually every locality, implementation proceeded slowly, presumably because of lack of funds. The determination of the Ceaușescu regime to pay off the foreign debt deprived the country of investment capital. Even before the debt crisis, little money had been allocated for the systematization program. Construction in rural areas declined sharply after peaking in 1960. In 1979 only 10 percent of all new housing was built in the countryside, and in the 1980s even less progress was made. Official projections had predicted that by 1985 Romania's population would have reached 25 million, of which 65 percent would live in urban places, with the increase in urbanization a result of the systematization program. In fact population had grown to only 23 million by 1987, and of that number only 51 percent lived in urban places. Thus, despite predictions that 365 new towns would be created by 1980 and another 500 by 1985, no new towns were declared during that time.

The mid-1980s brought renewed commitment to systematization. Some villages on the outskirts of Bucharest were destroyed, ostensibly to make way for projects such as the Bucharest-Danube Canal and airport expansion. Meanwhile about eight square kilometers in the heart of Bucharest were destroyed, leveling some of the nation's finest architectural heritage. Monasteries, ancient churches, and historic buildings were razed, and some 40,000 people were forced to leave their homes with only a twenty-four-hour notice. This was done to clear a path for the Victory of Socialism Boulevard, which would include a public square where half a million people could assemble and a mammoth Palace of Government glorifying Ceaușescu's rule.

Although lack of capital appeared to limit the renewed interest in systematization primarily to the Bucharest area, plans for nationwide rural resettlement were merely postponed and not canceled. The number of villages scheduled to be destroyed, whether gradually by forced depopulation or more abruptly by razing, rose from the 3,000 initially proposed in 1974 to between 7,000 and 8,000 in 1988. The citizens resented the rural resettlement program for its drastic social and cultural consequences and for the huge financial burden that even its limited implementation had already imposed.

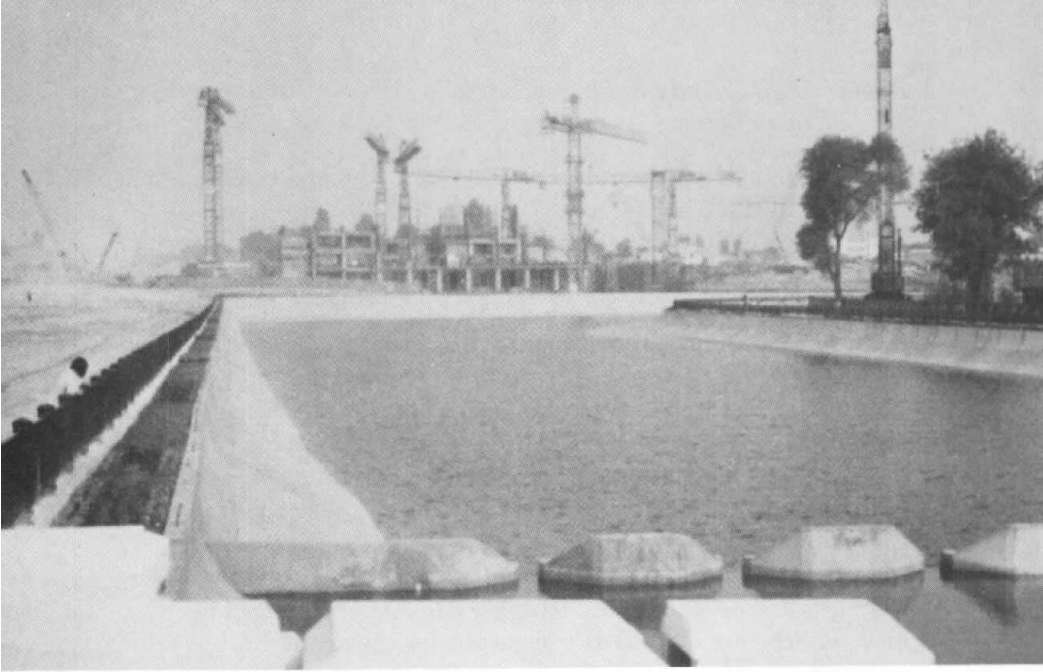
An especially controversial aspect of systematization was the theory that concentrating the rural population would promote more efficient use of agricultural land. New housing in rural areas after

1974 was subject to strict regulations. Villages were to be structured like towns, with construction of housing concentrated within specified perimeters. The buildings had to be at least two stories high, and surrounding lots were restricted to 250 meters. Private lots for agriculture were to be moved outside the settlement perimeter, diminishing the ability of the village populations to produce their own food, as they were required by law to do after 1981. Moreover, because private plots produced much of the nation's fruits, vegetables, and meat, full implementation of systematization would have jeopardized the food supply for the entire country.

The international community, particularly Hungary and West Germany, criticized systematization as a blatant attempt to forcibly assimilate national minorities. Each village escaping systematization was to have a civic center, often referred to as a "Song to Romania House of Culture." These institutions promised to be useful tools for indoctrination and mobilization and were apparently intended to replace churches as the focal point of community life. By 1989 many churches had already been destroyed, and no plans for rebuilding were evident. The destruction of churches and villages not only severed cultural and historic links to the past, but also threatened community bonds and group autonomy. Much of the international criticism of systematization deplored the investment in such a grandiose scheme amidst rapidly deteriorating living conditions, which had been on a downward spiral since the 1970s. The Victory of Socialism Boulevard was replete with irony as the 1980s witnessed serious food shortages and an energy crisis that prolonged the disparity between urban and rural Romania.

Ethnic Structure

Romania derives much of its ethnic diversity from its geographic position astride major continental migration routes. According to 1987 data, 89.1 percent of the population is Romanian, and more than twenty separate ethnic minorities account for the remaining 10.9 percent. Although many of these minorities are small groups, the Hungarian minority of about 1.7 million—estimated by some Western experts at 2–2.5 million—represents 7.8 percent of the total population and is the largest national minority in Europe. The next largest component of the population is the ethnic Germans, who constitute up to 1.5 percent of the total population. There are also significant numbers of Ukrainians, Serbs, and Croats, as well as a Jewish minority estimated by Western observers at between 20,000 and 25,000. Although not officially recognized as a distinct ethnic minority, there is a sizable Gypsy population. The 1977



*Rechanneled and deepened Dâmbovița River, one of many 1980s projects transforming the landscape of central Bucharest
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

census documented only 230,000, but some Western estimates put the Gypsy element at between 1 million and 2 million, suggesting that Gypsies might be actually the second largest minority after the Hungarians.

Historical and Geographical Distribution

In the region of the Old Kingdom, the population has traditionally been fairly homogeneous, with many areas 100 percent Romanian. The notable exceptions are Dobruja and the major towns in northern Moldavia, as well as Bucharest. Dobruja was an ethnic melting pot, where in the 1980s the Romanian component was estimated at less than 50 percent; it also had large representations of Bulgarians, Tatars, Russians, and Turks. Most of the Jewish population settled in Moldavia, first arriving from Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the nineteenth century. By 1912 there were some 240,000 Jews in the Old Kingdom region alone. At that time they constituted a majority in the ten northernmost towns of Moldavia. Some of the dwindling Jewish population continued to live in that region in the late 1980s—scattered in small communities of less than 2,000, including some as small as 30–40 members. The largest segment of the Jewish population—some 17,000 people—lived in Bucharest, as did approximately 200,000

Hungarians and a large number of Gypsies, who had given up their nomadic lifestyle.

Historically the most ethnically diverse regions were the former Hungarian territories in the northwest, which encompass more than one-third of Romania's total area, stretching from the deep curve of the Carpathians to the borders of Hungary and Yugoslavia (see fig. 4). This part of Romania, most often referred to simply as Transylvania, in fact also includes the Maramureş, Crişana, and Banat regions. These areas were settled by two distinct Hungarian groups—the Magyars and the Szeklers. The Magyars arrived in 896, and shortly thereafter the Szeklers were settled in southeastern Transylvania. Although they were of peasant origins, Szeklers were never serfs and in fact enjoyed a fair amount of feudal autonomy. Many were granted nobility by the Hungarian king as a reward for military service. Awareness of a separate status for the Szeklers still exists among other Hungarians and Szeklers alike. The Szeklers are regarded as the best of the Hungarian nation; the form of Hungarian they speak is considered to be the purest and most pleasant. These two groups are further differentiated by their religion, as most Szeklers are Calvinist or Unitarian, whereas the majority of Hungarians are Roman Catholic. Despite cultural distinctions, Szeklers, numbering between 600,000 and 700,000, consider themselves to be of purely Hungarian nationality.

The ethnic German component of the population is also concentrated in Transylvania and is divided into two distinct groups—the Saxons and the Swabians. The Saxons arrived in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries at the invitation of the Hungarian kings. They came primarily from the Rhineland (and so were actually not Saxons but Franks) and settled in fairly compact areas in the south and east of Transylvania. Like the Szeklers, the Saxons were frontier people tasked with defending the region against Turks and Tatars. They were granted a fair degree of political autonomy and control over their internal affairs. In addition, they were given a land base over which they had complete administrative authority. The area, known as Sachsenboden (Saxon Land), was a sort of national preserve, which was protected from political encroachment by other groups. This circumstance, coupled with their early predominance in small-scale trade and commerce, established the Saxons in a superordinate position, which helped to ensure their ethnic survival in a polyethnic environment.

Although there were no large exclusively German enclaves to sustain group solidarity, they were the dominant group in many areas, and cities founded on Saxon trade emerged with a distinctively German character. By far the most important factor in the

preservation of their ethnic identity was their adoption of the Lutheran religion in the mid-sixteenth century. Subsequently, Saxon community life was dominated by the Lutheran Church, which controlled education through parochial schools in the villages. Few Hungarians and Romanians in Transylvania converted to Lutheranism. The church became a cultural link to Germany and remained so until after World War II. Thus for centuries the Saxons of Transylvania were fairly well insulated both politically and culturally from their Hungarian and Romanian neighbors.

The Swabians, who are the German population in the Banat region, contrast sharply with the Saxons. They arrived in Romania much later—in the eighteenth century—from the Württemberg area. They were settled in the Banat by the Austrians and have traditionally been involved in agriculture. Unlike the Saxons, they did not convert to Lutheranism but remained Catholic.

The Magyars politically dominated Transylvania until the nineteenth century, despite the fact that Romanians constituted the majority. Although the Saxons and Szeklers were permitted local administrative autonomy, the Hungarian nobility filled the main political and administrative positions. In contrast, the Romanian majority formed a distinct underclass. They were much less urbanized than the Hungarians or Germans. Most were peasants, and the majority of those were enserfed and had little or no formal education. Furthermore, whereas most of Transylvania's Hungarians and Germans are Roman Catholic or Protestant and are thereby more Western-oriented, the great majority of Romanians belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The ethnic Gordian knot of Transylvania, intricately bound with several religious affiliations and complicated by separate social and economic niches, was made even more complex by the desire of both Hungary and Romania to control and claim the region. Throughout the nineteenth century, while Romanians in the Old Kingdom continued to strive for unification of the three Romanian lands—Moldavia, Walachia, and Transylvania—their brethren across the Carpathians were the primary target of a Magyarization policy that aspired to integrate Transylvania into Hungary.

