

area handbook series

# Romania

## a country study









# Romania

## a country study

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Edited by  
Ronald D. Bachman  
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On the cover: Thirteenth-century gate tower in the picturesque town of Sighișoara

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## Foreword

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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.

Louis R. Mortimer  
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# Contents

	Page
<b>Foreword</b> . . . . .	iii
<b>Acknowledgments</b> . . . . .	v
<b>Preface</b> . . . . .	xiii
<b>Country Profile</b> . . . . .	xv
<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	xxi
<b>Chapter 1. Historical Setting</b> . . . . .	1
<i>Charles Sudetic</i>	
<b>EARLY HISTORY FROM PREHISTORY TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURY</b> . . . . .	4
The Getae . . . . .	4
Roman Dacia . . . . .	7
The Age of the Great Migrations . . . . .	8
<b>TRANSYLVANIA, WALACHIA, AND MOLDAVIA FROM THE ELEVENTH CENTURY TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY</b> . . . . .	9
The Magyars' Arrival in Transylvania . . . . .	9
Origins of Walachia and Moldavia . . . . .	10
The Ottoman Invasions . . . . .	12
<b>TRANSYLVANIA UNDER THE HABSBURGS, 1688-1867</b> . . . . .	18
The Uniate Church . . . . .	18
The Reign of Joseph II . . . . .	19
The Revolution of 1848 . . . . .	21
Unification of Transylvania and Hungary . . . . .	21
<b>WALACHIA AND MOLDAVIA UNDER THE RUSSIAN PRO- TECTORATE, 1711-1859</b> . . . . .	22
The Phanariot Princes . . . . .	22
The Russian Protectorate . . . . .	23
The Crimean War and Unification . . . . .	25
<b>ROMANIA AND TRANSYLVANIA TO THE END OF WORLD WAR I, 1861-1919</b> . . . . .	26
Romania under Charles of Hohenzollern- Sigmaringen . . . . .	27
The Balkan Wars and World War I . . . . .	30
Greater Romania and the Occupation of Budapest . . . . .	35

GREATER ROMANIA TO THE END OF WORLD	
WAR II, 1920-45 .....	36
The Agrarian Crisis and the Rise of the	
Iron Guard .....	38
World War II .....	40
Armistice Negotiations and Soviet Occupation .....	42
POSTWAR ROMANIA, 1944-85 .....	44
Petru Groza's Premiership .....	46
Elimination of Opposition Parties .....	49
The Romanian People's Republic .....	50
The Post-Stalin Era .....	52
Gheorghiu-Dej's Defiance of Khrushchev .....	54
The Ceaușescu Succession .....	56
Dynastic Socialism and the Economic Downturn ....	58
<b>Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment .....</b>	<b>61</b>
	<i>Sherri Poradzisz</i>
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT .....	64
Boundaries and Geographical Position .....	64
Topography .....	65
Climate .....	70
POPULATION .....	70
Demographic History .....	70
Demographic Policy .....	72
Settlement Structure .....	75
Systematization: A Settlement Strategy .....	78
ETHNIC STRUCTURE .....	80
Historical and Geographical Distribution .....	81
National Minorities under Communist Rule .....	85
SOCIAL STRUCTURE .....	93
The End of the Ancien Régime .....	93
The New Social Order .....	95
Social Mobility .....	107
INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANS OF SOCIETY .....	108
Family .....	108
Women and Women's Organizations .....	112
The Education System .....	114
Religion .....	120
SOCIAL CONDITIONS .....	126
Housing .....	126
Public Health .....	126
State Welfare Assistance .....	130

**Chapter 3. The Economy** ..... 133

*Ronald D. Bachman*

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS	137
Evolution	137
Administration and Control	139
Banking	147
NATURAL RESOURCES	151
Land	151
Water	152
Forests	153
Fossil Fuels	154
Other Minerals	155
LABOR	156
Distribution by Economic Sector	156
Unpaid Labor	156
Demographics	157
Productivity	158
FOREIGN TRADE	162
Goals and Policy	162
Trading Partners	162
Structure of Exports and Imports	164
Retirement of the Foreign Debt	165
INDUSTRY	165
Geographic Distribution	165
Energy	166
Machine Building	170
Metallurgy	173
Chemicals	175
Light Industry	176
TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNI- CATIONS	176
Railroads	176
Highways	177
Inland Waterways	177
Maritime Navigation	179
Air Transport	179
Telecommunications	180
AGRICULTURE	180
Agricultural Regions	180
Major Crops	182
Livestock	182
Fishing	183
Farming Practices	183

Farm Organization .....	184
Administration .....	187
Procurement and Distribution .....	187
Consumption .....	189
GOALS FOR THE 1990s .....	190
<b>Chapter 4. Government and Politics .....</b>	<b>193</b>
	<i>Sergiu Verona</i>
GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM .....	196
STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING	
OF THE GOVERNMENT .....	199
Central Government .....	199
Joint Party-State Organizations .....	207
Local Government .....	208
Electoral System .....	210
ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY .....	211
Membership .....	211
Organizational Structure .....	213
Ideology and Party Program .....	217
Party Training .....	218
MASS ORGANIZATIONS .....	219
Union of Communist Youth .....	220
General Union of Trade Unions .....	221
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING	
THE CEAUȘESCU ERA .....	222
Period from 1965 to 1970 .....	222
1967 Party Congress .....	223
Rehabilitation and De-Stalinization .....	224
Tenth Party Congress .....	224
Eleventh Party Congress .....	225
Twelfth Party Congress .....	226
Thirteenth Party Congress .....	227
Cult of Personality .....	227
Emergence of an Organized Opposition .....	228
MASS MEDIA .....	231
FOREIGN POLICY .....	235
RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST STATES .....	237
Soviet Union and Eastern Europe .....	237
Hungary .....	241
RELATIONS WITH NONCOMMUNIST	
STATES .....	243
West Germany .....	243
United States .....	244
Other Western Countries .....	245

Middle East .....	246
Africa .....	247
Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe ..	247
<b>Chapter 5. National Security .....</b>	<b>249</b>
	<i>Karl Wheeler Soper</i>
<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>252</b>
Defense of Romanian Lands in Ancient Times and the Middle Ages .....	252
Ottoman Domination and the Struggle for National Unity and Independence .....	252
The Romanian Army in World War I .....	254
Security During the Interwar Years and World War II .....	255
Development of the Romanian Armed Forces after World War II .....	257
<b>MILITARY DOCTRINE AND STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>258</b>
Evolution of Military Doctrine .....	258
Military Strategy .....	260
Arms Control .....	261
<b>ARMED FORCES .....</b>	<b>262</b>
Command and Control of the Armed Forces .....	262
Armed Services .....	268
Military Personnel .....	276
The Military and the National Economy .....	283
Foreign Military Relations .....	289
<b>LAW AND ORDER .....</b>	<b>294</b>
Judicial System .....	294
Crime .....	297
<b>SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES .....</b>	<b>298</b>
Ministry of Interior and Security Forces .....	299
Dissidence .....	304
Department of External Information .....	305
<b>Appendix. Tables .....</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Index .....</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	
1 Administrative Divisions of Romania, 1989 .....	xx
2 Boundaries of Romania from the Congress of Berlin, 1878, to the Treaty of Trianon, 1920 .....	30

3	Topography and Drainage .....	68
4	Ethnic Hungarian Minority in Romania in the 1980s .....	84
5	Transportation System, 1982 .....	178
6	Government and Party Organization for Defense, 1988 .....	264
7	Major Military Installations, 1989 .....	270
8	Organization of a Motorized Rifle Division, 1987 .....	272
9	Organization of a Romanian Air Force Division, 1987 ....	274
10	Officer Ranks and Insignia, 1989 .....	284
11	Enlisted Ranks and Insignia, 1989 .....	285
12	Organization of the Ministry of Interior, 1980s .....	300
13	Organization of the Romanian Intelligence Service, 1980s .....	306

## Preface

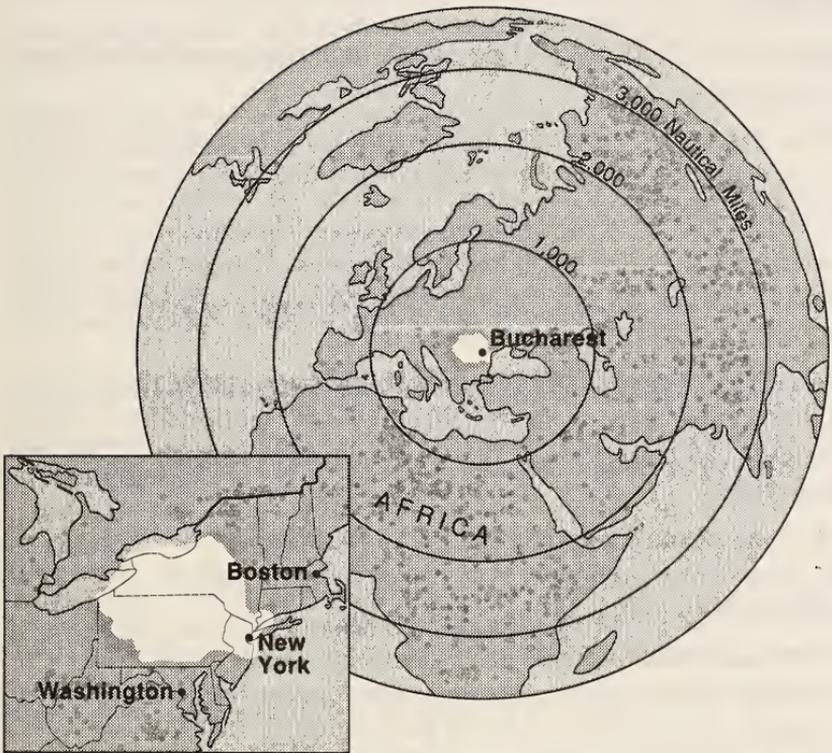
Like its predecessor, this study is an attempt to treat in a compact and objective manner the dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects of contemporary Romania. Unfortunately, during the intervening months between the completion of research (July 1989) and publication of this work, Romania 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.



## Judete, Bucharest Municipality, and Ilfov Agricultural District

- |                     |                    |                |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Alba (17)           | Constanța (42)     | Mureș (9)      |
| Arad (15)           | Covasna (20)       | Neamț (11)     |
| Argeș (28)          | Đimbovița (29)     | Olt (35)       |
| Bacău (13)          | Dolj (34)          | Prahova (30)   |
| Bihar (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)      | Vilcea (27)    |
| Caraș-Severin (24)  | Maramureș (2)      | Vrancea (21)   |
| Cluj (8)            | Mehedinți (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 Ceausescus' 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 highjacked by a neocommunist 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.

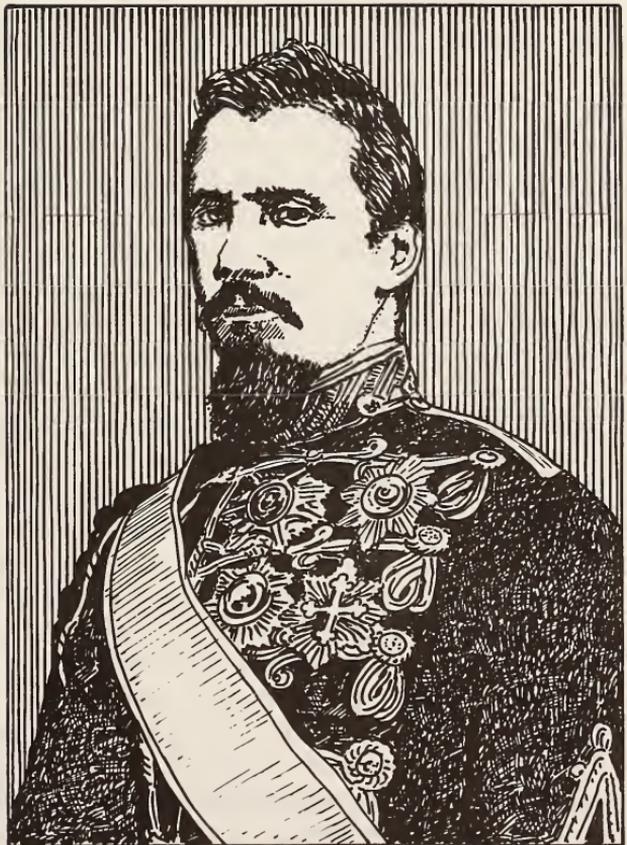
As Romania's economic deterioration accelerated, Prime Minister Roman assumed greater personal control of reform efforts. In October he addressed a special session of parliament and requested exceptional powers to implement a more radical reform program. In addition to the aforementioned price hikes 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 Grădișteța 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 Țepeș 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 Rumanians*, 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

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

Ceaușescu's wife, Elena, became a member of the Politburo, and in 1974 voters "elected" Ceaușescu 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." Ceaușescu 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 Ceaușescu as the greatest genius of the age and Elena as a world-renowned thinker.

Having assumed a cloak of infallibility, Ceaușescu 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.

Ceaușescu 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

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

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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



THE  
ROMANIAN PEOPLE



*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.





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.

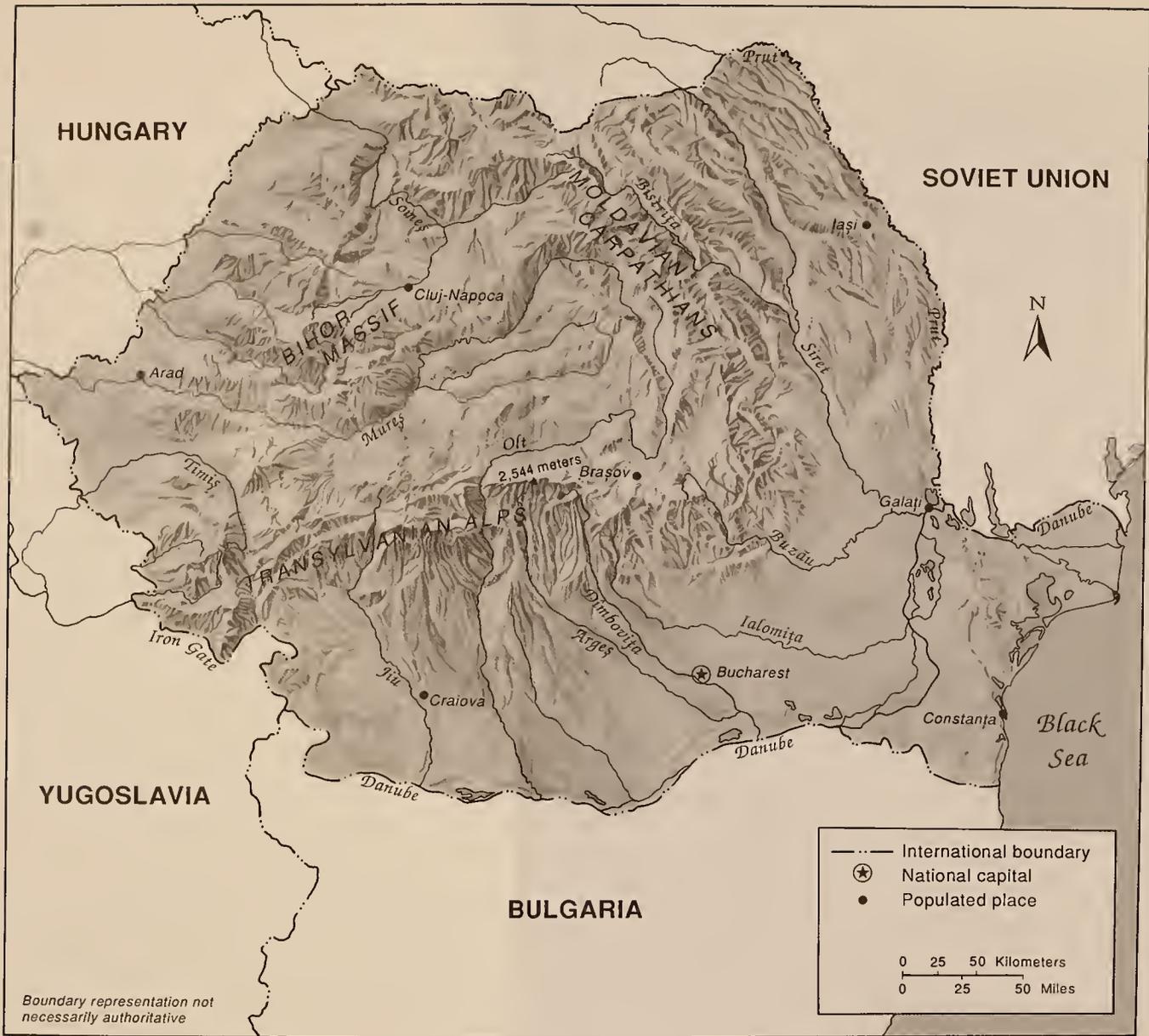
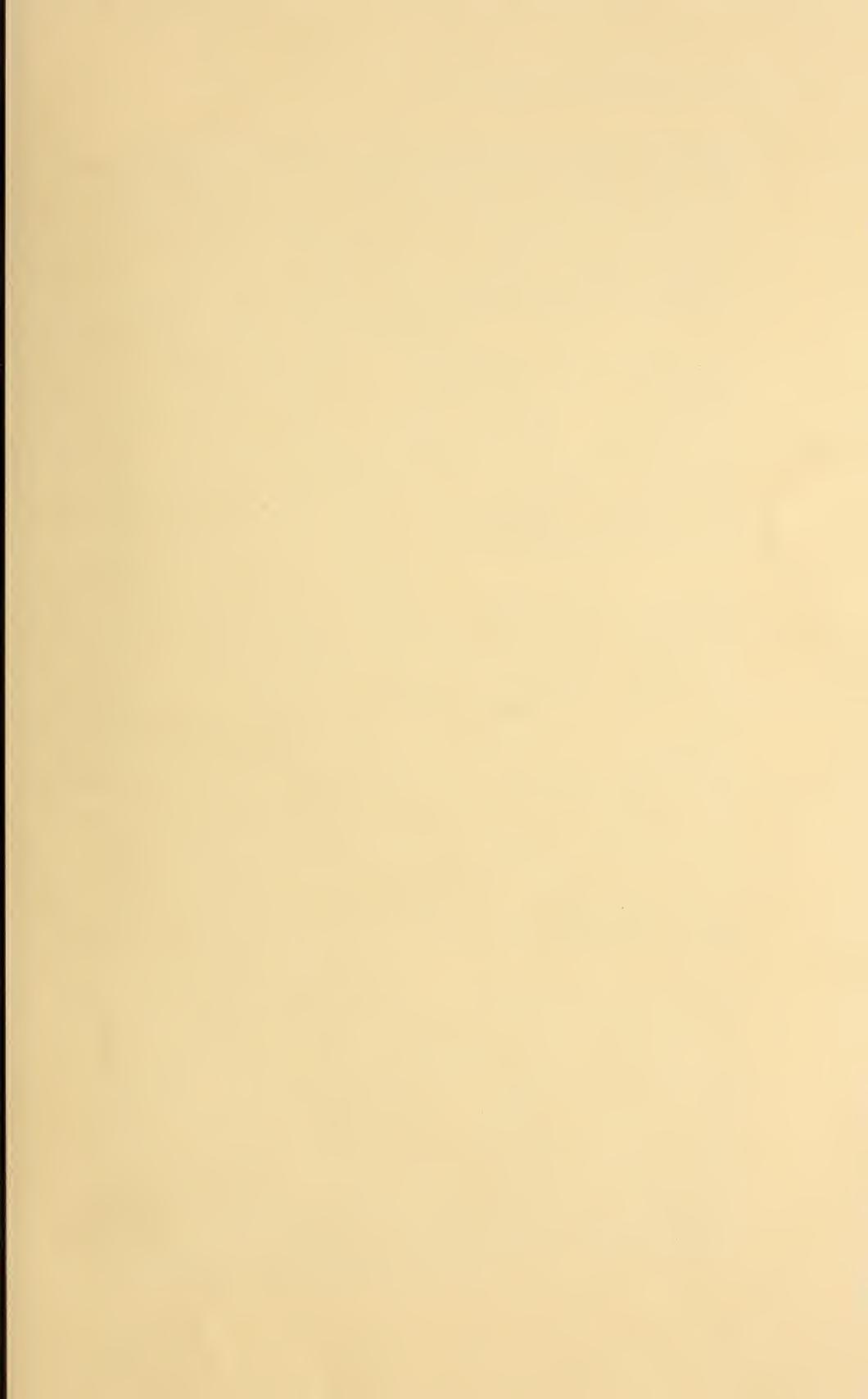


Figure 3. Topography and Drainage



## **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 Maramureș.

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 Dimbovița 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 Maramureș, Crișana, 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

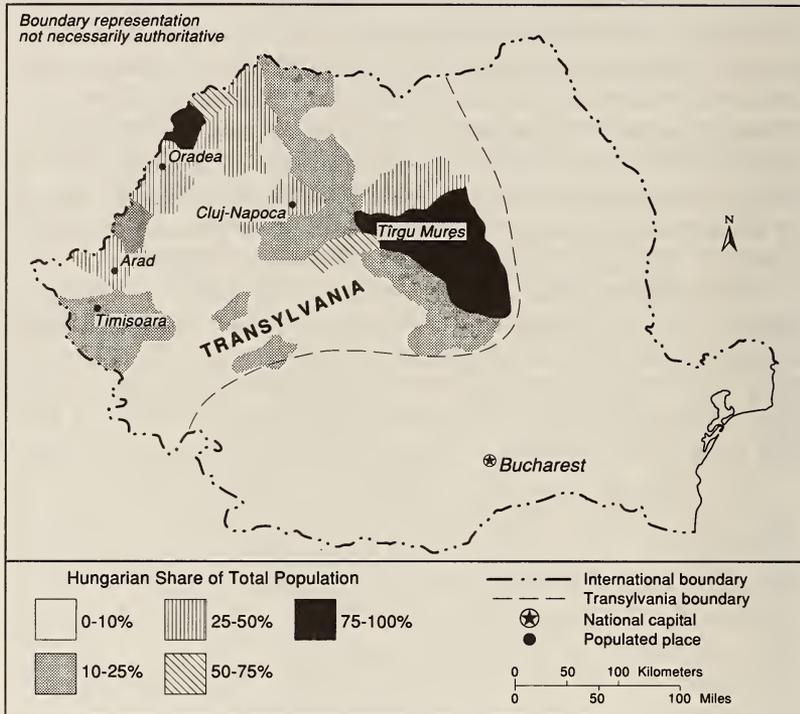


Figure 4. Ethnic Hungarian Minority in Romania in the 1980s

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

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 dislocation 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 Ceaușescu, 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

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

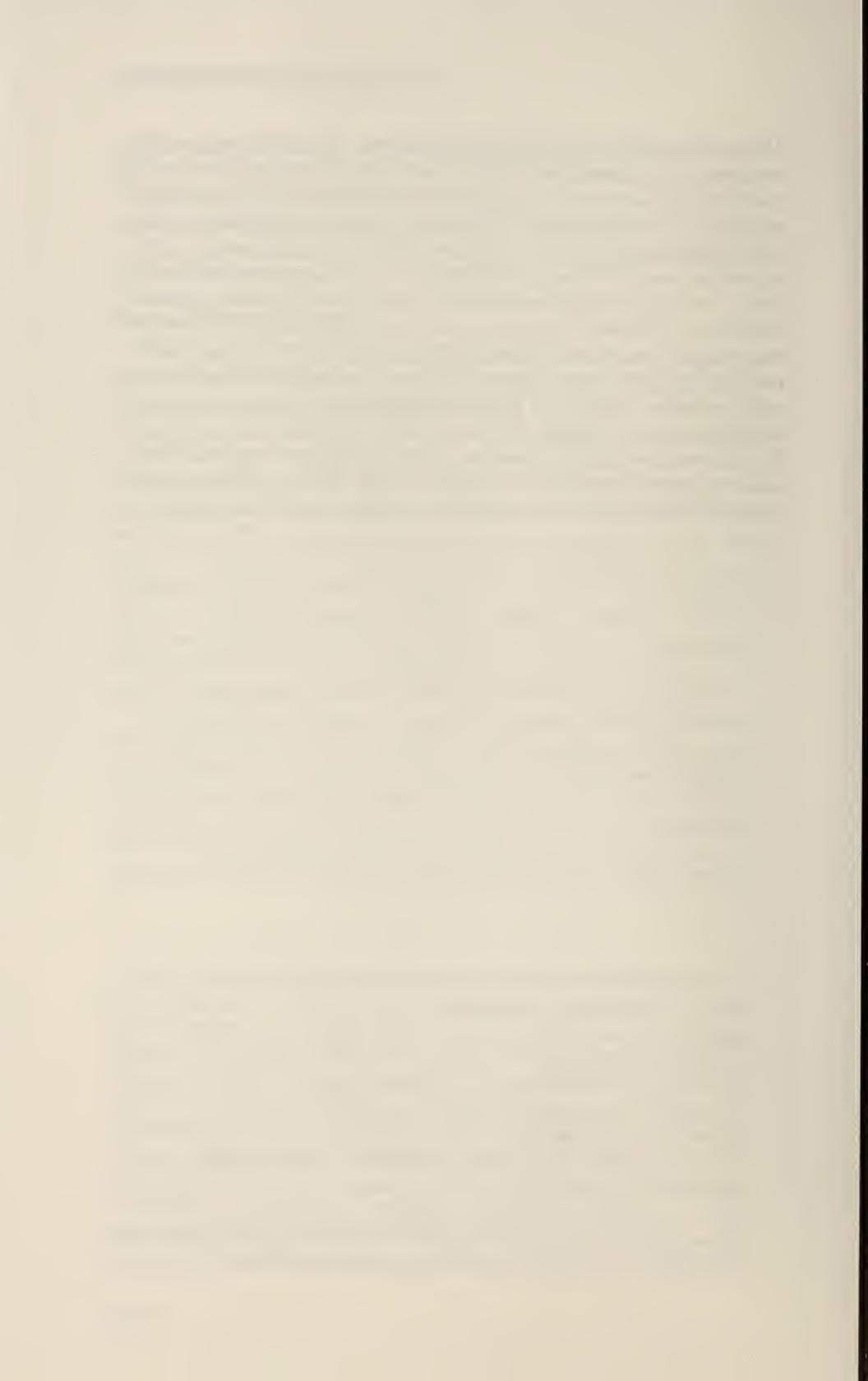
The pension scheme in socialist Romania provided for state employees only. Cooperatives, professional associations, and the clergy had to provide their own pensions. State employees were usually required to retire at age sixty-two for men and fifty-seven for women. Retirement could be postponed for up 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.

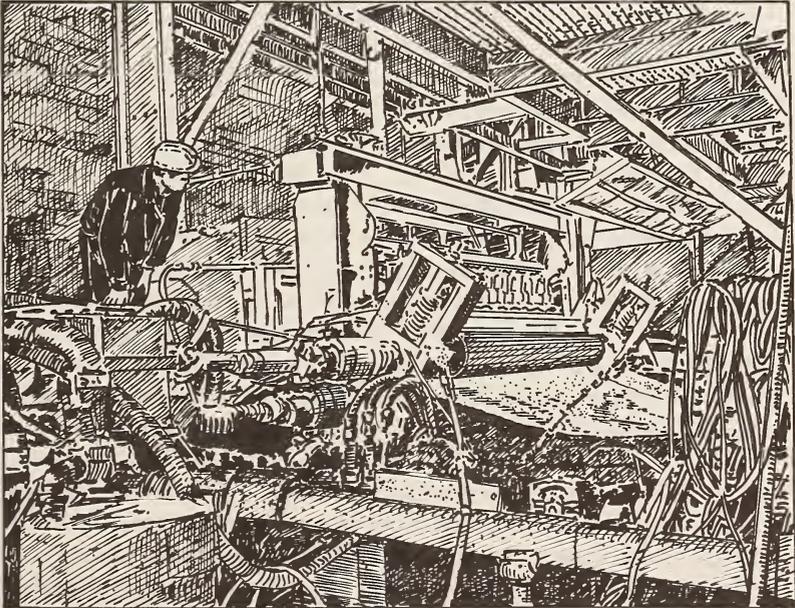
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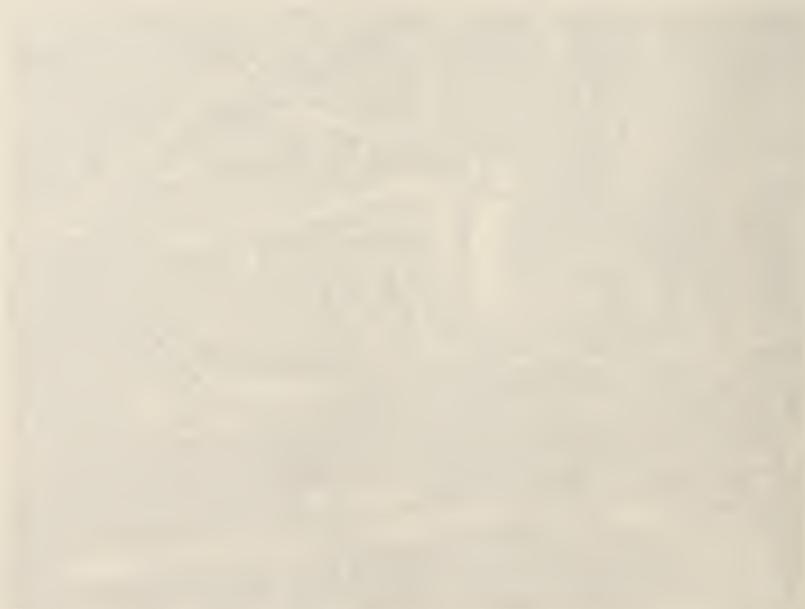
Many scholars have written on the structure and dynamics of Romanian society. Especially interesting and informative overviews can be found in Lawrence S. Graham's *Romania: A Developing Socialist State* and Ian Matley's *Romania: A Profile*. Michael Shafir's *Romania: Politics, Economy, and Society* 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.)



## Chapter 3. The Economy





*Rolling mill at Galafi Steelworks*

THE STALINIST ECONOMIC MODEL imposed on Romania after World War II survived the following four decades largely unaffected by the liberalizing reforms that gradually occurred in other parts of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. Indeed, in its degree of centralization, the pervasiveness of communist control, and the general secretary's personal dominance of economic policy making and implementation, the Romanian model arguably eclipsed even the Soviet archetype.

Through a highly centralized and interlocking party and state bureaucracy that reached from Bucharest to every farm and factory, the Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român—PCR, see Glossary) set economic goals, allocated resources, procured and distributed industrial and agricultural output, controlled prices and wages, and monopolized banking and foreign trade. Ideological goals and the preservation of power and privilege for the party elite had superseded all other considerations in economic decision making—even including the maintenance of a minimum standard of living for the general population.

The 1980s were a period of extreme deprivation for most Romanians. Determined to retire as quickly as possible the foreign debt accrued during the previous decade and thereby reassert his country's political and economic autonomy, General Secretary and President Nicolae Ceaușescu demanded enormous sacrifice on the part of ordinary citizens. His effort to build large foreign-trade surpluses required exporting basic commodities in short supply at home. Food rationing was reimposed in 1981 for the first time since the early 1950s, while the government continued exporting large amounts of food to earn foreign exchange. Consumers also faced chronic shortages of gasoline, electricity, and heat. Durables such as household appliances and automobiles were exorbitantly expensive, and their use was discouraged by the authorities.

In early 1989, Ceaușescu proclaimed that Romania had finally rid itself of the onerous foreign debt and could resume the pursuit of its long-term economic goal—the status of a multilaterally developed socialist state (see Glossary) by the year 2000. His vision of making Romania a “medium-developed” country by 1990 clearly had not come to fruition, as the economy had suffered numerous reversals since 1980. Western economists asserted that during much of the decade, industrial and agricultural output may actually have declined. This decline could not be confirmed by official

statistics, which had become increasingly untrustworthy and clearly omitted many categories of information.

The economic stagnation of the 1980s followed three decades of impressive industrial growth, when Romania had maintained one of the highest rates of capital accumulation and investment in the world. Industrial output by the end of the 1970s was more than 100 times greater than in 1945. The most notable growth had occurred in basic heavy industry, particularly in the chemical, energy, machine-building, and metallurgical sectors. Romania had become one of the world's leading producers and exporters of steel, refined petroleum products, machine tools, locomotives and rolling stock, oil-field equipment, offshore-drilling rigs, aircraft, and other sophisticated manufactures. Light industry's share of total output, however, had declined from more than 60 percent before World War II to less than 25 percent by the 1980s. The PCR industrialization program had been able to draw on a rich natural endowment of basic raw materials, including the most extensive oil and gas reserves in Eastern Europe, coal, metallic ores and other minerals, and timber. Natural inland waterways and warm-water seaports facilitated domestic and foreign commerce. And numerous streams and rivers flowing from the highlands provided opportunities for irrigation and electric power generation. These natural advantages notwithstanding, the economy of the 1980s suffered a severe raw materials and energy shortage as a large share of the most accessible reserves neared depletion. Furthermore, years of careless resource exploitation had caused severe environmental degradation, with particular harm to the water supply, soil, and forests.

Equally as critical to Romania's postwar development as its natural resources were its large reserves of underemployed rural labor that could be mobilized and transformed into an urban proletariat. But already by the end of the 1970s, it had become clear that this resource also was being exhausted. Romania faced an incipient labor shortage of the sort that had already stricken its more industrialized neighbors. This shortage was brought on by a declining birthrate, the aging of the population, the emigration of skilled workers, and the squandering of labor resources through poor planning and management. All sectors of the economy suffered from low labor morale and productivity and a growing dissatisfaction with working conditions, wages, benefits, and the general standard of living. This dissatisfaction had even begun to surface in unprecedented strikes, demonstrations, and other acts of defiance.

The ambitious industrialization program had deprived agriculture of investment capital and manpower for most of the first four

decades of communist rule. But even as late as 1982, 28.6 percent of the working population was still engaged in farming. Application of more modern farming practices and an ambitious irrigation and land reclamation program had steadily raised production. Grain output more than quadrupled between 1950 and 1980. Nevertheless, output consistently fell short of target and was generally inadequate for domestic and export requirements.

After decades of neglect, in the late 1970s agriculture had finally begun to receive investments at levels commensurate with its importance to the national economy. But by the early 1980s, the general economic crisis prevented importing the inputs needed to make the sector more productive. This development, combined with the counterproductive imposition of compulsory delivery quotas on private farmers and more centralized administration of the entire sector, resulted in agricultural stagnation through much of the 1980s.

## **Economic Structure and Dynamics**

### **Evolution**

From earliest times, the Romanian lands were renowned for their fertile soil and good harvests. As the Roman colony of Dacia, the region supplied grain and other foods to the empire for nearly two centuries. During the subsequent two millennia, a succession of foreign powers dominated the area, exploiting the rich soil and other resources and holding most of the native population in abject poverty. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that a unified, independent Romania finally emerged, opening the way for development of an integrated national economy.

But even after Romania had gained independence, foreign interests continued to dominate the economy. Large tracts of the best grain-growing areas were controlled by absentee landlords, who exported the grain and took the profits out of the country. Outsiders controlled most of the few industries, and non-Romanian ethnic groups—particularly Germans, Hungarians, and Jews—dominated domestic trade and finance. The centuries of outside control of the economy engendered in the Romanian people an extreme xenophobia and longing for self-sufficiency—sentiments that would be exploited repeatedly by the nation's leaders throughout the twentieth century.

On the eve of World War II, agriculture and forestry produced more than half of the national income (see Glossary). Reflecting the country's limited economic development, about 90 percent of export income in 1939 was derived from raw materials and semifinished

goods, namely grain, timber, animal products, and petroleum. The most advanced industry at that time, oil extraction and refining, was controlled by Nazi Germany for the duration of the war and suffered severe bombing damage.

For several years following the war, the devastated economy was burdened with reparation payments to the Soviet Union, which already by 1946 had expropriated more than one-third of the country's industrial and financial enterprises. By mid-1948 the Soviets had collected reparations in excess of US\$1.7 billion. They continued to demand such payments until 1954, severely retarding economic recovery.

After the installation of a Soviet-styled communist regime, Romania's economic evolution would faithfully follow the Stalinist pattern. Adopting a centrally planned economy under the firm control of the PCR, the country pursued the extensive economic development (see Glossary) strategy adopted by the other communist regimes of Eastern Europe but with an unparalleled obsession with economic independence. The development program assigned top priority to the industrial sector, imposed a policy of forced saving and consumer sacrifice to achieve a high capital accumulation rate, and necessitated a major movement of labor from the countryside into industrial jobs in newly created urban centers. The first step on this path was nationalization of industrial, financial, and transportation assets. Initiated in June 1948, that process was nearly completed by 1950. The socialization of agriculture proceeded at a much slower pace, but by 1962 it was about 90 percent completed.

Beginning in 1951, Romania put into practice the Soviet system of central planning based on five-year development cycles. Such a system enabled the leadership to target sectors for rapid development and mobilize the necessary manpower and material resources. The leadership was intent on building a heavy industrial base and therefore gave highest priority to the machinery, metallurgical, petroleum refining, electric power, and chemical industries.

Shortly after Nicolae Ceaușescu came to power in 1965, PCR leaders reevaluated the development strategy and concluded that Romania would be unable to sustain the rapid rate of economic growth it had achieved since the early 1950s unless its industry could be streamlined and modernized. They argued that the time had come to assume an intensive development strategy, for which the term "multilateral development" was coined. This process required access to the latest technology and know-how, for which Ceaușescu turned to the West.

Economic growth during the first twenty-seven years of communist rule was impressive. Industrial output increased an average

12.9 percent per year between 1950 and 1977, owing to an exceptionally high level of capital accumulation and investment, which grew an average 13 percent annually during this period. But with the concentration of resources in heavy (the so-called Group A) industries, other sectors suffered, particularly agriculture, services, and the consumer-goods (Group B) industries (see table 2, Appendix).

After 1976 the economy took a sharp downturn. A severe earthquake struck the country the following year, causing heavy damage to industrial and transportation facilities. Ceaușescu's vision of multilateral development had made little headway, as the bureaucracy was unable to steer the economy onto a course of intensive development, which would have necessitated major improvements in efficiency and labor productivity. The population was demanding production of more consumer goods, and an incipient labor shortage was hindering economic growth. By 1981 the country was in a financial crisis, unable to pay Western institutions even the interest on the debt of more than US\$10 billion accumulated during the preceding decade. Obsessed with repaying this debt as soon as possible, Ceaușescu imposed an austerity program to curtail imports drastically, while exporting as much as possible to earn hard currencies. Rationing of basic foodstuffs, gasoline, electricity, and other consumer products was in effect throughout the 1980s, bringing the Romanian people the lowest standard of living in Europe with the possible exception of Albania. In April 1989, Ceaușescu announced that the foreign debt had been retired, and he promised a rapid improvement in living conditions. Most foreign observers, however, doubted that he could fulfill this pledge.

## **Administration and Control**

### *Stalin's Legacy*

The Romanian economic model retained all the salient features of Stalinism, including state ownership of the means of production; communist party control of economic policy making and administration through interlocking party and state bureaucracies; democratic centralism, including concentration of decision-making power in the highest party executive organs and particularly in the person of the general secretary; annual and five-year economic planning; nonreliance on the counsel of technical and managerial experts in setting economic goals; forced deliveries of economic output to the state; pricing based on political and ideological considerations rather than market forces; reliance on mobilization campaigns in lieu of material incentives for workers; inflexibility and resistance to reform.

*Ownership of Economic Assets*

When the Constitution of 1965 declared Romania a socialist republic, the country had already made substantial headway in socializing its economic assets. And judging by Ceaușescu's words on the occasion of his sixty-ninth birthday in 1987, the campaign to eliminate private ownership appeared irreversible: "One cannot speak of a socialist economy and not assume the socialist ownership of the means of production as its basis." The state owned and controlled all natural resources except for a steadily declining amount of agriculturally marginal land still in private hands (see Land, this ch). All of industry had been socialized, but for a small number of artisan workshops, which contributed less than 0.5 percent of total marketable output in the 1980s. Even cooperatives, categorized as socialist forms of ownership, had fallen into decline at the very time they were enjoying a renaissance in the Soviet Union and the other members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon—see Glossary). Cooperative farms, for example, were considered ideologically less acceptable than state farms, which had priority access to rich land, fertilizers, machinery, and other inputs. And cooperative industrial enterprises accounted for only 4.3 percent of national output in 1984.

*Dominance of the Romanian Communist Party*

The Romanian economic structure was unusual in the extreme degree to which party and governmental hierarchies were intertwined and even formally merged. This fusion of bureaucracies was even apparent in the architecture of the capital city, Bucharest, whose skyline in the late 1980s came to be dominated by a massive new Palace of Government, housing both party and state agencies. All state administrative offices, from the national to the lowest local levels, were filled by carefully screened PCR careerists. As early as 1967, Ceaușescu had called for administrative streamlining by eliminating the duplication of party and government functions. His solution was to assign responsibility for a given economic activity to a single individual.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the merging of party and state organs gained momentum, affording the PCR ever tighter control over the economy. The process culminated in the emergence of national economic coordinating councils—administrative entities not envisioned by the Constitution of 1965. These party-controlled councils provided Ceaușescu, who after 1967 held the dual titles of general secretary of the PCR and president of the Council of State, the means to dominate the economic bureaucracy.

One of the most powerful of the new joint party and state bodies was the Supreme Council of Economic and Social Development, which Ceaușescu chaired from its inception in 1973. The new 300-member council coopted the authority to debate and approve state economic plans—authority constitutionally granted to the Grand National Assembly (GNA—see Glossary). The latter's role in the planning process became increasingly ceremonial, as real policy-making power shifted to the Supreme Council's permanent bureau—also chaired by Ceaușescu. At a joint meeting of party and state officials in June 1987, Ceaușescu announced the conversion of the permanent bureau into a quasi-military economic supreme command, further tightening his grip on planning while reducing the role of the governmental institution created for that purpose—the State Planning Committee. That same year, he signed a decree endorsing the 1988 annual economic plan even before obtaining rubber-stamp approval by either the Central Committee of the PCR or the GNA. Thus the general secretary had assumed absolute authority in setting economic policy.

Among other important joint party and state economic councils to evolve during the Ceaușescu era were the Central Council of Workers' Control over Economic and Social Activities, which oversaw economic plan fulfillment; the Council for Social and Economic Organizations, which controlled the size and functions of the ministries and enterprises; and the National Council of Science and Technology. The latter was chaired by the general secretary's wife, Elena Ceaușescu, who was emerging as a powerful political figure in her own right. In June 1987, it was announced that this body thereafter would collaborate with the Supreme Council of Economic and Social Development and would draft development plans and programs, thus giving Elena Ceaușescu much of the authority constitutionally vested in the chairmanship of the State Planning Committee.

Ceaușescu consolidated his control of the economy not only by creating new bureaucratic structures, but also by frequent rotation of officials between party and state bureaucracies and between national and local posts. In effect after 1971, the policy was highly disruptive. For example, twenty economic ministers were replaced in September 1988 alone. Rotation enabled Ceaușescu to remove potential rivals to his authority before they could develop a power base. He justified the policy by attributing virtually all the country's economic problems to inept and dishonest bureaucrats intent on sabotaging his policies. Another control tactic was making highly publicized visits to factories, state farms, or major construction sites, where—usually accompanied by his wife—Ceaușescu would

interview workers and front-line managers and solicit complaints about their superiors. The threat of public humiliation and removal effectively deterred the managerial cadres from independent thinking.

### *Administrative Hierarchy*

The government body constitutionally endowed with supreme authority in administering the PCR's economic program was the Council of Ministers, whose members simultaneously held important positions in the party. The number of ministries fluctuated over the years because of repeated reform efforts to improve efficiency; in 1989, there were twenty-five ministries with a strictly economic mission. Supra-ministerial bodies known as branch coordination councils synchronized the activities of ministries in related sectors, for example, mining, oil, geology, and electric and thermal power; chemicals, petrochemicals, and light industries; machine building and metallurgy; timber, construction materials, cooperatives, and small-scale industry; transportation and telecommunications; investment and construction; and agriculture, food processing and procurement, forestry, and water management. The ministries were responsible for accomplishing the economic goals set forth in the Unitary National Socioeconomic Plan. They assigned production, financial, and operational targets and made investment decisions for the economic entities subordinate to their authority.