The unification of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania in 1918 deeply affected the region's ethnic structure. Approximately one-fifth of the Magyar population departed immediately for Hungary, and those ethnic Hungarians who remained had their land expropriated and redistributed to Romanian peasants. Hungarian administrative and political dominance was swept aside, and a Romanian bureaucracy was installed. At the same time—and

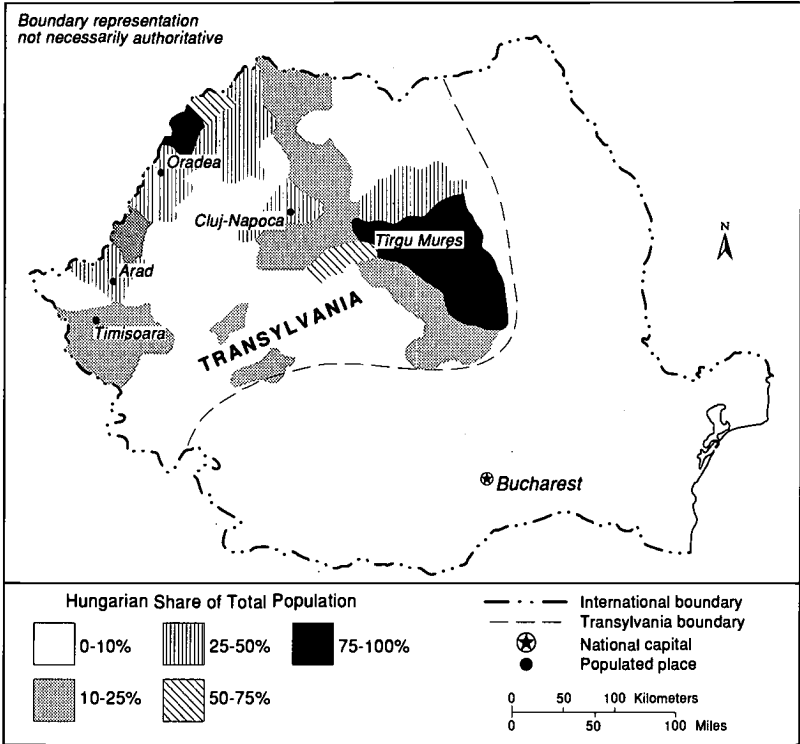


Figure 4. Ethnic Hungarian Minority in Romania in the 1980s

perhaps the most shattering blow—Romanian replaced Hungarian as the official language of the region.

The position of the German population in Transylvania was much less immediately damaged. Although the Saxons did eventually lose their communal land holdings, their private property was not confiscated. In Saxon enclaves, they retained control over education and internal affairs as well as cultural associations and still held economic advantages. The ability of the Germans to maintain their ethnic identity was not seriously hampered until after World War II, when all Germans were retroactively declared members of the Nazi Party. On that basis, they were initially excluded from the National Minorities Statute of 1945, which guaranteed equal rights to Hungarians and other ethnic minorities. A considerable portion of the German population—about 100,000—fled to Germany or Austria as the German forces retreated in 1944. Some 75,000 Romanian Germans were subsequently deported to

war-reparations labor camps in the Soviet Union. Many died there and many, rather than return to Romania after their release, chose Germany or Austria instead. By 1950 the ethnic German element was half its prewar level, and those German Romanians who did stay suffered the immediate expropriation of their lands and business enterprises. Some 30,000 Swabians from the Banat region were resettled to the remote eastern Danube Plain. Moreover, the remaining German population, like all other national minorities, began the struggle for ethnic survival against a new force, as communist power was consolidated.

National Minorities under Communist Rule

Although shifts in Romania's ethnic structure can be attributed to several factors, the most far-reaching changes occurred at the behest of the PCR, which subscribed to the Marxist belief in the primacy of class over nation. Marxist theory claims not only that national identity is subordinate to class identity, but also that as class consciousness rises, nationalism and nations will disappear. The practical problem of how to deal with nationalities in a multinational state until the class consciousness of socialism eradicates them was addressed not by Karl Marx but by Vladimir Lenin. A pragmatic response to the reality of national minorities in the Soviet Union, Lenin's nationalities policy is often summarized in the phrase "national in form, socialist in content." The policy essentially permitted national minorities to be separate in terms of language, education, and culture as long as they adhered to the principles of socialism and did not pose a political threat. Romania's national minorities at the outset of communist rule were seemingly well served by the Leninist approach. The Constitution provided them equal rights in "all fields of economic, political, juridical, social, and cultural life" and specifically guaranteed free use of their native language and the right to education at all levels in their mother tongue.

The large Hungarian minority received special attention with the establishment of the Hungarian Autonomous Region in 1952. Like many other generous provisions for nationalities, however, this concession turned out to be essentially an empty gesture and masked the true nature of relations between the state and minorities. The region was never home to more than one-quarter of Romania's Hungarian population, and it had no more autonomy than did other administrative provinces. Moreover, in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, even this autonomy was curtailed. In 1960 directives from Bucharest reorganized and renamed the province so that its Hungarian nature was even further reduced. The territorial reorganization, by adding purely Romanian inhabited

areas and excluding Hungarian enclaves, increased the Romanian element in the province from 20 to 35 percent and reduced the Hungarian presence from 77 to 62 percent. The name was changed to Mureș Autonomous Hungarian Region and thereafter was most often referred to simply as the Mureș Region.

In 1965, concomitant with Ceaușescu's rise to first secretary of the Partidul Muncitoresc Român (PMR—Romanian Workers' Party), a new Constitution proclaimed Romania a socialist unitary state. Thereafter, the country's multinational character was largely ignored, and the problem of cohabiting nationalities officially was considered resolved. In 1968 the regime eliminated the Autonomous Hungarian Region outright. The regime maintained the appearance of minority representation at all levels of government, and official statistics showed that the proportion of people from ethnic minority communities employed in government duly reflected their numbers. In reality, minorities had little real power or influence. At the local level, minority representatives, who were generally quite Romanianized, were mistrusted by their constituents. Ironically, although these spokespersons were routinely handpicked by the PCR, their loyalty to the regime was often suspected. The ethnic composition of the party itself was a more accurate reflection of minority participation and representation.

From the start of communist rule, large numbers of ethnic Romanians joined the party, and their share of total membership rose steadily over the years, increasing from 79 percent in 1955 to almost 90 percent in the early 1980s. Although the regime claimed that minority membership and representation in the people's councils and the Grand National Assembly were commensurate with their size, minorities were largely excluded from policy-making bodies on both the local and national levels (see Central Government, ch. 4). Even in areas where Hungarians represented a sizable portion of the population—Timiș, Arad, and Maramureș *județe*—few were found in local PCR bureaus. At the national level, the most powerful positions in the critical foreign affairs, defense, and interior ministries were reserved for ethnic Romanians, and minorities were consigned to rubber-stamp institutions.

Ostensibly representing minority interests, workers' councils were established for Hungarian, German, Serbian, and Ukrainian citizens. These bodies operated within the framework of the Front of Socialist Unity and Democracy and were under the constant supervision of the PCR Central Committee Secretariat, which funded their budgets. The councils had neither headquarters nor office hours, and their sole function appeared to be praising the regime's



*Countryside in Saxon German region of Transylvania
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

treatment of national minorities. Significantly, when the councils did meet, business was conducted in Romanian.

Nation-Building and National Minorities

Even before Ceaușescu came to power, PCR leaders had taken a nationalistic, anti-Soviet stance, which was important for maintaining the legitimacy of the regime. During the first decade of Soviet-imposed communist rule, the population suffered the misery of expropriations, the disruptions of rapid industrialization and forced collectivization, and the Sovietization of society. The result was an increasing bitterness toward the Soviet Union and the PCR itself, which was directly controlled by Moscow. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as de-Stalinization and a more liberal atmosphere prevailed in Moscow, PCR leaders asserted their independence by ousting pro-Soviet members and refusing to accept Soviet plans to make Romania the “breadbasket” for the more industrialized Comecon (see Glossary) countries (see Historical Setting, ch. 1).

As Ceaușescu assumed power, the campaign for self-determination and de-Sovietization was accompanied by increasing Romanian nationalism in domestic policy. Fervent emphasis on Romanian language, history, and culture, designed to enhance Ceaușescu’s popularity among the Romanian majority, continued unabated into the 1980s. In 1976 the PCR launched a nationwide campaign

dedicated to the glorification of the Romanian homeland—the “Hymn to Romania.” All nationalities were expected to join the fete, which placed the Hungarian and German minorities of Transylvania in a grievous predicament. The campaign aimed to remove all traces of German and Hungarian territorial identification. In cities that had already been Romanianized, monuments and artifacts representing links to the Hungarian or Saxon past were all but eliminated, bilingual inscriptions were removed, and streets—and in some cases, cities themselves—were renamed to emphasize Romanian roots. Thus Turnu Severin became Drobeta-Turnu Severin, and Cluj—Transylvania’s most important Hungarian city—was renamed Cluj-Napoca.

Given the socioeconomic structure of precommunist Transylvania, when Hungarians and Germans were much more urbanized and economically advanced than the mostly peasant Romanian majority, the changes wrought by the modernization program negatively affected the position of the minorities. As the needs of industrialization brought more and more peasants from the countryside to the factories, the ethnic composition of Transylvania’s urban places shifted. Romanians became the growing majority in cities that had long been Hungarian and German enclaves. These changes were not solely the result of natural migration, but were carefully engineered by the state. Secret internal regulations ordered major minority centers such as Cluj, Oradea, and Arad to be virtually sealed off to the largest ethnic minorities and encouraged their outmigration while directing an influx of ethnic Romanians.

Population shifts were engendered under the guise of multilateral development, the party’s byword for building socialism. The stated goal was equalization of regional development, and statistical data were often cited to show that investments in underdeveloped minority-inhabited areas were made in an effort to bring them up to the national average. Minorities—particularly the Hungarians—claimed, however, that economic growth did not provide training and jobs for them but served as a pretext for the massive influx of ethnic Romanian workers. Thus, whereas ethnic Hungarians had to leave their homeland to find employment in the Old Kingdom region, ethnic Romanians were offered incentives to relocate to Transylvania.

The dispute between Hungary and Romania over the history of Transylvania complicated interethnic relations in the region. The histories of both countries claim Transylvania as the safe haven that ensured the survival of each nation. The Romanians contend that they are descendants of Geto-Dacians—the indigenous inhabitants of Transylvania. Although earlier Romanian historiography

emphasized the Latin origins of Romanian language and culture, later pronouncements by Ceaușescu and Romanian historians stressed cultural ties to this pre-Roman civilization. The regime set out to prove the so-called Daco-Roman continuity theory to bolster Romania's claims over Transylvania. Despite furious archaeological activity to discover Dacian roots, however, just as many traces of Celts, Huns, Avars, Goths, and Romans were uncovered. Nevertheless, the country's museums and history books presented the theory as indisputable fact.

Even as early as 1948, the process of rewriting the history of Transylvania to favor the Romanian version was under way. Revised textbooks gave ample coverage of the great Romanian heroes of the past, but they provided little or no information about key minority figures, and those who were mentioned were given Romanian names. The books emphasized that the struggle for unification of the Romanian fatherland had been opposed by the Hungarians and Germans, who were labeled "latecomers" and "colonists."

Amidst the controversy, the Hungarian minority of Transylvania was considered an instrument of the Hungarian government, further ensuring their second-class citizenship status. Expressions of concern for the treatment of this minority, whether originating inside or outside Romania, were branded "chauvinistic, revanchist, and irredentist." The regime increasingly limited contacts and cultural links between Hungary and Romanian Hungarians. After 1974, regulations forbade all foreign travelers except close family members to stay overnight in private homes. Violators placed their hosts at risk of fines amounting to as much as one year's salary. Romanian Hungarians found it difficult to obtain newspapers and journals from Hungary, and the Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului—Securitate), the secret police, monitored the reception of Hungarian radio and television broadcasts and the placement of long-distance calls to Hungary. Significantly, the pervasive Securitate employed few minority citizens.

As the economy ground to a halt in the 1980s and living conditions deteriorated for both the majority and the minorities, thousands of citizens fled to Hungary. In 1987 alone, some 40,000 sought refuge there, and from June until August of 1988, at least 187 Romanians were shot dead by the Securitate while attempting to escape to Hungary.

Language, Education, and Cultural Heritage

Arguably the changes under communism that most grievously affected ethnic minorities, especially the Hungarians and to a lesser

extent the Germans, were those that limited education in their native languages. In the first decade of communist rule, students could acquire an education at Hungarian-language schools from preschool to university and at German-language schools from preschool to high school. These schools had their own administration and a long tradition of humanistic education; many were 300 to 500 years old. But already in 1948 some of the policies of the new regime had begun to weaken national minority education. A purge and "reeducation" of faculty in all educational institutions was carried out. From that time forward, important teaching positions were filled only by teachers deemed politically reliable. At the same time, nationalization of all ecclesiastical and private schools destroyed the traditionally important role of the church in the Hungarian and German educational systems.

Schools in some communities were merged so that ethnic Romanians constituted the majority of the student body. The regime mandated the teaching of Romanian in all educational institutions to "prevent national isolation." Beginning in 1957, amalgamation of minority (particularly Hungarian) and Romanian schools became the rule rather than the exception. Most of the directors for the newly merged schools were ethnic Romanians, whereas Hungarians or Germans filled vice-principal or vice-director positions.

The merger of the Hungarian Bolyai University at Cluj with the Romanian Babez University in 1959 dealt a major blow to the Hungarian-language educational network. Such mergers meant a larger enrollment of ethnic Romanians and reduced availability of Hungarian-language instruction. The party determined what courses would be taught in Hungarian; many were of an ideological bent, and the more technical courses were taught in Romanian only. It became nearly impossible to study any of the applied sciences in Hungarian, restricting career opportunities for the Hungarian minority. The result was a predictable drop in the number of Hungarian undergraduates—from 10.75 percent of all undergraduates in 1957 to only 5.7 percent in 1974.

Meanwhile education laws introduced in 1973 continued the assimilation that had begun with the amalgamation of minority and Romanian schools. In keeping with the economic program of rapid industrialization, the laws emphasized technical studies over humanities. The ratio established was two-thirds technical to one-third humanities, making it even more difficult for minorities to acquire an education in their native language. In 1974 only 1.4 percent of the instruction in technical schools was in Hungarian. Technical textbooks were rarely translated into minority languages. Thus a technical education, the premier vehicle of upward mobility,

became possible only for those who had mastered Romanian. This requirement and the fact that university entrance exams were given only in Romanian increased the pressure on parents to enroll their children in Romanian-language schools.

Instruction in Hungarian was further hampered by an acute shortage of Hungarian-language teachers and language experts; "internal regulations" assigned Hungarian university graduates to work outside their communities—usually out of Transylvania. The use of minority languages was restricted in the cultural arena as well. Local libraries persistently lacked literature in minority languages. After 1973, Hungarian-language newspaper publishing was sharply curtailed, and in 1985 television broadcasts in Hungarian and German were discontinued.

Romanian leaders claimed that the amalgamation of minority and Romanian schools and the 1973 educational reforms were necessary for administrative and economic efficiency and were not intended to ensure the assimilation of ethnic minorities. Although that claim appeared to be plausible, other actions that diminished the ability of minorities to maintain their ethnic identity were not so readily explained. The assimilation of national minorities into a "harmonious whole" continued, and over the decades the gap between theory and practice in the treatment of minorities widened. The state's discriminatory policies steadily diminished minority constitutional, political, linguistic, and educational rights.

Emigration: Problem or Solution?

Although the goal of the Ceaușescu regime was national homogenization and an ethnically pure Romania, the regime opposed the emigration of ethnic minorities. Beginning in the late 1970s, a media campaign was launched that followed two basic tracks. Spokespersons for ethnic minorities in the workers' councils praised the regime's treatment of minorities and declared their devotion to socialist Romania. By contrast, those who desired to emigrate were depicted as weaklings with underdeveloped "patriotic and political consciousness," would-be traitors abandoning their fatherland and the struggle to build socialism. Stories abounded of Romanians emigrating only to find life more difficult in their new environment and happily returning to their homeland. Accounts of those who had emigrated to West Germany were particularly bleak.

Attempts to discourage emigration were not left entirely to the media. The official policy allowed emigration only on an individual basis, and only in specific cases—usually for family reunification. In later years, the PCR ironically suggested that families could be reunited by immigration into Romania. Obtaining permission to

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leave the country was a lengthy, expensive, and exhausting process. Prospective emigrants were likely to be fired from their jobs or demoted to positions of lower prestige and pay. They were often evicted from their homes and publicly castigated. At the same time, they were denied medical care and other social benefits, and their children were not permitted to enroll in schools.

In 1972, amid claims that emigration was purposefully encouraged by the West and was becoming a "brain drain" for the nation, the regime proposed a heavy tax requiring would-be emigrants to reimburse the state for the cost of their education. Although Romanian citizens could not legally possess foreign money, sums of up to \$US20,000 in hard currency were to be paid before emigrants would be allowed to leave. Under pressure from the United States, which threatened to revoke Romania's most-favored-nation trade status, and West Germany and Israel, the tax officially was not imposed. But money was collected in the form of bribes, with government officials reportedly demanding thousands of dollars before granting permission to emigrate. A failed attempt to emigrate illegally was punishable by up to three years in jail.

Despite Ceaușescu's opposition to emigration, the ethnic German population declined sharply. In 1967, when diplomatic relations with West Germany were established, roughly 60,000 ethnic Germans requested permission to emigrate. By 1978, some 80,000 had departed for West Germany. In 1978 the two countries negotiated an agreement concerning the remaining German population, which had decreased from 2 percent of the total population in 1966 to 1.6 percent in 1977. Romania agreed to allow 11,000 to 13,000 ethnic Germans to emigrate each year in return for hard currency and a payment of DM5,000 per person to reimburse the state for educational expenses. In 1982 that figure rose to DM7,000–8,000 per person. In the decade between 1978 and 1988, approximately 120,000 Germans emigrated, leaving behind a population of only about 200,000, between 80 and 90 percent of whom wanted to emigrate. As their numbers declined, the Germans feared they would be less able to resist assimilation. In 1987 an entire village of some 200 ethnic Germans applied en masse for emigration permits.

The Jewish minority also markedly declined as a result of large-scale emigration. Suffering under state-fostered anti-Semitism and financially ruined by expropriations during nationalization, much of the Jewish population applied for permission to leave in 1948. Between 1948 and 1951, 117,950 Jews emigrated to Israel, and from 1958 to 1964, 90,000 more followed, leaving a total Jewish population of only 43,000 in 1966. Permission to emigrate was

freely granted to Jews, and by 1988 the population numbered between 20,000 and 25,000, half of whom were more than sixty-five years of age. Furthermore, over one-third of those Jews still in the country held exit visas.

In the late 1980s, ethnic Hungarians clung to their ancient roots in Transylvania and, unlike the Germans and Jews, the majority were reluctant to consider emigration. Although neither Hungary nor Romania wanted the minority decreased by emigration, thousands of refugees crossed into Hungary during the 1980s, especially after 1986. This development prompted Budapest to launch an unprecedented all-out publicity campaign against Romania's treatment of minorities. Inside Romania, ethnic protest against the regime was quite restrained. A notable exception in the late 1980s was Karoly Kiraly, an important leader in the Hungarian community who openly denounced the regime's nationalities policy as assimilationist. The regime, which readily discounted such protests, labeled Kiraly "a dangerously unstable relic of Stalinism dressed up in Romanian national garb."

Social Structure

The End of the Ancien Régime

Before World War II, Romania was overwhelmingly agrarian. In the late 1940s, roughly 75 percent of the population was engaged in agriculture. It was a poor and backward peasant agriculture; inferior yields were eked from plots of land that grew ever smaller as the rural population increased. Although a fair amount of industrial activity was nurtured by state contracts and foreign investments, industrial development was slow and failed to create alternative employment opportunities for the overpopulated and impoverished countryside. The bourgeoisie was weakly developed. Atop the low social pyramid stood a disproportionately powerful social elite, a remnant of the nobility that had once owned most of the land in the Old Kingdom. Although reforms between 1917 and 1921 had stripped them of all but 15 percent of the arable land, this aristocracy remained a puissant voice in political affairs.

After World War II, Romania's social structure was drastically altered by the imposition of a political system that envisioned a classless, egalitarian society. Marxist-Leninist doctrine holds that the establishment of a socialist state, in which the working class possesses the means of production and distribution of goods and political power, will ensure the eventual development of communism. In this utopia there will be no class conflict and no exploitation of man by fellow man. There will be an abundance of

wealth to be shared equally by all. The path to communism requires the ascendancy of the working class and the elimination of the ruling classes and the bourgeoisie. In Romania the latter was accomplished relatively easily, but the former was more problematic, as most of the population were peasants and not workers.

Following the Soviet imposition of a communist government in 1945, the first order of business was to eliminate opposition to the consolidation of power in the name of the working class. The displacement from the war assisted the new government in this objective, as many of the ruling elite, whether from the land-owning nobility or the bourgeoisie, had either emigrated or been killed in the war. Many of the survivors left with the retreating German forces as the Red Army approached. Most Jews, who before the war had constituted a large segment of the communal and financial elite, either died in fascist Romania or fled the country in the next few years.

Consequently, a few measures taken in the early days of communist rule easily eradicated the upper crust from the ancien régime. Land reforms in 1945 eliminated all large properties and thus deprived the aristocracy of their economic base and their final vestiges of power. The currency reform of 1947, which essentially confiscated all money for the state, was particularly ruinous for members of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie who had not fled with their fortunes. In addition, the state gradually expropriated commercial and industrial properties, so that by 1950, 90 percent of all industrial output was directly controlled by the state and by 1953 only 14 percent of the shops remained privately owned.

Although potential opposition from the more economically and socially advanced members of society was all but eliminated almost immediately, the task of creating an industrial working class, in whose name the communists claimed power, had hardly begun. In 1950 less than 25 percent of the population lived in urban areas or worked in industry. But conditions in the countryside were ripe for social change in the very direction the regime required. The ravages of war and subsequent Soviet occupation had left the peasantry on the brink of famine. Much of their livestock and capital had been destroyed. Their misery was further compounded by a severe drought in 1945 and 1946, followed by a famine that killed thousands. More important for the goals of the regime, many of the peasants were becoming detached from the land and were willing to take the factory jobs that would result from the party's ambitious industrialization program.

The New Social Order

The Peasantry

The share of the labor force employed in agriculture decreased to less than 30 percent by 1981, and this decline was accompanied by the destruction of many aspects of the peasant way of life. By 1963 more than 95 percent of all arable land was controlled by the state, either through collective or state farms. As a result, small-scale agriculture was no longer available to support the traditional peasant way of life, and the family was no longer the basic unit of production and consumption. The peasants who remained on the land were forced to participate in large-scale, state-managed agriculture that paralleled other socialist enterprises. The peasants were permitted to till small "private" plots, which in 1963 accounted for about 8 percent of all arable land. But even cultivation of these plots was subject to state interference (see *Farm Organization*, ch. 3). Initially some violent protests against collectivization occurred, but on the whole, protest took the form of plummeting yields. This process not only adversely affected living standards for town and country alike, but increased party penetration of the countryside, further reducing peasant autonomy.

Several other factors contributed to the rural exodus and the decline of the peasant class, among them substantial wage differentials between agricultural and nonagricultural sectors. In 1965 peasant incomes were only half the national average. Although the state tried to remedy the situation by establishing minimum incomes in the 1970s, remuneration for agricultural laborers remained well below that for industrial workers. In 1979 the average agricultural worker's income was still only 66 percent of the industrial worker's, and during the 1980s it rose to only 73 percent. A persistent and wide disparity also existed between rural and urban standards of living. In the mid-1970s, the majority of rural households were without gas, not even half had electricity, and more than one-third were without running water. Even in the 1980s, washing machines, refrigerators, and televisions were still luxury items, and peasant expenditures for them and other nonbasic items and for cultural activities remained conspicuously below those of industrial workers. In addition, rural citizens received lower pensions and child allowances and had much more limited educational opportunity.