The first echelon of administration below the ministries consisted of the industrial *centrale* (sing., *central*—see Glossary). The *centrale* were analogous to the production associations of the Soviet Union and other Comecon countries. Conceived in the economic reforms of 1967 as autonomous economic entities vertically and horizontally integrating several producing enterprises as well as research and development facilities, the first *centrale* appeared in 1969. Their number rapidly dwindled from the original 207 to only 102 in 1974. Although in theory the *centrale* were created to decentralize planning, investment, and other forms of economic decision making, their functions were never clearly delineated, and in the 1980s they appeared to have little real autonomy. Their authority was limited to monitoring plan fulfillment and designating production schedules for the plants under their jurisdiction.

At the bottom of the administrative hierarchy were the enterprises and their individual production units. They received highly detailed production plans, operating budgets, and resource allocations from superior echelons and were responsible for accomplishing the economic directives that came down to them through

the hierarchy. Notwithstanding official proclamations of enterprise self-management after the New Economic and Financial Mechanism (see Glossary) became law in 1978, the managerial cadres on this level enjoyed autonomy only in the mundane area of streamlining operations to raise output.

State and cooperative farms held a position in the administrative hierarchy analogous to that of industrial enterprises. They received detailed production plans that specified what was to be sown, what inputs would be provided, and how much farm output was to be delivered to the state. After 1980, county (*judet*—see Glossary) and village people's councils were responsible for fulfillment of agricultural production targets by the farms in their jurisdiction (see Local Government, ch. 4). Machine stations, analogous to Stalin's machine-and-tractor stations, had been set up to control access to equipment, thereby ensuring compliance with the PCR agricultural program. The manager of each machine station coordinated the work of, on average, five state and cooperative farms. In 1979, the stations became the focal point of a new managerial entity, the agro-industrial councils, which were intended to parallel the industrial *centrale* (see Farm Organization, this ch).

In addition to its sectoral administrative structure, the economy was organized on a territorial basis. In every *judet*, city, town, and commune, so-called people's councils—among their other functions—supervised the implementation of national economic policy by the enterprises and organizations located within their territory. The permanent bureaus of these bodies, without exception, were headed by local party chairmen, whose political credentials were validated by Bucharest. In 1976 a permanent Legislative Chamber of the People's Councils was established. Its membership—elected from the executive committees of the regional and local councils—debated economic bills before they were considered by the GNA.

### Planning

Beginning in 1951, following the Soviet economic model, Romania adopted annual and five-year economic planning. As in the Soviet system, the principle of democratic centralism applied (see Organizational Structure, ch. 4). Thus, the economic plans compiled by the central planning organs became the law of the land, and compliance was mandatory.

In theory, the Unitary National Socioeconomic Plan, as economic plans were officially called after 1973, was based on information on current plan fulfillment, requests for resource allocations, and recommendations for investments that originated on the lowest

echelons and rose through the bureaucracy to the central planners. Such a system involved a certain amount of give and take as enterprises and *centrale* “negotiated” with the ministries for favorable production targets and resource allocations. In turn the ministries lobbied for their respective sectors to gain priority consideration in the state budget. But during the 1980s, input from lower echelons in the planning process received less consideration. In part, this development was due to the unreliability of information reported by the managerial cadres, from the local level up to the heads of the economic ministries themselves. Plan fulfillment data were supposed to serve as the basis on which future economic plans were compiled, but in the 1980s data became skewed when salary reforms—the so-called global accord—began linking managers’ incomes to the performance of the economic units under their supervision. In 1986 this remuneration system encompassed nearly 11,000 managers and bureaucrats, even including the heads of ministries and the deputy prime ministers. In order to maintain their incomes, officials simply falsified performance reports. As a result, aggregate production figures were grossly inflated, and annual and five-year plan targets based on these figures became increasingly unrealistic.

Besides distorting production reports, managers resorted to other income-protecting measures that impeded the flow of accurate information to the central planners. Because wages and salaries were tied to plan fulfillment and severe penalties were levied for shortfalls—even when caused by uncontrollable factors such as power shortages, drought, and the failure of contractors to deliver materials and parts—it was in the interests of the enterprises, *centrale*, and ministries to conceal resources at their disposal and to request more inputs than they really needed. Managers concealed surplus operating reserves to ensure production in the event of unforeseen bottlenecks. This practice made accurate inventories impossible, resulting in inefficient use of resources.

### ***Pricing and Profit***

Because the market forces of supply and demand did not operate in the centrally planned command economy, prices were calculated and assigned to goods and services by a governmental body, whose decisions were shaped by political and ideological considerations as well as economics. Following the tenets of Marxism, prices for basic necessities had been maintained at artificially low levels throughout the postwar period until 1982, when 220 different food items were marked up 35 percent. Even after the increases, however, food was priced below the cost of production, and state

subsidies were required to make up the difference. At the same time, prices for what the party categorized as luxury goods—blue jeans, stereo equipment, cars, refrigerators—were far higher than justified by production costs. Consequently, per capita ownership of consumer durables was the lowest in Eastern Europe except for Albania.

The inflexible system of centrally controlled prices created serious economic dislocation. Lacking the free-market mechanism of self-adjusting prices to regulate output, the economy misallocated resources, producing surpluses of low-demand items and chronic shortages of highly sought products, including basic necessities. This serious failing notwithstanding, the Ceaușescu government in the late 1980s adamantly refused to modify the system and in fact was moving to strengthen the role of central planners in setting prices.

Wholesale and retail prices were assigned by the State Committee for Prices, with representation from the State Planning Committee, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Economic Cooperation, the Central Statistical Bureau, and the Central Council of the General Trade Union Confederation. The committee computed the price of an item based in part on normative industry-wide costs for the materials, labor, and capital used in its production. In addition, the price included a planned profit, which was a fixed percentage of the normative production cost. After a pricing revision, approved by the GNA in December 1988, the profit rate was set at between 3 and 8 percent of cost. An additional profit margin was factored into the price of commodities destined for export—6 percent for soft-currency and 10 percent for hard-currency exports.

Because prices were based on industry-standard costs, enterprises with lower than average costs earned above-plan profits, but those with high costs ran deficits and had to be supported by state subsidies. The New Economic and Financial Mechanism had called for making all enterprises self-financing, and those unable to break even were subject to dissolution. But as of early 1989, no instances of plants closing because of unprofitability had been reported. A pricing law enacted in December, 1988, would allow enterprises to retain all above-plan profit earned in 1990 but would require them to transfer half of such profits to the state budget during the subsequent four years. The enterprises channeled their share of profits into various bank accounts and funds that provided working capital and financed investments, housing construction, social and cultural amenities, and profit sharing. The last fund paid bonuses to employees if any money remained following compulsory payments to the state and the other funds. But if an enterprise

failed to meet its production target—an increasingly common occurrence in the 1980s—the profit-sharing fund was reduced accordingly.

### *The State Budget*

The Ministry of Finance directed the formulation of a detailed annual state budget, which was submitted to the GNA for approval and enactment into law. In theory, budget allocations took into account the analyses performed by the branch coordinating councils, the various ministries, their subordinate *centrale* and enterprises, and the executive committees of *județ* and municipal people's councils. But in reality, as the instrument for financing the Unitary National Socioeconomic Plan, the state budget was under Ceaușescu's firm control. The Council of Ministers had responsibility for supervising its implementation. The state budget typically was approved in December and went into effect on January 1, the beginning of the fiscal year (see Glossary), with expected revenues precisely offsetting authorized expenditures. Actual revenues and expenditures realized during the preceding year were officially announced at the same time, and the balance was carried over into the new state budget. Revenue estimates were set at the minimum level, while expenditures represented absolute ceilings. Consequently, budget surpluses were not unusual, particularly during the austere 1980s, when the top economic priority was elimination of the foreign debt. For example, a total surplus of 102 billion lei (for value of the leu; pl., lei—see Glossary) was accumulated during the years 1980–84, and in 1987 alone a 53.2 billion lei surplus was registered.

The consolidated state budget was divided into national and local budgets. In 1989 local budget revenues were forecast to be 25,446.8 million lei, while expenditures were set at only 14,078.7 million lei. The surplus of more than 11 billion lei was to be transferred to the national treasury to finance “society's overall development,” a euphemism for centrally controlled capital investment at the expense of consumer goods and services.

### **Revenues**

Profits from state enterprises and heavy turnover taxes levied on consumer goods, farm products, and farm supplies accounted for the bulk of revenue for the state budget. In 1989, for example, these two sources were expected to generate 69 percent of total revenues. Another large contributor was the tax on the “overall wage fund,” which, though paid by the enterprises rather than individuals after 1977, was actually a tax on the work force. During the 1980s, taxes levied directly on individuals accounted for an ever

larger share of revenues. For example, between 1981 and 1988, personal taxes rose by a total of 64.8 percent. The official claim that individuals paid only about 1.2 percent of the total tax bill ignored the reality that both the tax on the wage fund and the turnover tax directly affected individual purchasing power. The source of a large part of budget revenues was not identified in official announcements. In the 1989 state budget, for example, more than 6.3 percent of total revenues were not explained (see table 3, Appendix).

### **Expenditures**

Financing the national economy (including capital investment) claimed the largest share of the state budget throughout the post-war period. More than 43 percent of the 1989 state budget, for example, was earmarked for this purpose. Social services were the second largest recipient, getting slightly more than 25 percent of 1989 budget allocations. Actual outlays for social services, however, had declined during the belt-tightening of the 1980s. Reliable figures for military expenditures were generally not available, although according to official pronouncements, they were modest and declining as a percentage of total outlays, accounting for less than 3 percent of the 1989 budget, as compared with 6.1 percent in 1960. Allocations for the police and security service were never published. A large portion of total budgetary expenditures (more than 27 percent) was not itemized in the 1989 state budget, as compared with 14.8 percent not itemized in the 1984 budget and only 1.7 percent in 1965 (see table 4, Appendix).

### **Banking**

#### *The Role of Banking in a Centrally Planned Economy*

The banking system was nationalized soon after the installation of the communist regime and replicated the system that had evolved in the Soviet Union. Although organizational reforms were instituted in the course of the following four decades, the basic mission of banking and its relationship to the rest of the economy remained unchanged.

The role of banking in the Stalinist economic model differs markedly from that in a market economy. Banks are state owned and operated and are primarily an instrument of economic control. They do not compete for customers; rather, customers are assigned to them. Nor are they in business to make a profit, because in the absence of money and capital markets, there is no mechanism to assign an accurate price for credit and thereby earn a fair profit.

Economic reforms in the late 1970s assigned greater responsibility to the banks for policing the economy to ensure that enterprises were operating and developing in compliance with the national plan. The banks accomplished this mission by monitoring enterprises' operations and assessing financial penalties for inefficient use of resources. As one of the three principal sources of money to finance operations and investments—the others being state budget allocations and profits retained by enterprises from the sale of commodities—banks exercised considerable influence over all economic units.

### ***Banking Institutions***

The banking system in 1989 consisted of the National Bank of the Socialist Republic of Romania (known as the National Bank), the Investment Bank, the Bank for Agriculture and Food Industry, the Romanian Foreign Trade Bank, and the Savings and Consignation Bank. In addition, a centralized Hard Currency Fund was set up in January 1988 to supervise all transactions involving hard currencies and to control the use of hard currency earnings to finance imports. The new body included representatives of the National Bank, the Foreign Trade Bank, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

Established in 1880, the National Bank was the heart of the banking system. It issued the national currency, set exchange rates, monitored the flow of money, managed budgetary cash resources, coordinated short-term credit and discount activities, and participated in the formulation of annual and five-year credit and cash plans in cooperation with the State Planning Committee and the Ministry of Finance. All industrial, transportation, and domestic trade enterprises maintained accounts in the National Bank. The bank also controlled the production, processing, and use of precious metals and gems and had exclusive authority to purchase from individuals items made of precious metals or stones and items of artistic, historic, or documentary value.

The Investment Bank, established in 1948, was the conduit by which investment resources—including state budget allocations—were directed to individual state, cooperative, consumer-cooperative, and other public organizations except for food-industry and agricultural enterprises. With hundreds of affiliates throughout the country, the Investment Bank adjudicated loan applications from enterprises and granted long-term investment credit after verifying that the money would finance projects consistent with the national economic plan. The bank reviewed technical and economic investment criteria and evaluated the feasibility of proposed investment

projects on the basis of accepted standards. In theory, it approved only investment projects that satisfied all legal requirements regarding need, suitability, and adherence to prescribed norms; had an adequate raw materials base and assured sales outlets; and served to improve the economic performance of the organization undertaking the project. The bank also granted short-term credit to construction enterprises and to geological prospecting and exploration organizations. The Investment Bank was responsible for calculating capital depreciation allowances to be paid by the central government to the accounts of individual enterprises.

The Bank for Agriculture and Food Industry was created in May 1971 by expanding the functions and changing the name of the Agricultural Bank established three years earlier. The bank provided investment and operating credits for food-industry enterprises, state and cooperative farms, and private farmers and financed the distribution of agricultural products within the country.

The Savings and Consignation Bank, originally called the Savings and Loan Bank, held the savings and current accounts of individual citizens. The bank mobilized the cash resources of the population for investment through obligatory periodic transfers of deposited funds to the National Bank.

The Romanian Foreign Trade Bank was established in July 1968. In 1987 its deposits totalled nearly 168 billion lei. The bank collaborated with the Ministry of Finance to obtain and manage foreign credit, and it handled transactions in both foreign currencies and lei for import and export services and tourism. Through strict control of hard-currency allocations, the bank encouraged the substitution of domestic products for imports.

In 1972 eight French banks joined the Foreign Trade Bank in setting up the Paris-based Banque Franco-Roumaine, which had a founding capital of 20 million francs. Later that year, the Anglo-Romanian Bank with a founding capital of US\$7 million was established in London. And in 1976, the Frankfurt-Bucharest Bank AG, with a founding capital of DM20 million was set up in Frankfurt.

### *Credit Policy*

The state banks alone possessed the legal authority to proffer credit, the essential function of which was to ensure the fulfillment of the goals set forth in the national plan. Unlike subsidies from the state budget, credits had to be repaid—with a small interest charge—according to a fixed timetable. Initially, the banks set interest rates at levels high enough merely to cover expenses, because it was not the function of interest to reflect the market value of

money. But on January 1, 1975, a graduated scale of rates went into effect, whereby planned credits ranged from 0.5 to 5 percent; special loans to enable enterprises to meet their payment schedule ranged from 4 to 7 percent; and the rate for overdue loans went as high as 12 percent. Punitive surcharges were levied for delays in bringing investment projects into operation (2 percent) or for failing to free up unused machinery and equipment within six months (6 percent). Plant-modernization loans carried an interest charge of only 1 percent but were limited to 5 million lei per project and had to be repaid within four years.

### *Currency*

In 1989 the official unit of currency, the leu, which consists of 100 bani, was valued at about 14.5 lei per US\$1. In 1954 the government set the gold parity of the leu at 148.1 milligrams (where it remained as of 1989) and on this basis determined the official rate of conversion to Western currencies. But because Romania's centrally planned economy set prices independently of international economic forces, the official exchange rate quickly became divorced from reality. Thus, like the currencies of other Comecon states, the leu became a so-called "soft" currency—one that cannot be used outside the country of issue.

In addition to being a soft currency, the leu had no unitary exchange rate consistently applied for all transactions. Bucharest used a bewildering range of conversion rates in order to pursue various economic objectives, such as fostering exports and tourism. Although the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary), which had loaned hundreds of millions of dollars to Romania in the 1970s, insisted that the policy of multiple exchange rates be discontinued, at least thirteen different rates were still in use in 1982—one rate for imports and twelve for export transactions. According to World Bank (see Glossary) analysts in the late 1980s, however, it appeared that a unified commercial exchange rate for the leu was Bucharest's goal. A separate, bonus exchange rate continued to be offered to tourists. Both the commercial and noncommercial rates tended to remain in effect for long periods without the daily fluctuations that characterize hard currencies.

The state retained a monopoly on foreign exchange. Private citizens could not hold foreign currencies or securities or have bank balances abroad without official permission, nor could they import or export Romanian banknotes. They were forbidden to own or trade in gold, to export jewelry or diamonds, and to engage in foreign merchandise trade. All proceeds earned by foreign trade organizations were surrendered to the Foreign Trade Bank. All hard

currency earnings were consolidated in the Hard Currency Fund, set up in 1988 to prevent foreign trade organizations, ministries, and enterprises from making unofficial hard currency transactions.

On the black market, which thrived throughout the postwar era, especially during the austere 1980s, barter was more effective than the official currency in procuring the most highly sought goods and services. Kent brand cigarettes emerged as the most universally accepted unofficial medium of exchange, a status they could attain because of the state's prohibition against private ownership of hard currencies. The street value of one carton of Kents in 1988 was approximately US\$100. In the countryside, agricultural products became the *de facto* currency.

## **Natural Resources**

### **Land**

The land itself is Romania's most valuable natural resource. All but the most rugged mountainous regions sustain some form of agricultural activity. In 1989 more than 15 million hectares—almost two-thirds of the country's territory—were devoted to agriculture. Arable land accounted for over 41 percent, pasturage about 19 percent, and vineyards and orchards some 3 percent of the total land area.

Romania's soils are generally quite fertile. The best for farming are the humus-rich chernozems (black earth), which account for roughly one-fifth of the country's arable land. Chernozems and red-brown forest soils predominate in the plains of Walachia, Moldavia, and the Banat region—all major grain-growing areas. Soils are thinner and less humus-rich in the mountains and foothills, but they are suitable for vineyards, orchards, and pasturage.

The area under cultivation has increased steadily over the centuries as farming has encroached on forest and pasture areas, marshes have been drained, and irrigation has been brought to the more arid regions. By late 1986, Romania had extended irrigation to roughly one-third of its arable land, and a major campaign had been conceived to drain the Danube Delta and develop it into a vast agro-industrial complex of some 1,440 square kilometers. The area of arable land grew incrementally from about 9.4 million hectares in 1950 to slightly more than 10 million hectares in the late 1980s.

Another strategy to gain arable land was the controversial program of systematization of the countryside. This policy, first proposed in the early 1960s but seriously implemented only after a delay of some twenty years, called for the destruction of more than 7,000 villages and resettlement of the residents into about 550

standardized “agro-industrial centers,” where the farm population could enjoy the benefits of urban life. Only those villages judged economically viable by the authorities were to be retained. Through eradication of villages, fence rows, and reportedly even churches and cemeteries, the government aimed to acquire for agriculture some 348,000 hectares of land.

At the very time the government was attempting to increase the area of arable land, countervailing pressures were exerted by urban development, which consumed large tracts for residential and industrial construction. In May 1968, a law was passed to prohibit the diversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses without the approval of the central government. The law reversed the previous policy of assigning no value to land in calculating the cost of industrial and housing projects. It did not, however, curtail the ideologically driven policy of industrializing the countryside, and some of the country’s most fertile farmland was lost to development.

Postwar farming practices took a heavy toll on the country’s soil resources. It was estimated in the late 1980s that because of unwise cultivation methods, 30 percent of the arable land had suffered serious erosion. Moreover, residual agricultural chemicals had raised soil acidity in many areas.

## **Water**

Along with an abundance of fertile soil, Romanian agriculture benefits from a temperate climate and generally adequate precipitation. The growing season is relatively long—from 180 to 210 days. Rainfall averages 637 millimeters per year, ranging from less than 400 millimeters in Dobruja (see Glossary) and the Danube Delta to over 1,010 millimeters in the mountains. In the main grain-growing regions, annual precipitation averages about 508 to 584 millimeters. Droughts occur periodically and can cause major agricultural losses despite extensive irrigation. The drought of 1985 was particularly damaging.

Despite relatively generous annual precipitation and the presence of numerous streams and rivers in its territory, including the lower course of the Danube, which discharges some 285,000 cubic feet of water per minute into the Black Sea, Romania experienced chronic water shortages throughout the 1980s. Water consumption had increased by over thirteen times during the preceding three decades, taxing reserves to the limit. The 1990 official forecast envisioned consumption of 35 billion cubic meters, very close to nominal reservoir capacity. Large-scale agriculture and heavy industry were the major water users and polluters. Personal consumption was restricted by the growing scarcity of unpolluted

drinking water, which could be obtained from fewer than 20 percent of the major streams.

The Danube and rivers emanating from the Transylvanian Alps and the Carpathians represent an aggregate hydroelectric potential of 83,450 megawatts. Roughly 4,400 megawatts of this potential had been harnessed by the mid-1980s—mostly during the preceding two decades. Important hydroelectric stations were built on the Danube, Argeș, Bistrița, Mare, Olt, Buzău, and Prut rivers (see fig. 3). These stations generated roughly 16 percent of Romania's electricity in 1984. But chronically low reservoir levels in the 1980s, caused by prolonged drought and irrigation's increasing demand for water, severely limited the contribution of hydroelectric power to the national energy balance (see *Energy*, this ch.).

The country's water resources also were an increasingly important transportation medium. The government invested billions of lei in the 1970s and 1980s to develop inland waterways and marine ports. The Danube-Black Sea Canal, opened to traffic in 1984, was the largest and most expensive engineering project in Romanian history. Major investments were made to modernize and expand both inland and marine ports, especially Constanța and the new adjacent facility at Agigea, built at the entrance to the Danube-Black Sea Canal. Another important project—still under construction in the late 1980s—was a seventy-two-kilometer canal linking the capital city, Bucharest, with the Danube (see *Inland Waterways; Maritime Navigation*, this ch.).

## **Forests**

Over the centuries, the harvesting of trees for lumber and fuel and the relentless encroachment of agriculture greatly diminished the forestlands that originally had covered all but the southeastern corner of the country. Nevertheless, in the late 1980s, forests remained a valuable national resource, occupying almost 27 percent of the country's territory. Growing primarily on slopes too steep for cultivation, the most extensive forests were found in the Carpathians and the Transylvanian Alps. Hardwoods such as oak, beech, elm, ash, sycamore, maple, hornbeam, and linden made up 71 percent of total forest reserves, and conifers (fir, spruce, pine, and larch) accounted for the remaining 29 percent. The hardwood species predominated at elevations below 4,600 feet, while conifers flourished at elevations up to 6,000 feet.

Forestry had a long tradition in Romania, and for centuries timber was one of the region's primary exports. After World War II, the industry shifted its focus from raw timber to processed wood products. Increasingly aware of the economic value of the forests,

the government established a Council of Forestry in 1983 to supervise afforestation projects and ensure preservation of existing woodlands. In 1985 afforestation work on a total of 52,850 hectares was completed.

### **Fossil Fuels**

The late 1980s saw the rapid depletion of Romania's extensive reserves of fossil fuels, including oil, natural gas, anthracite, brown coal, bituminous shale, and peat. These hydrocarbons are distributed across more than 63 percent of the country's territory. The major proven oil reserves are concentrated in the southern and eastern Carpathian foothills—particularly Prahova, Argeş, Olt, and Bacău *judeţe*, with more recent discoveries in the southern Moldavian Plateau, the Danube Plain, and Arad *judeţ* (see fig. 1). Despite an ambitious program of offshore exploration, begun in 1976, significant deposits in the Black Sea continental shelf had yet to be discovered as of the late 1980s. Most of the country's natural gas deposits are found in the Transylvanian Plateau. The Southern Carpathians and the Banat hold most of the hard coal reserves, while brown coal is distributed more widely across the country, with major deposits in Bacău and Cluj *judeţe*, the southeastern Carpathian foothills, and the Danube Plain.

Total oil reserves in 1984 were estimated at 214 million tons. Western analysts interpreted consistently lower output figures and Romania's intense search for improved oil-recovery technology as evidence that reserves were being depleted rapidly. By the mid-1980s, comparatively little oil was being burned for heat and electricity generation. Most of the domestically produced crude was being used as feedstock for refining into valuable gasoline, naphtha, and other derivatives.

As oil's share of the energy balance was declining during the 1970s and 1980s, natural gas and coal assumed increasing prominence. In the mid-1970s, Romania's natural gas reserves—the most extensive in Eastern Europe—were estimated at between 200 and 240 billion cubic meters. This resource was all the more valuable because of its high methane content of 98 to 99.5 percent. Natural gas and gas recovered with crude oil fueled about half of the country's thermoelectric power plants and provided feedstock for the chemical industry. Falling natural gas output figures in the 1980s suggested that this valuable resource also was being depleted. Romanian experts themselves predicted that reserves would be exhausted by 2010. The country had to begin importing natural gas from the Soviet Union in the mid-1970s. Annual imports had reached

2.5 billion cubic meters by 1986 and were expected to rise to about 6 billion cubic meters after 1989.

Although total coal reserves were estimated at 6 billion tons in the mid-1970s, much of this amount was low-quality brown coal containing a high percentage of noncombustible material. Only a fraction of the steel industry's considerable demand for coking coal could be covered by domestic sources.

### **Other Minerals**

Romania possesses commercial deposits of a wide range of metallic ores, including iron, manganese, chrome, nickel, molybdenum, aluminum, zinc, copper, tin, titanium, vanadium, lead, gold, and silver. The development of these reserves was a key element of the country's industrialization after World War II. To exploit the ores, the government built numerous mining and enrichment centers, whose output in turn was delivered to the country's large and ever-expanding metallurgical and machine-building industries.

The major known iron ore deposits are found in the Poiana-Ruscă Mountains (a spur of the Transylvanian Alps) and the Banat, Dobruja, and the Harghita Mountains (in the Eastern Carpathians). Though commercially significant, these deposits were unable to satisfy the huge new steel mills that were the centerpiece of Romania's industrial modernization after the mid-1960s. Indeed, by 1980 Romania had to import more than 80 percent of its iron ore. Some experts predicted that domestic iron ore resources would be exhausted by the early 1990s.

Most of the nonferrous metal reserves are concentrated in the northwest, particularly in the Maramureş Mountains (in the Eastern Carpathians) and the Apuseni Mountains (in the Western Carpathians). The Maramureş range contains important deposits of polymetallic sulfides—from which copper, lead, and zinc are obtained—and certain precious metals. The Apuseni range holds silver and some of the richest gold deposits in Europe. Major copper, lead, and zinc deposits also have been discovered in the Bistriţa Mountains, the Banat, and Dobruja. Bauxite is mined in the Oradea area in northwestern Transylvania. Although new mines to extract these ores continued to be developed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the proclaimed goal of self-sufficiency in nonferrous metals by 1985 was unrealistic, considering that in 1980 foreign sources supplied 73 percent of the zinc, 40 percent of the copper, and 23 percent of the lead consumed by Romanian industry.

The country also has commercial reserves of other minerals, which are processed by a large chemical industry that barely existed before World War II. The inorganic chemical industry exploits

sulfur obtained as a metallurgical by-product or refined from gypsum, an abundant mineral. There are large deposits of pure salt at Slănic, Tîrgu Ocna, and Ocna Mureş. Caustic soda, soda ash, chlorine, sulfuric and hydrochloric acid, and phosphate fertilizers are among the chemical products based on domestic raw materials.

## **Labor**

### **Distribution by Economic Sectors**

A prerequisite for rapid economic growth after World War II was the wholesale transfer of labor from agriculture, which had employed 80 percent of the population before the war, to other sectors—primarily to heavy industry. The industrial work force grew by an average of 5 percent per year during the 1950–77 period, as Romania was accomplishing its most dramatic economic development, and industrial output was rising by an average 12.9 percent annually. As late as 1960, 65 percent of the labor force was still engaged in agriculture, with only some 15 percent working in industry and 20 percent in other sectors. But in the course of the following two decades, the labor force would be transformed, as peasants left the land in the wake of agricultural collectivization to take better-paid jobs in the cities. Between 1971 and 1978, the outflow of rural labor accelerated to 11 percent per year—more than twice the rate of the 1950s and 1960s.

By 1980 agriculture employed no more than 29 percent of the labor force, while industry occupied 36 percent and other sectors the remaining 35 percent. By this time the rural exodus had slowed, and although half the population continued to reside in rural areas, the reserves of able-bodied young men in agriculture had been reduced drastically. As a result, targets for expansion of the industrial labor force were unattainable, and agriculture was becoming the domain of the elderly and women (see table 5, Appendix).

### **Unpaid Labor**

The rapid realignment of the work force created difficulties for agriculture, particularly during planting and harvest seasons. To compensate for the loss of farm workers, the government followed the Stalinist practice of mobilizing soldiers, young people, and even factory workers to “donate” their labor. Throughout the communist era, these groups have supplied unpaid labor that made possible the massive civil engineering projects launched after World War II. In 1988 more than 720,000 high school and college students and 30,000 teachers were detailed to agricultural work sites, and

another 50,000 students and 2,000 teachers “donated” labor at construction projects.

Throughout the 1980s, the government appeared to be growing more reliant on compulsory labor, issuing a decree in August 1985 requiring all citizens to make labor and financial contributions to public works projects. At the same time, the military’s role in the economy was also becoming more prominent. Soldiers worked on such important national projects as the Danube-Black Sea Canal, the Iron Gate hydroelectric project, and the Bucharest subway, as well as on more mundane details such as repairing streets and bringing in the harvest. After 1985, when Ceausescu militarized the electric power industry, army officers even became involved in the management of the civilian economy.

### **Demographics**

Romania had a population of more than 23 million in 1987, but the active work force numbered about 10.7 million—an increase of only 550,000 workers since 1975. Women accounted for only about 40 percent of the labor force in 1988 and therefore represented the largest reserve of underused talent. After the mid-1970s, the rate of growth of the industrial labor force dropped significantly compared with the previous quarter century, falling from 5.1 percent in 1976 to 2.3 percent in 1980. Moreover, demographers forecast a growth of only 2.5 to 3.6 percent for the entire Eighth Five-Year Plan (1986–90).

Three major trends precipitated the slowdown in the growth of the labor force. First, the reserve of underused rural labor that could be transferred to the industrial sector was nearing depletion; the countryside had lost nearly half a million men in the four years between 1976 and 1979 alone. Second, Romania’s birthrate—after Poland’s, the highest in Eastern Europe—declined as urbanization proceeded, and despite the government’s pronatalist policy, this trend was not reversed. And finally, large numbers of skilled workers were emigrating.

As in all of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Romania’s fertility level dropped significantly as urbanization brought more women into the work force and abortion became available on demand. In 1958 112,000 abortions were performed, but by 1965, the figure had skyrocketed to 1,115,000 annually, or approximately 4 abortions for every live birth. Realizing that a lower birthrate would inhibit economic growth, the government began instituting a pronatalist policy and in 1966 declared an end to abortion on demand. But abortions—legal and illegal—continued to be performed at a worrisome rate, reaching 421,386 in 1983. A relatively

ungenerous incentive program to promote childbearing, instituted in the 1960s, had little positive effect. As a result, the birthrate declined steadily after 1967 and by the early 1980s had become a serious concern for Romania's economic planners.

Compared with the other communist regimes of Eastern Europe, Romania appeared to have a rather liberal emigration policy, but in the 1980s applicants for emigration increasingly were subjected to harassment and persecution. Most of the once-thriving Jewish community had been allowed to emigrate to Israel. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, nearly 1,000 ethnic Germans were permitted to depart each month for the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). Large numbers of ethnic Hungarians illegally crossed into Hungary to escape economic and cultural oppression. Western diplomats in Belgrade claimed that as many as 5,000 refugees crossed into Yugoslavia each year, and that in 1988 some 400 persons were shot to death and many others drowned trying to swim across the Danube. Those seeking permission to leave legally often lost their jobs, housing, and health benefits and were forced to wait long periods for their exit papers. These harsh policies reflected the seriousness with which the regime regarded the loss of the country's skilled workers and its concern for the overall deterioration of the labor pool.

### **Productivity**

Romania traditionally had one of the lowest levels of labor productivity in Europe. Agricultural units before World War II were small-scale and inefficient. Because of the high density of the rural population, much of the farmland had been subdivided into small parcels, making mechanization impractical. As a result, per capita farm output was low. Industrial labor productivity was somewhat higher. Employing less than 10 percent of the labor force in 1938, industry then produced 31 percent of total national income. The classic extensive development strategy pursued after the war accomplished gains in industrial output as a result of massive capital and labor inputs, not because of improved labor productivity and efficiency. But beginning in the late 1970s, as labor reserves dwindled, continued economic growth required substantially improved productivity. The government's inability to make significant gains in this area and to make the transition to an intensive development strategy was a primary cause of the economic crisis of the 1980s.

The postwar modernization process inevitably brought improvements in labor productivity in most sectors. Agriculture, however, because of the rapid loss of many of its most productive workers,

underinvestment and neglect by the central planners, and peasant demoralization in the aftermath of forced collectivization, remained one of the least efficient sectors of the economy. Although agriculture still employed some 28 percent of the labor force in the mid-1980s, it accounted for only 14 percent of national income. And in 1980, Romania ranked no better than twentieth of twenty-three European countries in terms of output per hectare of farmland. Industrial labor productivity, on the other hand, improved steadily through the first three decades of communist rule, growing an average 7.9 percent per year between 1950 and 1977—primarily because of the acquisition of modern machinery and technology. These improvements notwithstanding, in 1985 Romania ranked last among the East European Comecon countries in terms of per capita gross national product (GNP—see Glossary).

Labor productivity growth rates slowed noticeably toward the end of the 1970s. The annual target of 9.2 percent for the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1976–80) proved unattainable. Instead, the government claimed to have achieved an annual growth of 7.2 percent—still a respectable accomplishment. The reliability of that figure, however, was questioned by Western analysts, who were becoming increasingly distrustful of official Romanian statistics. During the decade of the 1980s, the government set the unrealistic goal of doubling labor productivity by 1990. But this target would not be met, as the economy took a severe downturn. Western sources estimated, for example, that 1988 gross industrial output was no higher than and possibly lower than that of 1987, which in turn might have been lower than output in 1986. Because the government had predicated most of its ambitious economic growth targets on improved labor productivity, the poor results in gross industrial output indicated that the labor situation had not improved.

A number of factors underlay the chronically low productivity of Romanian labor. Foremost among these were the extreme degree of economic centralization, which gave workers little input in decisions that affected their working conditions and incomes, and the absence of rewards for personal initiative. The labor force endured low wages, few bonuses, ungenerous pensions, long workweeks, poor living conditions, and a general sense of powerlessness.

With an average per capita annual income of approximately US\$1,000 in 1987, Romanian workers remained among the most poorly paid in Europe. Low labor remuneration, along with high taxes, and neglect of the consumer goods sector were deliberate government policies designed to accumulate funds for investment in the economy. Thus, while national income (see Glossary) rose

an impressive 9.2 percent per annum between 1951 and 1982, wages during the same period grew by only 4.9 percent. In 1983 Ceaușescu, frustrated by persistent worker apathy, abolished fixed wages in favor of a policy that tied a worker's income directly to plan fulfillment by the enterprise. Previously every worker had been assured of receiving 80 percent of his or her nominal salary regardless of performance, with the remaining 20 percent dependent on the individual's productivity.

Rather than spurring the worker to produce more, the new remuneration policy in fact caused further demoralization because it invariably lowered wages. For example incomes fell by an average 40 percent at the Heavy Machinery Plant in Cluj-Napoca after the new policy went into effect. Workers were now being penalized for factors beyond their control, such as parts shortages and power failures. Their reaction was predictable. Passive resistance in the form of sloppy workmanship, excessive absenteeism, and drinking on the job became commonplace. More alarming to the government, however, were the scattered but sizable strikes and demonstrations that were occurring with greater frequency in the late 1980s. Across the country there were reports of work stoppages in protest of the new wage law. Following the November 1987 outbreak of riots at the Red Flag Truck and Tractor Plant in Brașov—precipitated by low wages, food shortages, and poor working conditions—Ceaușescu announced that pay raises for all industrial workers and larger pensions would be phased in by the end of 1990. After the raises, the average worker theoretically would be earning 3,285 lei per month, and average monthly pensions would pay some 2,000 lei.

The Ceaușescu regime's approach to the problem of labor apathy in the late 1980s ran counter to the wave of reforms that were being tested in other Comecon nations at that time. Rather than encouraging workers with monetary incentives that recognized differences in skills and productivity, in 1988 and 1989 Ceaușescu offered modest wages that were graduated so that wage differentials between the highest- and lowest-paid workers were actually reduced. Wage hikes for the latter, averaging 33 percent, went into effect in August 1988, whereas increases of less than 10 percent for workers in the higher wage brackets were not scheduled to take effect until 1989. Instead of offering concessions that would improve their standard of living, Ceaușescu continued to exhort the workers to sacrifice for the building of socialism (see Glossary) and a better life for future generations. But these traditional motivational appeals were becoming less effective as life grew harder for most citizens.

Workers increasingly felt alienated from the institutions that were supposed to be defending their interests, particularly the PCR and its labor organ, the General Union of Trade Unions of Romania (Uniunea Generală a Sindicatelor din România—UGSR), which they viewed as merely another control mechanism, a conduit for the downward flow of directives from the central planners. A survey taken shortly before the economic downturn of the late 1970s revealed that more than 63 percent of a sampling of 6,200 young Romanian workers felt their union was not representing their interests.

Because of the late emergence of a working class, Romania had little experience with grass-roots labor movements. In 1979, however, Paul Goma, a prominent exiled dissident, and three compatriots inside Romania—Vasile Paraschiv, Theorghe Brașoveneau, and Ionel Căna—led an ill-fated attempt to organize an independent union. The PCR would not tolerate such a threat to its control of labor, and within a month, the three principal leaders had been arrested and the nascent union movement had been, at least temporarily, crushed.

In addition to low wages and nonrepresentation of the workers' interests, several other developments contributed to the growing disaffection of labor. For years the government had promised a shortening of the workweek, which was supposed to have been cut to forty-five hours by 1985. Although a forty-six-hour week was proclaimed in 1982, in practice most Romanians continued to work forty-eight hours or more. Adding to their misery, average workers wasted hours each day waiting in line for basic foodstuffs, gasoline, and other consumer items that were becoming ever more difficult to obtain.

Poor placement practices created immediate job dissatisfaction and were a primary cause of the high labor turnover rate. A survey of some 6,000 workers aged fourteen to thirty, taken in the relatively prosperous 1970s, revealed that more than half wanted to leave their jobs, and about one-quarter had already done so at least once. The problem of high turnover was most acute in the construction industry, where more than 28 percent of the work force quit their jobs during the 1982–86 period, and in the mining industry, which reportedly was hit even harder. To discourage turnover, the new wage system announced in September 1983 contained a provision that required newly hired workers to remain with an enterprise for at least five years. Failing that provision, they would forfeit a large share of their salaries, which had been withheld in compulsory savings accounts, and they would have to repay the enterprise for training expenses. But punitive monetary

measures of this type proved ineffective in an economy that offered workers few consumer goods on which to spend their money.

## **Foreign Trade**

### **Goals and Policy**

During the postwar era, Romania used foreign trade effectively as an instrument to enhance the development of the national economy and to pursue its goal of political and economic independence. In this context, earning a foreign-trade surplus was not a primary concern until the late 1970s. The primary goal, rather, was acquisition of the modern technologies and raw materials needed to create and sustain a highly diversified industrial plant. The export program was geared to earning the required hard currency to purchase these materials and technologies. But in the 1980s, the focus of foreign trade was shifted to curtail imports and run large hard-currency surpluses to repay the debt that had accrued in the previous two decades. Enterprises that produced for export received preferential treatment in resource allocation and higher prices for their output.

Foreign trade was a state monopoly. Trade policy was established by the PCR and the government, and its implementation was the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Economic Cooperation. Subordinate to the ministry were special state agencies—foreign-trade organizations—that conducted all import and export transactions. In 1969 the ministry was reorganized to become essentially a coordinating agency, and within a year only three foreign-trade organizations remained under its direct control. This decentralization was short-lived, however, as the number of foreign-trade organizations was reduced from fifty-six in 1972 to forty in 1975, and all but four of these were returned to the ministry's control.

### **Trading Partners**

Before World War II, the West accounted for more than 80 percent of Romania's foreign trade. During the postwar period up to 1959, however, nearly 90 percent of its trade involved Comecon nations. The Soviet Union was by far the most important trading partner during this period. But the PCR's insistence on autarkic development led Romania into direct confrontation with the rest of the Soviet bloc. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had envisioned an international division of labor in Comecon that would have relegated Romania to the role of supplier of foodstuffs and raw materials for the more industrially



*International Trade Fair Building, Bucharest*  
Courtesy Scott Edelman

developed members, such as the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and Czechoslovakia. In April 1964, however, General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej threatened to take Romania out of Comecon unless that organization recognized the right of each member to pursue its own course of economic development.

As early as the 1950s, Gheorghiu-Dej had begun to cultivate economic relations with the West, which by 1964 accounted for nearly 40 percent of Romania's imports and almost one-third of its exports. When Ceaușescu came to power in 1965, the West was supplying almost half of the machinery and technology needed to build a modern industrial base. In 1971 Romania joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT—see Glossary) and the following year it won admission to the IMF and the World Bank. In 1975 Romania gained most-favored-nation trading status from the United States.

Between 1973 and 1977, Romania continued to increase its trade with the noncommunist world and initiated economic relations with the less-developed countries. In 1973 about 47.3 percent of its foreign trade involved the capitalist developed nations, with which it incurred a large trade deficit that necessitated heavy borrowing from Western banks. During this period, major obligations to the IMF (US\$159.1 million) and the World Bank (US\$1,502.8 million) were incurred.

To gain greater access to nonsocialist markets, Romania set up numerous joint trading companies. By 1977 twenty-one such ventures were in operation, including sixteen in Western Europe, three in Asia, and one each in North America and Africa. Romania held at least 50 percent of the start-up capital in these companies, which promoted its manufactured goods and agricultural products abroad. In 1980 Romania became the first Comecon nation to reach an agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC), with which it established a joint commission for trade and other matters.

During the 1980s, however, trade relations with the West soured. Ceaușescu blamed the IMF and "unjustifiably high" interest rates charged by Western banks for his country's economic plight. For its part, the West charged Romania with unfair trade practices, resistance to needed economic reform, and human rights abuses. In 1988 the United States suspended most-favored-nation status, and the following year, the EEC declined to negotiate a new trade agreement with Romania. Meanwhile, attempts to increase trade with the less-developed countries had also met with disappointment. After peaking in 1981 at nearly 29 percent of total foreign trade, relations with these countries deteriorated, largely because the Iran-Iraq War had cut off delivery of crude oil from Iran.

Frustrated by the downturn in trade with the West and the less-developed countries, Romania reluctantly returned to the Soviet fold during the 1980s. By 1986 socialist countries accounted for 53 percent of its foreign trade. But the Ceaușescu regime continued to assert its independence, refusing to endorse the Comecon program that would allow enterprises to circumvent routine bureaucratic channels and establish direct business relationships with enterprises in other member countries. And he refused to cooperate in Comecon attempts to establish mutual convertibility of the currencies of the member states (see table 6, Appendix).

### **Structure of Exports and Imports**

The assortment of export products changed dramatically during the postwar era. Before the war, raw materials and agricultural products accounted for nearly all export income, but in the 1970s and 1980s, the primary exports were metallurgical products, especially iron and steel; machinery, including machine tools, locomotives and rolling stock, ships, oil-field equipment, aircraft, weapons, and electronic equipment; refined oil products; chemical fertilizers; processed wood products; and agricultural commodities (see table 7, Appendix).

## Retirement of the Foreign Debt

After 1983 Ceaușescu refused to seek additional loans from the IMF or the World Bank and severely curtailed imports from hard-currency nations while maximizing exports—to the great detriment of the standard of living. As a consequence, Romania ran balance-of-trade surpluses as large as US\$2 billion per year throughout the rest of the decade. With great fanfare, Ceaușescu announced the retirement of the foreign debt in April 1989, proclaiming that Romania had finally achieved full economic and political independence. Shortly thereafter, the GNA enacted legislation proposed by Ceaușescu to prohibit state bodies—including banks—from seeking foreign credits.

## Industry

### Geographic Distribution

The development program sought to distribute industrial capacity evenly across the country. This policy of disaggregation often appeared counterproductive to western observers. For example, by siting a vast steel complex at Călărași, some of the most valuable farmland in the country had to be sacrificed. But the PCR argued that dissemination of industry into the countryside was necessary to transform Romania from a peasant society to a proletarian society, one of the prerequisites for attaining communism.

The campaign to industrialize all regions was moderately successful. In 1968 nearly half of the forty *județe* reported per capita industrial output of less than 10,000 lei, but by 1990 no *județ* was expected to produce less than 50,000 lei per capita. In addition to the Bucharest agglomeration, which accounted for nearly one-seventh of total industrial output in 1986, major industrial centers had been built in many other regions of the country. Measured in value of industrial output, the ten leading *județe* in 1986 were Bucharest, Prahova, Brașov, Argeș, Bacău, Galați, Timiș, Hunedoara, Sibiu, and Cluj—in that order. These ten *județe* accounted for 51.2 percent of industrial production in 1986. The ten most industrially developed *județe*, with 48.2 percent of all fixed industrial assets in 1986, were Bucharest, Galați, Prahova, Hunedoara, Brașov, Gorj, Argeș, Bacău, Dîmbovița, and Dolj. On the other hand, the ten least developed *județe*, Satu Mare, Botoșani, Călărași, Ialomița, Bistrița-Năsăud, Covasna, Vrancea, Harghita, Sălaj, and Vaslui, had only 8.9 percent of the fixed industrial assets.

## Energy

### *Crisis of the 1980s*

Despite significant energy resources and an extensive industry to exploit them, the sector performed poorly during the 1980s, seriously damaging economic performance as a whole and causing great hardship for the population. In 1986, for example, electricity production fell 2.6 percent below target; this poor performance resulted in an estimated 4.7 percent reduction in national income. Not only was the goal of energy self-sufficiency by 1990 not fulfilled, all trends indicated that in the 1990s Romania would be increasingly dependent on imported fuels and electricity—especially from the Soviet Union. The sector performed so poorly that Ceaușescu issued a decree in 1985 militarizing the energy industry. That decree stated that a military commander and subordinate cadres would be assigned to each power plant to improve its efficiency and ensure uninterrupted operation.

The energy program for the 1980s called for drastically reducing reliance on oil and gas, while increasing the contribution of coal, hydroelectric power, nuclear power, and nonconventional sources (see table 8, Appendix). Romanian industry was among the world's least energy-efficient. Measures to reduce waste were largely unsuccessful, and the population bore the brunt of conservation, even though private households accounted for only about 6 percent of total consumption. During the 1980s, the government strictly rationed electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and other oil products, levying heavy fines for exceeding ration allotments.

### *Electric Power*

Enormous investments made in the sector following World War II resulted in dramatic gains in capacity and output (see table 9, Appendix). Despite the impressive growth in output, averaging 8.3 percent annually between 1966 and 1985, however, the power industry did not keep pace with overall industrial growth, which averaged 9.5 percent annually during the same period. The result was an acute and worsening energy deficit.

Thermal power plants burning fossil fuels accounted for more than 80 percent of electricity output in the mid-1980s, and the development program envisioned an installed capacity of 16,518 megawatts at such plants by 1990. The largest thermal plants operating in the mid-1980s were located at Rovinari in Gorj *judet* (1,720 megawatts), Turceni in Gorj *judet* (1,650 megawatts), Brăila (1,290 megawatts), Mintia in Hunedoara *judet* (1,260 megawatts), Craiova (980 megawatts), Deva (840 megawatts), Luduș in Cluj *judet* (800

megawatts), Borzești in Botoșani *județ* (650 megawatts), Galați (320 megawatts), and Bucharest (300 megawatts). After 1965, thermal plants producing both heat and electricity were favored, and by 1984 their combined capacity exceeded 6,100 megawatts—roughly one-third of total installed capacity. A serious problem for thermal plants during the 1980s was the deteriorating quality of lignite fuel, which was damaging equipment and causing frequent shutdowns. At the start of the 1988–89 peak-demand season, only 45 to 50 percent of total installed generating capacity was operational.

Capitalizing on the country's considerable hydroelectric potential, the government built some 100 hydroelectric plants between 1965 and 1985, bringing total capacity to 4,421 megawatts. Nevertheless, it was estimated in early 1989 that only 35 percent of the technically feasible hydroelectric potential had been tapped. The most important project was the 2,100-megawatt Iron Gates I complex on the Danube. Built in collaboration with Yugoslavia, which operated a twin plant on the right bank, the project was completed in 1972. In 1977 the two countries began work on a much smaller Iron Gates II project (sixteen twenty-seven-megawatt generating units). Other important projects were the 220-megawatt Gheorghiu-Dej plant on the Argeș River and a chain of fourteen smaller plants downstream with a combined capacity of 179 megawatts; the V.I. Lenin complex of twelve plants on the Bistrița River; a chain of plants along the 737-kilometer Olt River totaling more than 1,200 megawatts; a chain of sixteen plants on the Mare River with a total capacity of 536 megawatts; and numerous stations along the Buzău, Jiu, Prut, and other rivers.

To offset declining petroleum and gas reserves, the PCR pinned its hopes on nuclear power. But these hopes were partially frustrated by repeated setbacks in the construction of the first nuclear power plant at Cernavodă, which appeared unlikely to become operational before 1992. The Cernavodă plant would use five 660-megawatt Canadian-built reactors. The Canadians also had been engaged to build a nuclear station at Victoria-Brașov. In 1982 a contract was signed with the Soviet Union to build the Moldova nuclear plant, which would have three 1,000-megawatt reactors. And preparatory work began in March 1986 for construction of a nuclear plant at Piatra Neamț, to be equipped largely by the Soviet Union. As late as 1985, the government was anticipating that nuclear plants would be supplying 20 percent of the nation's electricity by 1990, when some 4,500 megawatts of capacity would be on line, but the long-range goal of building sixteen nuclear plants by 2000 appeared unattainable.

Geothermal, solar, wind, methane, and small hydroelectric installations produced the energy equivalent of nearly 450,000 tons of conventional fuel during the first three years of the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1986-90). The plan called for starting up some 240 alternative-energy installations during this period, including 125 solar and 70 methane plants. Methane accounted for over 80 percent of nonconventional energy production. In 1989 alternative energy sources were expected to double their output. The development program anticipated that such sources would contribute one-fifth of total energy capacity in 1995, when more than 60 percent of the geothermal, nearly 50 percent of the methane, and 63 percent of the small-stream hydroelectric potential would have been harnessed.

A transmission grid of 110-, 220-, and 400-kilovolt lines with a total length of about 27,000 kilometers in the mid-1980s distributed electricity throughout the country. Integrated into Comecon's Peace Unified Power System, the Romanian network was connected to the national grids of all neighboring states. In 1988 a 750-kilovolt transmission line built jointly with the Soviet Union and Bulgaria delivered some 5 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity to Romania from the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Station.

### *Oil and Gas*

With the largest petroleum reserves in Eastern Europe, Romania was a major oil producer and exporter throughout much of the twentieth century. The oil extraction industry, developed primarily by German, United States, British, and Dutch companies, was the forerunner of the country's belated industrialization. In 1950 oil satisfied nearly half of total energy needs. Peak production was reached in 1976, gradually declining in subsequent years, as many of the country's 200 oil fields began nearing depletion and discovery of new reserves waned. Increasingly large quantities of crude had to be imported, and in 1979 imports surpassed domestic production for the first time. Despite an accelerated exploration program, with average drilling depths increasing to 8,000 to 10,000 meters, oil output continued to decline in the 1980s.

Beginning in the late 1970s, Romania became one of only ten countries producing offshore oil-drilling rigs. In 1988 seven such platforms were operating in the Black Sea under the supervision of the Constanța-based Petromar enterprise to develop hydrocarbon reserves in the continental shelf.

During the 1970s, Romania invested heavily in developing an outsized oil-refining industry just as domestic petroleum production was beginning to decline and the world market price for crude

was skyrocketing. Some observers estimated that by 1980 the country was losing as much as US\$900,000 per day by exporting oil products derived from imported crude. But because these products found a ready market in the West—they accounted for 40 percent of exports to the West in the late 1980s—Romania continued large-scale processing of imported crude to earn hard currency. By 1988 domestic crude output had fallen to 9.4 million tons, while refining capacity stood at some 30 to 33 million tons annually. To keep the refineries running, ever larger volumes of crude had to be imported—first from members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), but after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, from the Soviet Union. Soviet crude deliveries reached about 6 million tons in 1986. Under the terms of a barter arrangement, Romania was to receive at least 5 million tons of Soviet crude annually during the 1986–90 period in exchange for oil-drilling equipment and food products.

The natural gas industry was unable to offset depletion of known reserves, and output declined from 1,216 billion cubic feet in 1976 to 940 billion cubic feet in 1986. Some Western experts believed that Romanian reserves could be exhausted as early as 1990. After it had begun importing gas from the Soviet Union in the mid-1970s, Romania obtained incrementally larger shipments; in 1986 it imported 2.5 billion cubic meters of Soviet gas. For its participation in projects to develop Soviet gas resources, Romania was expected to receive shipments of at least 6 billion cubic meters annually after 1989. In addition, as payment for transit rights for a 200-kilometer gas pipeline across Dobruja to Bulgaria, Romania would be receiving an unspecified amount of Soviet gas for a twenty-five-year period.

### *Coal*

The energy program of the 1970s and 1980s aimed for dramatic increases in coal output to compensate for the reduced role of oil and natural gas in power production. The use of oil and gas in electricity generation was projected to drop from 50 percent in 1981 to 5 percent in 1990. When Romania's energy vulnerability had been revealed by the stoppage of crude oil shipments from Iran in the late 1970s, Ceaușescu launched a campaign to expand coal production rapidly. Because of labor unrest in the Jiu Valley, the primary coal-mining region, he decided to develop other coal fields. But the coal from the new mines turned out to be of poorer quality and had a lower caloric content. Although a total of thirty-five new open-pit and underground mines began operating during the 1982–85 period, the initial output target of 86 million tons annually

by 1985 had to be revised to 64 million tons, and actual production amounted to just 44 million tons. Even as late as 1988, only 58.8 million tons were mined. Poor mine-development methods, numerous accidents, pit flooding, equipment failure, and high labor turnover were the principal causes of the industry's disappointing performance.

Coal production could not keep up with industrial needs. Nearly three-fourths of coal output was burned by large thermoelectric power plants located at or near the major coal basins. Large quantities of coking coal had to be imported from the Soviet Union. In 1989 Hancock Mining Company of Australia signed a contract to deliver up to 6 million tons of coking coal annually for a twelve-year period.

### **Machine Building**

Contributing about 35 percent of total industrial output in the 1980s, machine building had become the largest industrial sector. The Soviet Union and Comecon helped set up and outfit machine-building plants in the 1950s, but during the 1960s Romania began acquiring technology and know-how from the West. In the 1980s, however, many manufacturing ventures initiated with Western partners in the previous decade were on shaky ground or had already failed. As a rule, capitalist enterprises found both the output and quality of goods produced by these ventures unsatisfactory. Because of restrictions on imports, domestic industry was required to satisfy nearly 90 percent of the country's machinery and equipment needs during the 1980s.

In terms of both volume and diversity of output, the machinery sector was impressive. In 1982 Romania ranked tenth in the world in the production of machine tools and was the world's largest exporter of railroad freight cars and the third largest exporter of oil-field equipment. It was one of the few countries to build offshore-drilling platforms. A symbol of industrial sophistication, the giant rigs were assembled at the Galați shipyard using domestically manufactured components. And great strides had been made in the production of aircraft, electronic and electrical equipment, ships, and ground vehicles.

### **Aircraft Industry**

The aircraft industry in Romania dates from 1925, when the first airplane factory began operation in Brașov. Following World War II, the few production facilities not retooled for other purposes built only light planes and gliders. But in 1968, in keeping with PCR aspirations of economic autonomy, the government

revived production of heavy aircraft and established the National Center of the Romanian Aircraft Industry under the Ministry of Machine Building. The center oversaw the operation of airframe plants in Craiova, Bacău, Bucharest, and Braşov, and the Turbomecanica plant in Bucharest, where all the jet engines for Romanian-built planes were manufactured.

Romania was able to acquire both Western and Soviet technology to manufacture modern aircraft. The most successful projects involving such technology transfer included the Soviet-designed Yak-52 piston-engine two-seater (the primary trainer used in the Soviet Union) and Ka-126 agricultural-use helicopter; the Rombac 1-11 airliner, built under license from British Aerospace using a fuselage designed by British Airways and a Rolls-Royce engine; Viper engines built under license from Rolls-Royce; and the French-designed IAR-316 Allouette III and IAR-330 Puma helicopters. A noteworthy example of homegrown aircraft design was the IAR-93 Orao combat aircraft and a later model, the IAR-99, which were developed jointly with Yugoslavia.

### *Automotive Industry*

In 1965 a fledgling automotive industry produced only 3,653 passenger cars. In the 1980s, the industry consisted of three large auto assembly plants (at Piteşti, Craiova, and Cîmpulung in Argeş *judet*), eight subassembly enterprises, and more than 100 automotive parts factories. Production in 1988 amounted to 121,400 passenger cars and 17,400 trucks—well below the target set forth in the Eighth Five-Year Plan, which had anticipated an annual production of 365,000 automobiles by 1990.

A plant in Piteşti began assembling Dacia passenger cars in 1968 under license from Renault and turned out its millionth unit in 1985. In 1986 an affiliated plant in Timişoara began building a subcompact, the Dacia 500, using exclusively Romanian-designed and Romanian-produced components; the plant expected the car to compete on the world market beginning in 1990. Other automotive centers in the 1980s were Craiova (Oltcit automobiles produced under license from Citroën); Cîmpulung (Aro cross-country vehicles); Braşov (trucks and tractors); Brăila (earthmovers); and Bucharest (vans and panel trucks). In 1989 negotiations were under way to set up a joint venture with two Japanese corporations to manufacture buses and trucks at a factory in Bucharest for sale to third-world countries.

Between 50 and 80 percent of the automotive industry's output during the 1980s was exported. Poor quality control, however, damaged the international reputation of Romanian vehicles. Hungary,

a primary client, complained that 60 to 70 percent of Dacia cars delivered in 1986 were defective and required repairs before they could be sold to the public.

### *Locomotives and Rolling Stock*

Claiming to be the world's largest exporter of railroad cars, Romania sold roughly 70 percent of its output to foreign clients during the 1980s, and during the 1970-84 period it exported more than 100,000 freight cars, 3,000 passenger coaches, and 1,500 locomotives. The Soviet Union bought the lion's share, including the entire output of 70-ton and 105-ton freight cars. The August 23 Machinery Plant in Bucharest, the largest manufacturing facility in the country, was a major producer of diesel-electric locomotives and railroad cars. Other important plants were located in Craiova in Olt *judet*, Arad, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Caracal, Iași, and several other cities. In the mid-1980s, a large new plant was built at Caracal to produce grain cars for export to the Soviet Union in exchange for electricity.

### *Machine Tools*

Annual production of machine tools in the two decades after 1965 expanded more than six-fold in terms of tonnage. At the same time, ever more sophisticated units were manufactured, and the monetary value of output rose by a factor of thirty-one. During the 1980s in particular, Romania pushed to replace imported machine-tool technology with its own products and began designing and building high-precision units featuring numerical control, automatic lines, and flexible processing cells. The Scientific Research and Technological Engineering Institute for Machine Tools, established in 1966, coordinated a successful research and design program that placed Romania among the world's top ten machine-tool manufacturers in the 1980s. Romania manufactured 35.5 percent of the universal and specialized machine tools on the Comecon product list—second only to the Soviet Union.

### *Computers and Automation Technology*

The high-status automation-technology and computer industries received priority treatment during the 1970s and 1980s. Plants began producing a wide range of computers, peripherals, industrial electronic measuring equipment, and electronic control systems for domestic consumption and export—primarily to other Comecon and Third-World countries. In 1973 the United States firm Control Data Corporation set up a joint venture with the Bucharest Industrial Central for Electronics and Automation—known as the

Rom-Control-Data Company—to manufacture and market computer disk drives and printers. The joint venture was among the most successful operating on Romanian territory and was earning an annual profit of 7 to 8 percent in the late 1980s. More than a dozen major automation-technology plants and research centers were located in Bucharest by the mid-1980s, and facilities had also been built in such cities as Timișoara and Cluj-Napoca. In the late 1980s the Bucharest Computer Enterprise was producing fourth-generation Independent microcomputers, and its Felix models found application in machine-tool control, data transmission, and robotics. Romania intended to double its production of computer equipment during the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

### *Electrical Engineering*

Nearly half of Romania's electricity output was generated by Soviet equipment, and the Piatra Neamț nuclear plant, the construction of which began in 1986, was expected to use mostly Soviet-supplied components. It was not until 1970 that domestic industry was able to manufacture steam turbines larger than 6 megawatts, but by the 1980s Romania was producing 330-megawatt steam turbines, hydraulic turbines of all sizes, boilers, nuclear reactor components, transformers, and other power-engineering equipment. By then Romania had become the largest foreign supplier of electric power transformers to the Soviet Union. The major power-engineering plants included the Bucharest Heavy Machinery Plant, the Reșița Machine-Building Plant, and the Vulcan enterprise in Bucharest.

### *Shipbuilding*

After the mid-1960s, the shipbuilding program developed rapidly, as the industry made the transition from small-tonnage vessels to huge bulk-cargo and special-purpose ships. By the late 1980s, Constanța, the country's most important shipyard, was building 165,000-deadweight-ton ore carriers, 150,000-deadweight-ton oil tankers, sea-going railroad ferry ships, and offshore-drilling platforms. Other important shipbuilding centers were Mangalia (site of Romania's largest naval base) and several cities along the Danube—Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Oltenița, Giurgiu, Brăila, Galați, and Tulcea—that built river craft and smaller ocean-going ships. In 1989 the Galați shipyard launched an 8,000-deadweight-ton roll-on/roll-off (Ro-Ro) container carrier—the first of its kind built in the country.

### *Metallurgy*

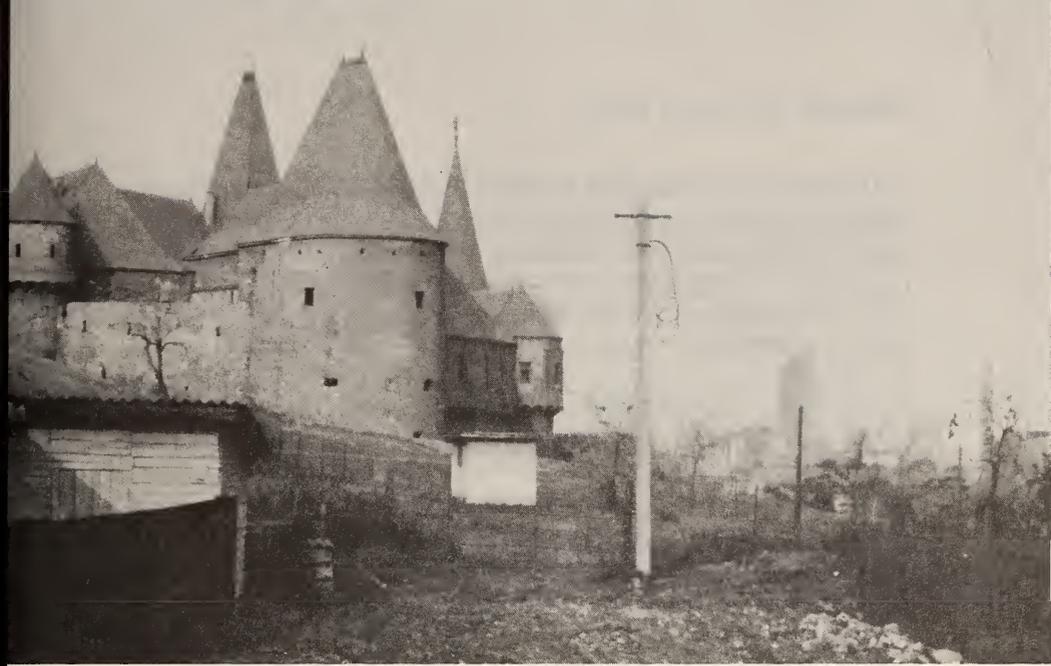
Attaining self-sufficiency in steel to supply the vital machine-

building industry was a primary economic goal after World War II. It was Romania's determination to pursue that goal and to build the Galați steelworks that precipitated the clash with Khrushchev and Comecon in 1964. Steel output rose from 550,000 tons in 1950 to 1.8 million tons in 1960 to 6.5 million tons in 1970. Despite this impressive growth, production fell short of demand, and the steel was of insufficient quality for many machine-building applications. Therefore the government decided in the early 1970s to build a state-of-the-art steelworks at Tîrgoviște using West German technology. In the second half of the decade, another large complex was built at Călărași—again with Western technology. But the industry failed to reach its 1980 production target of 18 million tons, as the country headed into a general economic decline. Production in 1985 was 13.8 million tons, and in 1988 it was 14.3 million tons—still below target but sufficient to place Romania among the world's top ten producers on a per capita basis.

Romania also imported Soviet technology. Using Soviet rolling mills delivered in 1985, the Galați steelworks and the Republica works in Bucharest began manufacturing 1,420-millimeter seamless steel pipe for Soviet gas pipelines; Romania was the only non-Soviet Comecon member to obtain this technology. In the late 1980s, the Soviets also agreed to equip a new steel plant at Slatina.

The Soviet Union also became the chief foreign supplier of raw materials for the steel industry, including iron ore and coking coal. Because of its participation in the Krivoy Rog iron-ore development project, Romania was assured of receiving 27 to 30 percent of output from that complex up to the year 2000. Australia was another promising supplier; the Hancock Mining Company signed a contract to improve the ore-transloading facility at Constanța and to deliver 53 million tons of iron ore between 1988 and 2000.

Nonferrous metallurgy, which dates to pre-Roman times, became increasingly important after World War II. Output during the period of 1966–82 increased an average 8.1 percent annually. Nonferrous metals increased their share of total industrial output from 3.2 percent in 1966 to 4.0 percent in 1982. Following World War II, Romania built flotation plants at six new sites and modernized existing facilities. Major centers of the industry included Brănești in Galați *județ*, Baia Mare, Copșa Mică in Sibiu *județ*, Zlatna in Alba *județ*, Tulcea, Oradea, Slatina, and Moldova Nouă in Caraș-Severin *județ*. The copper and aluminum industries received special attention. Aluminum output increased by a factor of twenty-seven between 1965 and 1987. Construction of a major new aluminum combine, using Soviet technology, was under consideration in the late 1980s. New copper, titanium, and vanadium mines



*Castle and steel mill at Hunedoara  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

were also being developed to reduce dependence on imports. Through participation in projects to develop nonferrous metal resources in the Soviet Union and in a number of Third-World nations, Romania secured foreign supplies of critical ores.

### **Chemicals**

The chemical sector developed rapidly after World War II and especially after 1965. Before the war, it generated less than 3 percent of total industrial output and its product list was limited to carbon black; hydrochloric and sulfuric acid; soda ash; caustic soda; and a few types of chemical fibers, paints, and lacquers. By the 1980s, the industry produced between 10 and 20 percent of industrial output and accounted for more than 25 percent of export earnings. The petrochemical branch was the heart of the industry, producing about half of total output. The largest petrochemical complexes were built at Ploești and Pitești, but numerous smaller production units were scattered across the country. With new plants at Turda, Tîrnăveni in Mureș *judet*, Ocna Mureș, and Govora in Vâlcea *judet*, Romania became the largest producer of sodium- and chlorine-based products in Comecon after the Soviet Union. New sulfuric acid plants were built at Copșa Mică, Victoria in Ialomița *judet*, and Năvodari in Constanța *judet*.

In later years, Romania reduced its emphasis on bulk chemicals and focused on more sophisticated products, such as special plastics, synthetic rubber, chemical fibers, electrodes, pharmaceuticals, dyes, and detergents. The government also gave priority to artificial fertilizers, building plants at Valea Călugărească in Prahova *judet*, Făgăraș, Tîrnăveni, Năvodari, Piatra Neamț, Victoria, Tîrgu Mureș, Craiova, Turnu Măgurele in Teleorman *judet*, and Slobozia. The Eighth Five-Year Plan (1986-90) called for doubling the production of agricultural chemicals.

### **Light Industry**

Traditionally the leading products of this sector were processed foods, textiles and clothing, and furniture. In the 1980s, food-processing plants produced about 13 percent of total industrial output, and processed foods were a major source of foreign currency earnings. The trend of the 1980s was to locate such plants in agro-industrial centers near the source of agricultural products in order to reduce transport losses and streamline processing. Textiles and clothing accounted for about 12 percent of industrial output in the early 1980s, but much of this production was exported. A severe shortage of all items of apparel persisted within Romania throughout the 1980s. After 1981 the government stopped publishing production statistics for cotton and wool clothing, knitwear, underwear, hosiery, footwear, and similar items.

Furniture, especially wood furniture, had long been a major export product. In 1980, for example, Romania claimed to be the world's sixth largest furniture exporter. Important furniture-making centers were Tîrgu Mureș, Iași, Tîrgu Jiu, Arad, and Oradea.

## **Transportation and Telecommunications**

### **Railroads**

The basic structure of the national railroad network had been completed by the outbreak of World War II, when the total system length was 9,900 kilometers. In 1986 the network had a combined length of 11,221 kilometers, including 10,755 kilometers of 1.435-meter standard-gauge, 421 kilometers of narrow-gauge, and 45 kilometers of broad-gauge track; about 3,060 kilometers of route had been double-tracked; and 3,328 kilometers of track had been electrified—roughly 30 percent of the system (see fig. 5).

The Thirteenth Party Congress of the PCR called for diverting freight from the highway system onto the railroads and increasing the volume of rail transport by 10 to 13 percent during the 1986-90 period. In 1984 the railroads carried 289.3 million metric

tons, as compared with 417.7 million metric tons transported by the highways. Measured in ton-kilometers, however, railroads hauled more than ten times as much freight as the highways (75.2 billion and 7.3 billion metric ton-kilometers, respectively).

Two important railroad construction projects completed in the 1980s were the Vâlcele-Râmnicu Vâlcea line, which connected the Pitești-Curtea de Argeș mainline with the Piatra Olt-Podul Olt mainline and shortened the distance to Transylvania by 100 kilometers, and the Borcea-Cernavodă line (part of the North-South Trans-European System), which tripled the traffic capacity of the Bucharest-Dobruja-Constanța route. These projects required building some of the longest bridges, viaducts, and tunnels in the country. Construction of the Bucharest subway system was another major investment in rail transportation during the 1980s.

### **Highways**

The highway network remained relatively underdeveloped in the late 1980s. Of 72,799 kilometers of roads in 1985, only 11,000 could be classified modern by international standards. In 1985 the system included 15,762 kilometers of concrete, 20,208 kilometers of black-top, 27,729 kilometers of gravel, and 9,100 kilometers of dirt roads. During the 1970s and 1980s, highways took on a larger share of freight and passenger transport, although the PCR program for the late 1980s attempted to reverse the trend. Among major road construction projects of the Ceaușescu era, the Trans-Făgărașan Highway, the Sibiu-Bucharest-Constanța super-highway, and the Cernavodă Bridge (the longest on the Danube) were the most noteworthy.

### **Inland Waterways**

As a result of a long-term effort to develop inland navigation, river transport increased by 50 percent during the 1980-85 period. Except for the lower Prut River in the east and the Bega Canal in the west, commercial navigation was restricted to the Danube waterway. The Danube-Black Sea Canal, which became operational in 1984, was the costliest engineering project in the country's history. The 64-kilometer canal linking Cernavodă and Constanța required excavating twice as much earth and rock as had the Panama Canal. The massive undertaking involved building some 150 kilometers of access roads, modernizing 80 kilometers of railroad track, and erecting thirty-six major bridges. Three important new port facilities were developed along the canal: Cernavodă, projected to transload as much as 7 million tons annually; Medgidia, expanded to handle 11.5 million tons a year; and Basarabi, which had a capacity of about 1 million tons annually. With an average



Figure 5. Transportation System, 1982

depth of 7 meters, the canal can accommodate seagoing ships as large as 5,000 deadweight tons and drafts of 5.5 meters. The canal was projected to carry up to 75 million tons of freight annually, but in its first five years of operation, traffic was disappointingly light.

In 1983 work began on a twenty-seven-kilometer lateral canal running northeast from Balta Albă on the Danube-Black Sea Canal through two natural lakes to a new port being built on the Black Sea at Midia. Two new ports were built along the route at Ovidiu and Luminița. Officially known as the Poarta Albă-Midia-Năvodari Canal, it was opened to traffic in late 1987.

In 1985 Romania undertook the second-costliest canal project in its history. The project would transform the southern part of the Argeș River into a seventy-two-kilometer navigable canal, providing Bucharest a direct link to the Danube and the Black Sea. The project had originally been started in 1952 but had been abandoned shortly thereafter.

Upstream from Cernavodă, a chain of weirs and locks was built on the Danube to ensure a minimum navigation depth of 2.5 meters as far as the Yugoslav border. Aside from Galați and Brăila, which could be considered seaports, the most important inland ports were Giurgiu, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, and Orșova.

### Maritime Navigation

After 1965 the maritime fleet grew rapidly, and modern seaport facilities were developed. By 1989 the commercial fleet consisted of 275 vessels with a total capacity of more than 5 million deadweight tons and included 15 modern Ro-Ro ships. But the goal of the Eighth Five-Year Plan—a fleet capacity of 8 million deadweight tons by 1990—was clearly unattainable.

Constanța handled about 65 percent of marine traffic, transloading more than 52 million tons annually during the 1980s. A port-modernization program had been started in 1964, and the first Ro-Ro facility went into service in 1979. By 1988 the port was handling more than 700,000 tons of Ro-Ro cargo annually and was processing containerized, pelletized, packaged, and bulk cargoes. Construction of a new port facility—Constanța-Sud—was nearing completion in the late 1980s. Located in the town of Agigea, south of the old port, Constanța-Sud was projected to cover some 2,000 hectares. It was designed to accommodate vessels as large as 165,000 deadweight tons. When completed, the port was expected to become one of the ten largest in the world. Integrated into the national rail and highway systems, and with direct access to a major international highway, Constanța also serves as the terminus of the Danube-Black Sea Canal.

Sea-going ships as large as 12,000 deadweight tons are able to ascend the Danube as far as Galați and Brăila. Mangalia, on the Black Sea south of Constanța, is a secondary seaport but is the site of the most important naval installation.

### Air Transport

In 1984 the nation's two airlines, TAROM and LAR, had a fleet of seventy heavy transport aircraft. Air service was offered to every region of the country through a network of 160 airfields, of which 15 had runways 2,500 meters or more in length. Four international airports (Bucharest, Constanța, Timișoara, and Suceava) provided connections to thirty-eight foreign destinations. In passenger volume, the busiest airports were Bucharest, Caransebeș in Caraș-Severin *judet*, Timișoara, Satu Mare, Botoșani, Iași, and Constanța. Between 1965 and 1984, the volume of cargo transported by air increased from 5 million to about 40 million

ton-kilometers, while passenger transport rose from 374 to 1,936 million passenger-kilometers.

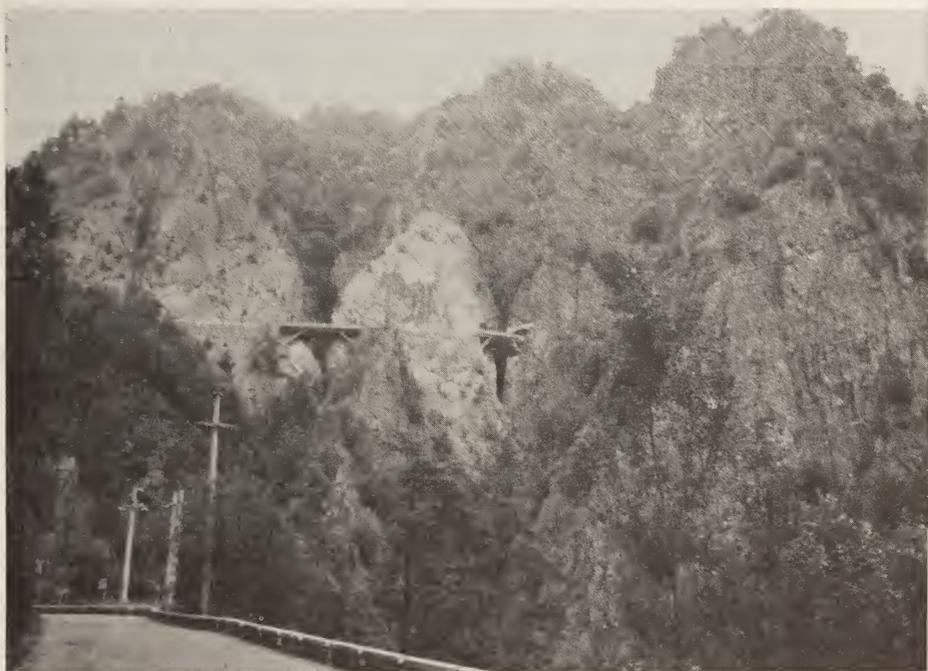
## **Telecommunications**

Although Romania's telecommunications systems had developed moderately by the 1980s, they lagged behind those of other Comecon members. In 1989 Romania operated thirty-nine AM and thirty FM radio stations, thirty-eight television broadcasting stations, and one satellite ground station. Television was not introduced until the mid-1960s, and, although the number of receivers owned by the population rose steadily to about 3.9 million in 1989, television did not have the pervasive influence on society that it did in other parts of Eastern Europe. Only about twenty-two hours of television programming were broadcast each week (see *Mass Media*, ch. 4). In 1988 the Bucharest Electronics Enterprise, the sole manufacturer of television sets in Romania, expected to produce 650,000 black-and-white and color television receivers, about half of which would be exported. The plant also manufactured radios. Much of the local telephone system had been automated by the late 1980s. In 1985 there were 1,962,681 telephone subscribers in Romania.

## **Agriculture**

### **Agricultural Regions**

The historic provinces of Walachia, Transylvania, Moldavia, Dobruja, and the Banat have distinct soil and climatic conditions that make them suitable for different types of agriculture (see *Climate*, ch. 2; *Land*, this ch.). The breadbasket of Romania is Walachia, which provides half the annual grain harvest and roughly half the fruit and grapes. Truck farming, especially in the Ilfov Agricultural District surrounding Bucharest, is also important. Despite the fertility of Walachia's soil, yields fluctuate considerably from year to year because of recurrent droughts. Transylvania, which receives more precipitation than Walachia, has poorer soils and more rugged terrain that restricts large-scale mechanized farming. Livestock raising predominates in the mountains, and potatoes and grains are the principal crops in the central basin. Moldavia has generally less fertile soil than Walachia and receives scant rainfall. Its primary crops are corn, wheat, fruit and grapes, and potatoes. The Banat region has a nearly ideal balance of rich chernozem soils and adequate precipitation. Grain, primarily wheat, is the principal crop; fruits and vegetables are also important. Dobruja, a region of generally inadequate rainfall, was becoming



*Danube-Black Sea Canal near Constanța  
Courtesy Scott Edelman  
Trans-Făgărașan Highway Through the Transylvanian Alps  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

agriculturally more important during the 1980s, because much of the marshland in the Danube Delta was being drained and brought under cultivation. The traditional crops of Dobruja are grain, sunflowers, and legumes.

### **Major Crops**

Corn and wheat (predominantly of the winter varieties) occupied nearly two-thirds of all arable land in the 1980s and about 90 percent of all grain lands. Corn, the staple of the peasant diet, was grown on 3.1 million hectares in 1987, while wheat was sown on 2.4 million hectares. Other important grains included barley (560,000 hectares), oats (70,000 hectares), rice (47,000 hectares), and rye (42,000 hectares). Among the major nongrain crops, the most widely grown in 1987 were hay (870,000 hectares), sunflowers (455,000 hectares), potatoes (350,000 hectares), soybeans (350,000 hectares), sugar beets (271,000 hectares), feed roots (70,000 hectares), corn silage (50,000 hectares), and tobacco (35,000 hectares). Wine and table grapes were widely grown, but the best vineyards were in Moldavia. Romania had gained a reputation for fine wines as early as the nineteenth century, and subsequently became one of the major producers of Europe.

Thanks to the increased use of fertilizers and plant-protecting chemicals and the expansion of arable land area through irrigation and drainage, grain output rose steadily from only 5 million tons in 1950 to between 20 and 30 million tons in the 1980s. How much grain was produced in the late 1980s was unclear because official figures had become unreliable. The Romanian government reported a 1987 grain harvest of more than 31.7 million tons, a record amount and far larger than the 1985 harvest of 23 million tons. The United States Department of Agriculture, however, estimated the 1987 harvest at only 18.6 million tons—well below the harvest of 1985.

### **Livestock**

Prior to the dramatic increase in grain cultivation in the nineteenth century, livestock raising, sheep breeding in particular, was the most important economic activity in the country. But with the diversion of grazing land and a perennial shortage of fodder, livestock raising fell into decline. After a drastic reduction in livestock inventories in World War II, herds were gradually replenished, but the number of horses continued to decline, as agriculture became more mechanized. Cattle were raised throughout the country, particularly in the foothills of the Carpathians.

Sheep predominated in the mountainous areas and Dobruja. Pigs, poultry, and rabbits were raised on a wide scale.

Private farmers, who produced a large share of livestock brought to market, operated under dire conditions. The state theoretically was obliged to provide fodder to the livestock breeders it contracted to fatten animals. But fodder and protein-rich mixed feeds were not made available in the necessary quantities, especially in the 1980s, when imports were drastically curtailed.

### **Fishing**

The numerous rivers emanating from the central mountains, the Danube, the Black Sea coastal waters, and Lake Razelm in the Danube Delta provide rich fishing grounds. The lower Danube supplies roughly 90 percent of the total catch, about 80 percent of which is consumed fresh. In 1985 approximately 260,100 tons were produced, and the 1986 plan called for 380,100 tons. Fish farming was being practiced on an increased scale in the late 1980s, particularly in the Danube Delta, where more than 63,000 hectares were expected to be covered with fish ponds by 1990.

### **Farming Practices**

By the mid-1980s, more than 30 percent of the country's 10 million hectares of cropland was irrigated. The remaining 7 million hectares were subject to recurrent and sometimes severe droughts, which were particularly destructive in the southern and eastern regions.

At the same time, large areas of land along the Danube and in its delta were waterlogged, and the government decided to drain much of this marshland and make it arable. The Danube Delta, covering more than 440,000 hectares, was being developed rapidly after 1984. By 1989 some 35,750 hectares had been made arable and large areas of pastureland had been created. By 1990 more than 144,000 hectares of the delta were expected to be useful agricultural land.

Poor crop rotation practices, with corn and wheat sown year after year on the same ground, led to serious depletion of soil nutrients, and supplies of chemical fertilizers were inadequate to restore the lost fertility. In the early 1980s, for example, only thirty-four to thirty-six kilograms of fertilizer were available per acre. Furthermore, much of the best farmland had been severely damaged by prolonged use of oversized machinery, which had compacted the soil, by unsystematic application of agricultural chemicals, and by extensive erosion.

During the first three decades of communist rule, agricultural planners ordered the slaughter of thousands of workhorses, which

were to be replaced by more powerful tractors. Indeed, the number of tractors available to agriculture grew from 13,700 in 1950 to 168,000 in 1983. But with the onset of the energy crisis, the regime reversed its policy. A program adopted by the National Council for Agriculture, Food Industry, Forestry, and Water Management in 1986 called for increasing horse inventories by 90,000 head by the end of the decade and reducing the number of tractors in service by nearly one-third. By 1990, according to plans, horse-drawn equipment would perform 18 to 25 percent of all harvesting and virtually all hauling on livestock farms.

### **Farm Organization**

Cooperative and state farms were the two primary types of farm organization, although a significant number of small private farms continued to exist in the 1980s. State farms accounted for more than 17 percent and cooperatives nearly 75 percent of all arable land. In 1982 cooperatives employed 2.2 million farmers, while state and private farms employed about 400,000 each.

The formation of state farms, which were intended to be the rural equivalent of socialist industrial enterprises, had begun as early as 1945. These ideologically favored farms received the best lands expropriated in 1949 and during the major collectivization campaign of the 1958-62 period, and they had priority access to machinery, chemicals, and irrigation water. Because of these advantages, state farms reported higher crop yields than did cooperative farms. Like other state enterprises, state farms operated according to the directives of the central government. Workers received a fixed wage in return for their labor on the farm and had no private plot rights. Their incomes in the 1980s approached those of urban workers.

Although cooperative farms owned their land and certain basic equipment, they had little more autonomy than the state farms. Their directors routinely accepted production directives from Bucharest with little objection. The cooperatives were told what crops to grow, how to grow them, and how much to deliver to the state. Many smaller cooperatives were ordered to combine into associations during the 1970s and 1980s to pool their assets. According to a decree issued by the Council of State, cooperative farmers were required to work at least 300 days per year on the cooperative, and they were subject to transfer to other farms or even to construction and lumber work sites if their own cooperative had no work for them. Between 40 and 60 percent of the average cooperative farm income was derived from the sale of products from private plots. Despite this supplementary income, cooperative farmers earned only about 60 percent as much as their counterparts on state



*Villagers and their livestock at the animal market in Negreni  
Courtesy Sam and Sarah Stulberg  
Outdoor market, Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

farms in the 1980s. Cooperative farmers also had much smaller pension benefits.

As late as 1988, almost 9.5 percent of the country's 15 million hectares of agricultural land remained in private hands. As a rule, this land was located in relatively inaccessible mountainous regions, where use of heavy machinery was impractical. In addition, in 1988 cooperative farms reserved some 922,000 hectares (about 6 percent of all arable land) for private plots, which were cultivated by families working on the cooperatives. These plots averaged 1,500 square meters in area, but in rugged terrain they could be considerably larger. Thus in the late 1980s, the private sector was still cultivating more than 15 percent of the country's agricultural land—the highest total in Eastern Europe after Poland and Yugoslavia. Privately owned land could not be sold, nor could it be inherited by persons unable to tend it adequately.

Even official government statistics revealed that private agriculture was more than four times as productive as socialized agriculture in the cultivation of fruit; twice as productive in grain growing and poultry raising, and 60 percent more efficient in milk, beef, pork, and vegetable production. In 1987 the private sector produced half the sheep, 40 percent of the beef, 28 percent of the pork, and 63 percent of the fruit output.

Despite the higher productivity of private agriculture and its major contribution to total farm output, the Ceaușescu regime systematically penalized the nonsocialist sector. At the very time most of the communist world was beginning to permit peasants to lease larger tracts for longer periods, Romania was actually reducing the area under private cultivation—from 967,500 hectares in 1965 to 922,841 in 1985. Beginning in 1987, an area of at least 500 square meters (or one-third) of each private plot was required to be sown in wheat, and the harvest was to be traded to the state for the yield from an equivalent amount of land cultivated by the cooperative farm. This policy was designed to discourage peasants from spending an inordinate amount of time cultivating their private plots instead of working for the cooperative. Its effect, however, was to further demoralize the farm population and thus make it less productive.

In the late 1980s, the systematization program aimed to subordinate privately owned land and private plots on cooperative farms to the regional agro-industrial councils and thereby tighten central control of private farming (see Administration and Control, this ch.). Systematization would eliminate many of the plots, as villages were levelled to create vast fields for socialized farming. This policy directly contradicted the government's mandate in the 1980s

that the population essentially feed itself by cultivating small plots (even lawns and public parks had been converted to vegetable gardens) and breeding poultry and rabbits.