Despite Ceaușescu's nationalistic glorification of peasant folklore and values, in the mid-1980s the Romanian peasant remained very much a second-class citizen. Adults perceived their lowly status and encouraged their children to leave the land. Young people





*Transylvanian men relaxing on Sunday after church
Courtesy Sam and Sarah Stulberg*

were inclined to do so and showed a decided preference for occupations that would take them out of the village. The regime was unable to prevent this development because it lacked the investment capital to both provide amenities to the countryside and to continue its industrialization program. Consequently the quality of the agricultural work force deteriorated to the point of inadequacy. As the young, educated, and ambitious abandoned the fields for the factories, the laborers left behind were older and, increasingly, female. Although they constituted only 14 percent of the national labor force in 1979, women made up 63 percent of agricultural labor. The average age of adult male farmers rose to 43.2 years in 1977. Furthermore, the men who remained on the land were generally the least capable and were unable to meet even the minimum requirements of industrial work.

Many of these peasants were apathetic and, according to Ceausescu, willing to spend their time drinking and gambling in local pubs instead of working on the cooperative farms. A 1981 survey showed that some 34 percent of all agricultural cooperative members had avoided doing any work whatsoever for the cooperative during that entire year. Consequently the regime had to mobilize soldiers, urban workers, college, high-school, and even elementary-school students to work in the fields at planting and harvest time.

Ironically the systematization program, which placed plants and factories throughout the countryside to equalize living standards, actually made the situation worse. Even as demands were made for the peasantry to increase agricultural output, commuting from village to factory became a fairly widespread practice, drawing the best labor from an already deteriorated supply. As a result, many peasant families were transformed into extended households whose members participated in both farming and industrial work. In such families, at least one member commuted to a factory and worked for wages, whereas others worked on the cooperative farm to secure the privilege of cultivating a private plot. The factory wage raised the family's standard of living, and the plot provided fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products that the family could consume or sell for extra cash. Even when members of the family had permanently migrated to nearby cities, these mutually advantageous economic ties were maintained, somewhat ameliorating economic conditions in the countryside.

Some observers argued that this rural-urban nexus boosted support for the regime in the countryside and contributed to political stability throughout the 1970s, when commuting workers constituted some 30 percent of the urban work force (50 percent in some

cities). Although commuters provided labor without aggravating the urban housing shortage, having a large number of peasants in the factories had certain disadvantages. The poorly educated and relatively unskilled peasant workers could not be fully integrated into urban industrial society. Most were deeply religious, and their lives centered not on work but on Orthodox rituals and family. Commuters were often absent because of village celebrations or the need to tend the household plot.

Peasant commuting also brought an increased awareness of the differences between rural and urban living conditions—particularly during the 1980s, when the overall standard of living sank to nearly unbearable levels. Rural areas were the most harshly affected, and despite the regime's efforts to restrict migration to cities, the process continued, albeit at a slower rate. In the late 1980s, the disappearance of the peasantry as a distinct class appeared virtually inevitable.

The Proletariat

Creation of a class-conscious proletariat was a primary goal of the PCR. Explosive growth in the industrial sector, which continually garnered the lion's share of investment capital, ensured the transformation of the economy and, consequently, the social structure. In 1950 industrial workers represented only 19 percent of the employed population. By 1988 the proletariat accounted for some 60 percent of the working population.

The ranks of the working class swelled with peasants from the villages, some as commuting workers, but most as migrants who took up permanent residence in the cities. In 1948 only 23.4 percent of the population lived in cities, but by 1988 over half were urban dwellers, most of whom had been born and raised in the countryside. In the late 1970s, some 60 percent of residents in the seven largest cities had rural origins. These workers exhibited roughly the same traditional peasant characteristics as peasant workers who retained residences in the villages. They were members of the Orthodox Church, parochial, poorly educated, and relatively unskilled. Values inculcated by church, family, and village were not easily pushed aside, and rural-urban migrants had tremendous difficulty adapting to the discipline of the industrial work place. As a result, alcoholism and absenteeism were recurring problems. Moreover, neither commuters nor rural-urban migrants were interested in the political activity demanded of a class-conscious proletariat. In contrast, the small prewar industrial working class was a much more urbanized, skilled, and politically active group, which felt an affinity with the new regime not shared by those of peasant origin.

As industrialization and urbanization progressed, the working class became more differentiated by type of industry and work process and by age group and social origin. The working class as a whole continued to exhibit very little class consciousness or solidarity. Over the years, as the standard of living slowly rose, the working class was accorded special advantages, and the circumstances of workers improved compared to other social groups. Socialist income policies reduced wage differentials between blue- and white-collar workers, so that by the 1970s many skilled workers earned as much or more than their better-educated compatriots. Likewise, urban workers gained the most from comprehensive welfare and social services introduced under socialist rule.

Although it was never a significant source of political leadership, the working class initially was generally satisfied with its special status and at least tacitly approved of the regime and its policies. Later years, however, witnessed a growing discontent among the rank and file of the proletariat, much of which was related to working conditions. The most common complaints concerned poor pay and slow advancement. Increasingly workers blamed the regime and the bureaucratic centrally planned economic system for problems in industrial enterprises. They believed that the system's waste and inefficiency not only affected wages and promotions, but also contributed to the precipitous decline in the standard of living. Although the late 1980s brought increases in wages, compared to other East European countries, wages remained quite paltry. Small as the increases were, they created inflation because of the scarcity of consumer goods. The regime sought to relieve workers of a portion of their disposable income by forcing them to buy shares in their factories, which was tantamount to confiscation and forced saving in that there was no popular control over these funds. The regime's inability to shorten the forty-eight-hour work week also provoked discontent, especially in light of the calls for citizens to devote an increasing number of hours to unpaid "patriotic work" on their day off.

In 1989 almost all Romanian workers belonged to trade unions, which were organs for worker representation in name only. In reality the unions, which were controlled by the party after 1947, functioned as transmission belts carrying directives from the central administration to the rank and file and as tools of political socialization to inculcate desired attitudes and values. Workers had to join trade unions to receive social welfare and many fringe benefits.

In 1971 workers' councils were established at enterprises, ostensibly to involve workers in economic decision making but in reality to shore up support for the regime. Few workers viewed

the councils positively. Data collected in the mid-1970s indicated that only one-third of workers actually submitted suggestions to their council, and of those who did so, only 40 percent thought their recommendations could influence enterprise policy. Most workers did not even know who their representatives were and did not participate in the councils, which were dominated by the same persons who directed other party, state, and mass organizations.

Although workers shunned officially sanctioned channels, they covertly expressed their dissatisfaction through low productivity, absenteeism, and general apathy. The older and most skilled workers seemed least satisfied and frequently changed jobs in search of better positions and higher wages. By the late 1970s, some workers were airing their grievances in mass protests. In 1977 some 35,000 miners in the Jiu Valley went on strike to protest food shortages and new regulations that forced older workers to retire with reduced benefits. In 1979 roughly 2,000 intellectuals and workers attempted to form a free trade union and called for improved working conditions, abolition of involuntary labor on weekends, official recognition of a national unemployment problem, and an end to special privileges for the party elite.

Working-class discontent continued to grow in the 1980s. The majority of older workers expressed dissatisfaction with pay and wanted stronger links between individual productivity and wages, objecting to the pay system that penalized all workers if the enterprise did not fulfill its production plan. Forced "patriotic labor" continued, and each citizen was required to work six days per year at local public works or face stiff penalties. Complaints about inequitable distribution of resources among social groups became more frequent, and the perquisites for the party elite, such as chauffeured limousines and palatial residences, drew bitter criticism. In late 1987, mass demonstrations and riots occurred in Braşov, the second largest city. Angry workers protested pay cuts for unfilled production quotas, energy and food shortages, and the regime's repression. They burned portraits of Ceauşescu, ransacked city hall and local party headquarters, seized personnel records, and looted party food shops. There were rumors of similar incidents in other major cities as well.

Although public protests were swiftly and brutally suppressed, worker dissatisfaction continued to smolder. But the majority of workers, perhaps because of chronological and psychological ties to a peasant past, were predisposed to react to even the most dire conditions with passive hostility rather than active opposition. At the close of the 1980s, the working class was sullen and dispirited to the point of apathy.

The Intelligentsia

Traditionally the Romanian intelligentsia—the educated elite of society—had been the children of the landed aristocracy who had moved to cities to become poets, journalists, social critics, doctors, or lawyers. Given the country's overall backwardness, any education beyond the elementary level accrued special privileges and high social status. The intelligentsia played a leading role in the life of the nation, providing a humanistic voice for major social problems, shaping public opinion, and setting value criteria. After 1918, as the aristocracy declined, the class of intellectuals and professionals grew stronger. Throughout the interwar years, many of them occupied high political positions and were quite influential.

During the first decade of communist rule, the old intelligentsia were all but eliminated. They lost their jobs, and their possessions were confiscated. Many were imprisoned, and thousands died or were killed. Those who survived the purge were blackmailed or frightened into submission and collaboration with the new regime. The intellectual arena was cleared of any opposition to communist power and policies, leaving the ruling party free to create a new intelligentsia—one that would be unquestionably loyal, committed to the communist cause, and easily manipulated. The traditional role of the intelligentsia had been irreversibly changed.

The party set out to educate a new intelligentsia that would meet the needs of the crash program of industrialization. The number of people with secondary or higher education rose dramatically. From 1956 to 1966, the total number of Romanians with a higher education increased by 58 percent, and the number of students enrolled in universities more than doubled. A quota system that favored the children of peasant and proletarian families ensured the desired social composition of this rapidly expanding student population. Children of middle-class families were kept to a minimum by a selection system that allocated more points for social origin than for academic qualifications. At the same time, the establishment of the new political system, with its many institutions necessary for administering the centrally planned economy, required an ever-increasing number of white-collar workers. The regime was eager to pull these workers from the ranks of peasantry and proletariat, regarding them as more politically reliable. By 1974 more than 63 percent of nonmanual workers were sons and daughters of proletarian families. This prodigious social advancement produced a highly diverse intelligentsia. The intellectual elite was composed of two main subgroups—a creative elite similar to the traditional intelligentsia involved in scholarly and artistic pursuits,

and a new technocratic elite involved in industrial production and management.

In contrast to the interwar period, when the intelligentsia shared the political stage with the ruling establishment, the role of intellectuals in socialist Romania became one of total subservience to the ruling elite. This reversal was particularly stifling for the creative intelligentsia, whose new mission was to paint a picture of socialism that was pleasing, reassuring, and convincing to both the masses and the regime. Under such conditions, freedom of expression and creativity evaporated. As a reward for conformity and demonstrated ideological commitment, the new members of the creative intelligentsia received social and material privileges. Despite reduced wage differentials between white- and blue-collar workers and despite the regime's emphasis on the more technical professions, the new intellectual elite exhibited a marked disdain for manual labor. The intellectuals showed a marked preference for the same fields their predecessors had most highly regarded—philosophy, history, literature, and the arts. It was toward these endeavors that they encouraged their children. The interests of the intelligentsia were strikingly at odds with party canon, which maintained that the intelligentsia was not a class but a separate social stratum working in harmony with the proletariat and performing the leading creative, executive, and administrative roles.

As the technical intelligentsia grew larger and had a more powerful voice in management, its members too were seen as a threat to political authority. Although increasing the quality and quantity of industrial production was the goal of both the PCR and the technical intelligentsia, the means to that end was common cause for disagreement between loyal but technically incompetent apparatchiks (party careerists) and the younger, better educated technocrats. Indicative of the rancor between the two was the latter's undisguised contempt for General Secretary Ceaușescu.

Until the late 1960s, the PCR leadership, despite some mistrust and aversion toward intellectuals, acknowledged that the cooperation and participation of skilled professionals was critical for the country's economic development. But with Ceaușescu's rise to power, hostility toward the intelligentsia grew. In the early 1970s, an anti-intellectual campaign was launched to eradicate "retrograde values." Ceaușescu criticized the intelligentsia for their bourgeois and intellectualist attitudes. Members of the technical intelligentsia were accused of resisting party policy, and thousands were dismissed from research and administrative positions and reassigned to more overtly "productive" work. Writers and artists were denounced for works that did not proclaim the achievements and

goals of socialism and aid in the creation of the new socialist man. The Writers' Union purged members who did not show renewed commitment to ideology and patriotism.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as the Ceaușescu personality cult permeated society, cultural conditions became increasingly repressive. The media were reorganized to allow for more stringent control, and the number of correspondents sent abroad was sharply reduced. (By 1988 there were none in the United States.) Western journalists increasingly were refused entry, and those who were admitted had very limited access to information. Foreign journalists who dared to be critical were kept under police surveillance and frequently expelled.