### **Administration**

Romanian agriculture in the late 1980s remained the most centralized in Comecon. A complicated and constantly changing network of overlapping state and party agricultural bureaucracies had evolved over the previous four decades. The Ministry of Agriculture set production targets and oversaw the distribution of resources among the *județe*. It became the frequent target of Ceaușescu's ire and received much of the blame for agriculture's persistent problems. In 1978 the Congress of the Higher Councils of Socialist Agricultural Units and of the Whole Peasantry and its permanent bureau, the National Agricultural Board, were established. The apparent purpose of the new body was to approve and thereby legitimize the PCR's policy directives. The following year a joint party and state agricultural policy-making body was established—the National Council For Agriculture, Food Industry, Forestry, and Water Management. Meeting as frequently as four times a year in plenary session, the council provided a forum for Ceaușescu to address thousands of agricultural specialists and functionaries.

In 1979 pursuant to the guidelines of the New Economic and Financial Mechanism enacted the previous year, a network of agro-industrial councils was set up to coordinate the activities of as many as five state and cooperative farms in an area served by a single state machinery station. A Stalinist holdover abandoned in the rest of Eastern Europe, these stations controlled access to tractors and other heavy equipment. In the 1980s the agro-industrial councils gained additional powers to coordinate agricultural production, food processing, research, and agricultural training. After 1980 *județ* and village people's councils bore responsibility for fulfilling agricultural production targets set in Bucharest. In each *județ* a General Directorate for Agriculture and Food Industry made assignments to individual state and cooperative farms.

### **Procurement and Distribution**

State farms, like other socialist enterprises after the implementation of the New Economic and Financial Mechanism, were in theory self-financed and self-managed concerns that were expected to earn a profit while delivering assigned quantities of output to the state. In reality, few state farms in the 1980s could turn a profit, because the government's procurement prices were consistently lower than production costs. Cooperatives and private farmers,

too, had large state-imposed quotas to fill even before satisfying their own food requirements. A 1984 decree specified the quantity of production to be delivered to the state by farmers. For example, potato growers were required to deliver three tons per hectare of land cultivated, and dairy farmers had to turn over 800 liters of milk per cow. To ensure compliance with the compulsory quotas, Ceaușescu reinstated the Department for Contracting, Acquiring, and Storing Farm Produce, which had been disbanded in 1956. The state was able to hold sway over individual farmers because it controlled the supply of fertilizers, herbicides, machinery, construction materials, and other inputs. To gain access to these materials, the farmer had to sign delivery contracts. Farmers who failed to comply with the delivery quotas even risked losing their land.

Farmers were permitted to keep for their own use any food remaining after their quotas had been filled, and they could sell the surplus at farmers' markets, where prices in the early 1980s were frequently five times the state procurement prices. A law passed in 1983 required peasants to obtain a license to sell their products on the open market, and it imposed a maximum commodity price of 5 percent above the state retail price. Disappointing harvests in the early 1980s convinced the government to raise procurement prices. As a result, peasant incomes rose by some 12 percent between 1980 and 1985, and farm output increased by about 10 percent. Private farmers in the mid-1980s were obliged to sell to the state 30 percent of the milk, 50 percent of the pork, 12 percent of the potatoes, and comparable shares of other commodities they produced.

Throughout the 1980s, a self-sufficiency program, mandated by the PCR, was in effect. Each village and *județ* was responsible for producing, to the maximum extent possible, the food needed by the local population. In reality the program was another means for procuring agricultural products for export. Nearly all the production from the three types of farms was confiscated by state procurement agencies, which then returned the amount of food the state deemed sufficient to meet the dietary needs of the village and *județ*. The quantity returned invariably was less than that delivered. The self-sufficiency program in effect reversed the rationalization of the 1970s, when regions specialized in the crops and livestock best suited to local conditions. Thus a portion of the prime grain lands of Walachia had to be diverted to truck farming, while cool, wet regions of Transylvania attempted to grow sunflowers. The self-sufficiency program seriously impeded the distribution of agricultural products among regions and damaged the domestic marketing system.



*Waiting in line for cooking oil, Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

The party secretary of each *judet* was responsible for delivering a specified quota of food to the state. Because these individuals reacted in different ways to the countervailing needs of their constituents and the central authorities, there was considerable regional variation in food supplies. Many party secretaries began understating output figures so that less would have to be delivered to Bucharest and more would be available for the people of their *judet*. Aware of this regional variation, citizens made food-hunting forays into other *judete* hoping to find stores better stocked. Ceaușescu ordered the militia to monitor the highways and railroads to prevent “illegal” food trafficking.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Processing itself was torn between a sense of responsibility to safeguard the interests of the agricultural sector and its obligation to fulfill the regime’s mandate to maximize procurement. To resolve these conflicting loyalties, in February 1986 a separate Ministry of Food Industry and Procurement was established.

### **Consumption**

Although gross agricultural output had been increasing at a rate four times higher than population growth between 1950 and 1980, food availability remained inadequate. In 1981 rationing was imposed for the first time since 1953, and it remained in effect

throughout the decade, as the regime exported as much as possible to pay off the foreign debt. In 1985 the average citizen was eligible to receive 54.88 kilograms of meat and fish, 1.1 kilograms of margarine, 9.6 kilograms of cooking oil, 14.8 kilograms of sugar, 114.5 kilograms of flour, 45.3 kilograms of potatoes, 20 kilograms of fruit, and 114 eggs per year. In reality, most Romanians were unable to obtain even these scant rations, as the situation deteriorated even further in following years. The food supply program of 1988 enacted by the GNA provided for an annual per capita consumption of 38 liters of milk, 3.5 kilograms of cheese, 1.5 kilograms of butter, 128 eggs, 21 kilograms of sweets, 3.6 kilograms of rice, 500 grams of oatmeal, and 22 kilograms of cornmeal.

Reliable statistics on food consumption were not available during the 1980s. Comecon statistical reports omitted Romanian data after 1981. Romania's own statistical yearbooks stopped reporting figures for consumption of food and many other commodities, including clothing, appliances, automobiles, and bicycles. Ceaușescu claimed in November 1988 that the daily per capita calorie intake of Romanians was 3,200 calories, which he termed excessive. He promised to improve food supplies in 1988 by slaughtering 8 million sheep and between 7.5 and 12.5 million hogs—an unlikely proposal considering that the entire national inventory included only 18.6 million sheep and 14.3 million hogs.

### **Goals for the 1990s**

According to long-standing PCR predictions, by 1990 Romania was to have attained the status of a "medium-developed country," and by the year 2000, it was to have become a multilaterally developed socialist country. By the end of the century, according to Ceaușescu's vision, the country would have an overwhelmingly industrial economy, employing a well-trained, highly skilled work force in technologically advanced branches, such as electronics, computers, and aeronautics. The "new agrarian revolution" would have made agriculture more productive by applying the latest scientific advances and better utilizing available resources.

As late as 1989, Ceaușescu was confidently predicting that during the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1991-95) the energy problem would be completely resolved. The plan would focus on modernizing metallurgy, chemistry, mining, oil production, and raw material processing. Foreign trade would receive greater emphasis, and Romania would remain an active member of Comecon. The rate of accumulation and investment in the economy would remain among the world's highest, hovering around one-third of gross national product. Achieving these goals would mean a continuation

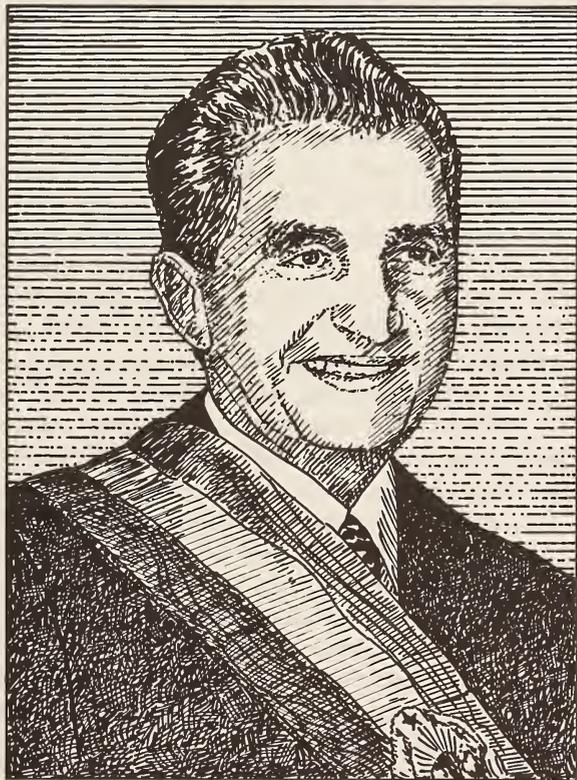
of consumer sacrifice and no immediate improvement in the standard of living.

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Several excellent English-language publications dealing with the Romanian economy appeared in the 1980s. Michael Shafir's *Romania: Politics, Economics, and Society* and William E. Crowther's *The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism* describe the evolution, structure, and performance of the economy in the twentieth century. Daniel N. Nelson's *Romanian Politics in the Ceaușescu Era* provides insight into the relationship between the people and the political and economic institutions that control their lives. Richard F. Staar's fifth edition of *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe* summarizes the administrative changes of the 1970s and 1980s. The *East European Economic Handbook*, whose main contributor is Alan H. Smith, presents comprehensive statistical information and analysis of all aspects of the economy. *Romania, 40 Years (1944-1984)*, edited by Vlad Georgescu, contains excellent essays by Paul Gafton and Serban Orescu on the performance of Romanian industry and agriculture since World War II. Radio Free Europe Research publications are an indispensable source for the most current information and analysis of the economic situation in Romania. For readers of Romanian, *Anuarul Statistic al Republicii Socialiste România*, published by the Central Statistical Directorate in Bucharest, is a useful reference work. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

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## Chapter 4. Government and Politics



ROMANIA



*President Nicolae Ceaușescu*

THE PROMULGATION of the Constitution of 1965, in which Romania officially proclaimed its status as a socialist republic, was a milestone on its path toward communism. The country had set out on that path in 1945 when the Soviet Union pressured King Michael to appoint communists to key government positions, where they provided the power base for a complete communist takeover and the abolition of the monarchy in December 1947. The political system installed in April 1948, when the Romanian People's Republic was created, was a replica of the Soviet model. The system's goal was to create the conditions for the transition from capitalism through socialism (see Glossary) to communism.

The formal structure of the government established by the Constitution of 1965 was changed in a significant way by a 1974 amendment that established the office of president of the republic. The occupant of that office was to act as the head of state in both domestic and international affairs. The first president of the republic, Nicolae Ceaușescu, still held the office in mid-1989 and acted as head of state, head of the Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român—PCR, see Glossary), and commander of the armed forces. His wife, Elena Ceaușescu, had risen to the second most powerful position in the hierarchy, and close family members held key posts throughout the party and state bureaucracies. The pervasive presence of the Ceaușescus was the distinctive feature of Romania's power structure.

Romania's political system was one of the most centralized and bureaucratized in the world. At the end of the 1980s, the Council of Ministers had more than sixty members and was larger than the council of any other European communist government except the Soviet Union. Joint party-state organizations not envisioned by the Constitution emerged and proliferated. The organizations functioned as a mechanism by which the PCR and the Ceaușescu controlled all government activity and preempted threats to their rule.

Despite Ceaușescu's tight control of the organs of power and the effectiveness of the secret police, more properly the Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului—Securitate), in repressing dissent, sporadic political opposition to the regime surfaced in the 1980s. The Western media published letters written by prominent retired communist officials accusing Ceaușescu of violating international human rights agreements, mismanaging the economy, and alienating Romania's allies.

Although Romania remained in Soviet-dominated military and economic alliances, PCR leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and his successor, Ceaușescu, pursued a defiantly independent foreign policy. During the 1958–75 period, they successfully cultivated contacts with the West, gaining most-favored-nation trading status from the United States and membership in the International Monetary Fund (see Glossary), the World Bank (see Glossary), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and other international organizations. Romania condemned the Soviet-led Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact) invasion of Czechoslovakia and was the only member of the pact to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel following the June 1967 War. After 1975, however, Romania became increasingly isolated from the West, on which Ceaușescu heaped much of the blame for his country's economic dilemma. In the 1980s, international outcries against human rights abuses further isolated the Stalinist Romanian regime from both the West and the East. Relations with Hungary were particularly tense, as thousands of ethnic Hungarians fled across the border. At the close of the decade, Ceaușescu's regime was badly out of step with the reform movements sweeping the Soviet Union, Poland, and Hungary.

## **Governmental System**

Since the imposition of full communist control in December 1947, Romania has had three constitutions. The first, designating the country a "people's republic," was adopted by the Grand National Assembly (GNA, see Glossary) in April 1948, just four weeks after the assembly had been reorganized under new communist leadership. The second, adopted in September 1952, was closer to the Soviet model. The third, ostensibly reflecting Romania's social and ideological development, went into effect on August 21, 1965.

In many ways similar to the initial constitutions of the other Soviet-dominated states of Eastern Europe, the 1948 constitution was designed to mark Romania's entry into the first stage of the transition from capitalism to socialism. There was no separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers. As a people's democracy, the state was said to derive power from the people's will, expressed through the GNA. A nineteen-member Presidium was elected by and from the GNA membership to provide continuity of legislative authority when the assembly itself was not in session. The highest executive and administrative organ was the Council of Ministers, which functioned under the direction of the prime minister. Although not mentioned in the constitution, the PCR, under close Soviet supervision, functioned as the supreme decision-making authority over and above the government.

At the ministry level, the most important decisions were taken under the supervision of Soviet advisers.

The right of private property ownership was guaranteed, although the constitution provided that privately held means of production, banks, and insurance companies could be nationalized when the "general interest" so required. Less than two months after the adoption of the constitution, the GNA passed legislation nationalizing the main industrial and financial institutions.

The organs of state power in the regions, counties, districts, and communes were designated "people's councils." Formally established by law in 1949, these bodies were organized into a centralized system in which the lower-level councils were fully subordinated to the next higher council, and all functioned under the direct control of the central government.

Largely patterned after the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union, the 1952 constitution specifically designated the Romanian Workers' Party (Partidul Muncitoresc Român—PMR)—as the communist party was known between 1948 and 1965—the country's leading political force. The nation's close ties with the Soviet Union were strongly emphasized, and the Soviets were described as great friends of the Romanian people. Whereas the 1948 constitution declared that "the Romanian People's Republic was born amid the struggle conducted by the people, under the leadership of the working class, against fascism, reaction, and imperialism," the 1952 version asserted that the republic "was born and consolidated following the liberation of the country by the armed forces of the Soviet Union."

As had its predecessor, the 1952 constitution guaranteed full equality to national minority groups, and it also established an autonomous administrative unit for the large ethnic Hungarian population—the Hungarian Autonomous Region. The region was given its own council and local authorities, although these bodies were clearly subordinated to the organs of the central government.

Citizens were guaranteed the right to work for remuneration; the right to rest, ensured by the establishment of an eight-hour workday and paid annual vacation; the right to material security when old, ill, or disabled; and the right to education. The constitution stated that full equality in all aspects of economic, political, and cultural life was guaranteed to all working people regardless of nationality, race, or sex.

The constitution also guaranteed freedom of speech, the press, assembly, public demonstration, and worship. Churches, however, were forbidden to operate schools except for the training of religious personnel. Other provisions guaranteed the protection of the

person from arbitrary arrest, the inviolability of the home, and the secrecy of the mails. Citizens also had the right to form public and private organizations, although associations having a "fascist or antidemocratic character" were prohibited.

It was the citizens' duty to observe the constitution and the laws of the republic, to preserve and develop socialist property, to practice work discipline, and to strengthen the "regime of people's democracy." Military service and the defense of the nation were described as duties of honor for all citizens.

In March 1961, the GNA established a commission to draft a new constitution. At the same time, the 1952 constitution was revised to transform the Presidium into the State Council. The new body, vested with supreme executive authority, consisted of a president, three vice presidents, and thirteen members. As was the case with the Presidium, the State Council was elected by and from the GNA membership and was, in theory, responsible to it.

The State Council had three kinds of powers—permanent powers, powers to be exercised between assembly sessions, and special powers that could be exercised in exceptional circumstances. The permanent powers were exercised by the president, who as head of state represented the republic in international relations. Between GNA sessions, the State Council was empowered to oversee the activity of the Council of Ministers, appoint and recall members of the Supreme Court and the commander in chief of the armed forces, supervise the functioning of the Office of the Prosecutor General, or Procuratura (see Glossary), and convene standing commissions of the assembly.

The council could also issue decrees having the force of law, although, technically, these had to be submitted to the next GNA session for ratification. If circumstances prevented the assembly from convening, the council was authorized to appoint the Council of Ministers, declare war, order mobilization, proclaim a state of emergency, approve the budget, and prepare economic plans.

Although the constitution drafted by the 1961 commission was never adopted, it served as the basis for the work of a second commission named in June 1965. Chaired by Ceaușescu, the commission prepared a new draft and submitted it to the party congress and the State Council. After approval by these bodies, the Constitution was adopted by the GNA on August 21, 1965, and after important amendments in 1974, it remained in effect in late 1989.

With the promulgation of the 1965 Constitution, the country was officially renamed the Socialist Republic of Romania. In adopting this name, the Romanian leadership was asserting that the

country had completed the transition from capitalism and had become a full-fledged socialist state.

The most innovative provision of the 1965 Constitution is the stipulation that the leading political force in the entire country is the Romanian Communist Party—the only legal party. Under its leadership, the working people have the expressed goal of building a socialist system to create “the conditions for transition to communism.”

Whereas the 1952 constitution repeatedly stressed the country's close ties to the Soviet Union and the role of the Red Army in the liberation of Romania, the 1965 Constitution omits all references to the Soviet Union. Instead it refers only to the policy of maintaining friendly and fraternal relations with all socialist states and, in addition, expresses the intention of promoting relations with non-socialist states.

The 1965 Constitution declares that the basis of the economy is socialist ownership of the means of production. Cooperative farmers, however, are permitted to own some livestock and tools, certain craftsmen are guaranteed ownership of their workshops, and peasants not in cooperatives are able to own small parcels of land and some farm implements. In the 1980s, however, these provisions for private ownership of farmland were violated by a controversial plan known as systematization (see Land, ch. 3).

In contrast to the 1952 constitution, which provided for representation in the GNA at a ratio of one deputy for every 40,000 persons, the 1965 document fixed the number of deputies at 465 and required the establishment of that number of electoral districts of equal population. A later amendment reduced the number of deputies to 369.

The provision of the 1952 constitution establishing the Hungarian Autonomous Region among the sixteen regional units was deleted in the 1965 Constitution, ostensibly in order to integrate all minority groups into the Romanian political community. PCR spokesmen asserted that while the heritage and political rights of the various nationality groups would be respected, the country would be united under the leadership of the party. A 1968 territorial reorganization eliminated the sixteen regional units and established a system of thirty-nine (subsequently increased to forty) *județe* or counties (see fig. 1).

## **Structure and Functioning of the Government**

### **Central Government**

In 1989 the major institutions of the central government were the GNA, the State Council, the office of president of the republic,

the Council of Ministers, and the court system. The president was elected by the GNA for the duration of a legislative period and remained in office until a successor was elected during the next legislative period.

### *Grand National Assembly*

The Grand National Assembly was nominally the supreme organ of state power and supervised and controlled the functions of all other state organs. It consisted of 369 deputies elected by universal adult suffrage from an equal number of electoral districts for a five-year term of office. In accordance with a 1974 constitutional amendment, the GNA met in regular session twice a year, and special sessions could be called by the State Council, the Bureau of the GNA, or, in theory, by one-third of the total number of deputies. If circumstances prevented the holding of elections, the GNA was empowered to extend its term of office for as long as necessary.

The GNA had the constitutional authority to elect, supervise, and recall the president of the republic, the State Council, the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Court, and the attorney general. The GNA had ultimate authority for regulating the electoral system, debating and approving the national economic plan and the state budget, and overseeing the organization and functioning of the people's councils.

The GNA was empowered to establish the general line of the country's foreign policy and had ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of public order and national defense. The Constitution gave it the authority to declare war, but only in the event of aggression against Romania or an ally with which Romania had a mutual-defense treaty. A state of war could also be declared by the State Council.

Other GNA powers included adopting and amending the Constitution and controlling its implementation. Empowered to interpret the Constitution and to determine the constitutionality of laws, the GNA was in effect its own constitutional court. To exercise its authority as interpreter of laws, the GNA elected the Constitution and Legal Affairs Commission, which functioned for the duration of a legislative term. The 1965 Constitution specified that up to one-third of the commission members could be persons who were not GNA deputies. The 1974 amended text, however, omitted this provision. The primary duty of the commission was to provide the assembly with reports and opinions on constitutional questions.

The GNA elected a chairman to preside over sessions and direct activities. The chairman and four elected vice chairmen, who

formed the Bureau of the GNA, were assisted in their duties by a panel of six executive secretaries. In addition to the Constitution and Legal Affairs Commission, there were eight other GNA standing commissions: the Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Administration Commission; the Credentials Commission; the Defense Problems Commission; the Education, Science, and Culture Commission; the Foreign Policy and International Economic Cooperation Commission; the Health, Labor, Social Welfare, and Environmental Protection Commission; the Industry and Economic and Financial Activity Commission; and the People's Councils and State Administration Commission. Their functions and responsibilities were substantially increased during the 1970s and 1980s. Reports, bills, or other legislative matters were submitted to the standing commissions by the GNA chairman for study and for recommendations on further action.

To conduct business, the GNA required a quorum of one-half of the deputies plus one. Laws and decisions were adopted by simple majority vote with the exception of an amendment to the Constitution, which required a two-thirds majority of the full assembly. Laws were signed by the president of the republic and published within ten days after adoption.

Until the early 1970s, election to the GNA and to the organs of local government was based on the Soviet model, with one candidate for each seat. A 1972 decree stated that thereafter more than one candidate could be nominated for a deputy seat in the GNA or in the people's councils. In 1975, of 349 seats in the GNA, 139 were open to "multiple candidacy," and in 1980 the ratio was even higher—190 of 369. A total of 594 candidates were nominated by the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front for the 369 GNA seats in the 1985 election. But the front emphasized that the introduction of multiple candidacies was never intended to offer the electorate a choice of political platforms.

### *The State Council*

The Constitution stipulated that the State Council was the supreme body of state power in permanent session, and that it assumed certain GNA powers when that body was out of session. As of mid-1989, the State Council consisted of the president of the State Council, four vice presidents, a secretary to the president, and fifteen members. At its first session, the newly elected GNA selected the State Council from its own membership. The council remained in office until another was elected by the succeeding GNA. Although the president of the State Council was simultaneously the president of the republic, the Constitution dictated that the

council was to function on the principle of collective leadership. In 1989 all but two members of the State Council were also members of the PCR Central Committee and held other important party posts.

Amendments to the Constitution adopted in 1974 reduced the scope of the power of the State Council in favor of the power of the president. In this connection, Article 63 listed only five permanent powers for the State Council, as opposed to eleven in the 1965 Constitution. Among the powers that were deleted were appointing and recalling the supreme commander of the armed forces; representing the republic in international relations; granting citizenship, amnesty, and asylum; and appointing and recalling diplomatic representatives.

Other permanent powers of the State Council were establishing election dates; ratifying or rejecting international treaties (except for those whose ratification or rejection was within the purview of the GNA); and establishing decorations and honorary titles. The provision in the 1965 text of the Constitution giving the State Council the right to appoint and recall the heads of central bodies of state administration (excluding the Council of Ministers) was replaced with the nebulous stipulation that the State Council "organizes the ministries and other central state bodies," another limitation of its prerogatives.

GNA powers that devolved to the State Council between assembly sessions or when exceptional circumstances prevented the GNA from acting included the authority to appoint and recall members of the Council of Ministers and members of the Supreme Court. The right to appoint or recall the prosecutor general was omitted in the 1974 amended Constitution. The State Council could also assume powers to establish legal norms, to control the application of laws and decisions passed by the GNA, and to supervise the Council of Ministers, the ministries and the other central bodies of state administration as well as the activities of the people's councils. In the event of a national emergency, the State Council could also exercise the GNA's power to declare a state of war.

In December 1967, the GNA elected PCR General Secretary Ceaușescu president of the State Council, thereby making him head of state. The rationale for concentrating party and government power in Ceaușescu's hands was to provide unitary leadership and thereby improve efficiency and ensure full party control at the highest level of government. The decision to unite the two posts, as well as to combine a number of party and government positions on lower administrative levels, had been taken at a national party conference. Outside observers saw the move as one of a series of steps

designed to ensure the continued subordination of both the party and the state apparatus to Ceaușescu's personal power.

### *President of the Republic*

The 1974 amended Constitution created the office of president of the republic. Although listed below the GNA and the State Council, the president was the most powerful figure and had the authority to act on behalf of both the GNA and the State Council. Creation of the office was a watershed event in Ceaușescu's methodical consolidation of power. Although he had held the position of head of state after 1967, it was only after 1974 that he emerged as an international figure, launching an energetic career of foreign travel and diplomacy.

The official motivation for the PCR decision to establish the office of president was to improve the functioning of the organs of state power—both domestic and international. It was also stressed that the president would be able to exercise those functions of the State Council not requiring plenary meetings. In fact, after 1974 rule by presidential decree became common practice.

On the recommendation of the Central Committee of the PCR and the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front, the president was elected by a two-thirds majority of GNA deputies. He represented the state in internal and international relations. And as chairman of the Defense Council, he was also the supreme commander of the armed forces. He was empowered to proclaim a local or national state of emergency.

Ceaușescu greatly broadened the powers of the presidency in domestic political life. He appointed and recalled the ministers and the chairmen of other central bodies of state administration. When the GNA was not in session—that is, for most of the year—he appointed and recalled the president of the Supreme Court and the prosecutor general without even consulting the State Council. He frequently presided over the meetings of the Council of Ministers, and he usurped the State Council's power to grant pardons, citizenship, and asylum.

The president's prerogatives in international relations included establishing the ranks of diplomatic missions, accrediting and recalling diplomatic representatives; receiving the credentials and letters of recall of diplomatic representatives of other states; and concluding international agreements on behalf of Romania.

### *Council of Ministers*

Defined in the Constitution as the supreme body of state administration, the Council of Ministers exercised control over the activities

of all state agencies on both the national and local levels. Although the size and composition of the Council of Ministers fluctuated, its basic elements were the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the ministers, and the heads of certain other important government agencies. Unlike the 1952 constitution, which listed twenty-six specific ministries, the 1965 version fixed neither the number of ministries nor their particular areas of competence.

In 1989 the Council of Ministers had sixty-one members including the prime minister, three first deputy prime ministers, six deputy prime ministers, twenty-eight ministers, and twenty-four committee chiefs or state secretaries with ministerial rank. Elena Ceaușescu held two positions in the council—first deputy prime minister and chairman of the National Council for Science and Technology. All but one of the members of the council were also members or candidate members of the PCR Central Committee, and the nine first deputies or deputies were members or candidate members of the PCR Political Executive Committee, usually known as Polecx (see Glossary).

The Constitution gave the Council of Ministers responsibility for the general implementation of the nation's domestic and foreign policies, the enforcement of laws, and the maintenance of public order. As the supreme governmental body, the council coordinated and controlled the activities of the ministries and other state organs at all levels. The council directed economic matters by drafting the Unitary National Socioeconomic Plan and state budget and providing for their implementation. In addition it directed the establishment of economic enterprises and other industrial and commercial organizations.

The council's responsibilities also included the general administration of relations with other states and the conclusion of international agreements. Its prerogatives in the area of defense, however, were diminished by the 1974 constitutional amendments. The council's right to act for the general organization of the armed forces was replaced by the provision that it could take measures in that area only "according to the decision of the Defense Council."

Formally elected by the GNA at the beginning of each new assembly session, the council's term of office continued until the election of a new council by the succeeding assembly. Both collectively and individually, the council members were responsible to the GNA or—between sessions—to the State Council. The Constitution asserted that the Council of Ministers was to operate on the principle of collective leadership to ensure the unity of its political and administrative actions.

After the promulgation of the 1965 Constitution and especially after Ceaușescu was elected president of the republic in 1974, the Council of Ministers underwent numerous reorganizations. The number of ministries almost doubled. Several of them, for example, the Ministry of Mines, Petroleum, and Geology, were repeatedly split and merged. Some of the departments in separate ministries were combined to form new ministries or central organizations. In 1989 Romania had the largest number of ministries and central organizations of any East European state.

Agency reshuffling and the reassignment or dismissal of large numbers of officials plagued the ministries. Between March 1985 and the beginning of 1988, there were over twenty government reorganizations affecting such key functions as defense, finance, foreign trade, and foreign affairs. In 1984, at least twelve ministers were removed. The following year, the ministers of foreign affairs and national defense were replaced, and in 1986 the ministers of foreign affairs, foreign trade, and finance lost their positions following criticism from high-level PCR officials for trade shortfalls. In 1987, in the largest government reshuffle to date, eighteen ministers were dismissed over a four-week period, and some were expelled from the party.

### *Judicial System*

The general organization and functioning of the judiciary was established by the Constitution and by the 1968 Law on the Organization of the Court System. Overall responsibility for the functioning of the courts was vested in the Ministry of Justice, and the prosecutor general was charged with the general application of the law and the conduct of criminal proceedings.

To fulfill its responsibility for the functioning of the courts and the supervision of state marshals, state notaries, and the national bar organization, the Ministry of Justice was divided into six directorates: civil courts, military courts, studies and legislation, personnel, administration, and planning and accounting. In addition, the ministry included a corps of inspectors, an office of legal affairs, and the State Notary Office.

The court system included the Supreme Court, *județ* courts, lower courts, military courts, and local judicial commissions. The Constitution placed the judiciary under the authority of the GNA, and between assembly sessions, under the authority of the State Council. The Supreme Court, seated in Bucharest, exercised general control over the judiciary activity of all lower courts.

Members of the Supreme Court were professional judges appointed by the GNA to four-year terms of office. The Supreme

Court functioned as an appeals court for sentences passed in lower tribunals and, in certain matters specified by law, could act as a court of first instance. It could also issue guidance, in the form of directives, on legal and constitutional questions for the judicial actions of lower courts and the administrative functions of government agencies. The Supreme Court was divided into three sections—civil, criminal, and military. A panel of three judges presided over each section. The minister of justice presided over plenary sessions of the entire court held at least once every three months for the purpose of issuing guidance directives.

In 1989 there were forty *judet* courts and the municipal court of Bucharest, which had *judet* court status. Each court on this level was presided over by a panel of two judges and three lay jurors, known as people's assessors, and decisions were made by majority vote. People's assessors were first introduced in December 1947 and were given additional legal status in 1952 by the Law on the Organization of Justice. Most of the people's assessors were appointed by the PCR or by one of the district bodies of the mass organizations.

Subordinate to the *judet* courts were various lower courts. In the city of Bucharest, these lower courts consisted of four sectional courts, which functioned under the supervision of the municipal court. The number of lower courts and their territorial jurisdiction were established for the rest of the country by the Ministry of Justice. Panels consisting of a judge and two people's assessors presided over courts on this level, and verdicts were based on majority vote.

Military courts were established on a territorial basis, subdivisions being determined by the Council of Ministers. The lower military tribunals had original jurisdiction over contraventions of the law committed by members of the armed forces; the territorial military tribunals exercised appellate jurisdiction over decisions of the lower units. In certain situations specified by law, cases involving civilians could be assigned to military courts. At each level, the military courts, when acting in the first instance, consisted of two judges and three people's assessors. In appeals cases on the territorial level, the courts consisted of three judges only. As in the civil courts, decisions were reached by majority vote (see Law and Order, ch. 5).

In 1968 the GNA enacted a law establishing a system of judicial commissions to function as courts of special jurisdiction in the state economic enterprises and in localities. These commissions were designed as "an expression of socialist democracy" to provide for the increased participation of working people in the settlement of problems involving minor local disputes and local economic issues.

The Procuratura exercised general supervision over the application of the law and the initiation of criminal proceedings. Elected by the GNA for a five-year term, the prosecutor general exercised supervisory powers that extended to all levels of society, from government ministers down to ordinary citizens. Procuratura subunits were hierarchically organized and included offices in each judicial district plus the prosecutor's military bureau.

### **Joint Party-State Organizations**

Joint party-state organizations were an innovation in Romanian political life; the Constitution made no reference to them. Ceaușescu used the organizations to increase his authority and minimize the possibility of government action that could challenge the power structure. At the beginning of 1989 there were nine joint party-state organizations. Five of them were headed by either Nicolae or Elena Ceaușescu: the Defense Council; the Supreme Council for Economic and Social Development; the National Council for Science and Education; the National Council for Science and Technology; and the National Council of Working People. The remaining party-state organizations were the National Council for Agriculture, Food Industry, Forestry, and Water Management; the Central Council of Workers' Control of Economic and Social Activities; the Economic and Social Organization Council; and the Silviculture Council.

The names of these organizations themselves bespeak the ambiguity and redundancy of their powers. Alongside the existing ministries and other central organizations, three of the joint party-state organizations dealt with economic problems, two with science, two with agriculture and forestry, and two with social problems. The new structures were accountable to both the PCR Central Committee and the Council of Ministers or the State Council. The regional branches of some of the party-state councils were placed under the direct supervision of local party committees.

One of the most important joint party-state organizations and the first to be created (in 1969), the Defense Council had decision-making powers for high-level military affairs. At the inception of the Defense Council, its chairman, Ceaușescu, automatically became supreme commander of the armed forces. After 1974 the president of the republic became *ex officio* chairman of the Defense Council. Some observers considered the creation of the council a move to weaken Ceaușescu's opponents in the armed forces.

The membership of the Defense Council reflected its importance. Besides the chairman, other members were the prime minister, the

minister of national defense, the minister of interior, the minister of foreign affairs, the chairman of the Department of State Security, the chairman of the State Planning Committee, the chief of staff—who held the position of ex officio secretary—and three other members. Among the members in the late 1980s was General Ilie Ceaușescu, the president's brother, who was the chief of the Higher Political Council of the Army and the official historian of the regime.

The Supreme Council for Economic and Social Development, created to supervise development of the national economy and to coordinate social and economic planning, had fourteen sections, which paralleled both the existing ministries and State Planning Committee departments with similar areas of concern. Another joint party-state organization, the Central Council of Workers' Control of Economic and Social Activities had broad authority to make overall economic policy and to ensure plan fulfillment (see Administration and Control, ch. 3).

### Local Government

Local government bodies, known as people's councils, existed on the *județ*, town, and commune level. The 1965 Constitution had also provided for subunits of state administration on regional and district levels, but a territorial-administrative reorganization voted by the GNA in 1968 replaced the 16 regions and 150 intermediate districts with a system of 39 *județe* and 44 independent municipal administrations. *Județ* lines in the southeastern part of the country were subsequently redrawn, creating a fortieth *județ*; the municipality of Bucharest, which had *județ* status; and a surrounding agricultural district.

In addition to the establishment of *județ* and municipal people's councils, local councils were also set up in 142 smaller towns, and communal councils were formed in rural areas. A number of smaller communes were combined in order to give them a larger population base. Boundaries of each *județ* were drawn to include about fifty communes consisting of 4,000 to 5,000 persons each.

Along with the territorial reorganization, the decision was also made to combine party and government functions on the *județ* level so that the same person acted both as party committee first secretary and as people's council chairman. In explaining this fusion of party and state authority, Ceaușescu stated that there were many instances in which offices in both the party and the government dealt with the same area of interest, a practice that resulted in inefficiency and unnecessary duplication of party and state machinery. Despite fusion of party and government functions, however, the bureaucratic structure on all government levels continued to expand.

*New civic center in Satu Mare  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*



According to the Constitution and the 1968 Law on the Organization and Operation of People's Councils, the people's councils were responsible for the implementation of central government decisions and for the economic, social, and cultural administration of their particular jurisdictions. Deputies to the people's councils were elected for five-year terms, except for the communes and municipal towns, where the term was two-and-one-half years.

Organized to facilitate highly centralized control, the people's councils functioned under the general supervision of the GNA or, between assembly sessions, under the direction of the State Council. The Law on the Organization and Operation of People's Councils specifically placed the people's councils under the overall guidance of the PCR.

Each people's council had an executive committee as its chief administrative organ and a number of permanent committees with specific responsibilities. The executive committee, consisting of a chairman, two or more deputy chairmen, and an unspecified number of other members, functioned for the duration of the council's term of office. Each executive committee also had a secretary, who was appointed with the approval of the next-higher-ranking council and was considered an employee of the central government. The chairman of an executive committee in a city, town, or commune served as the mayor of that unit. The executive committee was

responsible to the people's council that elected it and to the executive committee of the next higher council.

The executive committee implemented laws, decrees, and decisions of the central government; carried out decisions made by the people's council; worked out the local budget; and drafted the local economic plan. It was also charged with directing and controlling the economic enterprises within its area of jurisdiction and with supervising the executive committees of inferior councils. The executive committee was also responsible for the organization and functioning of public services, educational institutions, medical programs, and the militia.

### **Electoral System**

Although the Constitution asserted the right of all citizens eighteen years of age and older to participate in the election of all representative bodies with a universal, direct, equal, and secret vote, it did not determine how elections were to be organized or specify who was responsible for conducting them. The Constitution did declare, however, that the right to nominate candidates belonged to the PCR, as well as to all labor unions, cooperatives, youth and women's leagues, cultural associations, and other mass organizations.

Elections were organized under the direction of the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front, the national entity that incorporated the country's numerous mass organizations under the leadership of the PCR. All candidates for elective office needed the approval of the front in order to be placed on the ballot.

The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front was established in November 1968 under the original name of the Socialist Unity Front. It succeeded the People's Democratic Front, which had existed since the communists began to organize effectively during World War II. The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front listed among its member organizations, in addition to the PCR, the labor unions; cooperative farm organizations; consumer cooperatives; professional, scientific, and cultural associations; student, youth, women's, and veteran's organizations; religious bodies; and representatives of Hungarian, German, Serbian, and Ukrainian minorities. In the late 1980s, chairing the organization was among Ceaușescu's many official duties. In addition to a chairperson, the front had an executive chairman, one first vice chairman and six other vice chairmen, two secretaries and eighteen members.

The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front conducted a general election in March 1985, when 369 deputies to the GNA were elected. Of the 15,733,060 registered voters, 97.8 percent voted for

front candidates, while 2.3 percent voted against them—about 33 percent more than in 1980, according to published results. Although this figure was the highest number of dissenting votes ever recorded, outside observers contended that the percentage would have been much higher in an open election.

## **Romanian Communist Party**

Founded in 1921, the Communist Party was declared illegal in 1924 and forced underground until 1944. Because of the party's association with Moscow, it was unable to attract broad support. The communists came to power as a result of the Soviet occupation of Romania during the final year of the war. With Soviet backing, the party gradually consolidated power and sought to extend its base of popular support. In early 1948, it merged with a wing of the Social Democratic Party to form the Romanian Workers' Party. By the end of 1952, however, almost all of the Social Democrats had been replaced by Communists.

### **Membership**

At the close of World War II the Communist Party had fewer than 1,000 members. Three years later, at the official congress that sanctioned the merger with the Social Democratic Party, it reported more than 1 million members. This rapid growth was the outcome of an intensive propaganda campaign and membership drive that employed political and economic pressures. Subsequently, a purge of so-called hostile and nominal members during the early 1950s resulted in the expulsion of approximately 465,000 persons.

During the early years of full Communist control, the party considered itself the vanguard of the working class and made a sustained effort to recruit workers. By the end of 1950, the party reported that 64 percent of leading party positions and 40 percent of higher government posts were filled by members of the working class. Efforts to recruit workers into the party, however, consistently fell short of goals.

By 1965, when the name Romanian Communist Party was officially adopted, membership had reached 1,450,000—about 8 percent of the country's population. Membership composition at that time was 44 percent workers, 34 percent peasants, 10 percent intelligentsia, and 12 percent other categories.

After his accession to power in 1965, Ceaușescu sought to increase the party's influence, broaden the base of popular support, and bring in new members. His efforts to increase PCR membership were extremely effective. By February 1971, the party claimed 2.1 million members. The Twelfth Party Congress in 1979

estimated membership at 3 million, and by March 1988, the PCR had grown to some 3.7 million members—more than twice as many as in 1965, when Ceaușescu came to power. Thus, in the late 1980s, some 23 percent of Romania's adult population and 33 percent of its working population belonged to the PCR.

At the Thirteenth Party Congress in November 1984, it was announced that the nationality composition of the PCR was 90 percent Romanian, 7 percent Hungarian (a drop of more than 2 percent since the Twelfth Party Congress), less than 1 percent German, and the remainder other nationalities.

As of 1988, workers made up about 55 percent of the party membership, peasants 15 percent, and intellectuals and other groups 30 percent (see table 10, Appendix). Because of the PCR's special effort to recruit members from industry, construction, and transportation, by late 1981 some 45.7 percent of workers in these sectors belonged to the party. In 1980 roughly 524,000 PCR members worked in agriculture. Figures on the educational level of the membership in 1980 indicated that 11 percent held college diplomas, 15 percent had diplomas from other institutions of higher learning, and 26 percent had received technical or professional training.

In the 1980s, statistics on the age composition of the party were no longer published. The official comment on the subject was that the party had a "proper" age composition. Outside observers, however, believed that the average age of the membership had risen dramatically. The share of pensioners and housewives increased from 6.6 percent in 1965 to 9 percent in 1988.

Women traditionally were underrepresented in the PCR. In late 1980, they accounted for only 28.7 percent of the party's members, prompting Ceaușescu to call for increasing their representation to about 35 percent.

A document on the selection and training of party cadres adopted by a Central Committee plenum in April 1988 provided information on the backgrounds of individuals staffing the political apparatus. According to that document, workers, foremen, and technicians supplied 79.8 percent of the cadres of the PCR apparatus, 80.1 percent of the apparatus of the Union of Communist Youth (Uniunea Tineretului Comunist, UTC—see Glossary), and 88.7 percent of the trade union apparatus. By late 1987, the proportion of women in the party apparatus had risen to 27.8 percent from only 16.8 percent in 1983. More than 67 percent of activists in the state apparatus and 59.4 percent in the trade unions were under forty-five years of age. The document also asserted that 95.7 percent of PCR Central Committee activists and 90.7 percent of activists in *judet*, municipal, and town party committees were

graduates of, or were attending, state institutions of higher education.

### Organizational Structure

As the fundamental document of the PCR, the party statutes set basic policy on party organization, operation, and membership. Originally adopted in May 1948, the statutes underwent several modifications, with significant revisions in 1955, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1974, and 1984. Many of these changes strengthened Ceaușescu's hold on the party and reduced the role of rank-and-file members.

All organs of the party were closely interrelated and operated on the principle of democratic centralism. (Derived from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, this concept required a firm hierarchical subordination of each party organ to the next higher unit. In practice, party programs and policies were directed from the center and decisions of higher organs were unconditionally binding on all lower organs and on individual members.) The statutes called for the free and open discussion of policy questions at congresses, conferences, and local membership meetings. But discipline required that once a decision was made, the minority fully submitted to the will of the majority.

According to the party statutes, the supreme organ of the PCR was the party congress, consisting of delegates elected by the *județ* conferences at a ratio of 1 delegate per 1,000 members. The party congress, which convened at least once every five years, elected the PCR general secretary, the Central Committee, and the Central Auditing Commission and discussed and adopted programs and policies proposed by central party organs.

Between congresses the leading party organ was the Central Committee. At the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1984, the Central Committee consisted of 265 full and 181 candidate members—twice as many members as in 1969. The Central Committee was responsible for the overall direction of party activities and the implementation of policies established by the party congress. In addition, it screened nominations for the more important party and state positions. Party statutes required a plenary session of the Central Committee at least four times a year.

Several important changes in the structure of the party leadership were enacted by the Central Committee in March 1974, a few months before the Eleventh Party Congress. The Standing Presidium of the Central Committee, whose members were the most influential individuals in the party, was abolished and replaced by the Polexco Permanent Bureau. Although formally the Central Committee elected the leading party organs, in practice the Polexco

Permanent Bureau was a self-perpetuating body, and any change in its membership or in that of the Secretariat was generated from within rather than through a democratic decision by the Central Committee. The Secretariat, most of whose members were full or candidate members of the Poxeco, had responsibility for overseeing the implementation of party decisions. As general secretary of the party, Ceaușescu headed both the Poxeco Permanent Bureau and the Secretariat and chaired the Poxeco.

The Central Committee was backed by an extensive bureaucratic structure that in many instances paralleled the organization of the government ministries. A chancellery office, headed by a chief and three deputies, coordinated the committee's overall administrative activities. Party work was organized under several permanent sections, which were typically headed by a supervisory secretary, and a number of administrative sections and functional commissions. The designations of the sections were agriculture, armed forces and security forces, cadre, culture and education, economic affairs, foreign relations, letters and audiences, local economic administration, organization, party affairs, propaganda and media, social problems, and administration.

In 1989 the following commissions were directly tied to the Central Committee: the Party and State Cadres Commission; the Ideology, Political and Cultural Activities, and Social Education Commission; the Party Organization and Mass and Public Organization Commission; and the Economic Cooperation and International Relations Commission. Most of these commissions appeared redundant, addressing problems within the purview of the Central Committee sections, various joint party-state organizations, and the ministries.

As the center for decision-making and policy control, the Poxeco Permanent Bureau was the most powerful body in the country. Established in 1974, the Permanent Bureau went through several stages. Initially it consisted of five members, but after the Twelfth Party Congress in 1979, it expanded to fifteen members. In 1984, however, it was reduced to eight members, including Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, and in June 1988 it had only seven members. Most observers agreed that in fact the decision-making process was limited to the Ceaușescus and their most trusted allies, not all of whom held positions in the Permanent Bureau, the Poxeco, or the Secretariat.

Little information was available on the responsibilities of the Poxeco, although some observers regarded it as an administrative link between the Permanent Bureau and the Central Committee. In practice, it functioned as a rump Central Committee



*Communist Party Central Committee Headquarters, Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman  
Palace of the Council of State; May Day banner reads, "May Our Dear  
Fatherland, the Romanian Socialist Republic, Live Long and Flourish."  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

when the latter was not in session. The Secretariat served as the continuing administrative unit of the party. It supervised the execution of policies decreed by the Permanent Bureau.

Two other important party organs functioned under the supervision of the Permanent Bureau and the Secretariat: the Central Auditing Commission and the Central Collegium, formerly known as the Party Control Commission. Consisting of seventy-three members (none of whom could belong to the Central Committee), the Central Auditing Commission was empowered to exercise general control over party financial affairs and examine the management of finances by the various party organs. During the 1980s, the commission literally became a place of exile for officials who had fallen out of favor. The twenty-two-member Central Collegium dealt with matters of party discipline and served as a type of appeals court for penalties imposed on members by *judet* or local party committees.

An interlocking of authority and functions at the highest level of the party and state was evidenced in the frequency with which the senior party officials also held important government posts. In the late 1980s, all the members of the Pollexco Permanent Bureau, the Pollexco, and the Secretariat were GNA deputies, and most of them held prominent positions in the State Council, the Defense Council, or the Council of Ministers.

The party statutes described the basic party organization as the foundation of the party. Basic party organizations existed in factories, offices, cooperatives, military and police units, social and cultural organizations, and residential areas. Some of the party units consisted of a few members, whereas those in the larger enterprises could have as many as 300 members. In 1980 there were an estimated 64,200 basic party organizations.

The local and occupational basic party organizations implemented party directives and programs, recruited and indoctrinated new members, and disseminated propaganda directed at those outside the party. Members had the duty to participate in social, economic, and cultural activities, particularly those associated with economic enterprises, and to examine critically production and community life in the light of party ideology and goals. In all their activities, the local party units were required to uphold the discipline of the party and to adhere to the policies established by the ruling bodies of the PCR.

Between the basic party organizations and the higher organs of the PCR stood a hierarchy of party committees organized on the *judet*, town, and communal levels. Each of these units was directly subordinate to the next higher level of the party organization. Each party committee set up its own bureau and elected a secretariat.

In most cases the secretariat consisted of a first secretary, a first vice-chairman, and three or more vice-chairmen or secretaries.

The activity of the bureau was conducted through several functional departments, which generally consisted of sections on personnel, administration, agitation and propaganda, economic enterprises, youth, and women's affairs. The *judet* and city committee also had their own control commission and training programs. The first secretary of the *judet* committee served as chairman of the *judet* people's council, linking the party and government offices.

At each of these levels—*judet*, city, town, and commune—the highest authoritative organ was the party conference, which played a role similar to that of the party congress on the national level. The party statutes called for the convening of conferences every five years in the *judete*, in the city of Bucharest, and in the larger towns. In communes and smaller towns the conference was held every two years. Although the conferences were held ostensibly to discuss problems and formulate policies, they served in practice as transmission belts for the official party line set down by the central PCR authorities. *Judet* conferences and the Bucharest city conference elected candidates to the national party Congress.

### **Ideology and Party Program**

In the early 1970s, the PCR carried on a campaign to strengthen the Marxist character of its ideological, cultural, and educational activities. Within limits Ceaușescu encouraged “socialist democracy” and open communication between the masses and the party leadership. He defined “socialist democracy” as a spirit of social responsibility among the citizens to perform their duties in accordance with the needs and imperatives of society as a whole. Socialist democracy sought to stimulate the masses to support the cause of socialism by involving them in PCR programs so that the individual citizen's goals and values coincided with those of the party.

In the mid-1970s, Ceaușescu announced a new ideological program and the tightening of party control over government, science, and cultural life. Some observers regarded this campaign as a response to Soviet criticism of Ceaușescu's foreign policy. It may have been a reminder to Moscow that socialism was not endangered in Romania and that the Soviets could not use this pretext to justify intervention as they had done in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Others considered it an assertion of authority by Ceaușescu to combat domestic ideological laxity and what he perceived as corrupting Western influences. Partially directed at the youth of the nation, the campaign included curbs on alcohol in the youth clubs and on the screening of foreign television programs and music.

Another objective was increased party control over literature and cultural life. New ideological guidelines were issued for writers, publishers, and theaters. Ceaușescu declared that the arts must serve the single purpose of socialist-communist education. At the same time, he called for increasing guidance of the arts by all levels of the PCR and requested that works of art and literature be judged for their conformity to party standards and their service to the working class. Although Ceaușescu ruled out repressive measures, he asserted that the party would rely on persuasion to implement the new ideological program.

In the late 1980s, the PCR ideological program consisted of two major components—the political and ideological education of the citizenry and the scientific study of Romanian history. The former entailed the thorough study of PCR experience, Ceaușescu's theses and recommendations, and the classics of Marxism-Leninism. The scientific study of Romania's history was considered profoundly important in developing the population's awareness of their Dacian-Roman origin and the continuity of Romanian habitation of their homeland, particularly in the face of historical claims made by neighboring countries.

During the 1980s, the party's perception of its role in society changed. It no longer saw itself as the detached vanguard of the working class, but rather as the vital center of the nation and society. The party's identification with national interests was interpreted as rejection of the concept of "dictatorship of the proletariat," a phrase that was supplanted in party parlance by "state of the revolutionary workers' democracy." The policies pursued by the PCR were designed to maintain firm control of economic planning and administration. Party control was enhanced by the territorial and administrative reorganization of 1968, which set up commissions in all of the new *județe* to function under the direct supervision of the *județ* PCR committees. These commissions gave the party direct control over local economic programs.

### Party Training

In early 1970, the PCR carried out a major reorganization of its primary institution for the training of leading party workers, the Stefan Gheorghiu Party Academy, which was renamed the Stefan Gheorghiu Academy for Social-Political Education and the Training of Leading Cadres. The academy's mission was to train party activists and develop party leaders who could resolve problems by "applying the science of political leadership to the party and society." In September 1986, the academy was renamed the Party Academy for Social and Political Training, but its structure was not changed.

In 1989 the academy still consisted of two departments, one for the training of cadres in the party and mass organizations and a second for the training of personnel working in economic and state administration. Each department was subdivided into a number of institutes, sections, and training centers.

Admission to academy programs was carefully controlled by the party. Courses in the first department lasted four years, and candidates were selected from among activists in the *județ* and city party committees, central PCR bodies, and mass organizations. Political activists in the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Interior, and the Department of State Security were also eligible for training in the first department.

The PCR also maintained the Institute of Historical and Social-Political Studies in Bucharest, which functioned under the direct supervision of the Central Committee, and lower-level training programs that operated under the *județ* party committees.

In 1988 the PCR Central Committee adopted a document setting forth policy on cadre political and ideological training. The document demanded that party and state bodies work with greater determination to accomplish the political, ideological, and revolutionary education of cadres. The Central Committee also adopted a draft program for improving cadre training in the party apparatus, the ministries, and industrial enterprises. It called for special programs to send party workers without access to political schools to university courses for political and managerial training.

The study programs, which included practical work, discussion of specific problems, and field trips, covered such subjects as automated data processing, socioeconomic analysis, forecasting, and many specialized topics. To facilitate training of large numbers, branches of the Party Academy's Center for the Education and Training of Party and Mass Organization Cadres were set up in Bucharest and in three *județe*.

## Mass Organizations

The PCR fostered the development of a large number of mass organizations that functioned as its auxiliaries. These included traditional mass organizations (youth, labor, and women's organizations) and new types of political mass organizations such as the National Council of Working People. Mass organizations representing major ethnic groups also emerged.

Citizens were constitutionally guaranteed the right to join together in organizations. At the same time, the Constitution defined the leading role of the party in relation to the mass organizations, asserting that through such organizations the PCR "achieves

an organized link with the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, and other categories of working people and mobilizes them in the struggle for the completion of the building of socialism.”

There were two broad classes of mass organizations: those based on common interests and categories of persons, such as youth and women's associations; and those based on professions, such as the General Union of Trade Unions (Uniunea Generală a Sindicatelor din România, UGSR—see Glossary). Several of the groups belonged to international organizations and associations, such as the World Federation of Trade Unions and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

In November 1968, the Council of Working People of Hungarian Nationality and the Council of Working People of German Nationality were established. The former had units in fifteen *județe*, and the latter was active in nine. In *județe* with substantial Serbian or Ukrainian populations, local councils were established for these groups. The nationality councils were affiliated with the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front.

The purpose of the nationality councils, Ceaușescu declared, was to “cultivate socialist patriotism, socialist internationalism, and devotion to our new order and to the common fatherland . . . against any backward nationalistic concepts and manifestations.” Although the councils facilitated communication between the PCR and ethnic groups, they functioned primarily as transmitters of official nationality policies. During the 1980s, the councils served as a forum for expressing Romanian nationalism in the prolonged dispute with neighboring Hungary on the question of minority rights in Transylvania.

### Union of Communist Youth

Founded in 1949, the Union of Communist Youth (Uniunea Tineretului Comunist—UTC, see Glossary) was modelled after Komsomol (the Soviet communist youth organization). Having essentially the same organizational structure as the PCR, the UTC was both a youth political party and a mass organization. Its mission was to educate young people in the spirit of communism and mobilize them, under the guidance of the PCR, for the building of socialism. The UTC organized political and patriotic courses in schools, among peasant groups, and among workers and members of the armed forces. It also guided and supervised the activities of the Union of Communist Student Associations.

In the 1980s, the UTC remained one of the most powerful mass organizations in the country, having a membership of some 3.7 million in 1984 compared with 2.5 million in early 1972. Membership was open to persons between the ages of fifteen and twenty-six;

UTC members over eighteen could also become members of the PCR. The Tenth Party Congress in 1969 introduced the requirement that applicants under the age of twenty-six would be accepted into the party only if they were UTC members.

The structure of the UTC underwent a number of changes in the decades following its creation. In early 1984, the organization functioned on the national level with an eight-member Secretariat, including the first secretary, who was also the UTC chairman, and a bureau of twenty-one full and ten candidate members. The first secretary of the UTC also held the position of minister of youth. In the late 1980s, Ceaușescu's son, Nicu, functioned as UTC first secretary. In each of the forty *județe* and the city of Bucharest, UTC committees were patterned after the national-level organization. The UTC had its own publishing facilities and published its own propaganda organ, *Scînteia Tineretului* (The Spark of Youth).

A second youth movement, the Pioneers, was created for young people between the ages of nine and fourteen. The organization's responsibilities paralleled those of the UTC and involved political and patriotic training. Until 1966 the Pioneers functioned as an integral part of the UTC, but thereafter it was under the direct control of the party Central Committee.

### General Union of Trade Unions

As the official organization representing all blue- and white-collar workers, the General Union of Trade Unions of Romania (Uniunea Generală Sindicatelor din România—UGSR, see Glossary) was the largest of the country's mass organizations, with a membership of 7.3 million in 1985. Headed by a Central Council, the UGSR consisted of eleven labor union federations and forty-one area councils, one for each *județ* and the city of Bucharest. The Central Council had a chairman, appointed by the PCR Central Committee, eight vice chairmen, two secretaries, and an executive committee of forty-eight members. In the late 1980s, there were an estimated 12,000 local union units.

The primary function of the labor unions was the transmission of party policies to the rank and file. The UGSR statutes specified that the organization would conduct its activities under the political leadership of the PCR; a similar provision was included in the statutes of the *județ* UGSR committees. In early 1971, in the aftermath of increased labor problems, the PCR took steps to reform the labor union organization. Proclaiming a democratization of the UGSR and its component unions, Ceaușescu promised workers protection of their interests and a voice in the appointment of industrial management. According to Ceaușescu, democratization

meant that the labor unions would serve the party as a framework for organizing consultations with the masses and as a forum where workers could debate the country's economic and social development. But UGSR statutes introduced later that year failed to reform the system, and labor unions were still unable to take the initiative in matters of wages and the standard of living (see Labor, ch.3).

### **Political Developments During the Ceaușescu Era Period from 1965 to 1970**

After becoming PCR first secretary in March 1965, Ceaușescu's first challenge was consolidating his power. Posing a major threat to his authority were three of his predecessor's closest associates—Chivu Stoica, a veteran party leader; Gheorghe Apostol, first deputy prime minister and a former PCR first secretary; and Alexandru Drăghici, minister of interior and head of the powerful state security apparatus.

A temporary compromise was found in a system of collective leadership with Ceaușescu acting as head of the party and Stoica becoming president of the State Council and, as such, head of state. Apostol remained first deputy minister, and Drăghici kept the position of minister of interior. Ion Gheorghe Maurer, who had served as prime minister under Gheorghiu-Dej, retained that position. At the same time, changes were made in the party statutes to prevent one man from holding dual party and government offices as Gheorghiu-Dej had done.

At the Ninth Party Congress in July 1965, Ceaușescu was able to add a number of supporters to an enlarged PCR Central Committee and to change his title to general secretary. At the same time a new body was added to the party hierarchy—the Executive Committee, which stood between the Standing Presidium and the Central Committee. Although Ceaușescu was not able to gain full control of the Executive Committee immediately, in time the new body provided him the means to place his supporters in the leading PCR organs and to implement his own policies.

Political observers identified three principal factions within the PCR during the 1965-67 period: Ceaușescu and his supporters; the veteran party men led by Stoica, Apostol, and Drăghici; and the intellectuals, represented by Maurer. Those people allied with Ceaușescu, who was forty-seven years old when he came to power, tended to be men of his own generation and outlook, and whenever possible he engineered their appointment or promotion into important party, government, and military positions.

One of Ceaușescu's foremost concerns was what he termed the vitalization of the PCR. To achieve this end, he not only brought younger people into the top party organs but also sought, for a limited time, to broaden the professional skills represented in those bodies through the recruitment of technicians and academicians. At the same time, he allowed increased technical and scientific contacts with Western nations and lifted the ban on works by certain foreign writers and artists, thereby gaining support among intellectuals.

### **1967 Party Conference**

At a special National Conference of the PCR in December 1967—the first such event in twenty-two years—Ceaușescu continued to strengthen his position. Attending the conference were members of the Central Committee and 1,150 delegates from local party organizations. Ceaușescu elected to employ the technique of the party conference rather than a special party congress in order to have his proposals approved by a larger body than the Central Committee. At the same time, he wanted to avoid election of a new Central Committee, which a party congress would have required.

Ceaușescu proposed a number of reforms in the structure and functioning of the party and government, and he asserted the need to eliminate duplication. He proposed that the Central Committee limit itself to basic decisions of economic policy and that specific matters of implementation be left to the ministries.

Political and ideological activity, Ceaușescu proposed, would remain under the control of the Central Committee and would be given greater emphasis and direction through the creation of an ideological commission that would develop an intensified program of political education. A defense council, composed of the party's Standing Presidium and other members, would be established to deal with most military questions, but basic guidance for both the armed forces and the state security apparatus would remain the responsibility of the Central Committee. Major foreign policy questions would be decided by the Standing Presidium.

Ceaușescu proposed several reforms in the organization and responsibilities of government organs and called for redrawing the country's administrative subdivisions. He sought to broaden the activities of the GNA and its commissions, and he recommended a larger role for the Council of Ministers in formulating long-term economic plans. In addition, he suggested that the heads of three important mass organizations—the UGSR, the UTC, and the National Union of Agricultural Production Cooperatives—be included in the government and be given ministerial ranking.

The National Conference unanimously adopted Ceaușescu's proposals and reversed the party statutes adopted in 1965 that prevented the party leader from simultaneously holding the position of head of state. The official rationale for uniting the highest offices of the party and state was to eliminate duplication of functions and increase efficiency. Stoica was given a position in the party Secretariat and later, in 1969, was named chairman of the Central Auditing Commission.

In implementing Ceaușescu's recommendations, certain positions in the party and state organizations were fused. For example, *județ* and city party first secretaries became chairmen of the corresponding people's councils, and secretaries of local party units and labor union representatives became involved in the councils of industrial enterprises.

Immediately following the National Conference, the GNA convened to elect Ceaușescu president of the State Council. Apostol was demoted from his position as a first deputy prime minister to his previously held post of UGSR chairman. Drăghici was removed from the party Secretariat and given a position as a deputy prime minister under Maurer, who was reappointed prime minister. With the successful demotion of his chief rivals, Ceaușescu emerged at the close of 1967 as the undisputed leader of both the party and the state.

### **Rehabilitation and De-Stalinization**

With his power base firmly established, Ceaușescu proceeded to dissociate his regime from the Gheorghiu-Dej era. In April 1968, at a plenary session of the Central Committee, the Gheorghiu-Dej regime was indicted for abuses of power, and the victims of his political purges were officially rehabilitated. Because of his close association with Gheorghiu-Dej and his position as head of the interior ministry during the period of the purges Drăghici was relieved of all his positions. Apostol and Stoica were censured but were allowed to remain in their posts, although their standing in the party was considerably weakened.

During the 1968-70 period, Ceaușescu pursued a cautious policy of de-Stalinization in domestic affairs while maintaining Romania's independent stance in international relations. The domestic relaxation was short-lived, however, and in April 1968, Ceaușescu cautioned intellectuals and artists not to overstep the bounds established by the party.

### **Tenth Party Congress**

The Tenth Party Congress of August 1969 reelected Ceaușescu

PCR general secretary, enlarged the Central Committee from 121 to 165 members, purged some of Ceaușescu's potential opponents, and further revised the party statutes. The statute revisions provided for electing the Central Committee by secret ballot and transferred responsibility for electing the general secretary from the Central Committee to the party congress. It was also decided that the party congress would be convened every five—rather than four—years so that it could discuss and adopt a five-year economic plan for the country.

Nearly half of the older members of the Central Committee were replaced by younger men who supported Ceaușescu. Two members of the old guard, Apostol and Stoica, were conspicuously not reelected, and immediately after the congress, Apostol lost his position as UGSR chairman after being charged with "serious breaches of Communist morality."

### **Eleventh Party Congress**

The Eleventh Party Congress in November 1974 adopted the party program (a massive document establishing the framework for party activity for the following quarter century), the directives for the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1976-80), and the guidelines for the economy from 1974 through 1990. The congress failed, however, to complete all the items on its agenda, leaving such unfinished business as party statute revisions to the Central Committee for finalization.

The report of the Central Committee surveyed the party's achievements, examined "the problems of international political life" and cooperation with other countries, and defined the national goal as the building of a "multilaterally developed socialist society." The foreign policy objectives set forth in the report included the establishment of a "new world order," disarmament, and a "new type of unity" in the international communist movement.

The draft directives of the 1976-80 plan projected continued rapid development of "the technical and material basis of the national economy, and of the whole of society." The directives earmarked some one-third of the gross national product for investment, the highest rate in the communist world, and predicted an annual rate of industrial growth of between 9 and 10 percent for the period up to 1990.

The congress considered a proposal to appoint Ceaușescu PCR general secretary for life. Ceaușescu rejected the proposal in a brief speech, possibly because of the objections of Western communist delegates in attendance and the potential damage the appointment would cause to his international image.

The congress elected a new Central Committee, which was expanded to 205 members and 156 alternate members, and removed 43 members elected at the Tenth Congress, including former Prime Minister Maurer. Numerous party and government officials were assigned new positions. The Central Committee elected a twenty-eight-member Polexco, which selected the membership of the Permanent Bureau (created in March to replace the Presidium). Far from the broadly based committee initially projected, the Permanent Bureau comprised only Ceaușescu and a handful of persons who owed their rise entirely to him. Thus Ceaușescu's personal rule was further strengthened and institutionalized.

### **Twelfth Party Congress**

The Twelfth Party Congress in November 1979 was attended by 2,656 delegates representing approximately 3 million party members and by delegations from 98 countries. None of the more senior officials from the other East European and Soviet parties was present. Ceaușescu presented a lengthy report detailing the economic shortcomings and mistakes of the previous five years, particularly those in the agricultural sector. He stressed the necessity for greater efficiency and for additional austerity measures, especially energy conservation. Announcing that offshore oil had been found in the Black Sea, Ceaușescu proclaimed the goal of energy self-sufficiency within ten years.

On internal party matters, Ceaușescu stressed the need for greater discipline and pointed out shortcomings in ideological, political, and cultural activities. To detect potential adversaries, party members' records were to be examined by the Party and State Cadres Commission, headed by Elena Ceaușescu.

The Twelfth Congress witnessed an unprecedented attack on Ceaușescu's personal leadership by a former high-ranking party official, Constantin Pirvulescu, who openly opposed Ceaușescu's reelection as general secretary, accusing him of putting personal and family interests above those of the party and the country. He accused the congress of neglecting the country's real problems in its preoccupation with Ceaușescu's glorification. Observers noted that this unprecedented attack came from a man who could not be accused of pro-Soviet sentiments, because he had been a staunch defender of PCR autonomy. Nor could he, at the age of eighty-four, be accused of personal ambition. Pirvulescu's remarks were, according to press reports, evidence of discontent in the party ranks. Pirvulescu was stripped of his delegate credentials, expelled from the congress, and placed under strict surveillance and house arrest.

The congress elected a new Central Committee of 408 members, including 163 alternate members, and a Polexco of 27 full and 18 alternate members. The Polexco Permanent Bureau was expanded from eleven to fifteen members. This steady growth reflected Ceaușescu's desire to make the body an institutional gathering of the most powerful people in the government and party.

### **Thirteenth Party Congress**

At the Thirteenth Party Congress of November 1984, Ceaușescu's address was devoted mostly to the economy. The report made clear that there would be no substantial effort to increase the standard of living and that forced industrialization would continue unabated. It revealed that the industrial growth rate during the first four years of the decade had been much lower than was projected by the eleventh and twelfth congresses. The report did not mention food shortages and rationing. Ignoring the fact that electricity and fuel supplies to the general population had been cut drastically, Ceaușescu blithely predicted that by 1995, Romania would be energy self-sufficient.

A major part of the report was devoted to the question of political-educational activity and the "fashioning of a new man" in order to "elevate the socialist revolutionary awareness of all working people." Observers pointed out that the report featured Ceaușescu's Stalinist ideological orthodoxy more prominently than ever before. He called for intensified study of Marxist philosophical writings and urged the party to fight "mysticism" and "obscurantism" (euphemisms for religion), as well as "obsolete" and "foreign" ideological influences.

The congress elected a new Central Committee of 446 members, who in turn selected a commission to propose the composition of a new PCR Polexco of 23 full members and 25 alternate members. Among the new alternate members were Ceaușescu's son Nicu, whose political ambitions were undisguised, and Tudor Postelnicu, one of Ceaușescu's most trusted security men after the defection of Ion Pacepa in 1978 (see *Security and Intelligence Services*, ch.5). The size of the Permanent Bureau was reduced to eight members, only five of whom remained from the 1979 Permanent Bureau. All personnel changes after the Thirteenth Congress were designed to increase Ceaușescu's power base.

### **Cult of Personality**

The distinctive feature of Romania's political power structure in the 1980s was the cult of personality surrounding Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu. Some observers argued that the phenomenon

was the continuation of Romania's historical legacy. Others held that it was Ceaușescu's unique political creation.

Following Ceaușescu's rise to power in 1965, Romanians had enjoyed a short-lived liberalization, as the new leader sought to achieve genuine popularity. By 1971, however, the regime had reasserted its Stalinist legacy in socioeconomic and cultural matters. Thereafter ideological orthodoxy retained a tight hold on all intellectual life, and meaningful reforms failed to materialize. After assuming the newly established position of president of the republic, Ceaușescu was increasingly portrayed by the Romanian media as a creative communist theoretician and political leader whose "thought" was the source of all national accomplishments. His tenure as president was known as the "golden era of Ceaușescu." The media embellished all references to him with such formulaic appellations as "guarantor of the nation's progress and independence" and "visionary architect of the nation's future." In 1989, Ceaușescu functioned as the head of state, the PCR, and the armed forces; chairman of the Supreme Council for Economic and Social Development; president of the National Council of Working People; and chairman of the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front.

In the 1980s, the personality cult was extended to other members of the Ceaușescu family. Ceaușescu's wife, Elena, held a position of prominence in political life far exceeding protocol requirements. As first deputy prime minister, she took part in official negotiations with foreign governments and communist parties. She chaired both the National Council on Science and Technology and the National Council for Science and Education. Her most influential position, however, was that of chief of the Party and State Cadres Commission, which enabled her to effect organizational and personnel changes in the party apparatus and the government. By the mid-1980s, Elena Ceaușescu's national prominence had grown to the point that her birthday was celebrated as a national holiday, as was her husband's. With allies throughout the Central Committee and the powerful secret police, Elena Ceaușescu had emerged as one of the foremost contenders to succeed her husband, who in 1989 was reported to be in failing health. Their son, Nicu, was a candidate member of the Poxco, and two of Ceaușescu's brothers held key positions in the army and the secret police. In 1989, some twenty-seven of Ceaușescu's close relatives held top party and state positions.

### **Emergence of an Organized Opposition**

Postwar Romania had less labor unrest and fewer overt acts of antigovernment defiance than any other East European country.

*Poster marking the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Romanian Communist Party, Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*



*Victory of Socialism Boulevard leading to the new Palace of the Republic, Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*



During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Gheorghiu-Dej regime feared the unrest might spill over into Romania. But even though there was student unrest and tension among the Hungarian population of Transylvania, the regime was not seriously threatened. The gradual deterioration of the economy as well as poor and dangerous working conditions led to significant unrest during the late 1970s, however. In 1977 a prolonged strike by coal miners in the Jiu Valley climaxed in the miners holding the prime minister captive in a mine shaft for two days. As a result of this incident, the Securitate still maintained constant surveillance over the region more than a decade later. Despite further deterioration of the economy, the severe food shortages, and energy and fuel restrictions during the 1980s, only limited signs of unrest were observed, thanks to the strict surveillance and repressive measures of the internal security forces. But in November 1987, a massive protest occurred in the city of Braşov. Some 30,000 workers staged a violent protest against harsh living conditions and the prospect of another winter of food and energy shortages. The spontaneous demonstration began at a tractor and truck plant and spread into the streets. Joined by onlookers, the workers chanting anti-Ceauşescu slogans marched on the city hall and ransacked the mayor's office. The protest was broken up by militia and the Securitate, and a number of workers were arrested. Though it was crushed, the Braşov protest represented a rallying point for the possible emergence of an organized opposition.

In March 1989, a letter addressed to Ceauşescu criticizing his dictatorial policy reached the West. Written by a group of retired senior communist officials, it accused Ceauşescu of violating international human rights agreements, including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act (Helsinki Accords); ignoring the constitutional rights of citizens; mismanaging the economy; and alienating Romania's allies. The signatories called for a halt to the systematization program of destroying rural villages and forcibly relocating peasant families (see Land, ch.3). The letter was signed by former General Secretary Gheorghe Apostol; former Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister Alexandru Birladeanu; Constantin Pirvulescu, a co-founder of the PCR; Corneliu Manescu, a former Romanian foreign minister and one-time president of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly; and Grigore Raceanu, a veteran party member. Many analysts considered the letter the most serious challenge to Ceauşescu's rule to date. The regime relocated and isolated all signatories and reportedly subjected them to other repressive measures. The United States expressed official concern

for their safety, and several other Western governments subsequently limited their relations with Romania.

## **Mass Media**

In the late 1980s, the media continued to serve as propaganda, indoctrination, and disinformation tools to develop support for the regime's domestic and foreign policies and to consolidate Ceaușescu's personal power. The system of media control was highly centralized and involved an interlocking group of party and state organizations, supervising bodies, and operating agencies, whose authority extended to all radio and television facilities, film studios, printing establishments, newspapers, and book publishers and to the single news agency. The control apparatus also regulated public access to foreign publications, films, newscasts, books, and radio and television programs.

The 1965 Constitution promised freedom of information, but expressed the reservation that it "cannot be used for aims hostile to the socialist system and to the interests of the working people." In 1971, following a trip to China, Ceaușescu reinforced PCR authority over the highest information-control and policy-making bodies in the government. The former State Committee for Culture and Art, which was an element of the Council of Ministers, was reconstituted as the Council for Socialist Culture and Education and answered directly to the Central Committee of the PCR. Similar changes were made in the Committee of Radio and Television, which became the Council of Romanian Radio and Television. In 1985 a joint party-state organization, the National Council for Science and Education, chaired by Elena Ceaușescu, was created. Its responsibility was to ensure uniform policy implementation in science, technology, and education, and it provided the regime another mechanism with which to control educational activities.

The propaganda and media section of the Central Committee exercised general guidance and supervision of all publications and dissemination procedures. Its policies and directives, in turn, were implemented by such government-controlled agencies as the Romanian Press Agency and the individual publishing houses, printing establishments, book distribution centers, motion picture studios, and radio and television stations.

The UN's Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which collects statistics from all member states, reported that during the 1980s the number of Romanian daily and periodical publications dropped sharply. Whereas in 1969 Romania published fifty-one dailies, twenty-three weeklies, and two semi-weeklies, in 1985 there were only thirty-six dailies and twenty-four

weeklies. Daily newspapers had a total annual circulation of more than 1.1 billion copies. Major mass organizations, government-sponsored groups, local government organs, and the PCR and its subsidiaries published the most important and influential newspapers, both in Bucharest and in the various *județe*. Little latitude was allowed either in the content or format of the news.

The most authoritative newspaper, *Scînteia*, was founded in 1931 as the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and in the late 1980s had by far the largest daily circulation. It was the outlet for party policy pronouncements and semiofficial government positions on national and international issues. Until the early 1970s, *Scînteia* was published as an eight-page daily, but thereafter it was condensed to four pages with one six-page issue per week. Its editorials, feature sections, and chief articles were frequently reprinted or excerpted in the provincial newspapers, shop bulletins, and enterprise newsletters.

After *Scînteia*, the most important daily was *România Liberă*, established by the Socialist Unity Front in 1942. Although the paper featured items of national and international interest, it concentrated on local issues. The only paper allowed to publish one-page advertisement sections, *România Liberă* was in great demand. During the 1970s, the daily *Munca*, published by the UGSR, became a weekly publication. *Scînteia Tineretului*, which addressed the younger element of the population and stressed the ideological and political training of youth as the basis for a "sound socialist society," was another national daily. The most widely circulated minority-language newspapers were the Hungarian daily *Előre* and the German daily *Neuer Weg*. Both publications generally repeated the news of the national newspapers but also featured items of minority interest. They promoted the official government position on such sensitive issues as Romanian-Hungarian tensions and served as mouthpieces for anti-Hungarian propaganda.

The number of periodicals also decreased in the 1970s and 1980s. Whereas in 1969 there were 581 Romanian periodicals, in 1985 there were only 422. All periodicals were considered official publications of the various sponsoring organizations and were subject to the same licensing and supervising controls as newspapers. Virtually all magazines and journals were published by mass organizations and party- or government-controlled entities, such as institutes, labor unions, cultural committees, and special interest groups. They covered a broad range of subjects and included technical and professional journals, among them magazines on literature, art, health, sports, medicine, statistics, politics, science, and economics.



*Casa Scînteii, publishing house for major periodicals, Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

Established in 1949, the Romanian Press Agency (*Agenția Română de Presă—Agerpres*) operated as a department of the central government under the control of the PCR Central Committee. Agerpres had exclusive rights to the collection and distribution of all news, pictures, and other press items, both domestic and foreign. In the 1980s, Agerpres increasingly concerned itself with reporting official ceremonial (protocol) events and foreign news. For foreign dissemination, it issued the daily *Agerpres News of the Day* and the weekly *Agerpres Information Bulletin*. For domestic consumption, Agerpres distributed about 45,000 words of foreign news coverage daily to various newspapers and periodicals and to radio and television broadcasting stations. It also provided articles from Western wire services to government and party officials in classified bulletins. The Agerpres network of press correspondents in foreign countries was largely dismantled after several defections, and in 1989 Agerpres maintained only a few correspondents in the other East European countries.

After 1960, recognizing the importance of radio as a medium for informing the public and molding attitudes, the regime launched a large-scale effort to build broadcasting facilities and manufacture receiving sets. The number of radio receivers increased from 2 million in 1960 to 3.2 million in 1989. Receivers and amplifiers

that reached group audiences in public areas were installed throughout the country.

In the 1980s, Romanian radio broadcast three programs on medium wave and FM. Until the mid-1980s, there were also six regional programs, with transmission in Hungarian, German, and Serbo-Croatian. Each week about 200 hours of broadcasts in thirteen languages were beamed to foreign countries by Radio Bucharest.

Since its inception in 1956, television broadcasting has been closely linked with radio as an increasingly important instrument of "propaganda and socialist education of the masses." Like radio, television operated under the supervision of the Council of Romanian Radio and Television, whose policy guidelines were received directly from the party apparatus. Television frequently came under close scrutiny and criticism by the Central Committee and by national congresses on "socialist education." At the June 1982 Central Committee plenum and again in 1984, Ceaușescu denounced the "polluting" influence of Western propaganda and its impact on literary, theatrical, film, and artistic broadcasts and stated that radio and television should report current events from a Marxist-Leninist perspective.

In 1989 there were approximately 3.9 million television sets in Romania. Following the energy crisis of 1984, the two TV channels were merged and broadcasting was reduced from 100 to 22 hours per week. Programs in Hungarian and German were dropped. Because of these cutbacks and the greater ideological content of the broadcasts, the number of viewers actually declined, and some citizens resorted to building their own antennae to receive Bulgarian and Soviet programs.

Before World War II, Romania was one of the leading book-publishing nations in southeastern Europe. But after 1948, the new communist regime nationalized all publishing facilities and made the publishing industry a propaganda and indoctrination instrument. From 1955 to 1966 the number of titles gradually increased, reaching a plateau of about 9,000. In the following decades, however, book publishing declined dramatically, and in 1985 only 3,063 titles were published—about one-third as many as during the 1960s. Not only the number, but also the variety of books published during the 1970s and 1980s was reduced. By far the largest number of titles credited to a single author was attributed to Ceaușescu, whose writings were published in Romanian and in foreign languages in large printings.

The Council for Socialist Culture and Education controlled all printing and publishing activities. It formulated policy guidelines

for the publishing industry and used other government agencies, the various publishing houses, and book distribution centers to supervise and coordinate day-to-day operations. The council allocated paper, determined the number of books to be printed, and set the sale prices of publications. The number of publishing houses declined from about twenty-five in the early 1970s to eighteen in the late 1980s.

Film production, distribution, and exhibition also operated under the supervision of the Council for Socialist Culture and Education. There were two production studios—one in Bucharest that produced documentaries, newsreels, cartoons, and puppet films, and another in Buftea (near Bucharest) that made feature films.

Until the late 1960s, Romanian films reflected a strong French influence. Both the native and co-produced pictures of this period were of high quality, and several won awards at international film festivals. In later years, however, the regime repressed artistic expression in the film industry, and as a result, fewer and lower-quality films were made. In 1985 only twenty-six films were produced. Furthermore, according to UNESCO statistics, fewer foreign films were allowed into the country. Whereas in 1968 Romania imported 188 feature films, in 1984 the number declined to 72. Also noteworthy is that in 1968 approximately 40 percent of imported films came from the Soviet Union, while 60 percent were from the West, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), but in 1985 no films were imported from the West nor from any hard-currency country.

## **Foreign Policy**

Foreign policy formulation, according to the Constitution, is the responsibility of the GNA, and its implementation is within the purview of the Council of Ministers. In reality the highest echelons of the PCR—in 1989 the Ceaușescu circle, the Permanent Bureau, and the Polexo—formulated foreign policy. Party decisions were channeled through the Central Committee's Directorate for International Affairs to the GNA, which approved them automatically and without amendment. The State Council had the executive function of ratifying international treaties and establishing diplomatic relations with other states. As the head of state, the president of the republic represented Romania in international relations.

The Council of Ministers coordinated and implemented foreign policy through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Economic Cooperation. Because decision-making powers resided in the party leadership, however, the ministries functioned almost exclusively as administrative

agencies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for implementing party directives in diplomatic, educational, cultural, and scientific relations with other states and with international organizations. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Economic Cooperation functioned as the central organ for the country's international trade and economic activities.

In 1989 the organizational structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained essentially the same as that established by the Constitution of 1965. The ministry had five geographical and eight functional directorates. Geographical directorates were set up for the socialist countries; Western Europe; Africa; Asia, Middle East, and Oceania; and the Americas. There were functional directorates for consular affairs; culture and press; diplomatic courier and cable service; finance and accounting; foreign economic relations and international organizations; organization, control, and personnel training; protocol; and supply and administration.

In 1989 the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Economic Cooperation consisted of nine geographical directorates and twelve functional directorates, two of which were merged in a separate department. The geographical directorates included Africa, Asia and Oceania, Latin America, Middle East, North America, members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), non-Comecon socialist countries, Soviet Union, and Western Europe. The functional directorates were economic, administrative, and secretariat; export-import I (authorizing exports and imports and monitoring the production of export commodities by the heavy equipment, machine-building, electrical engineering, metallurgical, extractive, and electric energy industries); export-import II (authorizing exports and imports and monitoring the production of export commodities by the chemical and petrochemical, wood-processing, agriculture, food-processing, and light industries); finance and accounting; foreign contracts, agreements, and legal matters; foreign trade and international economic cooperation plan; hard currency; organization and control; personnel, education, and remuneration; and prices and effectiveness of foreign trade operations. In addition, there was the international economic cooperation department consisting of two directorates—export of complex installations, international bids, and technical assistance; and joint companies and coordination of international economic cooperation activity. Over the years the ministry was subjected to several reorganizations and restructurings.

In 1989 Romania maintained diplomatic relations with 125 countries (118 at the ambassadorial level) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Although most governments maintained

embassies in Bucharest, some Western countries maintained only symbolic representation or conducted business from a neighboring country because of the shortage of food and the inadequate heating during the winter. Romania also had trade relations with certain states with which it had not established formal diplomatic ties.

In 1989 Romania continued to be a member of the UN and a number of UN specialized agencies. It was also a member, albeit an often reluctant one, of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (see Glossary), more commonly known as the Warsaw Pact, and Comecon.

## **Relations with Communist States**

### **Soviet Union and Eastern Europe**

After coming under communist control in 1948, Romania was closely aligned with the international policies and goals of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But after mid-1952, when Gheorghiu-Dej had gained full control of the party and had become head of state, Romania began a slow disengagement from Soviet domination, being careful not to incur the suspicions or disapproval of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. The Gheorghiu-Dej regime strongly supported the Soviet suppression of the Revolution of 1956 in Hungary, hoping thereby to enhance prospects for the removal of Soviet occupation forces that had remained in Romania after the war. In fact Soviet forces were withdrawn in 1958, enabling Gheorghiu-Dej to take the first significant steps to diminish Soviet influence over Romanian foreign policy.

Gheorghiu-Dej rejected Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's plan to integrate the economies of the Comecon states and subordinate national economic plans to an overall planning body. Gheorghiu-Dej objected not only to the loss of economic autonomy but also to the subservient role Khrushchev envisioned for Romania—supplier of raw materials and agricultural products for the more industrially developed members. Therefore he proceeded with his own plans for the country's industrial development, asserting the right of each Comecon state to develop its economy in accord with national needs and interests. To lessen dependence on Comecon, the regime gradually expanded economic relations with noncommunist states (see Foreign Trade, ch.3).

The conflict with the Soviet Union became more acute in 1962, when Gheorghiu-Dej again rejected the Comecon plan for Romania and announced the signing of a contract with a British-French consortium for the construction of a large steel mill at Galați.

Romanian-Soviet relations continued to deteriorate as Gheorghiu-Dej exploited the Sino-Soviet dispute and supported the Chinese position on the equality of communist states and rejection of the Soviet party's leading role. In November 1963, Romania declared its readiness to mediate the Sino-Soviet dispute, a suggestion Moscow found arrogant and hostile.

A statement issued by the Central Committee in April 1964 declared the right of Romania and all other nations to develop national policies in the light of their own interests and domestic requirements. During the remainder of that year, the volume of economic and cultural contacts with Western nations increased significantly. Because of the increased tensions in Indochina that were developing into the Vietnam War, however, the regime curbed its efforts to improve relations with the United States.

Following the sudden death of Gheorghiu-Dej in March 1965, Ceaușescu continued a foreign policy that frequently diverged from that of the Soviet Union and the other members of the Warsaw Pact. Ceaușescu antagonized the Soviet Union by establishing diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1967 and by refusing to follow the Soviet lead in breaking relations with Israel in the wake of the June 1967 War.

The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet-led forces was a turning point in Romanian relations with Comecon and the Warsaw Pact. Some observers maintain that Ceaușescu's denunciation of the invasion marked the apogee of Romanian defiance of the Soviet Union. But Ceaușescu was careful not to press the policy to the point of provoking military intervention. The regime interpreted as a clear warning the enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine—the concept articulated by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev that the protection of socialism in any communist state is the legitimate concern of all communist states.

After 1968 pressures mounted on Romania to cooperate more fully in the Warsaw Pact and to agree to a supranational planning body within the framework of Comecon. Nevertheless, the Ceaușescu regime continued to resist the Soviet efforts toward economic integration. Several important events during the 1968-70 period strengthened Romania's international position, namely the visits of President Charles de Gaulle of France and President Richard M. Nixon of the United States and the long-delayed signing of a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in July 1970.

As of mid-1989, Ceaușescu had dealt with several Soviet leaders during his tenure as head of state—Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, Konstantin Chernenko, and Mikhail Gorbachev. Relations were most strained during the Brezhnev era, which witnessed the

Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Nixon visit to Romania, Soviet accusations of a Romanian plot to organize a pro-Chinese bloc in the Balkans, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

In 1976 Ceaușescu received Brezhnev in Bucharest—the first official visit by a Soviet leader since 1955. The final communiqué of the meeting reflected continuing disagreements between the two countries, as Romania refused to side with the Soviets in their dispute with China. In 1978, after visiting China, Ceaușescu attended a Warsaw Pact summit meeting in Moscow, where he rejected a Soviet proposal that member countries increase their military expenditures. On his return to Bucharest, Ceaușescu explained the refusal by stating that any increase in military expenditure was contrary to the socialist countries' effort to reduce military tensions in Europe. Perhaps because of Ceaușescu's uncooperative attitude, a 1980 Romanian attempt to secure supplies of energy and raw materials from the Soviet Union and other Comecon countries failed when those countries demanded world market prices and payment in hard currency. Nor would the Soviet Union guarantee that it would increase or even maintain existing levels of oil exports to Romania for the following year.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused Romania to distance itself further from Brezhnev. When the UN General Assembly voted on a resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops, Romania broke with its Warsaw Pact allies and abstained. And one month later, at a meeting of communist states in Sofia, Romania joined the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in refusing to endorse the invasion.