As nationalistic overtones grew more strident, restraints on scholars wanting to study in the West increased. The length of time permitted for research was reduced from ten months to three months. In later years, the regime consistently refused to allow students or scholars to take advantage of academic opportunities abroad. The number of United States lecturers in Romania under the Fulbright program dropped from ten to five, and the number of Romanian lecturers in the United States decreased from thirty-eight in 1979 to only two in 1988.

As the anti-intellectual campaign continued into the 1980s, intelligentsia membership in the PCR declined sharply. In the late 1960s, before the onset of the ideological campaign, roughly 23 percent of PCR members were from the intelligentsia. By 1976 the figure was only 16.5 percent. At the end of the 1980s, the intelligentsia was the least satisfied of any social stratum. Probably neither the technical nor the creative elite would have argued for the more heroic version of socialism, with its devotion to egalitarianism and the disappearance of class differences. On the contrary, members of the intelligentsia strongly believed that they deserved certain privileges. They were especially unhappy with salary levels, the party's stifling control over their careers, and their insecure position in society.

Despite the high level of discontent among the intelligentsia, there was relatively little overt dissent against the regime. In 1977, following the signing of the Helsinki Accords, a dissident movement involving several intellectuals under the leadership of the prominent writer Paul Goma did surface. After publicly condemning the regime's violation of human rights, many members of the group were arrested, interrogated, or confined to psychiatric hospitals. Later that year, Goma was exiled to the West. In the 1980s there were sporadic cases of dissent, but most intellectuals expressed their dissatisfaction

by withdrawing into their private lives and avoiding, as much as possible, participation in institutionalized forms of public life.

The Ruling Elite

Before the Soviet imposition of a communist regime in 1945, party membership had been negligible, but immediately thereafter membership soared, reaching 250,000 by the end of that year. Most of the new members were from the working class or peasantry, or claimed to be, and by virtue of their social origins were considered politically reliable. Most joined the party for opportunistic reasons rather than out of new-found loyalty to the communist cause. These workers and peasants, although relatively uneducated, were hastily inducted into the *nomenklatura*—lists of key party and state positions matched with politically reliable candidates. They were immediately eligible for some of the most powerful positions the party had to offer, and they soon had cause to develop a sense of loyalty to the political establishment and its communist principles.

After the first decade of communist rule, the PCR membership included about 5 percent of the population over twenty years of age. Most of the members were over forty years old. The social composition of the party in 1955 revealed the favored position of the working class; though workers accounted for only 20 percent of the general population, they represented 43 percent of the membership. Peasants, the majority of the population, were under-represented at only 34 percent—still a remarkable figure when compared with their political position in the ancien régime. The intelligentsia, although overrepresented with 23 percent of the membership for their 9 percent of the population, had less influence than before the war.

By the mid-1950s, a new political elite had emerged—the apparatchiks. Most were increasingly dogmatic functionaries, primarily of peasant origin, who had from the beginning occupied the key posts of the *nomenklatura*. As such, they had served as the driving force behind the massive social and economic transformation of the country and had risen to positions of relative comfort and security. By the late 1950s, however, the old guard was beginning to lose key positions to a growing class of better educated and more competent technocrats. It was a more liberal climate in which technical skills were better appreciated, and important appointments were based more on qualifications than on political loyalty. For a while the apparatchiks successfully resisted this trend, but as a result of the demand for technical competence, many were demoted to less important positions or removed to the provinces. The rapid growth of higher education provided an ever-increasing number

of young technocrats to replace the apparatchiks. After Ceaușescu consolidated his power, however, the period of political liberalization came to an end. By 1974, with the anti-intellectual campaign well under way, the apparatchiks were again firmly entrenched.

The social composition of the PCR in the 1980s affirmed that the battle against the intellectuals had been won. In 1987, 80 percent of the 3.6 million PCR members were of working-class or peasant origins. Approximately 10,000 of these members constituted the central *nomenklatura*—the true political elite. This elite, especially its core—the Political Executive Committee—was empowered to steer societal development in the direction it deemed necessary and became the sole arbiter of the nation's social values (see Romanian Communist Party, ch. 4).

That poorly educated bureaucrats dominated the party and government had severe consequences for society. The low standard of living and cultural repression of the 1980s were directly attributable to the attitudes and values of this ruling elite, who were anti-intellectual, antitechnocratic, hostile to change, and increasingly xenophobic and isolationist. More specifically, these prejudices were the attitudes and values of President Ceaușescu, who presided over probably the smallest ruling elite in Romanian history. Ceaușescu surrounded himself with apparatchiks who unabashedly contributed to his personality cult, and he installed members of his immediate and extended family in the most powerful party and government positions.

The political elite enjoyed a lifestyle much different from that of most citizens. Members of this group lived in palatial homes expropriated from the previous elite, were cared for by servants, protected by bodyguards, and whisked to work in limousines. They had exclusive access to special shops and commissaries that offered a wide variety of food and luxury items. Ceaușescu lived in regal splendor. His residence in suburban Bucharest was protected by guards and traffic blockades. Several castles and palaces were renovated for his personal use and were no longer open to public visitation. He and his entourage travelled in a fleet of luxury cars, for which all traffic was stopped.

The conspicuous perquisites enjoyed by Ceaușescu and his circle created resentment among the population, which was suffering from economic and cultural atrophy as well as political repression. Dissidents of various backgrounds called for the abolition of special privileges for the ruling elite, and by the late 1980s disaffection was evident at all levels of society.

In the past, nationalism had played an important role in the legitimacy of the ruling elite and in mobilizing support for its plans

for the country. By the late 1980s, however, nationalistic fervor was waning. The Soviet Union appeared much less threatening, and more than a few Romanians were drawn to Mikhail Gorbachev's political and economic reforms. Ceaușescu's periodic mobilization campaigns during the 1970s and 1980s had damaged relations between the ruling elite and the rest of society to the point that more and more citizens were reluctant to rally around the PCR and were less accepting of its closed-fist political control and economic policies. Average citizens were weary of sacrificing to build a socialist utopia for posterity and would have preferred a higher living standard in their own lifetimes.

Social Mobility

Declining social mobility was another important factor in the growing discontent among the citizenry. The economic development following the imposition of communist rule created considerable upward mobility. The fast-growing industrial sector demanded more laborers, skilled workers, and managers. The ever-expanding state bureaucracy required an army of clerks and administrators, and the regime needed thousands of writers, artists, and philosophers to help create the new socialist man and woman. The rapid development of free education created a demand for teachers. In 1969 more than 83 percent of the working population were the product of this mass social mobility and held positions of greater status than had their fathers. More than 43 percent of those in upper-level positions had working-class origins, and 25 percent had peasant backgrounds. In contrast, only 14 percent had roots in the intelligentsia.

As the economic transformation slowed, such phenomenal social mobility was no longer possible. Fewer positions at the top were being created, and they were becoming less accessible to the children of workers and peasants. The new economy demanded skilled personnel, and educational credentials became more important than political criteria for recruitment into high-status positions. Statistics showed that children of intellectuals and officials were far more likely to acquire these credentials than were children of peasants and workers. In the late 1960s, when peasants and workers constituted over 85 percent of the population, their children made up only 47 percent of the university student body, whereas children of the intelligentsia filled 45–50 percent of university slots. Moreover, members of the intellectual elite were more likely to find places for their children in the most prestigious universities and faculties, whereas students from worker and peasant backgrounds

were concentrated in the less sought after agricultural and technical institutions.

Such inequalities persisted into the late 1980s, largely because children of the intelligentsia had better opportunity to acquire language facility and positive attitudes toward learning. Furthermore, these families were more able to prepare their children for the competitive selection process through private tutoring. Some resorted to bribery to obtain special consideration for their children. A child from an intellectual family had a 70 percent chance of entering the university; the child of a worker or peasant had only a 10 percent chance.

Despite the regime's repeated assaults on the intelligentsia and the ideological efforts to elevate the status of blue-collar work, most citizens continued to aspire to intellectual professions. Studies conducted in the 1970s at the height of the ideological crusade against intellectualism and the privileged class revealed that the majority of young Romanians planned to pursue higher education. Virtually none declared any desire for a blue-collar career. And yet as a consequence of the party's effort to channel more of the population into production jobs, opportunities for professional careers grew increasingly rare. Enrollment in technical schools had increased to 124,000 by the end of 1970, which provided a surfeit of low-paid, low-status engineers.

In the 1980s, it appeared that the boundaries between the social strata were beginning to harden. Research conducted in the mid-1980s suggested that some 87 percent of citizens born into the working class remained blue-collar workers. The intelligentsia showed an even greater degree of self-reproduction, and the rate of downward mobility from the intellectual elite into other social categories was remarkably low—lower in fact than in any other European member of Comecon. The hardening stratification along traditional lines gave evidence of a growing class consciousness, which was most evident among the intelligentsia, whose values, attitudes, and interests differed from those of other segments of society. Workers, too, exhibited increased class consciousness, as their aspirations and expectations went unfulfilled. Not only did social mobility in general decrease, it also declined within the working class itself, creating greater potential for social unrest.

Institutions and Organs of Society

Family

The Marxist position on the family is found in *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State* by Friedrich Engels. Its basic

premise is that the patriarchal family and its subjugation and exploitation of women and children were born out of private-property relationships. Under socialism the abolition of private property would result in relationships between couples founded solely on love, and the emphasis on collective life would diminish the importance of the family as a unit for nurturing children.

The Evolution of Family Law

Family law in socialist Romania was modeled after Soviet family legislation. From the outset, it sought to undermine the influence of religion on family life. Under the ancien régime, the church was the center of community life, and marriage, divorce, and recording of births were matters for religious authorities. Under communism these events became affairs of the state, and legislation designed to wipe out the accumulated traditions and ancient codes was enacted. The communist regime required marriage to be legalized in a civil ceremony at the local registry prior to, or preferably instead of, the customary church wedding. Overall, a more liberal legal atmosphere prevailed, granting women greater rights within the family. The predominance of the husband was reduced, and the wife was given equal control over children and property and was entitled to keep her maiden name. The divorce procedure was greatly facilitated. In fact, if both parties wanted a divorce, and there were no children involved, the dissolution of the marriage could be accomplished simply by sending a joint statement to the local registry office. In addition to the right to divorce with relative ease, abortion on demand was introduced in 1957.

Because of the more liberal procedures, the divorce rate grew dramatically, tripling by 1960, and the number of abortions also increased rapidly. Concern for population reproduction and future labor supplies prompted the state to revise the Romanian Family Code to foster more stable personal relationships and strengthen the family. At the end of 1966, abortion was virtually outlawed, and a new divorce decree made the dissolution of marriage exceedingly difficult.

As part of the program to increase birthrates, the legal age for marriage was lowered to fifteen years for women in 1984, and yet the rate of marriage remained quite steady—on average about 9 marriages per 1,000 people per year. The divorce rate remained well below 1 per 1,000 until 1974. A study published in 1988, however, showed that the divorce rate had risen steadily since 1974, although not to the pre-1966 level. It must be noted, however, that divorces were measured against the total population and not the total number of marriages, which disguised the rising rate. The

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primary causes of divorce were violence and alcoholism. The study concluded that marital instability was once again a growing problem.