During Andropov's brief tenure as Soviet leader, relations remained frigid. The wording of the communiqué following a meeting with Ceaușescu in Moscow suggested that Andropov intended to pressure Romania to bring its foreign policy into line with the Warsaw Pact. The Romanian leadership appeared to suspect Andropov of pro-Hungarian sympathies because of his close personal friendship with First Secretary János Kádár of Hungary. Romanian disagreements with the Soviet position on intermediate nuclear forces in Europe also surfaced during the Andropov period.

Ceaușescu's Moscow meeting with Chernenko in June 1984 was cordial and promised an improvement in the Romanian-Soviet relationship. Ceaușescu had backed Chernenko over Andropov to succeed Brezhnev, and their mutual regard was reflected in less divergent positions on international issues. In contrast with previous years, Ceaușescu began to increase his criticism of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States for the deterioration of international relations.

With the replacement of Chernenko by Gorbachev in 1985, political relations between Romania and the Soviet Union began to cool again, although the economic relationship improved. Soviet oil deliveries rose while Romania became the largest supplier of oil- and gas-drilling equipment to the Soviet Union. In other spheres, however, relations were tense, as Ceaușescu's Stalinist philosophy conflicted with Gorbachev's program of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). In reaction to the political changes occurring throughout Eastern Europe in the wake of Soviet reforms, Romania moved toward retrenchment. Ceaușescu rejected the decentralization of economic planning and management, the reintroduction of market mechanisms, and private enterprise as incompatible with socialism.

Romania also rejected much of Gorbachev's foreign policy. In December 1987, Ceaușescu failed to attend a Warsaw Pact summit in East Berlin, where Gorbachev briefed leaders on his trip to Washington. While the Soviets frequently spoke of positive trends in East-West relations and progress in arms control, Ceaușescu's statements took exception. He criticized the rationale for the Soviet-United States dialogue, stating that the international situation remained complex and fraught with the danger of war. Romania increasingly adopted a more hawkish position than the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact members on a number of East-West issues.

In May 1987, Gorbachev visited Romania, and the two leaders publicly aired their differences. Referring to complaints of mistreatment of the Hungarian minority, Gorbachev reminded Ceaușescu of the need to demonstrate "tact" and "consideration" in nationality policy. He also criticized nepotism in the Eastern bloc, without mentioning Ceaușescu by name, and complained about Romania's unwillingness to expand cooperation with the other members of Comecon. In October 1988, Ceaușescu visited Moscow for official discussions with Gorbachev but failed to improve the state of bilateral relations. By that time, the Hungarian-Romanian dispute had become an even more serious issue.

Romania's objections to *perestroika* influenced its relations with other East European countries. It appeared that two major camps were emerging within the Warsaw Pact, with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania lining up against restructuring and Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union favoring it. Romania strove to improve its relationship with the countries sharing its dislike for *perestroika*. Bulgaria had already established a special relationship with Ceaușescu and his predecessor, Gheorghiu-Dej. Ceaușescu and Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov, the two East

European leaders with the longest tenure, met at least twice yearly and signed numerous joint venture and trade agreements.

Relations with Czechoslovakia improved markedly after Ceaușescu's May 1987 visit, largely because of the countries' shared opposition to *perestroika*. Likewise, even before Gorbachev's rise to power, Romanian-East German relations had been fostered by certain shared resentments of Soviet actions. East Germany's Erich Honecker was the only Warsaw Pact leader to appear in Bucharest on the occasion of the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of Romania's liberation.

## **Hungary**

Although in the postwar period Romania and Hungary were "fraternal states in the socialist community of nations," bilateral relations were marred by historical hostility, and disputes continued to erupt throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1977 Kádár visited Romania, and he and Ceaușescu signed a comprehensive agreement governing bilateral relations. The agreement called for more cultural exchanges between the countries and for setting up additional consulates in Szeged and Cluj-Napoca for that purpose. The Hungarian government hoped the agreement would improve its contact with the Hungarian minority in Romania, but the Ceaușescu regime failed to implement the agreement and continued its policy of forced assimilation under the guise of enhancing national unity.

In the 1980s Romanian-Hungarian relations remained tense. The Hungarian government and intellectual circles began to express concern over the issue of ethnic assimilation in Romania. In 1982, reports of mistreatment of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania further exacerbated relations. The media of both countries publicized the controversy, and an energetic anti-Hungarian propaganda campaign on the anniversary of Romania's union with Transylvania brought relations to their lowest level since World War II.

With the progressive deterioration of Romanian-Hungarian relations, polemics crept into official political statements. In 1985 the Central Committee secretary for international relations in Budapest blamed the poor relations on the political climate and reduced human contacts, presumably referring to a series of measures taken by Romania to hinder contacts between Transylvanian ethnic Hungarians and Hungarian visitors. The next day, Ceaușescu at a Central Committee plenum criticized "nationalism, chauvinism, and revanchism wherever it was to be found." In turn Radio Budapest accused Romania of failing to implement the 1977 agreements signed by Kádár and Ceaușescu.

A particularly serious episode in the chronology of the crisis was the Hungarian Ministry of Culture's 1986 publication of the three-volume *History of Transylvania*. The work followed Bucharest's publication of two volumes describing atrocities committed against Romanians by Hungarian forces occupying Transylvania from 1940 to 1944. The Romanians started a propaganda campaign against the publication of Hungary's three-volume work. Ceaușescu addressed a joint plenum of the German and Hungarian nationality councils and condemned the publication as the "revival of Horthyist, fascist, and even racist theses by reactionary imperialist circles."

In 1987 relations between the two countries further worsened as large numbers of ethnic Hungarians began leaving Romania. The Hungarian government established an interdepartmental committee and allocated the equivalent of approximately US\$5 million to resettle the refugees. Meanwhile, 40,000 people marched to the Romanian embassy in Budapest to protest the planned demolition of Transylvanian villages. The demonstration, organized by Hungary's dissident Democratic Forum, appeared to have the tacit support of the Hungarian government. The protesters regarded the planned demolitions as an attempt to disperse the ethnic Hungarian population, which they claimed numbered some 2.5 million persons. Following the demonstration, Hungary was ordered to close its consulate in Cluj-Napoca and vacate its embassy in Bucharest, which was to be converted to a cultural center.

In an attempt to resolve some of the issues dividing the countries and to obtain guarantees for the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania, new Hungarian leader Karoly Grosz met Ceaușescu in August 1988 at the Romanian city of Arad—the first meeting between the countries' leaders in more than ten years. The day-long discussion was fruitless, as the Romanians rejected two key proposals. The first called for reopening the consulates closed during the dispute—the Romanian office at Debrecen and the Hungarian facility at Cluj-Napoca. The second appealed for an end to the rural systematization program (see *Systematization: A Settlement Strategy*, ch.2).

In March 1989, Hungary declared that it would lodge a complaint with the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva concerning Romania's failure to abide by cultural agreements, its policy of forced assimilation of minorities, and the flood of refugees into Hungary. At Geneva the Hungarian representative accused Romania of "severe violations of basic human rights," while his Romanian counterpart reproached Hungary for "pursuing irredentist goals." The Hungarian government therefore decided to join the

Geneva Refugee Convention and to establish refugee camps in the eastern part of the country and in Budapest.

The Swedish representative to the UN Human Rights Commission submitted a resolution calling for an investigation of alleged human rights violations by Romania. The Swedish initiative was cosponsored by Australia, Austria, Britain, France, and Portugal. Later Hungary made an offer to "co-sponsor" the resolution. Romania rejected the criticism as meddling in its internal affairs. The Romanian representative to the Commission claimed that all ethnic groups in Romania enjoyed "legal guarantees and the means to preserve their cultural identity."

## Relations with Noncommunist States

### West Germany

In January 1967, Romania became the second Warsaw Pact state after the Soviet Union to establish diplomatic relations with West Germany, an action based on the Warsaw Pact's Bucharest Declaration of 1966. The declaration affirmed that there were "circles that oppose revanchism and militarism and that seek the development of normal relations with countries of both the East and the West as well as a normalization of relations between the two German states." The declaration also included a statement affirming that a basic condition for European security was the establishment of normal relations between states "regardless of their social system."

In the period after 1967, relations with West Germany passed through several stages. Initially, Romania minimized differences in ideology and foreign and domestic policy. But friction soon surfaced over the question of ethnic German emigration. In 1979 West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Schmidt visited Bucharest and extended credit guarantees of approximately US\$368 million in return for Romanian pledges to facilitate the reunification of ethnic German families. The issue resurfaced in 1983 when the so-called education tax would have increased West Germany's payment of the equivalent of US\$2,632 per ethnic German emigrant to US\$42,105. After visits by Bavarian premier Franz Joseph Strauss and West German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, an agreement was reached whereby the West German government increased its payment per emigrant to approximately US\$5,263. According to press reports, the agreement remained in effect until June 30, 1988, and provided for the emigration of 11,000 to 13,000 Transylvanian Saxons annually. The West German publication *Die Welt* reported that in January 1989 a follow-up

agreement had been reached by which Romania would continue to permit emigration at the previous rate.

Political relations with West Germany, which had been their most cordial during Willi Brandt's chancellorship, took a sharp downturn in the 1980s. Ceaușescu's 1984 visit to Bonn had sought to exploit a setback in West German relations with Bulgaria, East Germany, and the Soviet Union. Observers believed that Ceaușescu was determined to rebuild his tarnished reputation in the West. But disagreements over arms control, trade, and the treatment of ethnic Germans prevented the issue of a joint communiqué.

After the mid-1980s, West German official criticism gave way to direct acts of protest against Romanian policies. In April 1989, Chancellor Helmut Kohl declared that the situation for Romania's ethnic Germans had become intolerable. At the same time, the West German Foreign Ministry lodged an official condemnation of Romania's human rights policies.

### **United States**

Relations with the United States were initiated on a limited scale in the early 1960s, and ambassadors were exchanged in 1964. But with the United States' increased involvement in the Vietnam War, relations deteriorated. In the late 1960s, following Romanian condemnation of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and the opening of the Paris peace talks, political relations between the two states improved significantly, but economic relations remained minimal because of United States restrictions on trade with Eastern Europe.

Evidence of improved relations between the nations was President Nixon's visit to Romania in August 1969—the first visit by an American head of state to a communist country since the 1945 Yalta Conference. Nixon received an enthusiastic welcome, and a wide range of international problems were discussed. The countries agreed upon the mutual establishment of libraries, the opening of negotiations for the conclusion of a consular convention, and the development and diversification of economic ties. Ceaușescu visited the United States in October 1970 to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary session of the UN General Assembly.

Nixon moved to strengthen economic relations with Romania, and in 1972 the United States Congress debated granting most-favored-nation status. In 1975 a three-year agreement made Romania the first East European country to receive the special trade status, and in 1981 bilateral trade reached US\$1 billion. But because of persistent reports of human rights violations in Romania, and the regime's decision to impose an education tax on applicants for

exit visas, the United States Congress hesitated to renew most-favored-nation status.

In November 1985, Secretary of State George Schultz visited Bucharest and warned that Romania could lose most-favored-nation status unless it changed its human rights policies. Both sides agreed to establish a system of consultation on human rights issues. Romania did not abide by the agreement, however, and at the beginning of 1987 it was removed from the list of countries allowed to export certain goods—mainly raw materials—duty-free to the United States. The United States Congress voted to suspend most-favored-nation status for six months because of Romanian limitations of religious freedom, restrictions on emigration, and persecution of its Hungarian minority. The Reagan administration, however, succeeded in getting congressional approval for its recommendation to renew the status, hoping the action would encourage Romania to improve its human rights record.

In February 1988, Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead visited Bucharest and restated United States disapproval of Romania's human rights policies. Ceaușescu, in turn, accused the United States of meddling in Romanian internal affairs. Later the same month, the United States State Department announced that Romania had relinquished its most-favored-nation trade status.

The deterioration in relations continued, and in March 1989 the United States Department of State called off plans for a meeting with high-ranking Romanian officials, warning that a further crackdown against critics of the regime would have negative consequences for bilateral relations.

### **Other Western Countries**

After the mid-1960s, political, economic, and cultural ties also expanded with other Western countries, particularly Austria, Britain, France, and Italy. Economic relations with these countries were especially important to Romania, and several trade and joint-venture agreements were negotiated.

After the late 1970s, relations with these countries, as with the West in general, took a sharp downturn. In particular relations with France deteriorated severely. For centuries French culture had exercised profound influence on Romania, which viewed itself as France's special friend in Eastern Europe. President de Gaulle's visit in 1968 reaffirmed this feeling of amity. But during the 1980s, human rights abuses, the poor performance of French-Romanian joint ventures, and unfair Romanian trade practices (including the dumping of steel) poisoned the relationship.

Perhaps the most damaging episode in French-Romanian relations was a spy scandal in the early 1980s known as the "Tanase affair." Virgil Tanase, a dissident Romanian writer, accused the Romanian government of mounting a plot to assassinate himself and another émigré, Paul Goma. Shortly thereafter, President François Mitterrand cancelled an official visit to Romania and relations worsened rapidly. Romania expelled several French journalists, and in March 1989, France recalled its ambassador in reaction to the persecution of signers of a letter condemning Ceaușescu's rule.

Relations with Britain took a similar course. Optimistic joint-venture and trade agreements in the 1970s, including licenses from British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce to build sophisticated aircraft, were followed in the 1980s by official revulsion for Ceaușescu's human rights abuses. The British considered withdrawing their ambassador from Romania and stripping Ceaușescu of an honorary British distinction.

### **Middle East**

The Middle East situation posed a dilemma for the Ceaușescu government, which sought to maintain relations with both sides of the conflict. In 1969 Romania announced an agreement to elevate its relations with Israel to the ambassadorial level, while continuing to voice support for "the struggle of the Arab people to defend their national independence and sovereignty" and calling for a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

The Ceaușescu regime maintained good relations with both Egypt and Israel and played an intermediary role in arranging Egyptian President Anwar as Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977. In the following years Romania maintained contacts with all parties in the conflict and cautiously endorsed the Camp David Accords, in contrast with the Soviet Union and other East European countries. In later years, Romania called for a global approach to the Middle East crisis that would involve all interested parties, including the PLO. Ceaușescu offered to act as an intermediary and met several Arab leaders including PLO chairman Yasir Arafat. Some observers believed Ceaușescu's intermediary efforts were designed to gain access to new sources of Middle East oil to compensate for the suspension of Iranian oil deliveries.

After the late 1970s, Romania advocated a peace plan featuring four points: Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied from June 1967, including East Jerusalem and southern Lebanon; establishment of an independent state governed by the PLO; guarantees for the security of all states in the region; and convocation of an international peace conference, with representatives from

the PLO, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Although Israel rejected all four points of the plan, it continued to maintain good relations with Romania.

After 1985 relations with Israel gradually deteriorated. Although the countries continued to exchange high-level visits, they failed to make major breakthroughs. Romania continued to insist on Israeli concessions, including direct negotiations with the PLO. In August 1987, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel, after nine hours of talks with Ceaușescu in Bucharest, reported no progress on the issue of Middle East negotiations. A few months later, Ceaușescu invited representatives of the PLO and the Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue Committee to a meeting in Romania, but that discussion too bore no fruit.

Relations with the PLO were generally good, and Arafat and other high-ranking PLO officials frequently travelled to Bucharest. The Romanian media described Arafat as a personal friend and comrade of Ceaușescu. Between November 1987 and December 1988, Arafat met with Ceaușescu five times. The PLO opened one of its first diplomatic offices in Bucharest, and several bilateral agreements were concluded, some of which reportedly offered the PLO educational and even military training facilities in Romania.

## **Africa**

After 1970 Ceaușescu systematically cultivated relations with the less-developed countries, African nations in particular. Numerous African leaders called on Ceaușescu in Bucharest, and he embarked on long African tours almost every year. Ceaușescu travelled to nearly every African country except South Africa on several occasions. These annual tours gave him the opportunity to appear as an international statesman, and they resulted in general trade agreements. The less-developed countries were viewed as a source of raw materials and a market for Romanian manufactured goods that did not fare well in the West.

## **Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

The Ceaușescu regime's conduct at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Vienna, which concluded in January 1989, reinforced Romania's poor reputation on the issue of human rights. After a twenty-six-month review, an East-West consensus emerged, but Romania announced it was not bound by the agreement. From the start of the negotiations, Romania had attempted to dilute the draft text prepared by the nonaligned states. During the final negotiations, it submitted seventeen amendments to remove human rights provisions from the final document, in

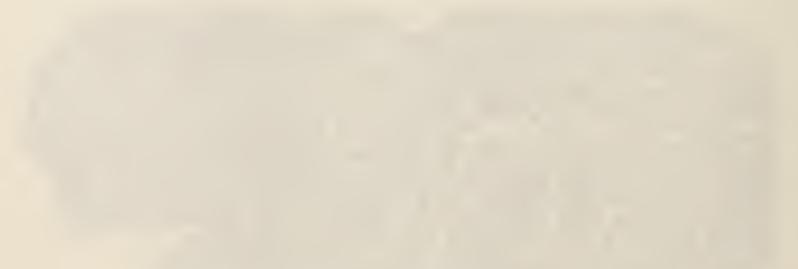
part because the Ceaușescu regime realized that the agreement would facilitate emigration and create a serious brain drain. Other delegations, including some from Warsaw Pact states, rejected these efforts. Romania's refusal to abide by the agreement drew universal condemnation from the other delegations and represented another step toward the international isolation of Ceaușescu's Romania. It appeared unlikely, however, that the defiant regime in Bucharest would be greatly swayed by international objections to its human rights policies.

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Among the most important studies of the Romanian political system are Mary Ellen Fischer's examinations of the Ceaușescu regime: "Participatory Reforms and Political Development in Romania," in *Political Development in Eastern Europe*, edited by Jan F. Triska and Paul M. Cocks; "Political Leadership and Personnel Policy in Romania: Continuity and Change, 1965-1976," in *World Communism at the Crossroads*, edited by Steven Rosefielde; and "The Romanian Communist Party and Its Central Committee: Patterns of Growth and Change," in *Southeastern Europe*. Other excellent sources of information and analysis include Michael Shafir's *Romania: Politics, Economics, and Society*; Daniel N. Nelson's *Romania in the 1980s*; and William E. Crowther's *The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism*. Foreign policy issues are reviewed and analyzed in Aurel Braun's *Romanian Foreign Policy Since 1965: The Political and Military Limits of Autonomy*; Ronald H. Linden's "Romanian Foreign Policy in the 1980s: Domestic-Foreign Policy Linkages," in *Foreign and Domestic Policy in Eastern Europe in the 1980s: Trends and Prospects*, edited by Michael J. Sodaro and Sharon L. Wolchik; George Schöpflin's "Romanian Nationalism," published in *Survey*; and Robert Weiner's *Romania's Foreign Policy and the United Nations*. (For additional information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

## Chapter 5. National Security





*Frieze depicting battle between Greeks and Amazons, sculpted at  
Constanța, ca. A.D. 250*

THE MEASURE OF ROMANIA's success in the area of national security has been its ability to achieve and maintain the status of a sovereign, independent nation-state. Thus measured, Romania has succeeded over the long term despite some major defeats along the way. In its postwar incarnation as a communist state and member of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact), Romania has enjoyed more national security than ever before.

In 1989 Romania relied on a relatively small professional military establishment and larger reserve and paramilitary forces to provide defense against external threats. The regular armed forces consisted of ground, air, and naval services as well as border guards. The Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român—PCR, see Glossary) controlled the armed forces through its political apparatus within them. PCR General Secretary Nicolae Ceaușescu also exercised considerable personal control over the top military leaders by using his power to appoint and dismiss them.

Because Romania's military doctrine, strategy, and policies differed from those of its Warsaw Pact allies, the country had the reputation of being the maverick of the Warsaw Pact. Its independent positions frequently brought it into conflict with the Soviet Union, the senior alliance partner. Soviet reluctance to provide Romania with up-to-date weaponry has made it the most poorly equipped Warsaw Pact member state. Yet Romania's unique stance inside the Soviet-led alliance has helped it establish diverse military contacts and relations with countries outside the Warsaw Pact.

The PCR controlled Romania's system of law and order and operated it to maintain its absolute political power in the country. Judicial officials and courts routinely promoted the requirements of party and state over the rights of individual citizens. Ceaușescu provided the security and intelligence services with the resources and latitude to suppress his political opponents at home and abroad. Consequently there was little organized opposition to Ceaușescu in 1989.

Romania faced few serious external threats in the late 1980s. The greatest threats to national security stemmed from internal political and economic weaknesses. Many observers surmised that a prolonged struggle between would-be successors to Ceaușescu could result in political turmoil that would weaken the nation's defense posture. Likewise, economic decline and hardship could

give rise to internal disorder or even open rebellion against the PCR, which would make Romania more vulnerable to external pressures.

## **Historical Background**

Romania suffered frequent invasions and long periods of foreign domination throughout its history because of its location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and its relative weakness. Its territorial integrity often hinged on alliances with powerful states that were willing to protect it against the designs of others. Thus the development of military power to overcome chronic weakness and to underwrite national independence has been a constant theme in Romanian history.

### **Defense of Romanian Lands in Ancient Times and the Middle Ages**

As early as 500 B.C., the Persians, Macedonians, and Romans threatened the Getae and Dacians, the two tribes from which modern Romanians descended (see Early History, from Prehistory to the Seventeenth Century, ch. 1). The Roman legions of Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117) conquered much of the region in the early years of the second century and occupied it for almost two centuries.

During the Middle Ages, the forebears of today's Romanians depended on the protection of a local military leader (*voivode*—see Glossary), who defended them in exchange for their allegiance and tribute. In times of danger, the free peasantry provided soldiers for local *voivodes* to command. The principalities of Moldavia and Walachia staved off the depredations of nomadic barbarians and avoided absorption by more powerful neighbors, but the Kingdom of Hungary and Hungarian noblemen ruled over the peasant descendants of the ancient Geto-Dacians in Transylvania and the Banat. All peoples of southeastern Europe, including the early Romanians, were soon subjected to several centuries of domination by an external power.

### **Ottoman Domination and the Struggle for National Unity and Independence**

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the lands of modern Romania became a battleground for Ottoman armies invading southeastern Europe and for local *voivodes* who resisted their incursions. Moldavia and Walachia succumbed and accepted rule by the Ottoman Empire despite some great victories won by their armies and *voivodes* such as Stephen the Great, Voivode of Moldavia (1457-1504). Although Ottoman suzerainty proved to be

relatively lenient, the sultans forbade the principalities to maintain armies that could be used to fight for independence. Michael the Brave, prince of Walachia (1593–1601), defied them, briefly emancipated and united the principalities, and defeated Ottoman armies in 1596. But the latter reasserted control over the principalities and killed Michael in 1601.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the expanding Russian and Habsburg, or Austro-Hungarian, empires began to contest Ottoman domination of the Balkans and fought many battles against the Ottoman armies on the territory of Moldavia and Walachia. A Walachian *voivode*, Tudor Vladimirescu, led a brigade of 6,000 men fighting in tsarist ranks in the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–12. Vladimirescu received the Russian Order of St. Vladimir for his service. In 1821 he led a rebellion in Walachia against Ottoman rule. Tsar Alexander I, however, did not approve of his actions, and Vladimirescu fell out of favor with the Russian Empire.

In 1848 Romanian nationalists formed an armed force to fight for the liberation and unification of the principalities into a modern state. Recognizing the challenge that this development implied, Russian and Habsburg armies invaded to forestall unification. The unsuccessful revolution of 1848 showed that there would not be a Romanian nation-state, independent of control by any empire, until the military power needed to defend it was established.

### *Military Development under Alexandru Ioan Cuza*

Colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza, a hero of 1848 who became prince of the United Principalities of Moldavia and Walachia in 1859, emphasized the establishment of a large, modern army on the level of the major powers of Europe. He believed that the viability of the first autonomous Romanian state depended on strong armed forces, under national control, that were capable of deterring would-be invaders. He formed a Ministry of War and a general staff to administer and train the army of the United Principalities.

Cuza established a working military relationship with France, which had a tremendous influence on the development of the modern Romanian army. In 1859 the French emperor, Napoleon III, sent a ten-year military mission of instructors and specialists to the United Principalities. They trained the first Romanian army and directed the construction of factories and foundries to manufacture arms, equipment, ordnance, and other war matériel. Napoleon III accepted Moldavian and Walachian officers into French military academies at St. Cyr, Metz, Brest, and Saumur. Cuza also established programs of military cooperation with Belgium and

Serbia, and these programs supplied the United Principalities with several types of armaments. Cuza sent military attachés to observe combat around the world, including the battles of the American Civil War.

The Law on the Organization of the Army, drafted by Cuza and passed by the parliament of the United Principalities in 1864, established three major divisions at Bucharest, Iași, and Craiova; set up a regular standing army of 20,000 soldiers and territorial defense units with 25,000 reserves; and formed the first Romanian officer training college. Cuza's successor, a German prince, who ruled as Carol I (1866-1914), had served as an officer in the Prussian Army and experienced combat in Denmark in 1864. Carol I continued the military development initiated by Cuza; the army built by Cuza and Carol I played a decisive role in achieving full independence and sovereignty for Romania.

### *War of Independence, 1877-78*

During the summer of 1877, Romanian soldiers guarded the 650-kilometer Danube River boundary and engaged in artillery duels with Ottoman gunners until Russian armies could arrive and cross the river to confront Ottoman forces. An initial defeat at the village of Plevna, located in the territory of modern Bulgaria, obliged the Russians to ask Carol I to send his forces across the Danube. Carol mobilized 40,000 soldiers and ordered them into combat alongside battered tsarist armies at Plevna, Rahova, and Vidin in contemporary Bulgaria. They made a decisive contribution to Russian victory in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, thereby underpinning Romania's claim to national independence and sovereignty, which was officially recognized by the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

### **The Romanian Army in World War I**

Prior to World War I, Carol I emphasized military ties with Germany and forced France to compete with Germany as a source of military assistance for, and influence on, the Romanian state. The sympathies of most Romanians, however, lay with France. In 1913 Romania mobilized nearly 500,000 men against Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War and, at a decisive moment, marched virtually unopposed on the Bulgarian capital, Sofia.

Although it sympathized with France, Britain, and Russia, Romania maintained an armed neutrality during the first two years of World War I. The warring alliances tried to induce Romania to enter the war on their side in return for territorial gain. The Central Powers offered Bukovina and Bessarabia, which would be

carved out of tsarist Russia. The Triple Entente promised Romania Transylvania, which would be detached from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Romania finally joined the Entente in August 1916 and fought alongside Russian armies on the eastern front. It mobilized approximately 750,000 men against German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers in the northern Carpathian Mountains and against German and Bulgarian troops along its southern border. Romanian forces suffered a string of early and catastrophic defeats, and Bucharest was occupied in December 1916. The final blow to the Romanian effort in the war was the collapse of Russian armies in October 1917, which disrupted Romania's supply lines. As a result, Romania was obliged to sue for peace in December 1917. Romania lost approximately 400,000 soldiers to combat wounds or disease, as well as untold numbers of civilians.

Although Romania was a defeated power, its French and British allies eventually were victorious, and it reaped major territorial gains as a result of the peace treaties that officially ended World War I. It received Transylvania from Austria-Hungary, Dobruja from Bulgaria, and Bukovina and Bessarabia from Soviet Russia (see fig. 1). These gains nearly doubled its size but also earned it the enmity of its immediate neighbors.

## **Security During the Interwar Years and World War II**

Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia formed the Little Entente under French influence during the interwar years to act as a counterweight against the possible resurgence of German influence in southeastern and central Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. Romania continued to look to France to guarantee its security, at least until Britain and France sacrificed Czechoslovakia's territorial integrity in the Munich Agreement of September 1938. After Munich, French guarantees meant little, and Romania accommodated the reality of German hegemony in the region.

The Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of August 1939 squeezed Romania between the territorial ambitions of Germany and the Soviet Union. Beginning in 1940, Germany forced Romania to cede territory to Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union (see Greater Romania to the End of World War I, 1920–45, ch. 1). In September German forces occupied Romanian territory under the pretext of protecting the country's oil resources, access to which had already been secured in a 1939 commercial agreement. In November 1940, Romania joined Germany, Italy, and Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact and became Hitler's base of operations to conquer the Balkans.

On June 22, 1941, Romania's third and fourth armies, a total of thirty divisions, joined Operation Barbarossa, Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union. Its forces were by far the largest and possibly the best of the fifty divisions allied with the Wehrmacht (German armed forces) on the eastern front. Romania joined the war largely in the hope of regaining northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, establishing a greater Romania at the Soviet Union's expense along the northern Black Sea coast, and also because it was simply too weak to resist Germany.

The third and fourth armies fought at Odessa and Sevastopol but became bogged down with a German army group in front of Stalingrad in October 1942. In November the Red Army counteroffensive at Stalingrad focused on encircling the powerful German Sixth Army by striking its flanks held by the relatively weaker Romanian armies. Northeast of Stalingrad, three Soviet armies punched through the Romanian Third Army and its spearhead, the Romanian First Armored Division. Southwest of Stalingrad, two Soviet armies smashed the Sixth Corps and the Eighteenth Infantry Division, the strongest elements of the Romanian Army. By November 23, the Soviet armies completed their encirclement of the German Sixth Army. In bearing the brunt of the Red Army's breakthrough at Stalingrad, nineteen Romanian divisions were badly mauled, and more than 250,000 Romanian soldiers were killed, wounded, captured, or missing in action. In August 1943, the war reached Romanian soil dramatically: 178 B-24 bombers from the United States Army's eighth and ninth air forces conducted a bombing raid from North African airfields against the oil fields at Ploiești, a major source of fuel for the Wehrmacht. The raid reduced Romanian oil production by half and destroyed much of the country's military industry.

The Red Army refocused its strategic attention on Romania in mid-1944. It sought to occupy Romania, knock it out of the war, and from there advance across the Danube Delta through the Carpathian Mountains into Yugoslavia and Hungary before wheeling north to roll up the right flank of Nazi Germany. Having penetrated northern Bukovina at the end of 1943, the Red Army launched the Iași-Kishinev Operation in August 1944 by sending eight armies with more than 1 million men across the Prut River along two convergent axes from Iași and Kishinev in Bessarabia to drive through the Focșani Gap to capture the Ploiești oil fields and Bucharest. Soviet armies driving from Kishinev pinned down the remnants of the German Sixth Army and seven divisions of Romania's Third Army on the Black Sea coast. Meanwhile, the bulk of Soviet forces driving from Iași encircled the German Eighth

Army and the remaining fourteen divisions of the Romanian Fourth Army. On the first day of the operation, Red Army forces destroyed five divisions of the Fourth Army in fighting northwest of Iași. Remaining Romanian divisions simply disintegrated as their troops deserted the front.

After the August 23, 1944, coup d'état against military dictator General Ion Antonescu, King Michael arranged Romania's surrender to the Red Army. The following day, Hitler ordered 150 German bombers to attack Bucharest in a vain attempt to force Romania to rejoin the war. Romania then declared war on Germany and put its scattered forces under the command of the Red Army. These forces included parts of the Fourth Army; the four divisions of the First Army, which guarded the disputed Romanian-Hungarian border during the war; and the Tudor Vladimirescu First Volunteer Division, a force recruited by the Red Army from Romanian prisoners of war taken at Stalingrad who were willing to submit to communist indoctrination. These forces helped to liberate Bucharest and clear German forces from the rest of Romania, and they finished the war fighting alongside the Red Army in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In all, Romania suffered an estimated 600,000 casualties during World War II.

Under the terms of the September 1944 armistice signed in Moscow, Romania accepted Red Army occupation of the country at least until peace negotiations commenced, agreed to pay US\$300 million in war reparations, and put its oil production, rolling stock, and merchant fleet at the Soviet Union's disposal. Given the situation on the ground, the Soviet Union dominated the Allied Control Commission, which administered Romania for three years after the war. The Soviet Union also retained the right to maintain its occupation of Romania in order to keep open its lines of communication to Soviet forces occupying Austria. Under the 1947 peace treaty, Romania permanently surrendered large tracts to Bulgaria and the Soviet Union (see *Armistice Negotiations and Soviet Occupation*, ch. 1).

### **Development of the Romanian Armed Forces after World War II**

The Soviet occupation of Romania made the Red Army the predominant external influence on the development of the Romanian armed forces after 1945, especially after the communists seized power in 1947. After the war, obviously pro-German elements were purged from Romania's armed forces under Red Army supervision. Meanwhile, a second division of former Romanian prisoners of war that was organized and indoctrinated in the Soviet Union entered in late 1945 to join the Tudor Vladimirescu First Volunteer

Division as the nucleus of the new Romanian Army under Soviet control. Once the communist regime took power, fully 30 percent of the Romanian officers and noncommissioned officers were purged from the ranks. They represented Romania's most experienced soldiers and the greatest source of opposition to the increasing Sovietization of the Romanian Army. The Romanian military establishment was reorganized according to the Soviet model. Soviet officers served as advisers to Romanian units down to the regimental level, and large numbers of Romanian officers went to the Soviet Union to receive education and training.

Emil Bodnaraș, a member of the PCR Politburo who was in exile in Moscow during the war and had returned to Romania with the Red Army in 1944, became the first postwar minister of national defense in 1947. In many cases, trusted party functionaries were simply assigned appropriate military ranks and appointed to crucial posts in the armed forces. Political loyalty to the PCR served as a more important selection criterion than did professional military competence or experience. The party closely monitored the political attitudes of officers who were not members of the PCR.

When the PCR was firmly in control of the country and Romania securely within the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union was willing to withdraw its occupation forces, which happened in May 1958. By the mid-1960s, however, the Ceaușescu regime had begun to de-Sovietize the armed forces, to reemphasize Romanian military traditions, and to carve out an autonomous position within the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact. The Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968, was the watershed event in postwar Romanian military development.

## **Military Doctrine and Strategy**

In 1989 Romania had a military doctrine unique within the Warsaw Pact, a doctrine that had emerged during the two decades following the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Unlike the other non-Soviet Warsaw Pact member states, it did not subscribe to the alliance's joint military doctrine devised by the Soviet Union. Romania's political leadership developed a military doctrine based on the country's experience in interstate relations as well as its own interest in maintaining power. Ceaușescu was increasingly identified as the founder of Romanian military doctrine and came to be linked to legendary Romanian military heroes and leaders such as Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave.

### **Evolution of Military Doctrine**

Because historically its enemies had had tremendous numerical

and technological superiority, Romania had succumbed to them despite occasional periods of rebellion and armed resistance. Experiences as the ally of Russia in World War I, Nazi Germany in World War II, and the Soviet Union afterward had taught Romania, however, that allowing a stronger country to dictate its political and military course could lead to ruin and loss of sovereignty. In the wake of the Warsaw Pact action against Czechoslovakia in 1968, Ceausescu deviated from standard Warsaw Pact doctrine and promulgated a distinct national military doctrine for Romania. Known as "War of the Entire People" (Lupta Intregului Popor), this doctrine was largely a reaction to the failure of Czechoslovakia to resist the Soviet-led invasion. Its basic premise was that the people would resist with all means at their disposal any "imperialist" incursion into Romania and would defend the nation's sovereignty, independence, and socialism (see Glossary). Thus, War of the Entire People implied defense not only of the nation but also of Romania's particular style of socialism and the political power of the PCR hierarchy that controls it.

War of the Entire People defined imperialism in an omnidirectional sense as the greatest threat to Romania. Any nation, whether a capitalist North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) country or an erstwhile socialist Warsaw Pact ally that sought to dominate Romania militarily, constituted an imperialist threat. Although left unstated, in the context of the time, the clearest threat was a Soviet or Warsaw Pact intervention in Romania similar to what occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The Law on National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Romania, passed by the Grand National Assembly (GNA) in 1972, codified and further elaborated War of the Entire People. The law stated that Romania would declare war only to defend itself or a Warsaw Pact ally against external aggression. The 1972 law also made acceptance of surrender, cession, or occupation of national territory an illegal act. It made GNA approval a requirement for the entry of foreign troops into Romania and declared that Romania's armed forces may respond only to orders or directives issued by the country's national command authority. These provisions were designed to prevent the Soviet Union from disrupting national resistance to an invasion of Romania or justifying an invasion by installing a compliant faction of the PCR to request and legitimize the Soviet Union's "fraternal assistance" or intervention.

War of the Entire People mandated a system of national territorial defense modeled on that of Yugoslavia and called for mobilizing all of the country's human and material resources to mount continuous resistance against any aggressor, invader, or occupier

until Romania was liberated. Thus the regular armed forces ceased to be the exclusive focus of military doctrine. The Patriotic Guards were established and received great attention and considerable resources (see Reserves and Mobilization, this ch.). To explain the relationship of the regular army and the irregular Patriotic Guards, Romanian military historians began writing about the role of peasant masses in rising up to join princes, nobles, and the professional warrior caste to defend the Romanian lands against invasions during the Middle Ages.

### **Military Strategy**

According to the assumptions explicit in its military doctrine since 1968, Romania's greatest likelihood of future military conflict is a defensive war fought on its territory against a more powerful aggressor. Thus, Romania's strategy aims at victory achieved not through a military defeat of an invading enemy, but through massive, prolonged resistance that denies an enemy the possibility of a rapid, successful military operation against Romania. During a protracted war of attrition against a foreign occupation, Romania would seek international sympathy and support for its struggle to throw off its invader. Strategists hoped that the aggressor would suffer international political opprobrium outweighing any conceivable strategic benefit of a continued occupation. Meanwhile, Romanians would drain the morale of occupying forces through constant harassing actions. As a result, an invader would eventually withdraw or retreat from Romania to cut its political and military losses.

To execute this strategic concept, Romania's political and military leaders have developed a particular type of military organization and tactics. A strategy of prolonged resistance against invading forces depends on the ability of the relatively small regular armed forces to slow an advancing enemy and to provide time for paramilitary units to mobilize. Although the latter's effectiveness in combat is uncertain, Romanian experts assert that one-third of the country's population can be put under arms in a national emergency and that it would require an army of 1 million men to maintain an occupation of Romania, much less to pacify it. Romania's leaders have elaborated the basic operational and tactical principles that underlie this strategy. Foremost among them, Romania would fight a more powerful invader on terms that would neutralize the latter's numerical and technological superiority. It would avoid large battles between its ground forces and the enemy in favor of small-unit attacks on an invading army in areas where it is unable to deploy large forces.



*Soldiers at Lake Herăstrău*  
*Courtesy Sam and Sarah Stulberg*

Romania placed confidence in its ability to choose propitious times and favorable terrain for battle. The use of surprise and night attacks would help the paramilitary forces offset the preponderance of a conventional occupation army. Familiarity with the country's rugged terrain would also favor Romanian defenders. The narrow valleys of the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvanian Alps, which cut through the center of Romania, could serve as a formidable base of operations for protracted guerrilla warfare against an invader. Finally, Romanian doctrine calls for the local population to follow a "scorched earth" policy throughout the countryside along the enemy's invasion route to deny it sources of supply and to complicate its logistical support of an extended occupation of Romania.

### **Arms Control**

In 1989 Romania viewed arms control as an element of its military doctrine and strategy that had the potential to promote its national security. It was the most vocal Eastern European proponent of a general military disengagement in Europe, maintaining that general reductions in armaments and military activities by NATO and the Warsaw Pact would minimize the threat of a general European conflict. In 1985 Romania repeated its previous calls for the establishment of a nuclear and chemical weapons-free zone in the Balkans.

Romania adopted positions on arms control issues that would reduce the ability of its Warsaw Pact allies to intervene in its internal affairs. It urged that NATO and the Warsaw Pact be dissolved simultaneously. It called for the United States and the Soviet Union to cease maintaining bases or troops on the territory of allied countries, declaring that they constitute a violation of the host country's sovereignty and provide opportunities for external pressure on the host government.

Romania strongly advocated, and benefited from, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), signed in Helsinki in 1975. The confidence-building measures contained in the Final Act stipulate that when a signatory nation conducts large-scale maneuvers, involving 30,000 or more troops within 300 kilometers of international boundaries, it should give neighboring states prior notice of the size and geographic area of the exercise. This provision made it more difficult to use maneuvers as a pretext to mobilize for an invasion of another country. Thus, the Helsinki Final Act complicated possible Soviet military action against Romania.

## **Armed Forces**

In 1989 Romania maintained 180,000 men in its armed forces, or about 1 soldier for every 128 citizens—the second lowest ratio of regular military personnel to population in the Warsaw Pact. It compensated for this small regular force by maintaining large reserve and paramilitary formations.

## **Command and Control of the Armed Forces**

In 1989 Romania had a well-developed centralized system for administering and directing its armed forces. The government had nominal responsibility for the armed forces, but the PCR hierarchy exercised real authority. As PCR general secretary and chief of state, Ceaușescu also held the powerful positions of supreme commander of the armed forces and chairman of the Defense Council.

Yet there have been periodic indications of friction between the professional military and the Ceaușescu regime. During the 1970s and early 1980s, Ceaușescu had legitimate reasons to be concerned about the potential for a pro-Soviet military coup d'état. His policy of remaining independent of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact made him more dependent on the loyalty and reliability of the armed forces to maintain his political power than was the case in other communist regimes in Eastern Europe, which could rely on Soviet intervention to preserve their rule against domestic challenges.

### *Government and Party Organization for Defense*

The GNA had constitutional responsibility for national security and the authority to declare war or a national emergency, to order mobilization, to ratify an armistice or peace treaty, to appoint the supreme commander of the armed forces, and to award the ranks of marshal, general, and admiral. When the GNA was not in session, however, the Council of State assumed these powers and Ceaușescu, as chairman of the latter, wielded these powers effectively. The small circle of Ceaușescu, his family, and his closest political associates exercised real national security and defense policy-making authority, requesting and using expert advice as they deemed necessary.

Composed of party and state officials, the Defense Council examined and coordinated all problems related to national security, including both external defense and internal security. It provided strategic direction to the armed forces, supervised military-related industries, and made national military and economic mobilization plans to be executed by the Council of State. In addition to Ceaușescu, the Defense Council also included the prime minister, minister of national defense, chief of the Higher Political Council of the Army, chief of staff of the Patriotic Guards, minister of interior, minister of foreign affairs, and chairman of the State Planning Committee. The chief of the General Staff of the armed forces served as secretary to the Defense Council. Theoretically responsible to the GNA and the Council of State, the Defense Council directly advised Ceaușescu on national security and defense issues.

The Defense Council structure also existed at lower administrative levels. Local party first secretaries chaired defense councils in the forty *județe* (counties) and some larger municipalities. Other members included the local people's council secretary, commander of the nearest military garrison, his political deputy, chief of staff of the Patriotic Guards for the area, head of the local Ministry of Interior office, Union of Communist Youth (Uniunea Tineretului Comunist—UTC) officials, and directors of major economic enterprises in the area. In peacetime local defense councils had responsibility for organizing all resources and productive capacity under their authority, for making local mobilization plans to fulfill national defense requirements, and for operating the military conscription system. In wartime they were charged with maintaining uninterrupted, or restoring disrupted, militarily essential production.

In contrast to the policy-making authority and strategic control exercised by the PCR hierarchy and the Defense Council, the

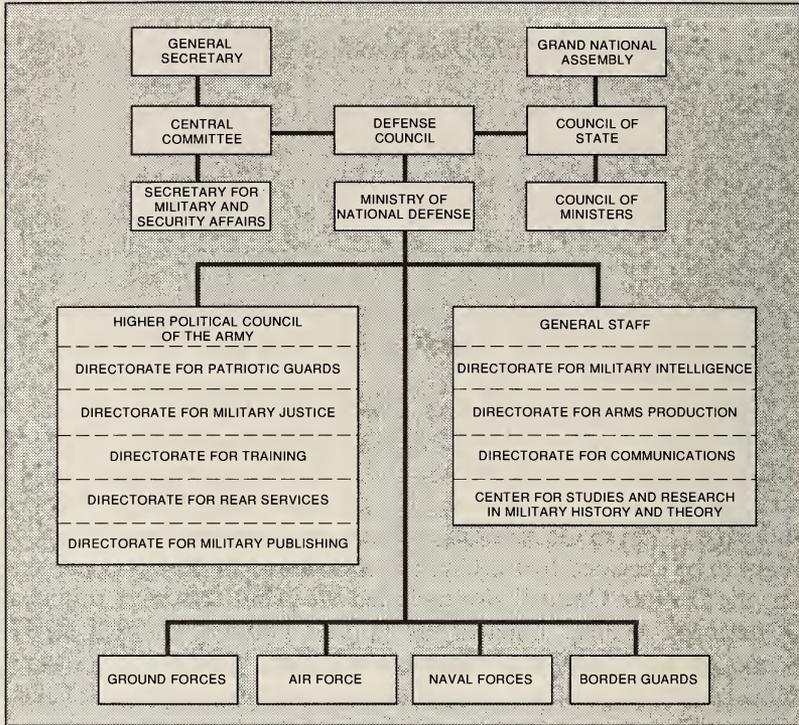


Figure 6. Government and Party Organization for Defense, 1988

Ministry of National Defense had day-to-day administrative authority over the armed forces in peacetime and was responsible for implementing PCR policies within them. In peacetime the general staff made provisional strategic and operational plans, based on general guidance from the Defense Council, coordinated the actions of the armed services, and exercised operational and tactical control of the armed forces as a whole.

The Ministry of National Defense comprised several directorates and other organizations (see fig. 6). The Directorate for Military Intelligence (Direcția de Informații a Armatei—DIA) provided the General Staff with assessments of the strategic intentions of the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries and monitored indications and warnings of imminent hostilities against Romania. The Directorate for Military Publishing operated the Military Publishing House and published the monthly armed forces journal *Viața Militară* (Military Life) and the daily military newspaper *Apărarea Patriei* (Defense

of the Homeland). Several directorates of the Ministry of National Defense had extensive interconnections with civilian ministries, especially ones that supplied the armed forces matériel, armaments, and logistical support. For example, in 1989 a Romanian admiral headed the Department of Naval Transportation within the civilian Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications. In wartime other important ministries like it would be subordinated to the Ministry of National Defense. The Higher Political Council of the Army enjoyed a unique, somewhat autonomous status within the Ministry of National Defense. It operated as part of the latter but was subordinate to the PCR Central Committee. The Center for Studies and Research in Military History and Theory examined Romania's military experience as an input to the formulation of strategic and operational plans by the general staff.

### *Party Control of the Military*

Of all national institutions, in 1989 only the armed forces were potentially strong and organized enough to challenge PCR rule. For that reason, the Ceaușescu regime tightly controlled the military establishment by maintaining a PCR apparatus within it, co-opting the highest-ranking officers, manipulating promotions and appointments, and allowing the internal security service to operate within the armed forces. Ceaușescu and the PCR exerted their control over the military through the Higher Political Council of the Army, the party's military branch. Ceaușescu himself was given general officer rank and served as the highest party representative in the armed forces when he headed the Higher Political Council of the Army's forerunner between 1950 and 1954.

The Higher Political Council of the Army conducted political education within the military, supervised a huge network of political officers from the highest command echelon to company-sized units, reviewed promotions and other personnel matters, and monitored and reported on the political reliability and loyalty of military personnel to the Ceaușescu regime. Its political indoctrination program was founded on socialist and nationalist ideologies and emphasized the leading role of Ceaușescu and the PCR in society and the economy. It conspicuously lacked the pro-Soviet sentiment and "socialist internationalism" characteristic of indoctrination in the other Warsaw Pact countries. In 1989 approximately 90 percent of all soldiers and sailors were PCR or UTC members. Virtually all officers were PCR members, and usually only PCR members were eligible for promotions to higher ranks. Officers were subject to party discipline outside the military chain of command.

Thus the PCR had the power to remove officers of all ranks on political grounds.

In addition to using formal party mechanisms, Ceaușescu exercised other means of control over the armed forces. Many high-ranking officers were fully integrated into party and state policy-making bodies and enjoyed considerable privilege and status because of their positions. In 1989 three general officers, Ion Dinca, Ion Coman, and former Minister of National Defense Constantin Olteanu were full or alternate members of the PCR Political Executive Committee (Polexco). Dinca was also one of three first deputy prime ministers. Coman was the PCR Central Committee secretary for military and security affairs. The minister of national defense was usually a full PCR Central Committee member when he occupied his post and then received a promotion to the Polexco. Olteanu became minister of national defense in 1980 and a Polexco member in 1983. Vasile Milea became minister of national defense in 1985 but had not achieved Polexco membership as of mid-1989. During the 1980s, military representation in the PCR Central Committee dropped from more than 4 percent of the membership to about 2 percent. In addition to the minister of national defense, the chief of the general staff, the chief of the Higher Political Council of the Army, and the commanders of the armed services and army corps were also Central Committee members.

The domestic security service, the Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului—Securitate), thoroughly penetrated the country's armed forces and had informants in place at all levels to monitor the loyalty of military personnel to the PCR and to Ceaușescu personally. One of its directorates had responsibility for counterespionage within the armed forces. The Ceaușescu regime's major concern was the degree of Soviet influence within the professional officer corps. The Soviets reportedly had tried to exploit their traditionally strong ties with the officer corps to pressure Ceaușescu. Some observers believed that the Soviet Union might lend its support to a military coup d'état in the expectation that Romania would become a more compliant ally under different leadership.

### *Ceaușescu and the Military*

The armed forces, which had a history of intervention in politics before the advent of communist power, have been the only plausible threat to Ceaușescu's rule since the late 1960s. He has frequently rotated cadres within the Ministry of National Defense and the top military command positions to prevent the emergence of strong, politically independent military leaders. And he has



*Casa Centrala a Armatei (Central Army House), Bucharest  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

unceremoniously fired senior officers and promoted ambitious lower-ranking officers to higher posts, thereby using his patronage to command their loyalty.

In 1971 forty general staff officers were purged and arrested, conceivably for plotting to overthrow Ceaușescu. In May 1974, Ceaușescu unexpectedly purged five senior commanders and in 1976 suddenly dismissed General Ion Ionita, his long-time political ally. Rumors of anti-Ceaușescu conspiracies or attempted revolts within the military circulated freely in Romania in the 1980s. In 1983 an abortive military coup d'état was reportedly crushed and twelve officers were executed for plotting it. Ceaușescu then made his brother Ilie a lieutenant general and appointed him deputy minister of national defense and chief of the Higher Political Council of the Army to increase his control of the armed forces. Later in 1983, Ceaușescu spent considerable energy visiting military units, apparently in an effort to reaffirm his credentials as supreme commander of the armed forces. Ceaușescu's handling of this alleged revolt amply demonstrated his mastery of the mechanisms of party and personal control over the armed forces, which has enabled him to eliminate potential threats before they become organized challenges.

Whether rumored military revolts were confirmed or not, the professional military had real grievances with the PCR and the

Ceaușescu regime. Many of Ceaușescu's military policies contradicted some basic interests of the officer corps, diminished its professional status, and served as potential sources of political and military friction. Some officers opposed Ceaușescu's policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union because it denied the armed forces access to more sophisticated Soviet weapons and equipment as well as military assistance. Romanian officers might have been willing to accept a less independent military policy in return for a larger supply of higher-quality arms from the Soviet Union. The officer corps probably chafed at Ceaușescu's reductions in the country's defense budget as well as the extensive use of armed forces personnel in domestic construction projects, which had a negative impact on military training and readiness. Ceaușescu's habit of manipulating high-level military promotions to further his political interests and suddenly dismissing top military commanders also annoyed professional officers.

The importance ascribed to the Patriotic Guards in Romania's military doctrine and strategy served to undermine the prestige and professional autonomy of the regular armed forces. With its emphasis on the employment of irregular paramilitary and guerrilla detachments, War of the Entire People required the Ministry of National Defense to cooperate closely with the Patriotic Guards and supply them with equipment. The latter's requirement for relatively large quantities of low-technology, low-cost arms conflicted with the former's desire for smaller numbers of more advanced weapons and equipment. Although the Ministry of National Defense had to share its budget and resources with the Patriotic Guards, it exercised less than full control over them. The considerable independence of the Patriotic Guards led Western analysts to conclude that they were established, at least partially, to serve as a rival armed force counterbalancing the regular armed forces.

### **Armed Services**

Professional officers have stressed that, despite the emphasis placed on Romania's irregular or paramilitary units, only the traditional armed services are trained and equipped to fulfill the full range of military missions. In 1989 the ground forces remained the largest, most important, and most influential armed service. However, the air and naval forces had steadily developed and increased in importance to Romania's military strategy during the preceding two decades.

#### ***Ground Forces***

In 1989 the ground forces numbered 140,000 men, of whom

two-thirds were conscripted soldiers. The country was divided into Cluj, Bacău, and Bucharest military regions in the west, east, and south, respectively (see fig. 7). In wartime the ground forces in each military region would become an army corps with their headquarters in Cluj-Napoca, Iași, and Bucharest. The ground forces consisted of eight motorized rifle (infantry) divisions, two tank divisions, four mountain infantry brigades, and four airborne regiments. Motorized rifle divisions were organized along the Soviet model with three motorized rifle regiments, one tank regiment, and a full complement of 12,000 infantry soldiers (see fig. 8). They were mechanized to a considerable extent, operating more than 3,000 BTR-50, BTR-60, TAB-2, and TAB-77 armored personnel carriers and more than 400 BRDM-1, BRDM-2, and TAB-C armored reconnaissance vehicles. Tank divisions had three tank regiments, one motorized rifle regiment, and 10,000 men. Tank divisions operated more than 800 T-54 and T-55, 350 M-77, and 30 T-72 tanks.

The artillery, antitank, and air defense regiments of ground forces divisions provided specialized fire support that enabled motorized rifle and tank regiments to maneuver. In 1989 the artillery regiments of motorized rifle and tank divisions included two artillery battalions, one multiple rocket launcher battalion, and one surface-to-surface missile battalion. Romania's artillery units operated nearly 1,000 Soviet-designed towed artillery pieces with calibers ranging from 76 to 152 millimeters, approximately 175 SU-100 self-propelled assault guns, and more than 325 multiple rocket launchers, including the 122mm truck-mounted BM-21 and 130mm M-51. Surface-to-surface missile battalions were divided into three or four batteries, each equipped with one missile launcher. They operated thirty FROG-3 and eighteen SCUD missile launchers. The FROG-3, a tactical missile first introduced in 1960, was being replaced in other non-Soviet Warsaw Pact armies. Proven to be fairly inaccurate in combat, FROG and SCUD missiles would be ineffective weapons carrying conventional high-explosive warheads. Tipped with nuclear or chemical warheads, however, they could be devastating. According to one former Romanian official writing in 1988, Romania produced chemical agents that could be delivered by battlefield missiles.

Antitank regiments were equipped with Soviet-made 73mm, 76mm, and 82mm recoilless rifles, 57mm antitank guns, and AT-1/SNAPPER and AT-3/SAGGER antitank guided missiles (ATGM). Whereas the AT-1/SNAPPER was primarily a shoulder-fired weapon, more advanced AT-3/SAGGER ATGMs were mounted on BRDM-2 armored reconnaissance vehicles.



Figure 7. Major Military Installations, 1989

Air defense regiments provided motorized rifle and tank divisions with mobile protection against enemy air attack. They consisted of two anti-aircraft artillery battalions and one surface-to-air missile (SAM) battalion, each composed of several batteries. Air defense regiments were equipped with medium-range SA-6 SAM launcher vehicles, shoulder-fired short-range SA-7 missiles, and more than 500 30mm, 37mm, 57mm, 85mm, and 100mm anti-aircraft guns. Romania's mountain infantry and airborne units are noteworthy. Approximately 30 percent of the country's terrain is mountainous; therefore, these units can be employed to great effect. Transported by helicopters, which Romania began manufacturing in the mid-1970s, the mountain units are highly mobile.

**Air Force**

In 1989 the Romanian Air Force had approximately 32,000 personnel and, because of the high technical qualifications required

of them, less than one-third were conscripts. The air force operated more than 350, mostly Soviet-built, combat aircraft. It also had responsibility for transport, reconnaissance, and rotary wing aircraft as well as the national air defense system. The air force's primary mission was to protect and support the ground forces in defending the country against invasion. It also had a major role in operating, maintaining, and supplying trained personnel for the national airline TAROM.

The air force was divided into three tactical air divisions. Each air division had two regiments with two or three squadrons of interceptor and one squadron of ground attack aircraft as well as supporting transport, reconnaissance, and helicopter elements (see fig. 9). With a few notable exceptions, most aircraft in the Romanian order of battle were designed and produced in the Soviet Union. The air force had fifteen interceptor squadrons, three with fifteen MiG-23 fighters each and twelve with similar numbers of MiG-21 fighters. Romania received its first MiG-23s from the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, nearly ten years after the plane entered service in Soviet and some other Warsaw Pact air forces. Soviet allies in Third World countries such as Syria, Libya, and Iraq had the MiG-23 in their inventories before Romania did. Romanian fighters carried the 1960s-era Soviet AA-2/ATOLL air-to-air missile. The air force had six ground attack squadrons operating eighty-five 1950s-era MiG-17 aircraft made in the 1950s, which had been modified and transferred from duty as interceptors when Romania acquired the MiG-21, and thirty-five Romanian-built IAR-93 Orao ground-attack fighters. In 1989 the air force had an additional 125 Orao close air-support aircraft on order.

Transport, reconnaissance, and helicopter squadrons supported the ground forces by airlifting ground forces units, collecting intelligence on the composition and disposition of hostile forces, and conducting medical evacuation, mobile command, and utility functions. In 1989 Romania had eleven An-24, eight An-26 (both smaller than the United States C-130 transport), and several other Soviet transport aircraft, as well as four Polish Li-2 and two American-made Boeing 707 transports. Using its total lift capability, however, it could transport only the men and equipment of one airborne battalion. Reconnaissance squadrons operated twenty Soviet Il-28 aircraft built in the 1950s. Helicopter squadrons operated fifty-five IAR-316B Allouette III and forty IAR-330 Puma helicopters produced in Romania under French license and twenty-five Soviet Mi-4 and Mi-8 helicopters. Helicopter squadrons directly supported the ground forces by providing enhanced mobility and fire power for small units. The air force had a large pilot training

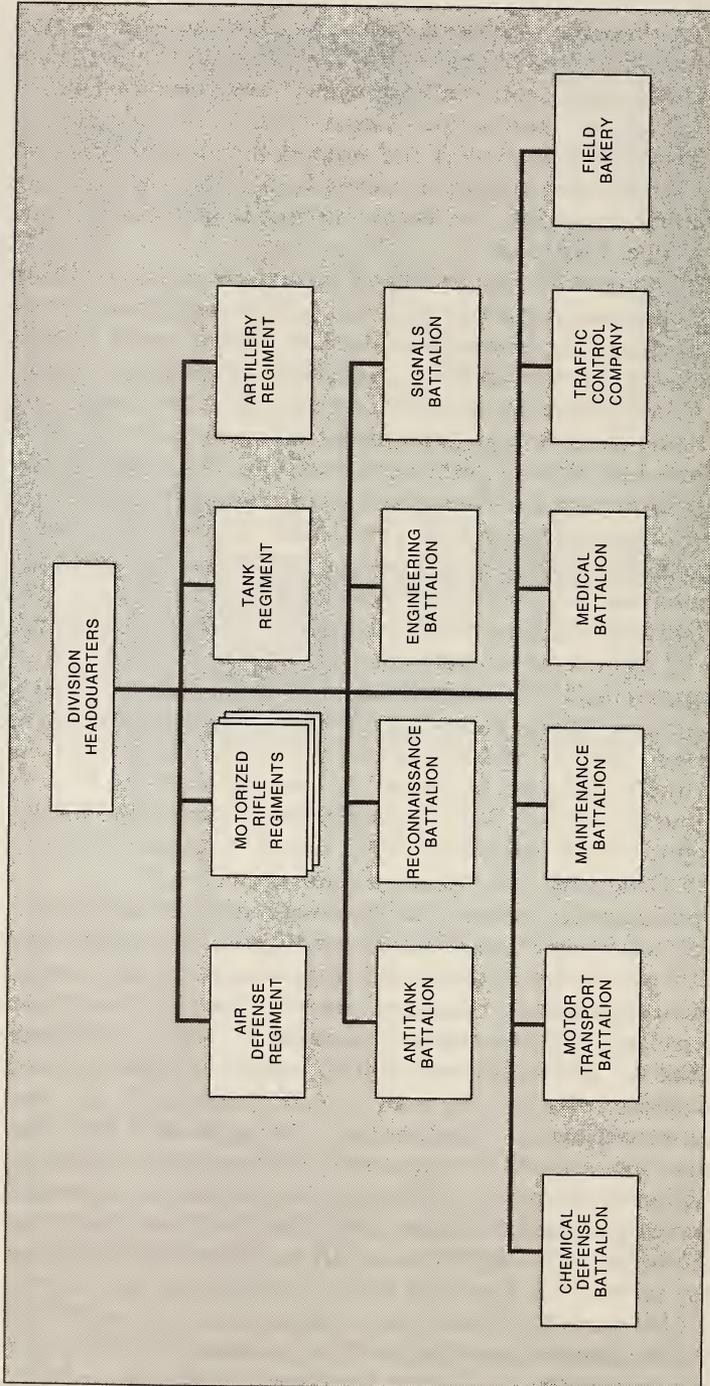


Figure 8. Organization of a Motorized Rifle Division, 1987

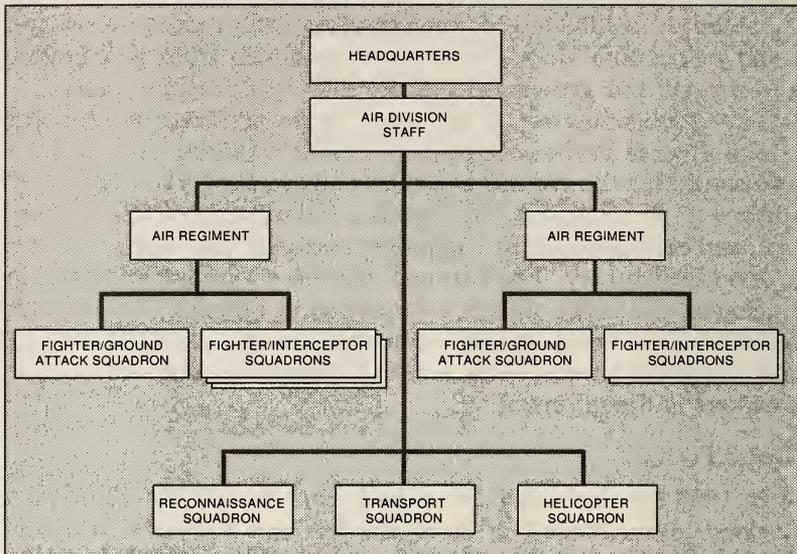
program, which reflected an apparent intention to develop increased capabilities. In 1989 it had sixty Czechoslovak-produced L-29 and L-39 jet training aircraft, twenty older Soviet MiG-15 trainers, and a small but growing inventory of Romanian-built trainers.

The fourteen interceptor squadrons of the air force were the first line of defense in the country's air defense system. The air force also controlled the ground-based air defense network of 135 SA-2 surface-to-air missiles, early warning radar, and command, control, and communications equipment dispersed among twenty sites around the country. The national military command authority in Bucharest and in the country's oil-producing region around Ploiești were the areas best protected against air attack. In 1989 Romania still depended on the Soviet Union to supply all of its air defense weapons and equipment.

### *Naval Forces*

In 1989 the Romanian Navy had more than 7,500 sailors, organized into a Black Sea Fleet, the Danube Squadron, and the shore-based Coastal Defense. It had the mission of defending the country's coastlines against enemy naval bombardments and amphibious assaults, or at least blunting them. All sailors were trained to use infantry weapons and tactics to fight in a land war, in the likely event that the Romanian Navy would be neutralized in a surface engagement with a more powerful naval force. Its major naval bases and shipyards were the Black Sea ports of Mangalia and Constanța. It also made use of Danube River anchorages at Brăila, Giurgiu, Sulina, Galați, and Tulcea. The Romanian naval order-of-battle included several minor surface combatants and larger numbers of fast-attack craft and patrol boats. Beginning in the early 1980s, Romania placed greater resources into its naval construction program and built new patrol boats, frigates, and even destroyers using Chinese and Soviet designs. This increased production may have been intended to increase Romania's export sales. In 1986 Romania took delivery of a Soviet Kilo-class diesel submarine, and it was speculated that additional units could be received in subsequent years.

In 1985 Romania commissioned its first large surface unit, a 6,000-ton guided missile destroyer, the *Muntenia*, built in the Mangalia shipyard. The *Muntenia* was based on the design of the 1960s-era Soviet Kashin-class destroyers. Its weapons were almost exclusively of Soviet manufacture. *Muntenia* had four dual SS-N-2C/STYX antiship missile launchers and one dual SA-N-4 surface-to-air missile launcher. It was equipped with 100mm guns, two torpedo tubes, and a helicopter deck that could shelter two



Source: Based on information from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1988-89*, London, 1988, 52-53.

Figure 9. Organization of a Romanian Air Force Division, 1987

IAR-316B Alouette III antisubmarine warfare (ASW) helicopters. In 1989 a second unit of the same type as the *Muntenia* was under construction. Between 1983 and 1985, Romania built three 1,900-ton Tetal-class frigates using the 1970s-era Soviet Koni-class as a model. Equipped with a dual 76mm gun, antiaircraft guns, four torpedo tubes, and two ASW rocket launchers, these frigates could be used as submarine chasers or maritime escorts. A fourth Tetal unit was under construction in 1989. For logistical support, the navy operated two 3,500-ton Croitor-class combatant tenders. Modeled on the Soviet Don-class, they had four dual SA-N-5 surface-to-air missile launchers, one dual 57mm gun, antiaircraft guns, and a helicopter deck. These ships also went to sea in the early 1980s.

In 1989 the Romanian Navy operated the following ships: three 400-ton Poti-class ASW corvettes armed with two twin 57mm gun turrets, four torpedo tubes, and two ASW rocket launchers (obtained from the Soviet Union in 1970); three 300-ton Kronshtadt-class ASW corvettes equipped with various guns and depth charges (received from the Soviet Union in 1956); six Osa I-class fast attack craft (missile) carrying four SS-N-2A/STYX antiship missile launchers and antiaircraft guns (transferred from the Soviet

Union in the 1960s); twenty-two 40-ton Huchuan-class hydrofoil fast attack craft (torpedo) armed with two torpedo tubes and anti-aircraft guns (the first three units were delivered from China in 1973); twelve 200-ton Romanian-built Eptrop-class fast attack craft, which mounted four torpedo tubes and anti-aircraft guns on an Osa-class hull; twenty-five Shanghai II-class fast attack craft (gun) (received from China beginning in 1977); two 1,500-ton Cosar-class minelayers armed with 57mm guns (built in Romania during the early 1980s); and four modernized Democratia-class coastal minesweepers (built in the 1950s in the German Democratic Republic—East Germany).

Coastal Defense was the shore-based component of defense against attack from the Black Sea. Headquartered at Constanța, the 2,000-man Coastal Defense regiment operated in several sectors along Romania's 245-kilometer coastline and was organized into ten artillery batteries with 130mm, 150mm, and 152mm guns, three antiship missile batteries with SSC-2B/SAMLET launchers, and eight batteries of anti-aircraft artillery.

The Danube Squadron included eighteen 85-ton VB-class riverine patrol boats, armed with 85mm main guns, 81mm mortars, and anti-aircraft guns, eight 40-ton VG-class boats, and twenty-five VD-class inshore minesweeping boats. It also operated several units of the 400-ton Brutar-class armored boat, equipped with a BM-21 multiple rocket launcher and a 100mm gun mounted in a tank turret. The Danube Squadron's mission was to defeat hostile ground forces attempting to ford the Danube River and to ensure the river's availability as a line of communication.

### ***Border Guards***

In 1989 the Border Guards were a separate, smaller armed service equal in standing to the other three services and also subordinate to the Ministry of National Defense. With a force of 20,000 soldiers, the Border Guards had the mission of defending Romania's nearly 3,200-kilometer border with Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union and preventing Romanians from leaving the country illegally.

The Border Guards were organized into twelve brigades and were equipped essentially in the same way as the motorized infantry troops. These brigades were responsible for thirty-two-kilometer-wide border sectors of varying lengths depending on the difficulty of the terrain in their area of operation. They staffed watch towers, patrolled fences and well-lit border strips, and maintained electronic sensors and surveillance systems along the border. Approximately 600 Romanian Navy sailors functioned as the maritime

component of the Border Guards. They operated several Shanghai II-class fast attack craft (gun) as riverine patrol boats on the Danube borders with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

In the 1980s, the Border Guards reportedly used lethal force to prevent illegal emigration to Romania's more liberal neighbors, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Consequently, the borders with Yugoslavia and Hungary were more heavily guarded than were those with Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. The latter were ordinarily guarded only at major highway and railroad-crossing points. The Border Guards also helped to enforce customs and export laws by controlling the flow of goods across Romania's borders.

The Border Guards were the first line of Romania's defense in wartime. They had the mission of preventing an invader's special forces units from infiltrating to sabotage, disrupt, or disorganize military mobilization. In the event of an invasion or attack, the Border Guards would offer initial resistance, use delaying tactics, and try to impede the enemy's advance until the ground forces and Patriotic Guards units could mobilize and reinforce them.

### **Military Personnel**

In 1989 virtually all men who were eighteen years of age or older had to serve in the armed forces or Ministry of Interior units to maintain them at full strength. The terms of service in the armed forces were sixteen months in the ground forces and air force and two years in the navy and in the Border Guards. The armed units of the Ministry of Interior, the security troops, and the militia (police) also served two years (see Ministry of Interior and Security Forces, this ch.). They were selected during the same annual induction cycle as were those called to serve in the armed forces. Students accepted into civilian universities were required to serve nine months on active duty prior to matriculation or to take instruction from the military faculty and become reserve officers after graduation. The demographic strain of universal male military conscription on the national labor pool, however, forced the Ceaușescu regime to cut the armed forces by 10,000 soldiers in 1987. Also because of demographic trends, by 1989 women had achieved a small, but increasingly visible, role in the armed forces.

According to Article 36 of the 1965 Constitution, defense of the country is the duty of all citizens, and military service is obligatory, but only men were subject to induction into the armed forces. Young men generally accepted compulsory military service as a reality of life in Romania. There were no provisions for conscientious objection and no alternatives to military service. Conscientious objectors had traditionally been subject to harsh treatment

by political authorities. Seventh Day Adventists who refused to serve in the army during the 1930s were imprisoned. During World War II, citizens who refused military service were charged with treason and summarily executed. In the late 1960s, small numbers of Nazarenes were arrested for objecting to compulsory military service. In 1989, however, authorities granted limited numbers of deferments from service in extreme cases of family hardship or illness and granted, as well, some educational exemptions. Still Romania lacked the organized movement of youths opposing military service that had developed in several non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries in the 1980s.

### *Military Training*

The 1972 Law on the Organization of National Defense mandated universal premilitary training for Romanian youths. Each year more than 650,000 young men and women between ten and twenty years of age received basic military training at schools and work. They were organized into what were called Youth Homeland Defense detachments. In the summer, they attended 200 ground forces, 40 air force, and 15 navy training camps located throughout the country. During several weeks of training camp, they wore the blue uniform of the Patriotic Guards. The Ministry of National Defense, the Patriotic Guards, and the UTC supplied the military equipment and instructors for premilitary training. The program sought to compensate for short service terms by preparing young men for service in the armed forces. Young women used their premilitary training in later service with the Patriotic Guards. A major objective of premilitary training was to inculcate youths with socialist, and especially nationalist, values. In addition, Youth Homeland Defense detachments could be deployed for certain missions and duties if needed in wartime.

After induction into the armed forces, the basic training cycle for conscripts was similar to that in most of the world's armies. It started with individual physical conditioning, close-order drill, small-arms firing, and fundamental small-unit tactics, followed by training in more complex equipment and crew-served weapons and the assignment of a military specialty, and appropriate training in it, after several months. Approximately 20 to 30 percent of basic military training time for conscripts was devoted to political indoctrination. The emphasis on political education among soldiers was evident in the fact that the large majority of them were UTC members. More than 70 percent of the noncommissioned officers (NCOs) in the armed forces were members of the PCR. At the time of induction, the most qualified conscripts were made NCOs

in return for extending their service beyond the normal sixteen-month or two-year term. Nevertheless, the short service term in the armed forces made the training and retention of competent NCOs a chronic problem.

In 1989 daily existence for soldiers was harder than for most citizens. The daily dietary allowance for soldiers was 2,700 calories, which consisted mainly of bread and small quantities of meat in stews and soups. Dairy products and fruit were generally absent from the military diet because they were in short supply even in the civilian sector. Military units cultivated gardens and raised animals for slaughter to supplement their rations. In many instances, however, this home-grown produce and meat was sold for cash on the black market.

### *Officer Education*

In 1989 officers in the armed forces received higher than average salaries and extensive benefits such as priority housing. They had relatively high social standing and prestige. Officers still enjoyed fewer perquisites and privileges than their counterparts in the other Warsaw Pact countries, however. Yet the officer's profession remained a path of upward mobility, especially for young men from remote *judete* and agricultural communities.

In 1989 there were several ways of earning a commission in the armed forces. Romania had a number of military secondary schools for officer training in cities and larger towns. After passing a competitive admission examination, cadets could enter a military secondary school at the start of their ninth year of formal education or after completing their terms of service as conscripts. Military secondary schools offered a three- or four-year curriculum of mathematics, physics, chemistry, applied science and engineering, geography, foreign languages, physical conditioning, and sports. Many, like the Alexandru Ioan Cuza Naval Secondary School or the Nicolae Balcescu Military Officers College, were named for heroic military leaders from Romanian history. Military secondary schools began accepting women for training as communications, chemical defense, transportation, air defense, quartermaster corps, medical, and topographic officers in 1973.

In 1989 approximately 70 percent of the second lieutenants on active duty had received commissions by graduating from military secondary schools. While on active duty, approximately 50 percent of all officers continued their professional training by developing a military specialty in resident or correspondence courses at schools for armor in Pitești, infantry in Bacău, artillery in Ploiești, missiles in Brașov, military engineering in Lugoj in *Timiș județ*,



*Soldiers from the military academy at Alba Iulia  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

and communications in Bucharest. The other 30 percent of officers on active duty received commissions after completing university-level courses of study at more elite institutions.

The General Military Academy and the Military Technical Academy, both located in Bucharest, were the most prestigious military educational establishments. An army general, usually senior in rank and experience to the minister of national defense, headed the General Military Academy. The four-year courses of study at the military academies, concentrating on general military science, military engineering, or party work and organization, led to a university degree as well as a commission as a junior officer. Also located in Bucharest, the Aurel Vlaicu Military Academy for Aviation Officers, named for the founder of Romania's prewar aircraft industry, and the military faculty of the University of Bucharest also produced commissioned graduates.

As captains, navy lieutenants, and majors, promising officers applied to attend two- to five-year advanced command and staff courses at the General Military Academy. Until the early 1960s, mid-career officers were assigned to elite Soviet military academies for higher professional education similar to that provided in war colleges in the United States and other Western countries. Graduation from either the Soviet General Staff Academy or Frunze Military Academy was almost a prerequisite for advancement to general

officer rank and a requirement to become minister of national defense in the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries. When Romania began to follow a course of greater independence within the Warsaw Pact, however, it stopped sending its officers to the Soviet Union for training. This reduced the chance that Romanian officers would develop a loyalty toward their Soviet counterparts stronger than that to Ceaușescu, the PCR, and the Romanian government. It also largely eliminated opportunities for the Soviet Union to recruit spies from among the Romanian officer corps. At a more practical level, the military had to train its own officers to fight according to a military doctrine and strategy different from that of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.

### ***Reserves and Mobilization***

In a concession to the need for economy, the ground forces maintained only one motorized rifle and one tank division at near-full strength in personnel, weapons, and equipment (category one) in 1989. One tank and three motorized rifle divisions were held at 50 to 75 percent of their wartime strength (category two); four motorized rifle divisions were kept at less than 50 percent of complete readiness (category three). Romania also relied heavily on large reserve and paramilitary forces that could be equipped and trained at less cost than could regular forces and could mobilize rapidly in a condition of imminent hostilities.

In 1989 approximately 4.5 million men, or approximately 20 percent of the country's total population, were in the reserve military service age-group of 18 to 50 years. More than 550,000 of these people had served on active duty in the armed forces during the previous five years. They were subject to periodic recall for refresher training in weapons and small unit tactics.

In addition to its system of reserve service, Romania had the Patriotic Guards, which were staffed by about 700,000 citizens, both men and women. In keeping with the doctrine of War of the Entire People, the Patriotic Guards were a combined territorial defense or national guard and civil defense organization, which was established immediately after the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Patriotic Guards worked closely with the Ministry of National Defense but were directly subordinate to the PCR and the UTC. Relying more on ordinary citizens than on the professional military, the Patriotic Guards served as a potential counterweight to or check on the power and influence of the regular armed forces.

In 1989 the Patriotic Guards were organized into company- and platoon-sized units in almost every *judet*, municipality, town, village,

and industrial or agricultural enterprise. Under the command of the first secretary of the local PCR apparatus, they conducted basic and refresher training in small-arms handling, demolition, mortar and grenade-launcher firing, and small-unit tactics. In wartime they had responsibility for local anti-aircraft defense, providing early warning of air attack, defending population centers and important elements of national infrastructure, and conducting civil engineering work as needed to reestablish essential military production after an attack. They would reconnoiter and attack enemy flanks and rear areas, combat airborne units and special forces penetrating deep into Romania, and mount resistance operations against occupying forces. In keeping with their guerrilla image, the Patriotic Guards wore plain uniforms with no insignia or badges of rank.

### *Ranks, Uniforms, and Insignia*

As a Warsaw Pact member, Romania adopted armed forces uniforms and insignia modeled on those of the Soviet Union. Following the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, however, there was a gradual movement away from the Soviet model and a partial return to the pre-World War II army accoutrements, including the steel helmet formerly known as the "Dutch helmet" and the national crest on head gear, belt buckles, and sleeve patches.

In 1989 the armed forces used four categories of uniforms: full dress, dress, service, and field. The full dress uniform was worn for formal occasions such as parades, ceremonies commemorating Armed Forces Day (October 25), Navy Day (the first Sunday in August), Air Force Day (the third Sunday in July), and Border Guards Day (June 25); conferral of promotions in rank or military decorations; and official receptions. The dress uniform was worn during off-duty hours or during classes at higher military schools. The service uniform was for duty in garrison, and the field uniform was used during training, maneuvers, and firing exercises. The color of the basic uniform for the ground and air force was olive drab, and for the navy it was blue.

Officers wore blue full dress and dress uniforms, which consisted of a single-breasted, open-collar service jacket; matching trousers with a red stripe; black, low quarter shoes or high riding boots; and a service hat. Officers participating with a troop formation in a parade wore the olive drab uniform with a cotton khaki shirt and olive drab tie, a steel helmet, an ornate gold pistol belt, brown gloves, breeches, and high riding boots. Officers in the reviewing stand had the option of wearing the blue uniform with long trousers, black low quarter shoes, the service hat, a white shirt and

black tie, white gloves, and a ceremonial dirk or the olive drab uniform but with a service hat, a white shirt and olive drab tie, and white gloves. The dress uniform for officers was either blue or olive drab with long trousers and low quarter shoes but without the ornate pistol belt and ceremonial dirk. In winter the olive drab uniform was worn with a double-breasted overcoat and brown gloves. Enlisted personnel and noncommissioned ranks wore an olive drab shirt and trousers, a brown leather belt with brass buckle, a garrison cap, and black combat boots. In winter they wore an olive drab overcoat and a pile cap.

The service uniform was the same as the dress olive drab uniform except that officers wore a brown leather Sam Browne belt, breeches, and high boots. Enlisted personnel could wear a field jacket as an outer garment with a brown leather belt and brass buckle. The field uniform was the same as the service uniform except that officers wore the field jacket instead of the service jacket with the Sam Browne belt and hard shoulder boards. Enlisted personnel wore the steel helmet in place of the garrison cap. Depending on the season, the overcoat, gloves, and pile cap were worn in the field.

The prominent features that distinguished air force, air defense, and airborne personnel from army personnel were the background color of the shoulder boards, the color of the collar tabs, and the color of the service hat band. Reminiscent of the pre-World War II era, general and field-grade air force officers wore a series of gold braids topped by a diamond on their sleeves. Members of the elite mountain-troop units wore distinctive olive drab ski pants, field jackets, ski/mountain boots, thick white socks rolled over the boot tops, and olive drab berets. For field training, reconnaissance unit personnel wore a mottled green and brown camouflage jumpsuit with attached head cover in summer and a white uniform in winter. Navy personnel wore uniforms similar in color and style to those used by most of the world's navies. The winter uniform was navy blue, and the summer uniform featured a tropical white service jacket. Enlisted seamen wore a visorless hat with a black band and a hat ribbon worn in pigtail fashion.

In 1989, Romanian military rank structure conformed to that used by the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact nations. There were four general officer ranks, three field-grade ranks, and four company-grade ranks. Enlisted ranks included privates and non-commissioned officers. The naval rank structure was analogous, but there were only three admiral ranks.

All rank insignia was displayed on shoulder loops or shoulder boards and tended to be ornate for commissioned officers and plain for enlisted personnel. General officers wore a shoulder board with

a red background and a broad ornate gold stripe and silver stars set on a red background. The shoulder board worn by air force general officers had a blue background, whereas that worn by navy admirals featured a navy blue background and gold stars. Field-grade officers wore a shoulder board with three longitudinal gold stripes on a background of the color designated for the branch of service and smaller silver stars. For company-grade officers, the shoulder board had two longitudinal gold stripes and even smaller silver stars. The shoulder boards of enlisted and noncommissioned officer ranks featured transverse gold stripes on a background of olive drab or the color designated for the branch of service along with a branch-of-service metallic insignia. Navy officers wore gold sleeve stripes and stars, and the lowest enlisted seamen wore gold chevrons on the sleeve (see fig. 10; fig. 11).

## **The Military and the National Economy**

The Ceaușescu regime pursued a policy designed to ensure that the armed forces would not become an unacceptable burden on the economy. In fact, the armed forces during the 1970s and 1980s made important economic contributions, providing cheap labor and managerial cadres. As economic problems mounted in the mid-1980s, the government curtailed military spending and broadened the use of the armed forces in the civilian economy. At the same time, the arms industry earned badly needed hard currency through weapons and matériel exports.

### *Military Budget*

After five years of sustained military budget increases in the early 1980s, the Ceaușescu regime reduced military expenditures by 4.8 percent in the 1986 state budget. At his instruction, the GNA passed an additional 5 percent cut in military spending and the size of the armed forces. It also adopted a change in the 1965 Constitution to hold a national referendum to confirm or to reject this reduction. Young Romanians aged fourteen to eighteen, who were likely to favor any cut that might decrease their chances of induction into military service, were allowed to vote on the referendum. On November 23, 1986, in balloting typical of that during Ceaușescu's rule, a reported 99.9 percent of all eligible citizens turned out and voted unanimously in favor of the 5 percent reduction. This electoral ploy may have enabled Ceaușescu to overcome more easily the apparent opposition to the plan among the professional military.

Implementing the decision made in the November referendum, Romania cut its 1987 military expenditures by US\$156 million to US\$1.171 billion, an actual reduction of more than 11 percent.

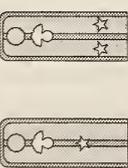
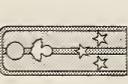
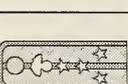
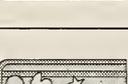
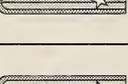
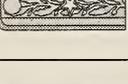
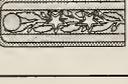
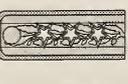
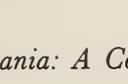
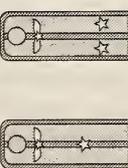
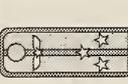
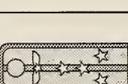
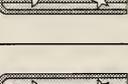
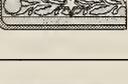
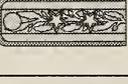
ROMANIAN RANK	SUB-LOCOTENENT LOCOTENENT	LOCOTENENT MAJOR	CĂPITAN	MAIOR	LOCOTENENT COLONEL	COLONEL	GENERAL MAIOR	GENERAL LOCOTENENT	GENERAL COLONEL	GENERAL DE ARMATA
<b>ARMY</b>										
U.S. RANK TITLES	2D LIEUTENANT	1ST LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	MAJOR	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL	BRIGADIER GENERAL	MAJOR GENERAL	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL
<b>ROMANIAN RANK</b>	SUB-LOCOTENENT LOCOTENENT	LOCOTENENT MAJOR	CĂPITAN	MAIOR	LOCOTENENT COLONEL	COLONEL	GENERAL MAIOR	GENERAL LOCOTENENT	GENERAL COLONEL	
<b>AIR FORCE</b>										
U.S. RANK TITLES	2D LIEUTENANT	1ST LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	MAJOR	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL	BRIGADIER GENERAL	MAJOR GENERAL	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	
<b>ROMANIAN RANK</b>	SUB-LOCOTENENT LOCOTENENT	LOCOTENENT MAJOR	CĂPITAN LOCOTENENT	CĂPITAN RANGUL III	CĂPITAN RANGUL II	CĂPITAN RANGUL I	CONTRA AMIRAL	VICE AMIRAL	AMIRAL	
<b>NAVY</b>										
U.S. RANK TITLES	ENSIGN	LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE	LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT COMMANDER	COMMANDER	CAPTAIN	COMMODORE ADMIRAL	REAR ADMIRAL	VICE ADMIRAL	

Figure 10. Officer Ranks and Insignia, 1989

ROMANIAN RANK	SOLDAT	SOLDAT FRUNTAȘ	CAPORAL	SERGEANT	SERGEANT MAJOR	PLUTONIER	PLUTONIER MAJOR	PLUTONIER ADJUTANT
<b>ARMY</b>								
U.S. RANK TITLES	BASIC PRIVATE	PRIVATE PRIVATE 1ST CLASS	CORPORAL	SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT SERGEANT MAJOR	SERGEANT 1ST CLASS	MASTER SERGEANT	COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
<b>ROMANIAN RANK</b>	SOLDAT	SOLDAT FRUNTAȘ	CAPORAL	SERGEANT	SERGEANT MAJOR	PLUTONIER	PLUTONIER MAJOR	PLUTONIER ADJUTANT
<b>AIR FORCE</b>								
U.S. RANK TITLES	AIRMAN BASIC	AIRMAN AIRMAN 1ST CLASS	SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT	TECHNICAL SERGEANT SERGEANT MAJOR	MASTER SERGEANT	SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT	CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT
<b>ROMANIAN RANK</b>	SOLDAT	SOLDAT FRUNTAȘ	CAPORAL	SERGEANT	SERGEANT MAJOR	PLUTONIER	PLUTONIER MAJOR	PLUTONIER ADJUTANT
<b>NAVY</b>	NO INSIGNIA							
U.S. RANK TITLES	SEAMAN RECRUIT	SEAMAN APPRENTICE	SEAMAN SEAMAN 3D CLASS	PETTY OFFICER 2D CLASS	PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS	CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	FLEET FORCE MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER

Figure 11. Enlisted Ranks and Insignia, 1989

Active units discharged 10,000 soldiers and mothballed 250 tanks and armored vehicles, 150 artillery pieces, and 25 aircraft. Deteriorating economic conditions and a chronic labor shortage in the mid-1980s probably necessitated the cut in military spending and the force reductions that accompanied it. Nevertheless, a genuine commitment to disarmament—and its attendant potential for enhancing Romania's security—and desire to demonstrate this commitment cannot be entirely discounted as a factor behind the unilateral reductions.