Much family legislation concerned women in the workplace and was designed to increase the size of families. Provisions for pregnant women and working mothers were comprehensive and generous. Expectant and nursing mothers were not permitted to work under hazardous conditions, were exempt from overtime work, and after the sixth month of pregnancy and while nursing were exempt from night work—all with no reduction in salary. Nursing mothers were entitled to feeding breaks, which could total two hours per day—also with no reduction in pay. In addition, women were allowed paid maternity leave of 112 days—52 days prior to and 60 days after delivery. They were also entitled to paid leave to care for sick children under three years of age. Without loss of benefits, mothers were permitted to take a leave of absence from work to raise a child to the age of six, or they could request half-time work.

Changes in Family Structure

Not only did households become smaller—mostly because of a lower fertility rate—there was also a transition from the traditional extended family of three generations in a single household to the nuclear family of only a couple and their children. By the late 1960s, only 21.5 percent of families had grandparents living with them. This trend was hastened by improved old-age pensions that made it unnecessary for the elderly to live with their children and by the cramped quarters of urban living. However, in the countryside, where about half of Romanian families still lived in the late 1980s, families tended to have more children, and extended families were common. And even when parents and their children lived in separate households, the close relations of kinship were not abolished, even after one or the other had moved to the city. Strong ties between households were evident in the extended family strategies that were aimed at maximizing resources by placing family members in various sectors of the economy. This process led to jointly owned property such as livestock, joint cultivation of garden plots, and shared material comforts from salaried labor.

Family Life

The process of socialist modernization greatly affected family life. Through education and a comprehensive welfare system, the state assumed responsibility for providing assistance and transmitting values. Although the family was identified as the fundamental unit of socialist society, and it heavily influenced the values of the

younger generation, its primary role had become population reproduction. Even that role was no longer a private matter, but was subject to the whim of government policy. But the prediction that socialism would provide for the transfer of domestic duties from the home to the public sector fell far short of fruition. In 1989 communal dining facilities and public laundries were still largely unavailable, and because the tertiary sector of the economy received the lowest priority, services such as house cleaning, home repairs, and dry cleaning were either inadequate or nonexistent.

Consumer durables to lighten the burden of housework were available only to a privileged few. In the late 1960s, only 7.3 percent of households had electric refrigerators, 22.6 percent had gas stoves, 9.5 percent had washing machines, 3.2 percent had vacuum cleaners, and 38.8 percent had electric irons. By the late 1980s, the situation had improved somewhat, but the majority still lacked these items. In addition to the difficulties associated with home maintenance, shopping for the family was laborious and time-consuming. The dearth of refrigerators and freezers forced most families to shop for food every day and because supermarkets were scarce, shopping entailed trips to several different stores where the customer typically had to stand in one queue to select merchandise and in another to pay for it. Inadequate public transportation made shopping even more toilsome.

Family life for rural Romanians differed in many respects from that of urban families. Their living standards were lower, and they maintained values and behavior patterns that were firmly rooted in traditional peasant life. The unavailability of electricity to many rural households made it impossible for them to use refrigerators and washing machines, which in many cases would have been prohibitively expensive. Even when electricity was available and they could afford the appliances, many peasant women still did their laundry at the stream because it was a traditional site of social interaction. Using a washing machine gave a woman a reputation for being lazy and antisocial. Likewise, many rural families eschewed refrigerators in favor of traditional ways of preserving food. Perhaps because farm produce was a source of income for many rural families, they consumed far less fresh meat, vegetables, and fruit than urban families, and the staple of the rural diet remained maize porridge flavored with cabbage, cheese, onion, or milk. This frugal everyday diet was interspersed with feasting on special occasions such as weddings, funerals, Easter, and Christmas.

Rural family life was much more heavily influenced by religion than was urban society. Romanian Orthodoxy, rich in tradition, dictated the rhythm of life in a calendar of numerous holiday

celebrations. Church attendance in rural areas far surpassed that in urban places. Most rural people viewed the civil marriage ceremony required by the state as a mere formality and lived together only after a church wedding. In addition, divorce was much less common in rural parts. Rural families spent a remarkable amount of free time in church and in church-related activities. The average sermon lasted more than three hours. Visiting, folk music, folk dancing, and listening to the radio were other popular activities. Urban families, on the other hand, exhibited more secularized values and were more likely to use their free time to pursue cultural activities.

Although industrialization, urbanization, and education did not eliminate the cultural gap between rural and urban Romania, these processes did narrow it. Rural-urban contact occurred daily through commuting, and the accoutrements of urban living trickled back to families even in the most remote areas. Furthermore, although the influence of religion was not eradicated, it certainly declined, especially in urban areas, creating an unforeseen problem. Surveys indicated that the socialist ethics and values that the state expected the educational system to instill had not filled the void left by fading religious values.

Women and Women's Organizations

The socialist plan for the emancipation of women aimed to eliminate the "barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking drudgery" of their lives. The subservience of women was to be ended by establishing the complete equality of the sexes before the law and by making women economically independent through employment outside the home. The legislation was easily accomplished, and Romanian women were indeed mobilized into the work force in large numbers. By 1970 some 74.9 percent of working-age women (aged 20 to 59 years) were employed outside the home. But despite the theoretical commitment of socialism to eradicating sexual inequality, working women continued to bear the burden of caring for children, home, and husband. Romanian husbands tended to regard cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and child care as essentially female duties. Consequently women were left with the lion's share of household responsibilities and far less time to pursue educational, recreational, cultural, or social activities.

By the 1980s, illiteracy among females had long since been eliminated. Female enrollment in the primary education system was proportionate to their numbers, and a woman's access to higher education had also increased considerably. Some 44 percent of students pursuing higher education were women—up from 32.8

percent in 1945. Behind these figures, however, lurked stereotyped sex roles that were much more difficult to erase. Popularly held views continued to divide professions according to sexual suitability. Studies showed that most girls chose traditional feminine specializations, such as education and the humanities, whereas boys tended to favor technical and scientific fields. Consequently young men acquired skills and filled occupations that were held in higher regard and were better paid.

A similar fissure occurred in the industrial workplace, where patterns of sex discrimination clearly penalized women. Although opportunities abounded for those who wanted to work, women were found primarily in the ready-made clothing, textile, soap, cosmetics, and public health industries. They were also the majority in the shoe and food industries and in trade. Thus women were concentrated in light industries, whereas economic development favored heavy industry, which employed mostly men, was more modernized and automated, and paid better wages. Not only were women concentrated in branches of the economy where they labored at more arduous tasks and earned less, women were seldom employed as supervisors, even in the sectors where they dominated in numbers. Women also made up more than 60 percent of the agricultural work force, which constituted about two-thirds of the total female labor force.

This sexual division of labor was due both to discrimination and to voluntary choices on the part of women not to enter certain professions and not to seek promotions. Generally the primary factor in the decision to limit themselves was the double burden of homemaking and child rearing, which left little time for professional preparation or extra responsibilities in the workplace. In addition, men had negative attitudes toward women's careers. In a 1968 study to determine whether professional women were supported in their endeavors by their spouses, only 35 percent of the husbands interviewed valued their wives' careers more than their housework. This attitude was reinforced by labor laws designed to protect women's reproductive capacities and provide for maternal functions, which prohibited women from working in particular occupations and placed restrictions on hours and work load in general.

Although women represented some 30 percent of the PCR membership in 1980, few actually participated in political activity. Of those women serving in government, most held less powerful positions at the local level or served on women's committees attached to local trade unions, where the work was largely administrative in nature. Women were usually involved in issues of

special concern to their gender, such as child care, or health and welfare matters, and rarely served on the more important state committees.

Unlike in the West, feminist groups dedicated expressly to the articulation and representation of women's interests did not exist in Romania. A national committee of prominent women headed by Ceaușescu's wife, Elena, was organized to advise the government on women's issues. There were also traditional women's groups, such as social and educational associations and women's committees attached to local trade unions. These organizations served the interests of the PCR first and foremost. The PCR officially regarded feminism and an independent women's movement as divisive and unacceptable.

Clearly socialism had not resolved the conflict between the sexes, and although it provided equal access to education and employment, it did not provide equal opportunity to succeed. In that regard, Romania's experience was not very different from that of other countries, but it was ironic that such inequality between the sexes persisted in a country ideologically committed to its elimination.

The Education System

The PCR viewed education as the primary vehicle for transforming society, instilling socialist behavior standards and values, and thereby creating the new socialist man. The provision of free and universal public education extended social opportunity to a broad segment of the population and became a paramount factor in the regime's legitimacy. At the same time, education provided the state with an adequate labor force for continued economic development. These basic objectives—societal transformation, legitimacy, and economic development—continued to be the most influential factors in setting education policy.

Administration

In 1989 the PCR continued to set education policy and initiate changes in the system. Education was centrally controlled through the Ministry of Education and Training, which carried out party mandates and was responsible for the general organization, management, and supervision of education. Although in theory all educational activities were subject to the authority of this central ministry, many of the specific duties were delegated to support organizations, and lower party organs were involved in running the system at all levels. The degree of central state involvement varied. Higher education, because of its vital role in research and economic

development, was the most directly administered. On the other hand, at the lower levels, there was a fair amount of parental and popular participation in school affairs.

Political Education and Socialization

Education was a political socialization process from preschool through university and beyond. In kindergarten ideological training aimed to instill love of country, the PCR, and President Ceaușescu. In addition, children were introduced to the Marxist concept of work, largely through imitation of the everyday work world. Instruction stressed equality between the sexes in the working environment and the equal importance of physical and intellectual work. Much of the ideological training was dedicated to socialist morality, which emphasized obedience to discipline and commitment to building socialism over the welfare and advancement of the individual, as well as honesty and politeness.

Although ideological training in preschools was indirect, as children progressed through the system, it began to resemble other academic subjects. Students were increasingly obligated to participate actively in ideological training. The emphasis was placed on conformity and anti-individualism. Violations of the dress code, which dictated dress, hairstyle, and general appearance, were viewed as ideologically incorrect behavior. The primary source of teaching materials for political instruction were party newspapers, and typical topics for discussion were Ceaușescu's speeches, decrees by the Central Committee, and the role of industry in the country's economic development. At the high school and university level, students read classical texts of Marxism-Leninism and studied the Romanian interpretation of them.

In addition to the ideological training accomplished within the education system, political training was supplemented by extracurricular activities arranged for young people through the national youth organizations—the Pioneers and the Uniunea Tineretului Comunist (UTC), or Union of Communist Youth (see Glossary)—which were closely affiliated with schools but controlled by the PCR. Students in the fifth to eighth grades were members of the Pioneers, and students at the high school or university level were UTC members. Membership in these organizations, which supervised almost all extracurricular activities, was mandatory. In the 1980s, however, the youth organizations were battered by criticism because of the younger generation's political apathy and infatuation with Western values, music, and dress. The UTC was castigated for the anti-socialist nature and "narrow individualism and careerism" of

young people and many of its traditional responsibilities were transferred to educational and cultural organs.

Ideological profiles were kept on each student throughout his or her academic career, and failure to exhibit correct ideological behavior was noted. Upward mobility within the education system, and hence, upward social mobility, depended on getting passing marks in discipline and ideological studies as well as in academic studies. University students who demonstrated political activism, perhaps by serving as UTC officers, often were invited to join the PCR.

Education and Legitimacy of the Regime

Along with the aim of political socialization, a chief goal of the communists from when they first held power was the “democratization” of education, which meant compulsory primary education for all members of society and implied greater access to higher education for peasants and workers. Democratization of education was to serve as the wellspring of upward social mobility and an important source of legitimacy for the regime. Large investments were made in education, and illiteracy was all but eradicated by 1966, an important achievement considering that in 1945 some 27 percent of the population was unable to read or write.

At the same time there was a massive expansion of enrollment in elementary education, and universal ten-year basic schooling was achieved by 1975. In that year 100 percent of those eligible to attend elementary school were enrolled; the corresponding figure for secondary education was 49 percent, and for higher education 10 percent. By 1970 the number of teachers at the primary and secondary level was three times the pre-1945 figure, and by 1975 the student-to-teacher ratio fell to 20 to 1. The university teaching staff also expanded dramatically—from approximately 2,000 teachers in the 1938–39 academic year to more than 13,000 by 1969. Teaching, especially at the university level, had long been a prestigious profession. Teachers were required to be qualified in two specialties and were trained in guidance and counseling.

Throughout the 1970s, efforts were made to link more closely the education system to the requirements of the economy and the industrial development of the nation. This had a dramatic impact at all levels of the educational structure, as the desire for close ties between the school and real-life situations meant greater emphasis on technical and vocational education, whereas the humanities and liberal arts suffered. This polytechnic approach favored basic education with more courses in mathematics and natural and physical sciences, factory and farm work during school hours, and

special courses aimed at instilling love and respect for manual labor and eliminating bias in favor of academic work. As a result, the education system of the 1980s openly discouraged higher academic education and favored training that would produce workers and managers as quickly as possible.

Preschool and Kindergarten

The state provided some preschool and child-care institutions, including nurseries for children under three and kindergartens for children between three and six or seven. In 1955 only 18.6 percent of children aged three to six were actually enrolled in kindergarten. That figure increased to 41.9 percent in 1974, but demand still far exceeded the spaces available. By 1981, 75 percent of children between three and four years old and 90 percent of children between five and six were attending kindergarten. For a charge of about two dollars per month, full-day care (including two meals each day) was provided, and the child was intellectually and socially prepared for school. Apparently most parents concurred that the principal role in the care and development of children between the ages of three and six belonged to state institutions and not the family. On the other hand, studies showed that parents were much less willing to use nurseries, because they believed the quality of care was poor, and they considered care of children under three a function of the family.

Primary Education

As of the late 1980s, compulsory education began at age six and concluded at sixteen. Despite considerable differences in quality between rural and urban schools, the first four years were fairly standard for all students and consisted of a general program taught by teachers trained in three-year pedagogical institutes. As part of the de-Sovietization program, compulsory study of Russian had been dropped, and the traditional Soviet five-point marking system had been replaced with a ten-point system. Many students did study foreign languages, however, usually beginning in the fifth grade. English and French were the most popular choices. In grades five through eight, students began to specialize and were encouraged to start learning trades. Teachers for students at this level were primarily university-trained.

Secondary Education

Secondary education, of which two years were compulsory, allowed the students three options. The general secondary schools lasted four years and were geared toward preparing students for

the university. These schools could concentrate on a specific field of study, such as economics or music or on a particular foreign language. Four- and five-year technological secondary schools trained technicians and industrial managers. Two- and three-year vocational high schools, extolled by the regime, trained skilled workers. Most primary school graduates attended vocational schools.

Education at the secondary level clearly reflected a technical bias. Three years after the 1973 educational reforms, the ratio of general to technical and vocational schools was reversed—from four general to every one specialized school in 1973 to one general to four specialized schools in 1976. During the 1970s, the number of students enrolled in technical studies increased from 53,595 to 124,000. The trend toward vocationalism continued into the 1980s, but general secondary schools continued to carry more status, despite official rhetoric and preferential treatment for vocational and technical schools. To combat popular bias favoring intellectual education, the leadership made a conscious effort to incorporate elements of vocational education into academic schools and vice versa.

In the late 1980s, the regime claimed that more than 40 percent of graduates of specialized schools went on to higher education. But most peasant and worker families sent their children for some sort of vocational training, whereas the social and political elite secured a general secondary education and usually a college degree and a higher social niche for their offspring. This restratification of the education system bred resentment among the working class and was troublesome for the regime's goal of educational democratization.

Another major problem was the growth in credentialism that in turn created a greater demand for more post-secondary education of all types. But the occupations most necessary for economic development were among the least sought, and the gap between the needs of the economy and the aspirations of young people widened. The majority of young Romanians wished to pursue higher education, even as education institutions were channeling students into production as skilled workers with specialized training.

Higher Education

Despite remarkable expansion in education at the primary level and increased numbers of secondary school graduates, the transition to mass higher education did not occur. Competition for entry to universities and other institutions of higher learning was extremely intense, and the procedures for admission were strict and complicated. Despite an impressive network of universities, technical



*Children on a school outing, Cluj-Napoca
Courtesy Sam and Sarah Stulberg
State theater in Drobeta-Turnu Severin
Courtesy Harriet Gerber*

colleges, academies, and conservatories, only 8 percent of those eligible for higher education were permitted to enroll. The central government allocated slots based on predicted demand for given occupations.

Stringent entrance exams eliminated a large number of applicants. Some 90 percent of freshmen entering one university department had private tutoring for eight years before taking the tests. Because the exams were tailored to the course of study, as early as the fifth grade students began planning their specializations, so that they could devote the last four years of elementary school and four years of high school to the subjects in which they would be tested. Both high school teachers and university professors confirmed that it was next to impossible to enter the university without private tutoring.

The cost of a private tutor was prohibitive for many workers and peasant families, and rural-urban differences in education exacerbated their difficulties. A point system that discriminated in the favor of workers and peasants was apparently not enough to compensate for poorer preparation. Such students had less chance of getting into universities and even when admitted were more likely to drop out. Most of the 20 percent of students dropping out after the first year were of peasant or working-class backgrounds.

Although the state provided generous financial support ranging from low-cost housing and meals, free tuition, and book subsidies to monthly stipends, higher education was not free of charge. For those students who received financial aid, the amount depended on factors such as social background and specialization. Some students were sponsored by a particular industrial enterprise, for whom they pledged to work for a certain amount of time after completing their studies.

Religion

Church-State Relations

Although officially atheistic, the state in 1989 recognized and financially supported sixteen different religious groups. These groups and the scope of their activity were controlled by the Department of Cults and were subject to strict regulations. Churches could not engage in any religious activity outside officially designated religious buildings. This restriction prohibited open-air services, community work, pilgrimages, and evangelization. Religious education for young people was expressly forbidden, and religious classes in general were prohibited. Severe restrictions limited the printing and import of bibles and other religious books and materials, and

their distribution was treated as a criminal offense. The state recognized no religious holidays and often asked for "voluntary labor" on important holidays in an apparent effort to reduce church attendance and erode religious influence.

After 1984, under the guise of urban renewal, many churches of all denominations in and around Bucharest, including churches with unique spiritual and historical importance, were demolished by government orders. By 1988 approximately twenty-five had been razed, and sixty or seventy more were scheduled for destruction. Some of the buildings leveled were more than 300 years old, and many were classified as architectural monuments. Along with them, valuable icons and works of art were destroyed. Protests by congregation members, leading intellectuals, and Western governments failed to halt the demolition.

The Romanian Orthodox Church

In the late 1980s, the Romanian Orthodox Church, by far the largest denomination, claimed some 16 million members—roughly 70 percent of the total population. The church had some 12,000 places of worship and 9,000 priests and was the most generously supported of all denominations. The most important positions in the Orthodox hierarchy were filled by party nominees, and the church remained patently submissive to the regime, even in the face of repeated attacks on the most basic religious values and continued violations of church rights. Church leaders lauded the "conditions of religious freedom" that the state had guaranteed them and were known to collaborate with the Securitate in silencing clergymen who spoke out against the demolition of churches, interference in church affairs, and atheistic propaganda in the media.

The Roman Catholic Church

The next largest denomination, the Catholic Church, in the late 1980s had about 3 million members, who belonged to two groups—the Eastern Rite Church, or Uniates, and the Latin Rite Church, or Roman Catholics. After 1948 the Department of Cults took the official position that "no religious community and none of its officials may have relations with religious communities abroad" and that "foreign religious cults may not exercise jurisdiction on Romanian territory." These regulations were designed to abolish papal authority over Catholics in Romania, and the Roman Catholic Church, although it was one of the sixteen recognized religions, lacked legal standing, as its organizational charter was never approved by the Department of Cults. The fact that most members

of the Roman Catholic community were ethnic Hungarians probably contributed to the church's tenuous position. In 1948 Roman Catholics were deprived of three of five sees, leaving only two bishops to attend to the spiritual needs of the large membership. Subsequently all Catholic seminaries and charitable institutions were closed and newspapers and other publications affiliated with the church were suppressed. A few seminaries were reopened in 1952, but they were generally provided little support by the state. Although the priest-to-members ratio remained quite high in the 1980s, more than 60 percent of the active clergy were over 60 years of age, and owing to restrictions on enrollment in seminaries and theological colleges, their numbers were likely to decline.

After 1982 the church was allowed only fifteen junior and thirty senior seminarians per year. Moreover priests received minimal salaries and had no pension plans nor retirement homes. The state controlled all clerical appointments, which meant that many vacancies went unfilled, and effective priests were transferred from parish to parish, whereas those who proved most loyal to the regime received the highest salaries and key appointments. Seminaries, priests, and congregations were closely watched and infiltrated by the Securitate. Even in the 1980s, the danger of being interrogated, beaten, imprisoned, or even murdered was apparently very real, as most foreign visitors found priests and lay people alike too frightened to communicate with them. The government also restricted the amount of work that could be done to repair or enlarge church buildings.

In the early 1980s, there were indications that tensions between the Vatican and the regime over bishopric appointments were easing. Pope John Paul II successfully appointed an apostolic administrator for the Bucharest archbishopric. As of 1989, however, the Romanian government had not officially recognized the appointment, and the issues of inadequate church facilities, restrictions on the training of priests, and insufficient printing of religious materials remained unresolved.

The Uniate Church

Although its members are primarily Romanian, the Uniate Church has received even more severe treatment. By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Uniates, or Eastern or Byzantine Rite Catholics, had broken away from the Orthodox Church and accepted papal authority while retaining the Orthodox ritual, canon, and calendar, and conducting the worship service in Romanian. In 1948, in an obvious attempt to use religion to foster political unity, the country's 1.7 million Uniates were forcibly



*Central University Library in Bucharest
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

reattached to the Romanian Orthodox Church. Some 14,000 recalcitrant priests and 5,000 adherents were arrested, at least 200 believers were murdered during incarceration, and many others died from disease and hunger. The suppression of the Uniate Church required collaboration between the regime and the Romanian Orthodox Church hierarchy, which maintained that the Uniates had been forcibly subjugated to Rome and were simply being reintegrated into the church where they properly belonged.

That the Uniate Church survived, albeit precariously and underground, long after it officially had ceased to exist was an embarrassment to the regime and the Orthodox leadership. Even in the mid-1980s, there were still some 1.5 million believers, and about twenty "Orthodox" parishes that were universally regarded as Uniate. Besides 300 priests who were not converted, another 450 priests were secretly trained. The church had three underground bishops. After 1977 some Uniate clergymen led a movement demanding the reinstatement of their church and full restoration of rights in accordance with constitutional provisions for freedom of worship. In 1982 the Vatican publicly expressed concern for the fate of the Uniates and supported their demands. The Romanian authorities protested this act as interference in the internal affairs of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Other Religions

Romania's Jewish community in the late 1980s numbered between 20,000 and 25,000, of whom half were more than sixty-five years old. Jews enjoyed considerably more autonomy than any other religious denomination. In 1983 there were 120 synagogues, all of which had been relatively recently restored. For twenty-five years the Jewish Federation in Romania had been allowed to publish a biweekly magazine in four languages. There were three ordained rabbis, and religious education was widely available to Jewish children. In addition the government permitted the Jewish Federation to operate old-age homes and kosher restaurants. On the other hand, there were repeated anti-Semitic outbursts in the official press and elsewhere that were condoned by the regime.

Romania also has a Muslim community, which in the late 1980s numbered about 41,000. Two ethnic groups—Turks and Tatars—concentrated in the Dobruja region make up this religious community.

In the 1980s there were a number of Protestant and neo-Protestant denominations that were formally recognized and ostensibly protected by the Constitution. The Reformed (Calvinist) Church, an entirely Hungarian congregation, had a membership of between 700,000 and 800,000. The Unitarian Church, also largely Hungarian, had between 50,000 and 75,000 members. The Lutheran Church had a membership of about 166,000—mainly Transylvanian Saxons. Most of the neo-Protestant followers were converts from the Romanian Orthodox Church. Of these, the Baptists were the largest denomination with 200,000 members, followed by the Pentacostalists (75,000 members), Seventh Day Adventists (70,000 members), and a few other smaller groups.

The neo-Protestant religions attracted an increasing number of followers in later years. The rapid growth, especially among Baptists and Pentacostalists, continued throughout the 1970s, and many young converts from the established churches were gained. This trend was troublesome to the regime because many neo-Protestants—especially Baptist clergymen—called on churches to resist state interference in their affairs and suggested that the state should respect Christians' rights and renounce atheism. In the late 1970s and in the 1980s, the regime responded to this quasi-political movement with a press campaign attacking the credibility of the denominations and with police repression. Many congregations were fined heavily, and their most effective leaders and activists were arrested or forced to emigrate, whereas others were threatened with dismissal from their jobs and the loss of social benefits. Propaganda,



*Monk sounding the call to vespers at Snagov Monastery near Bucharest
Courtesy Barbu Alim*

media attacks, and police repression against Jehovah's Witnesses were especially harsh. Because the sect remained unregistered, its mere existence was illegal. The regime claimed that the religious beliefs espoused by the sect were "dangerous, antihumanistic, antidemocratic, and antiprogressive."

Social Conditions

The economic crisis of the late 1970s and the 1980s imposed a precipitous decline in social expenditures and social services. Between 1980 and 1985, annual outlays for housing decreased by 37 percent, for health care by 17 percent, and for education, culture, and science by 53 percent. This dramatic decrease in social spending meant that in the 1980s Romanians lived in conditions of impoverishment akin to that experienced in the 1940s.

Housing

Although housing was a high priority, in the 1980s it remained inadequate in both supply and quality. The law allotted only twelve square meters of living space per person, and the average citizen had even less—about ten square meters. More than half a million workers lived in hostels; some had lived there for many years, even after they had married and had children. These hostels were known for their cramped and squalid conditions and for the heavy drinking and violence of their occupants. The lists of persons waiting for housing were long, and bribes of as much as 40,000 lei were necessary to shorten the wait.

Defying reality, the PCR leadership pronounced the housing problem "solved for the most part" and predicted its total elimination by 1990, an unlikely prospect in view of the fact that new housing construction during the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1986-90) had fallen far short of target. To achieve the official goal of fourteen square meters per person by the year 2000, it would have been necessary to complete an apartment every three minutes. Comecon-published statistics and even figures released by the Romanian government indicated that in fact there had been a sharp decline in the construction of new-dwelling space.

Public Health

Health care in socialist Romania was provided free of charge by the state and, at least in theory, to all citizens. Indeed, between 1940 and 1980, annual expenditures for public health increased considerably. There was a concurrent rise in the number of physicians and hospital beds available to the population. In 1950 there were 9.1 physicians and 41.6 hospital beds per 10,000 people.

By 1971 these numbers had risen to 12.1 and 84.7 respectively. Using officially reported infant mortality rates and life expectancy figures as indicators, public health improved. Infant mortality decreased from 116.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1950 to 49.4 per 1,000 in 1970 and to only 23.4 per 1,000 in 1984. It should be noted, however, that infant deaths were officially recorded only if the infant was older than one month. Over the same period, life expectancy rose for men from 61.5 to 67 years and for women from 65 to 72.6 years.

In later years, however, infant mortality apparently rose quite rapidly, particularly after 1984. In 1988 health officials confirmed the rise in infant mortality, blaming the incompetence of medical personnel, geographic remoteness, harsh weather, and even "careless and uncooperative mothers" for the higher rate of mortality. Western observers suggested explanations such as harsh working conditions, especially in the textile industry, environmental pollution, and a food supply that was inadequate for the needs of expectant mothers and infants. Shortages of infant formula and inadequate concentrations of powdered milk resulted in malnutrition and death. Perhaps the greatest factor, however, was the government's demographic policy that forced women who were unwilling or in poor health to bear children. In the first year after the demographic policy was introduced in 1966, infant mortality increased by some 145.6 percent. There were even reports of newborns in hospital incubators dying during government-ordered power shutdowns. In 1989 the death rate of newborns stood at roughly 25 per 1,000 live births.

Although the mortality rate among the elderly decreased during the decades following the war, an unstable food supply, energy shortages, and the increasing cost of living in the 1980s posed grave hardship for the aged, who lived on pensions that averaged only 2,000 lei per month. Staple foods were rationed throughout the 1980s and were often unavailable except at exorbitant prices on the black market. In late 1988, one kilogram of meat was priced at 160 lei, or about 8 percent of the monthly pension. Cheese cost as much as 120 lei and coffee about 1,000 lei per kilogram. Although utility rates rose sharply, most people periodically had no hot water, heat, or electricity. In late 1988, pensions were raised an average 8 percent for some 1,352,000 people. It seemed doubtful, however, that the raise would make an appreciable difference in the face of erratic food and energy supplies and steadily rising inflation.

The elderly, who represented a growing percentage of the population (14.3 percent in 1986), received shoddy treatment from the state. Through regulations issued at the local level, they were

unable to move to larger cities—where food and health care were more readily available—even when their children offered to care for them. There was also widespread discrimination against the aged in health care. Hospitals responded to emergency calls from citizens over 60 years old slowly, if at all. Physicians routinely avoided treating the elderly in nonemergency cases and reportedly were under strict instructions from the state to reduce drug prescriptions for the aged. Homes for old people, established and run by the state social security system, had appalling reputations. In these institutions, the elderly suffered from inadequate medical care, poor hygienic standards, and the same food and heating shortages that affected the general population. After 1984 the winter months brought many complaints that old people had to go without heat and hot water for as long as a week, and there were regular reports of deaths of elderly men and women because of poor heating.

The disreputable treatment of the elderly was ironic in a country that had a long tradition of geriatrics. After 1952 Romania had an Institute of Geriatrics, directed by Dr. Ana Aslan until her death in 1968. Aslan was known internationally for developing “rejuvenation” drugs and for a philosophy of longevity that stressed social factors and material needs. The First National Congress of Geriatrics and Gerontology, held in Bucharest in 1988, failed to criticize the dire situation of the elderly in Romania.

Medical care was unevenly distributed throughout the country for all citizens, not just the elderly. There were substantial differences between urban and rural standards. In the 1980s, although half the population continued to live in rural areas, only 7,000 (15.7 percent) of the 44,494 physicians worked in the countryside. Consequently, many citizens had to travel great distances to get medical care. The state did not provide free medical care to some 500,000 peasants and 40,500 private artisans. In addition, access to medical care often depended on the gratuities proffered. It was common to offer medical personnel money, food, or Kent cigarettes (see Banking ch. 3). Moreover the quality of health care depended on social standing. For example, only special health units that served party members, the Securitate, or the upper ranks of the military dispensed Western medications or had modern medical facilities comparable to those in the West.

Although many of the diseases of poverty had disappeared, cancer, cardiovascular disease, alcoholism, and smoking-related illnesses were prominent. Alcoholism, judging by the dramatic increase in production and consumption of alcohol after the 1960s, was a serious problem. By 1985 wine and beer production was twice that of 1950, and hard liquor production was four times higher.

In 1980 beer consumption was eleven times that of 1950, brandy use was 2.2 times higher, and consumption of other alcoholic drinks was 5.8 times greater.

Drinking was prominent in all segments of society, but especially in the villages, where almost every occasion for celebration involved consumption of alcohol. Young workers in hostels were notorious for heavy and competitive drinking, which often led to brawls, destruction of public property, and violent crimes.

The deterioration of the standard of living exacerbated the drinking problem. Although food was scarce, the supply of alcohol was ample, and there was little else on which to spend one's wages. Moreover, the use of alcohol was encouraged by the traditional practice of offering bottles of liquor as bribes or gifts. Finally, official pronouncements aside, the sale of alcohol brought considerable profit to the state, and little real progress was made against increased consumption despite its adverse effects on labor productivity and work safety.

After a long official silence on the incidence of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) in Romania, the first media references to the disease began to appear in late 1985. Even then the brief articles contained very little information. They gave the technical name and classification of the disease and mentioned that it was fatal but said nothing about how AIDS was transmitted, its symptoms, or what preventive measures could stop its spread. The articles mentioned only two risk groups—drug addicts and hemophiliacs—and made no reference to the prevalence of AIDS among homosexual men. Most likely this omission was due to the fact that homosexuals as a group were never publicly acknowledged. Not only was homosexuality a taboo subject, it was illegal and punishable by one to five years in prison.

By 1987 Romania had reported only two deaths from AIDS and only thirteen carriers of the disease to the World Health Organization. But nothing about the cases, deaths, or carriers appeared in the Romanian press, which continued to emphasize that the highest incidence of AIDS occurred in the West, particularly in the United States. In 1988, however, a committee was established to study the disease. Between 1985 and 1987, thousands of people were tested for AIDS. In mid-1987 an information campaign was initiated. Articles in the press more frankly and factually covered the disease, admitting the existence of fifteen cases and two deaths from AIDS, as well as explaining for the first time that male homosexuals were the highest risk group. The symptoms were also listed. Still, efforts to combat the disease may have been seriously hampered by sexual taboos that persisted in Romanian society.

High-risk groups such as homosexuals and prostitutes were unlikely to voluntarily submit to screening for fear of going to jail. In addition, the health service was impaired by the country's economic deterioration, and there was little hard currency available to purchase necessary testing and diagnostic equipment and supplies from the West.

State Welfare Assistance

The pension scheme in socialist Romania provided for state employees only. Cooperatives, professional associations, and the clergy had to provide their own pensions. State employees were usually required to retire at age sixty-two for men and fifty-seven for women. Retirement could be postponed for up to three years, or individuals could request early retirement at sixty years of age for men and fifty-two for women if conditions for length of service were met (twenty-five years for women and thirty years for men). The employer adjudicated requests for early or postponed retirement. Pensions were based on the employee's salary level and length of service. Retirees without the required length of service had their pensions reduced accordingly. Pension amounts were not permanently fixed, but could be adjusted up or down according to the needs of the state, and presumably, the needs of the elderly.

In addition to retirement pensions, the state provided pensions to invalids and survivors' benefits to the immediate families of deceased persons entitled to retirement pensions. Monetary assistance was also provided under a state insurance plan in cases of sickness or injury. Again, this help was available only to state employees. The state also provided special programs for social assistance to orphans, people with mental or physical handicaps, and the elderly.

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Many scholars have written on the structure and dynamics of Romanian society. Especially interesting and informative overviews can be found in Lawrence S. Graham's *Romania: A Developing Socialist State* and Ian Matley's *Romania: A Profile*. Michael Shafir's *Romania: Politics, Economy, and Society* is remarkable for depth and detail. *The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism* by William E. Crowther is an excellent description of both politics and society. A thorough examination of industrialization and urbanization and their impact on society is presented in Per Ronnas's *Urbanization in Romania, a Geography of Social and Economic Change*. A useful examination of systematization made all the more interesting and informative for its anthropological perspective is Steven L. Sampson's

National Integration Through Socialist Planning. Trond Gilberg's *Modernization in Romania since World War II* describes socioeconomic modernization, education, political socialization, housing, social services, and medical care. *Transylvania, the Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, edited by John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi, and Louis J. Elteto, and an article by George Schöpflin, "The Hungarians of Romania," provide thorough treatments of ethnic minority issues. Several articles by William Moskoff are invaluable for their information on women's issues and demographic policy. The following books provide excellent comparisons of Romanian and other East European societies: *Politics and Society in Eastern Europe*, by Joni Lovenduski and Jean Woodall; *Socialism, Politics and Equality*, by Walter D. Connor; *Socialism's Dilemmas: State and Society in the Soviet Bloc*, also by Connor; and *Politics in Eastern Europe*, by Ivan Volgyes. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