### *Arms Production*

In 1989 the Soviet Union still provided the majority of heavy arms and complex equipment in Romania's inventory. In the preceding two decades, however, Romania had made considerable progress toward building an independent domestic arms industry. At the PCR Central Committee plenum in April 1968, Ceaușescu officially made development of a domestic arms industry a national priority. He recognized the inherent vulnerability in Romania's reliance on the Soviet Union, a potential adversary, as its principal arms supplier. Ceaușescu claimed that Romania in 1985 was producing more than two-thirds of the weapons and military equipment essential for the country's defense.

At first Romania concentrated on developing its capabilities in low-technology areas, producing spare parts for, repairing, and modifying Soviet-made weapons and equipment for the ground forces. By the early 1980s, Romania had a large-scale program of naval construction and had reestablished its prewar aviation industry. It built minor surface combatants and fighter aircraft using its own designs and produced more complicated units under licensing arrangements with the Soviet Union and other countries. Several Western countries assisted Romanian arms production efforts as a reward for the country's adopting an independent stance within the Warsaw Pact. Besides contributing to its increased independence of the Soviet Union, domestic arms production also increased Romania's exports and became a source of hard currency.

Using Soviet designs provided under license, Romania produced a number of armored fighting vehicles for its ground forces. The TAB-72 was a modified version of the Soviet BTR-60 armored personnel carrier, and the TAB-77 was the counterpart of the Soviet BTR-70. The TAB-72 had an improved Romanian-designed turret, upgraded optical equipment and gun sights, and increased elevation angles for its 14.5mm and 7.62mm machine guns for use in an anti-aircraft mode. It featured a better power-to-weight ratio than the BTR-60 and a greater road speed. One TAB-72 variant

used a Soviet 82mm mortar in place of its turret. The TAB-77 had either a Romanian-made turret or mounted six Soviet AT-3/SAGGER antitank guided missiles. The TAB-C was essentially a domestic version of the Soviet BRDM-2 armored reconnaissance vehicle first built in the early 1960s.

The M-77 tank, also known by the designation TR-77, was the first produced in Romania since World War II. It mounted the turret and 100mm gun from the Soviet T-54/T-55 tank but had a Romanian-designed six-roller track and suspension system for improved mobility over rugged terrain. Romania produced towed and truck-mounted Soviet and Czechoslovak B-11, M-51, and BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, as well as DAC-443 light and DAC-665 medium military cargo trucks using a chassis design purchased from a firm in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). These trucks were used as ground forces transports, communications and electronics vans, bridging equipment carriers, and mobile multiple rocket launcher platforms. Romania also manufactured all small arms, ammunition, munitions, mortars, grenade launchers, communications equipment, and some spare parts for more complex weapons used by its ground forces.

### *Naval Construction*

After the early 1970s, the Soviet Union curtailed transfers of naval vessels, and licenses to construct them, to Romania, forcing it to turn to other potential suppliers and develop a domestic program of naval construction. China allowed Romania to build units of two classes of fast attack craft under license. In the late 1970s, Romania began constructing the first of nineteen Huchuan-class boats in the Drobeta-Turnu Severin shipyard and several Shanghai II-class boats in the Mangalia shipyard. At the same time, Romania developed some more original units. It built eighteen eighty-five-ton VB-class armored riverine patrol boats beginning in 1973. Based on their experience in building Chinese boats, Romanian shipbuilders designed and constructed fourteen Epitrop-class hydrofoil fast attack craft in the early 1980s. Romania built thirty VD-class riverine minesweeping boats and several units of the heavily armed Brutar-class riverine patrol boat (see Naval Forces, this ch.).

The Soviet Union began to reestablish its earlier role in Romanian shipbuilding in the 1980s, granting licenses to build copies of the Kashin-class guided missile destroyer and Koni-class frigates—the Romanian Muntenia- and Tetal-classes, respectively. Although Romania built the hulls for ships of these classes, the

Soviet Union supplied all armament and electronic equipment needed to outfit them.

### *Aviation Industry*

In the 1960s and 1970s, Romania reestablished its pre-World War II position as one of the few countries with a national aviation industry. The Soviet Union cooperated to an extent but also tried to confine Romania to producing relatively unsophisticated aircraft at a lower level of aviation technology. Romania therefore established extensive ties with several non-Warsaw Pact countries and undertook licensed production of foreign aircraft and coproduction of the IAR-93, the first non-Soviet combat aircraft ever built and flown in the air force of a Warsaw Pact member state.

Romania had a strong national aviation industry during the interwar years. It produced more than eighty models of aircraft and employed 20,000 engineers, technicians, and other workers. But most of its aircraft production capability was destroyed in bombing raids during World War II, and the post-war recovery of the industry proceeded slowly. The Soviet Union forced Romania to convert its remaining capacity to tractor production but eventually allowed it to resume production of motorized gliders and agricultural, utility, scout, and medical evacuation aircraft. Advancing the aviation industry to a higher technological level became a priority when Ceaușescu came to power in 1965.

Romania began producing light military training aircraft in the early 1970s. The first, the IAR-28MA, was developed on the basis of the IS-28M2 motorized glider. In 1974 the first of seventy-five IAR-823 two-seat turboprop primary training aircraft was built for the air force. In 1978 the Soviet Union granted a license to produce 200 two-seat YaK-52 piston engine trainers annually for the Soviet Air Force. Four years later, Romania began producing the IAR-825TP TRIUMF two-seat turboprop training aircraft for its own air force. In 1986 the Soviet Union awarded Romania production of the single-seat YaK-53 trainer, an upgraded YaK-52. Building Soviet-designed training aircraft, however, did little to increase the technology base of the Romanian aviation industry.

As of 1989, Romania's greatest achievement in the aviation field was the development and production of the IAR-93, a single-seat light fighter aircraft, in collaboration with Yugoslavia. The joint Yugoslav-Romanian (YUROM) program began in 1970, and serial production of the IAR-93 started in 1979. The IAR-93, designed for a close air-support and ground-attack role, was produced in two variants. The thirty IAR-93A aircraft in service with the Romanian Air Force in 1989 had two Rolls-Royce Viper Mk 632 turbojet

engines. The 165 IAR-93B aircraft on order had two afterburner-equipped Mk 633 engines. The IAR-93 had a fully-loaded combat radius of 300 to 400 kilometers. It was armed with two twin-barrel 23mm cannons and carried a maximum bomb load of 1,300 kilograms on four wing pylons and one fuselage attachment point. In conjunction with bringing the IAR-93 into service, Romania developed and built the compatible IAR-99 advanced jet trainer at Craiova in the 1980s.

In the mid-1970s, the Romanian state aviation firm, Industria Aeronautica Română (IAR), began building the first of 200 Alouette III and 100 Puma helicopters on a license from the French firm Aerospatiale, under the designations IAR-316B and IAR-330, respectively. The air force operated the IAR-316B and IAR-330 as armed transports in support of the ground forces. They had pylons for four AT-3/SAGGER antitank guided missiles or sixteen 57mm rockets.

### ***Military Labor***

The government traditionally relied on the military as a reserve labor force for gathering harvests and building railroads. In the 1980s, however, the armed forces became increasingly involved in other areas of the civilian economy. The use of military units in the civilian sector was practically a necessity in view of Romania's severe economic difficulties. To alleviate the chronic labor shortage and to overcome occasional labor unrest and other disruptions, the regime used the military as a corps of engineers on 170 important public construction projects. During the mid-1980s, military commanders and troops were deployed in power plants and energy-related industries to maintain order and to ensure the regime's control over the critical energy sector (see *Energy*, ch. 3).

In 1988 Ceaușescu stated that 50 percent of active duty military personnel worked on civilian projects at some point during their service. Troops worked on the Bucharest-Danube Canal, the Agigea Lock on the Danube-Black Sea Canal, the bridge over the Danube between Fetești and Cernavodă, the Constanța-Mangalia railroad, the Iron Gates II hydroelectric plant, the Bucharest subway, the Palace of the Republic, and the Ministry of National Defense building. Troops worked almost continuously on irrigation, land reclamation, and reforestation projects.

### **Foreign Military Relations**

Until the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Romania had few military ties to countries outside the Warsaw Pact. After 1968 Romania looked toward the West, China,

and Third World countries for military cooperation in all areas. It developed additional sources of arms supplies, besides the Soviet Union, to meet its requirements for national defense; ensured itself diverse political support in the event of an attack or invasion; and developed markets for its arms exports. Political and military officials modeled Romania's new military doctrine on that of Yugoslavia and coordinated defense plans with its independent neighbor. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Romania pursued an active program of military cooperation with China, including licensed production of fast attack craft in its shipyards and exchanges of high-level military delegations. Romania's military ties to China, which challenged Soviet leadership of the communist world, were particularly irritating to the Soviet Union. Romania also expanded its cooperation in defense matters with neutral European countries including Austria and Switzerland. It reportedly trained Nicaraguan military pilots in the early 1980s. In October 1986, the minister of national defense visited the United States secretary of defense in Washington. Romania also had a program of reciprocal warship port visits with the United States, Britain, and France.

### *The Warsaw Pact*

In the late 1950s, Romania curbed excessive Soviet influence over its armed forces, built up in the years after World War II, and ceased sending its officers to the Soviet Union for military education and training. After 1962 it did not allow Warsaw Pact troop maneuvers on its territory, although occasional command and staff exercises were permitted. In November 1964, PCR General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej announced a unilateral reduction in the term of compulsory military service from two years to sixteen months and in the size of the Romanian armed forces from 240,000 to 200,000 soldiers. His successor, Ceaușescu, openly asserted that these moves reflected the precedence of Romanian national interests over Warsaw Pact requirements. He criticized Soviet domination of the alliance, its command, and policy making, and he called for structural changes in the Warsaw Pact, to include rotating the position of commander-in-chief of the joint armed forces among non-Soviet officers and allowing the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact member states a bigger role in decision making. In the late 1960s, Romanian forces essentially quit participating in joint Warsaw Pact field exercises except for sending staff officers to observe them, and Ceaușescu announced that Romania would no longer put its military forces under the Warsaw Pact's joint command, even during peacetime maneuvers.

In the midst of the 1968 "Prague Spring" crisis over internal political liberalization in Czechoslovakia, Ceaușescu traveled to Prague to demonstrate his support for party First Secretary Alexander Dubček and Czechoslovak autonomy. Romania declined to join the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia or to allow Bulgarian forces to cross its territory to intervene in Czechoslovakia. At a massive demonstration in Bucharest on the day after the invasion, Ceaușescu denounced the intervention as a violation of Czechoslovakia's national sovereignty, international law, and the terms of the Warsaw Pact itself. He declared that, unlike Czechoslovakia, Romania would resist a similar invasion of its territory, and he placed Romanian forces on alert status. He established the paramilitary Patriotic Guards with an initial strength of 100,000 citizens to provide a mechanism for the participation of the country's population in a system of total national defense. Later in August, major troop movements along Romania's borders with the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Bulgaria indicated a similar threat of intervention in Romania. These threatening movements may have been intended to intimidate Ceaușescu, who was conferring with Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito at the time.

Determined to prevent alliance maneuvers from serving as a vehicle for intervention in Romania, Ceaușescu refused to allow Warsaw Pact exercises on Romanian territory in the wake of the 1968 action against Czechoslovakia. After its deviation from the common alliance line on Czechoslovakia, Romania became the object of several joint Warsaw Pact maneuvers conducted near its borders that were designed to pressure it politically. These exercises coincided with other major displays of Romanian independence from the Warsaw Pact.

Shortly before Ceaușescu visited China in June 1971, the Soviet Union mounted a major exercise on its southern border with Romania. During "South-71," as the exercise was called, the Soviet Union mobilized twelve ground forces divisions, and the Soviet Black Sea Fleet operated off the Romanian coast. It requested, but Romania denied, permission to transport three divisions across Romania to Bulgaria for the maneuvers. South-71 was an indication of Soviet displeasure with Ceaușescu for making the first visit to China by a Warsaw Pact head of state since the Sino-Soviet split in the late 1950s and for maintaining good relations with its communist rival. South-71 forced Romania into a partial mobilization but did not disrupt Ceaușescu's trip to China. Soviet, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian units conducted the "Opal-71" exercises along Hungary's border with Romania in August 1971. Ceaușescu's failure to travel to the Crimea for a summer meeting with Soviet leader

Leonid Brezhnev, customary for East European leaders, may have been related to the military activity along Romania's borders.

Throughout the remainder of the 1970s and during the 1980s, Romania continued and further developed its autonomous position in the Warsaw Pact. It refused to allow Soviet forces to traverse Romanian territory to Bulgaria for joint Warsaw Pact maneuvers. In 1974 Romania denied a Soviet request to construct a broad-gauge railroad from Odessa across eastern Romania to Varna, Bulgaria, that could be used to transport major troop units. Romania's stance against the use of its territory by allied forces effectively isolated Bulgaria from the other Warsaw Pact countries except by air or sea transport.

Romania continued to participate fully in formal alliance political meetings in which it could publicly express its views, assert its interests, and influence the formulation of official Warsaw Pact statements and documents. It openly adopted positions different from those of the Soviet Union. Romanian demands for genuine consultation and greater Eastern European input into decision making resulted in the establishment of the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1976 and other formal deliberative bodies within the Warsaw Pact. Romania used these consultative mechanisms to publicize its disagreements with the Soviet Union over alliance policy. In 1978 it publicly opposed Soviet initiatives to achieve tighter military integration in the Warsaw Pact and to increase the military expenditures of the Warsaw Pact member states. In 1980 Romania refused to support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when it abstained instead of voting against the United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning the Soviet action. It later openly called on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. In 1984 Romania publicly opposed the Soviet decision to deploy short-range ballistic missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia to counter the 1983 NATO deployment of intermediate nuclear forces (INF) in Western Europe.

Romania remained a Warsaw Pact member state in 1989, but retained its well-established reputation as a maverick within the Soviet alliance. It maximized its autonomy within the boundaries of the Warsaw Pact, minimized its participation, and avoided an outright withdrawal from the alliance, which the Soviet Union would not have tolerated. The Soviet Union countenanced these displays of independence because, as part of the Warsaw Pact's southern tier, Romania had a less strategic location than East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary; it did not border on a NATO country; and it retained its rigid internal communist regime.

### *Arms Sales*

Romania produced Soviet weapons and military equipment under license not only for its own armed forces, but also for export to the Soviet Union and to both Soviet-allied and nonaligned countries in the Middle East and Africa. In the early 1980s, annual arms transfers abroad averaged US\$620 million, or between 5 and 6 percent of total exports, making Romania the world's ninth largest arms exporter and second only to Czechoslovakia among the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries.

The Ministry of National Defense's foreign trade division and the state-owned firm Romtehnica handled Romania's arms sales abroad. The majority of its sales of Soviet-designed AK-47 and AKM assault rifles, BM-21 and M-51 multiple rocket launchers, TAB-72 armored personnel carriers, and munitions and ordnance went to the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) during the early 1980s. In 1983 Romania and Libya signed a formal military cooperation agreement based on the supply of Romanian-made infantry arms, military vehicles, and explosives to the latter. Iraq remained Romania's best Middle East customer. Besides selling arms, Romania repaired and overhauled Iraqi tanks and armored vehicles that had been damaged in the battles of the Iran-Iraq War.

In 1984 Romania agreed to sell 200 M-77 tanks, its improved version of the Soviet T-55, to Egypt as well as to provide training and maintenance and to assist Egypt in undertaking licensed production of the M-77. Romania exported spare parts—produced under license—for French Alouette III and Puma helicopters in service with the air forces of Algeria, Angola, and Ethiopia. It tried unsuccessfully to sell its versions of the French-designed helicopters, IAR-316B and IAR-330, in Latin America in competition with the original manufacturer Aerospatiale.

For Romania, arms sales represented a stable export market that helped to absorb some underutilized productive capacity in its heavy manufacturing sector and to earn hard currency until the mid-1980s. Arms transfers to the Soviet Union allowed Romania to reduce somewhat its trade imbalance with that country. Trading weapons for oil with countries in the Middle East enabled Romania to develop a non-Soviet source of energy supplies. After several years of steady increases, however, arms sales abroad dropped to US\$270 million in 1986. Arms production and sales became a less valuable part of the economy in the late 1980s and even became a burden on the civilian sector.

## **Law and Order**

The PCR and the Ceaușescu regime placed a far greater emphasis on order than on the rule of law. The Constitution of 1965 was superficially similar to the constitutions of Western democracies, but a tremendous gap existed between the rights stipulated in it and the human rights and civil liberties respected by the party and state. As a result, Romania earned the reputation as being the most repressive state in Eastern Europe. Although abuses were perpetrated by the Ministry of Interior and its Department of State Security, the Ministry of Justice and the judicial system were either unable or unwilling to prevent them.

The 1965 Constitution theoretically guaranteed equal rights for all citizens regardless of ethnic origin or religious belief (Article 17); freedom of association (Article 27); freedom of speech (Article 28); freedom of conscience and religious belief (Article 30); as well as the inviolability of the person (Article 31), the domicile (Article 32), and correspondence and communications (Article 33). However, the Constitution also stipulated that no citizen may exercise these rights when they conflict with the "socialist order" or serve aims "hostile to the interests of the Romanian working people." Because the PCR alone defined the interests of the working people, no Romanian was able to exercise his or her rights to challenge the rule of the PCR and Ceaușescu. The rights of the citizenry were not inalienable; they were given by the party and as such could be taken away.

## **Judicial System**

The Ministry of Justice was responsible for the administration of justice and the maintenance of law and order. Under the Constitution, it was charged with defending the socialist order, protecting individual rights, and reeducating those who violate the country's laws, in that order of precedence. The Ministry of Justice exercised its authority through its main component, the Office of the Prosecutor General (Procuratura), which was established in 1952. The Procuratura operated the court system, decided jurisdictional questions, and compiled statistics on crime. It also oversaw the central criminology institute and forensic science laboratory.

Although the judicial system was theoretically independent, the PCR controlled it through its power to appoint judges and through the rules of party discipline. The judicial system took its orders directly from the Ministry of Interior and the security service. As a result, the government has never failed to win a conviction, according to Romanian dissidents. The GNA possessed formal

authority to appoint the prosecutor general (attorney general) for a five-year term, and he was theoretically responsible only to it, or to the Council of State when the former was not in session. The prosecutor general represented the interests of the party and government in all legal disputes. He could petition the Supreme Court for interpretations of existing laws or propose changes in criminal statutes or new legislation to the GNA. He also appointed lower-level prosecutors in the *judete*. The Procuratura was supposed to investigate and resolve any charges that the Ministry of Interior or the security service had acted illegally or improperly. Yet the latter operated virtually unchecked in the late 1980s, following only directives issued by Ceaușescu and the PCR. Below the national level, the Procuratura was organized in the forty *judete*, the municipality of Bucharest, and smaller localities. Its prosecutors had greater latitude to issue arrest warrants, review evidence, monitor investigations, arraign suspects, and file suits than did prosecutors in most legal systems.

### Courts

The court system was organized at national, *judet*, and local levels. It operated for a long time under the 1947 Law on the Organization of the Judiciary, which placed many professional judicial functions in the hands of ordinary citizens, who were selected and instructed by the PCR. The 1947 law put two lay judges alongside one professional jurist on 16,000 local judicial commissions that heard cases involving labor disputes, civil complaints, family law, and minor crimes and violations of public order. A judicial reform implemented in 1978 established panels of between three and seven “popular” judges, recruited from the masses of workers and peasants, to serve as local working people’s judicial councils for two-year terms. These judges were appointed by and responded to local PCR committees or people’s councils, the UTC, official trade unions, and other PCR-controlled mass organizations.

Operating in small municipalities, towns, and large industrial and agricultural enterprises, working people’s judicial councils played a significant role in dispensing justice. They handled up to 50 percent of all court cases. The management of a work unit investigated and presented the facts of a case, and a co-worker defended the accused. Unlike the larger municipal, *judet*, and military courts over which professional judges presided, working people’s judicial councils could impose only light sentences short of prison terms. Nevertheless, whether filled by a professional or an ordinary citizen, the judge’s bench in Romania was subject to

virtually irresistible pressure to decide cases according to the PCR's political preferences.

### *Military Courts*

The civilian prosecutor general appointed the military prosecutor with concurrence of the minister of national defense. The military Procuratura operated an extensive system of courts, which tried military personnel for violations of the military oath and regulations and held courts-martial for certain offenses. Military courts also exercised original jurisdiction over cases involving civilian offenses committed by those in the military services. More unusually, they heard cases of transgressions against the socialist order or the security of the state in both peacetime and wartime regardless of whether the accused was military or civilian. Cases brought before military courts were tried in closed session with even less concern for due process and the rights of the accused than was shown in civilian courtrooms. The use of secret proceedings reduced the chances of negative international publicity for the PCR and the Ceaușescu regime that could result from open trials of alleged criminals.

### *Penal Code*

Romania introduced its new Penal Code in 1978. It was somewhat less draconian than the two previous penal codes promulgated during the early period of communist rule, in 1948 and 1968. The new code had a major impact on crime and punishment. It reduced the overall number of indictable offenses, introduced lighter sentences, and established a more flexible approach toward the treatment of offenders, juvenile offenders in particular. It mandated rehabilitation instead of prison sentences in many cases.

The greater emphasis on socialist legality, or the rule of law over adherence to the political dictates of the PCR evident in the 1978 penal code, did little to change the PCR's attitude toward the phenomenon of political crime. Although officials denied it, estimates indicated that as many as thirty prisoners remained incarcerated for political "crimes" after the government's January 1988 amnesty. Human rights groups reported that this estimate represented only a fraction of the total number of cases, as many more prisoners with political motivation had been convicted of common crimes or of attempting to leave the country illegally. Political prisoners were customarily tried and convicted in military courts. Articles 166 and 167 of the Penal Code were used to charge Romanian dissidents as criminals for calling on the regime to respect the civil and human rights outlined in the Constitution or for granting

interviews to foreign reporters to discuss the regime's repressive nature (see *Dissidence*, this ch.). They could receive sentences of from five to fifteen years for disseminating "propaganda against the socialist order," for "any action aimed at changing the socialist order or from which a danger to the security of the state may result," or for "slandering the state."

Under the 1978 Penal Code, a system of release on bail for those accused of minor crimes was established. Previously bail was granted only to foreigners, who were required to post it in hard currency. First offenders were punished by disciplinary or administrative actions and court-ordered fines. Courts could order corrective labor under the supervision of a specific industrial or agricultural enterprise and mandate an automatic 15 to 20 percent reduction in the salary of an offender. For other misdemeanors, the courts could order an offender to be placed on probation under police (militia) supervision for up to five years. Minors between fourteen and twenty-one years of age were tried by a collective comprising the leaders of the school or enterprise where they studied or worked, UTC representatives, and a judge or other representative of the local procuratura. As a rule, convicted juveniles served a term of supervised labor in correctional homes called "special training institutes." Only minors with a prior record of offenses could be sentenced to a prison term, and they were supposed to be segregated from older inmates. The 1978 Penal Code reduced the number of offenses punishable by death from twenty-eight under the 1968 penal code to just a few serious crimes including first-degree murder, air piracy, treason, and espionage. It imposed a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison for all offenses. Misdemeanors were expunged from the 1978 Penal Code and formed into a separate Code on Minor Violations of the Law, leaving only felony offenses in the Penal Code.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Council of State announced an amnesty program approximately every other year. Generally, prisoners serving less than three years or with less than three years remaining on longer sentences were freed, and the sentences of prisoners serving more than three years were reduced. The government reportedly released 90 percent of those in prison or awaiting trial through an amnesty announced in January 1988. Amnesties may have been intended to alleviate chronic labor shortages or to clear prisons crowded by strict law enforcement.

## **Crime**

The PCR asserted that the socioeconomic change wrought under communist rule reduced crime committed against individuals

and property. According to the PCR, the socialist system eliminated the root cause of lawlessness—economic inequality—and therefore crime was disappearing. Articles in the Romanian press, however, indicated that crime remained a significant, if not growing, problem in 1989. The phenomenon of economic crime was the by-product of Romania's inefficient, overly centralized economy. Unrealistic prices and exchange rates led to widespread corruption, shortages, a black market, speculation, and hoarding. Although the 1978 Penal Code abolished the use of capital punishment against those convicted of economic crimes such as embezzlement or fraud, it stipulated heavy fines and criminal penalties, including a two-year prison term, for failure to conserve resources in socialist industrial and agricultural enterprises. In 1987 courts sentenced 300 citizens for economic crimes or the "illegal acquisition of wealth" and confiscated goods worth 47,000,000 lei (for value of the leu—see Glossary). There were indications that apprehension of economic "criminals" was difficult and that a prosecutorial backlog of such cases existed in 1989.

After the 1988 amnesty, the minister of justice reported that there were 7,500 citizens in prison. There had been 75,000 citizens in jail prior to the amnesty. Although Romania released few statistics on crime, press reports indicated that juvenile crime was a particular problem. In 1981 the UTC revealed that 25,000 youths under the age of twenty-one had been convicted of various offenses.

## **Security and Intelligence Services**

The Ministry of Interior's Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului, popularly known as the Securitate, see Glossary) was the PCR's secret political police. The Department of External Information (Departamentul de Informații Externe—DIE) was the principal foreign intelligence service. These organizations were shrouded in secrecy, but an increasing number of defections from their ranks shed some light on their composition and activities. The Securitate and the DIE were responsible for guarding the internal and external security of the Ceaușescu regime and suppressing any unrest, disturbance, or dissident group that criticized or challenged it. They succeeded in repressing most organized opposition to the regime. Yet spontaneous outbursts of discontent with Ceaușescu's "cult of personality," economic austerity policy, treatment of ethnic minorities, antireligious campaign, and lack of respect for internationally recognized civil and human rights occurred with increasing frequency after the mid-1970s.

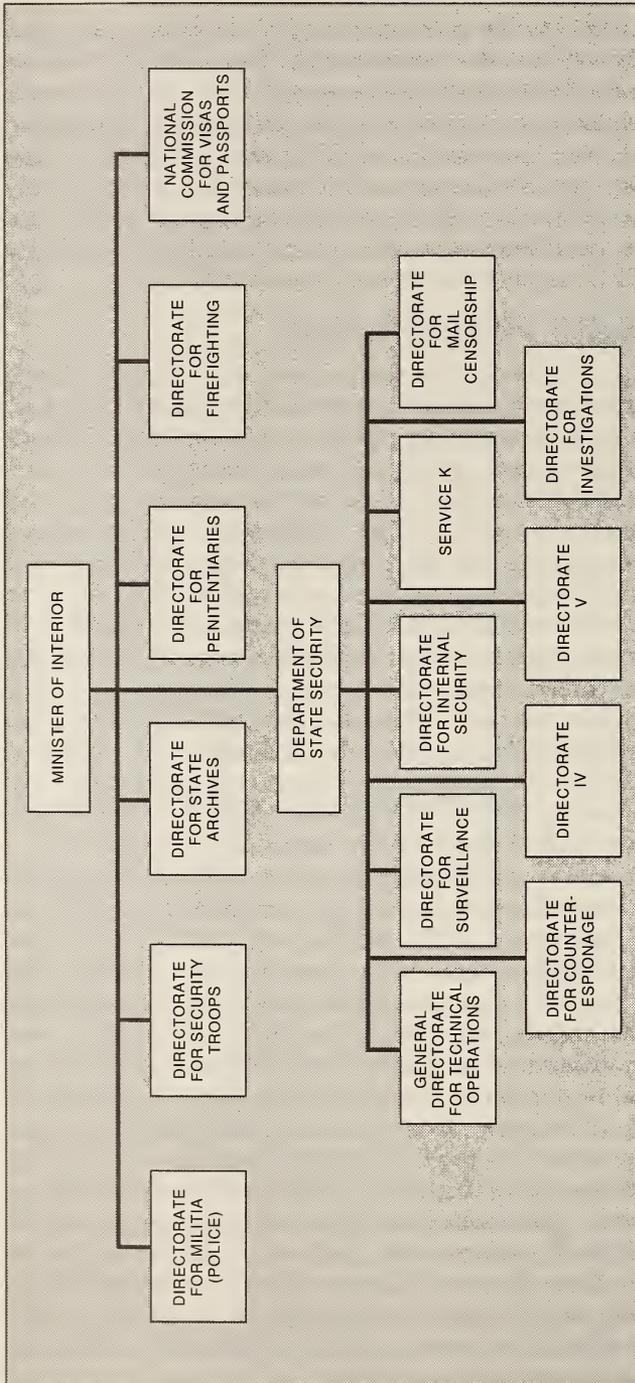
Given the deteriorating economic situation and the growth of social unrest in the 1980s, the loyalty of the security and intelligence

services was critical to the political future of the Ceaușescu clan. Observers believed that the services could play a decisive role in the outcome of a future leadership struggle between Ceaușescu, his heirs, and other contenders for power. Despite their treatment as a privileged caste, Securitate and DIE personnel showed signs of dissatisfaction with the regime and the situation in the country during the late 1980s. Poor living conditions were so widespread that even these individuals were affected, creating the potential for sympathy with a largely discontented population.

### Ministry of Interior and Security Forces

The Ministry of Interior was the primary government organization responsible for maintaining order in Romania (see fig. 12). It was one of only three ministries represented in the Defense Council, the highest governmental forum for considering national security issues. It controlled the Securitate, special security troops, and police throughout the country. The ministry's functions ranged widely from identifying and neutralizing foreign espionage and domestic political threats to the Ceaușescu regime to supervising routine police work and local fire departments. The Ministry of Interior was organized into a number of directorates at the national level, and it controlled similar activities at the *județ* and municipal levels. There was a ministry inspectorate general in each *județ* as well as in Bucharest. The inspectorates general in the *județe* had subordinate offices in fifty major cities. They were accountable only to the first secretaries of the *județ* PCR committees and local people's councils as well as the ministry chain of command.

In prewar Romania, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (the precursor of the Ministry of Interior) closely supervised the activities of local governments and courts. The PCR gained control of the ministry in 1946 and filled its ranks with party activists, enabling the party to seize power the next year and consolidate communist rule during the following decade. One of the PCR's first actions was to increase the strength of the police from 2,000 to 20,000 officers who were loyal to the party. Little is known about the activities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs after the late 1940s except that it was tightly controlled by the PCR general secretary and directly served his interests. In 1972 a deputy minister of internal affairs, General Ion Serb, was arrested and executed for spying on behalf of the Soviet Union. Serb was allegedly recruited by the Soviet Committee for State Security (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti—KGB) early in his career during his training in Moscow. The Serb affair led to a purge within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was renamed the Ministry of Interior, and helped



Source: Based on information from Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Red Horizons: Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief*, Washington, 1987; and United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Directory of Romanian Officials*, Washington, 1985.

Figure 12. Organization of the Ministry of Interior, 1980s

Ceaușescu establish control over an important lever of power. In a bizarre 1982 affair, Ceaușescu again purged the ministry, dismissing scores of officials who allegedly practiced transcendental meditation. Among those who lost their positions was a deputy minister of the interior, Major General Vasile Moise.

In 1989 the directorates of the Securitate were the largest component of the Ministry of Interior. They also comprised Eastern Europe's largest secret police establishment in proportion to total population. The Directorate for Investigations had agents and informants placed in virtually every echelon of the party and government, as well as among the public, to report on the antiregime activities and opinions of ordinary citizens. It perpetrated illegal entries into public offices and private homes and interrogated and arrested people opposed to Ceaușescu's rule. Its agents frequently used force to make dissidents provide information on their compatriots and their activities. According to some prominent dissidents, because of the directorate's influence over judges and prosecutors, no dissident arrested by it had ever been acquitted in court. It worked closely with the Directorate for Surveillance and the Directorate for Mail Censorship. The latter monitored the correspondence of dissidents and ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania. Toward this end, it collected handwriting samples from the population and supervised the official registration of all typewriters and copying machines by the police.

The General Directorate for Technical Operations (*Direcția Generală de Tehnică Operativă—DGTO*) was an integral part of the Securitate's activities. Established with the assistance of the KGB in the mid-1950s, the DGTO monitored all voice and electronic communications in the country. The DGTO intercepted all telephone, telegraph, and telex communications coming into and going out of the country. It secretly implanted microphones in public buildings and private residences to record ordinary conversations among citizens.

The Directorate for Counterespionage conducted surveillance against foreigners—Soviet nationals in particular—to monitor or impede their contacts with Romanians. It enforced a variety of restrictions preventing foreigners from residing with ordinary citizens, keeping them from gaining access to foreign embassy compounds and requesting asylum, and requiring them to report any contact with foreigners to the Securitate within twenty-four hours. Directorate IV was responsible for similar counterespionage functions within the armed forces, and its primary mission was identifying and neutralizing Soviet penetrations.

Directorate V and the Directorate for Internal Security focused mainly on party and government leadership cadres. Directorate V provided protective services and physical security for Romanian officials. With more than 1,000 agents, the Directorate for Internal Security concentrated on rooting out disloyalty to Ceaușescu within the PCR hierarchy, the Council of Ministers, and the Securitate itself. It was a small-version Securitate in itself, with independent surveillance, mail censorship, and telephone-monitoring capabilities. An additional source of information on attitudes toward the regime within the Securitate was one of Ceaușescu's relatives, who was a lieutenant general in the Ministry of Interior.

The Directorate for Penitentiaries operated Romania's prison system. In 1989 the prisons had a notorious reputation for mistreating inmates. Major prisons were located in Aiud in *Alba județ*, Jilava near Bucharest, Gherla in *Cluj județ*, Rahova, and Drobeta-Turnu Severin, and political prisoners were known to be confined in each of these institutions. Others may have been held in psychiatric hospitals. The Ministry of Interior's Service K exercised wide countersubversion authority in the prison system, beating dissidents, denying them medical attention, implanting microphones, censoring their mail to obtain incriminating evidence against them and their associates, and reportedly even administering lethal doses of toxic substances to political prisoners.

The Directorate for Militia and the Directorate for Security Troops controlled the routine police and paramilitary forces of the Ministry of Interior respectively. The police and security troops selected new recruits from the same annual pool of conscripts that the armed services used. The police performed routine law enforcement functions including traffic control and issuance of internal identification cards to citizens. Organized in the late 1940s to defend the new regime, in 1989 the security troops had 20,000 soldiers. They were an elite, specially trained paramilitary force organized like motorized rifle (infantry) units equipped with small arms, artillery, and armored personnel carriers, but their mission was considerably different.

The security troops were directly responsible through the Minister of the Interior to PCR General Secretary Ceaușescu. They guarded important installations including PCR *județ* and central office buildings and radio and television stations. The Ceaușescu regime presumably could call the security troops into action as a private army to defend itself against a military coup d'état or other domestic challenges and to suppress antiregime riots, demonstrations, or strikes. To ensure their loyalty, security troops were subject to intense political indoctrination and had five times as many political



*Old Braşov town hall, site of November 1987 riots  
Courtesy Scott Edelman*

officers in their ranks as in the armed services. They adhered to stricter discipline than in the regular military, but they were rewarded with a better standard of living.

The National Commission for Visas and Passports controlled travel abroad and emigration. In 1989 travel and emigration were privileges granted by the regime, not civil rights of citizens. As a rule, only trusted party or government officials could travel abroad and were required to report to the Securitate for debriefing upon their return. Prospective emigrants faced many bureaucratic obstacles and harassment at the hands of the Securitate.

Even the Securitate was unable to deter all Romanians from fleeing the country to escape its political repression and economic hardships. An estimated 40,000 Romanians entered Hungary as refugees during 1988 alone (see *Ethnic Structure*, ch. 2). Romanians who applied to emigrate legally were dismissed from their jobs and were unable to find work other than manual labor. They were questioned and had their residences searched and personal belongings seized or were called up for military duty or service in special labor brigades. There were no time deadlines for the government to make decisions on emigration applications and no right of appeal for negative decisions. Even with an exit visa, would-be emigrants confronted corrupt passport and customs officials demanding bribes amounting to US\$3,000 to process necessary paperwork. The government received payment from West Germany and Israel in return for allowing ethnic German and Jewish Romanians to leave the country. Emigrants in these categories represented the vast majority of the 14,000 allowed to emigrate annually during the 1980s.

## **Dissidence**

There were few signs of widespread organized opposition to the Ceaușescu regime in the late 1980s, but scattered and sporadic indications of social and political unrest were increasing. This opposition emanated from political and human rights activists, workers, religious believers, ethnic minority groups, and even former mid-level officials of the PCR. But the ubiquitous Securitate effectively suppressed dissidence because activists were few in number and isolated from one another and from their potential followers.

The Securitate had an effective overall strategy and varied tactics for suppressing dissidence. It relied primarily on extralegal reprisals against leading individual dissidents that ranged from petty harassment, threats, and intimidation to physical beatings at the hands of the plainclothes militia. Dissidents were often fired from their jobs and then prosecuted and imprisoned for "parasitism,"

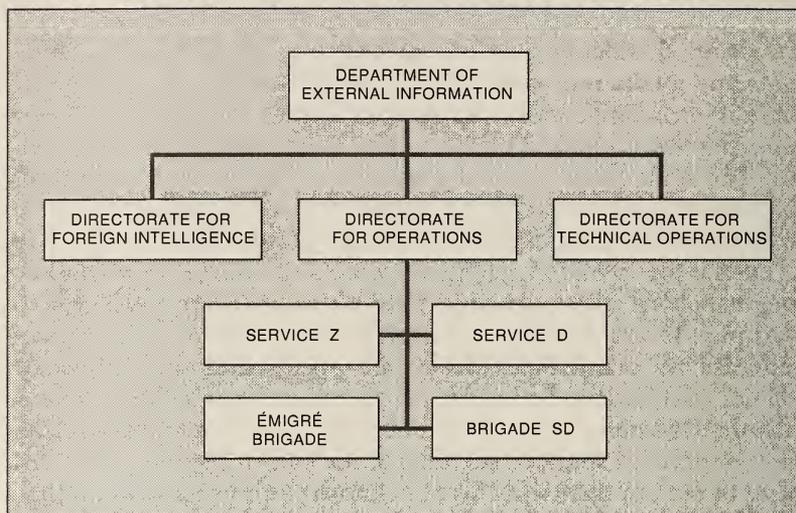
even though they were frequently denied all opportunities to work. To isolate dissidents from one another and from Western diplomats and media representatives inside Romania who could bring them international attention, the state denied them residence permits that were required by law before they could live in major cities. The state either avoided prosecuting dissidents in open trials that would generate publicity for their causes or prosecuted them in secret trials before military courts (see *Judicial System*, this ch.).

Even if they avoided detention, some well-known dissidents had their telephone and mail service interrupted and were jailed without warning. Several lived under virtual house arrest and constant surveillance by plainclothes Securitate agents and the uniformed militia, who cordoned off their apartments and intimidated potential visitors. Dissidents were often vilified publicly in the media as traitors, imperialist spies, or servants of the ancien régime. When the cases of certain dissidents became known to international human rights organizations and the state was unable to act freely against them, the Securitate pressured these dissidents to emigrate by making their lives unbearable and granting them exit visas to leave the country. Once the dissidents were removed from the domestic political scene, the DIE acted against those who continued their criticism of the Ceaușescu regime while in exile (see *Department of External Information*, this ch.).

Romania's industrial workers became an important source of unrest and a potential threat to the Ceaușescu regime and future PCR rule in the 1970s. During the 1980s, the labor force's restiveness continued, primarily in reaction to the virtual collapse of the national economy and the deteriorating standard of living (see *The Economy*, ch. 3). The regime's economic austerity policy and attendant food, fuel, and power shortages hurt the working class in particular. But Ceaușescu weathered spontaneous, short-lived labor protests with the support of the security forces and police, who prevented the development of a sustained, independent workers' movement in Romania that would be comparable to Poland's Solidarity. Although they never failed to subdue protestors, the Securitate and police appeared to be strained under the burden of monitoring restive workers throughout Romania in the late 1980s.

### **Department of External Information**

The Department of External Information (DIE) was Romania's primary foreign intelligence organization (see fig. 13). It worked closely with the Ministry of Interior, the Securitate, and the general staff's Directorate for Military Intelligence (*Direcția de Informații*



Source: Based on information from Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Red Horizons: Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief*, Washington, 1987.

Figure 13. Organization of the Romanian Intelligence Service, 1980s

a Armatei—DIA). The defection of the DIE deputy director, Lieutenant General Ion Pacepa, in 1978 revealed considerable information on its activities abroad for the first time, precipitated a major purge of personnel from the DIE, and contributed to the cooling of relations between Romania and the United States in the 1980s.

The DIE was formed with Soviet assistance in the mid-1950s. Until the early 1960s, Romania sent its intelligence officers to attend a two-year KGB training course in espionage tradecraft near Moscow. In 1964 Romanian leader Gheorghiu-Dej curtailed DIE cooperation with the KGB and established a DIE training center in Broșteni, in Suceava județ.

The Directorate for Operations conducted clandestine intelligence collection and other activities outside Romania. Its officers operated under cover throughout the world, collecting political, economic, and technical intelligence for analysis by the Directorate for Foreign Intelligence. Brigade SD had 300 intelligence officers who were assigned primarily to Western countries to conduct technological espionage. It focused on acquiring military-related technology for use in the domestic arms industry and armed forces. According to Pacepa, however, Romania also transferred illegally obtained Western industrial, electronics, nuclear energy, and

data-processing technology to the Soviet Union, under a secret bilateral agreement, in exchange for hard currency.

Within the Directorate for Operations, the Emigré Brigade had intelligence officers who contacted and worked among the 600,000 Romanian émigrés living in the United States, France, and West Germany. Playing on Romanian nationalism, they encouraged former Romanian citizens to cooperate with the DIE in obtaining Western high technology and engendering a favorable image of Romania abroad. The Emigré Brigade also monitored the activities of exiled dissidents who were vocal critics of the Ceaușescu regime and attempted to assassinate selected émigrés in retaliation for their opposition to Ceaușescu.

In 1982 a Romanian agent who was dispatched to kill dissident writers Paul Goma and Virgil Tanase in Paris defected to French authorities before undertaking his mission. This episode severely strained previously close French-Romanian relations. The DIE's primary target abroad, however, was the Munich-based staff of Radio Free Europe's (RFE) Romanian service, many of whom were Romanian émigrés. For many years, RFE's Romanian service had monitored internal developments in Romania and exposed the repressive nature of the Ceaușescu regime. The beating and stabbing of several RFE staff members by unidentified assailants, several death threats, and the deaths from cancer of three successive directors of the Romanian service were attributed by some observers to DIE operations.

Also within the Directorate for Operations, Service D conducted covert operations, including the dissemination of forgeries and disinformation, to promote Romanian national interests and foreign policies. According to Pacepa, Service D's forgeries and disinformation were designed to influence Western countries to reward Romania for its independence of the Soviet Union with economic assistance and trading privileges and to generate political support among Third World countries. Service Z of the Directorate for Operations reportedly maintained ties to non-state entities including guerrilla movements, terrorist groups, and international organized crime.

The Directorate for Technical Equipment was responsible for designing or obtaining specialized espionage equipment required by the DIE. It was reportedly involved in equipping some Romanian trucks to conduct espionage operations in Western Europe. The DIE's National Center for Enciphered Communications had the mission of protecting Romanian government and party communications from Western and Soviet electronic monitoring. In 1989 the ministries of national defense, interior, foreign affairs, and foreign trade relied on

the center's encryption systems in their daily operations at home and abroad.

\* \* \*

The best sources of information on Romanian military history, doctrine, and strategy are Ilie Ceaușescu's *Romanian Military Doctrine* and Ion Coman's *The Romanian National Defense Concept*. They cover the development of the Romanian military establishment from the earliest times until World War II. Romanian writers, however, ignore Soviet-Romanian fighting between 1941 and 1944, as well as Soviet domination of Romania until the late 1950s. John Erickson's two-volume set, *Stalin's War with Germany*, fills this gap. Alex Alexiev's *Romania and the Warsaw Pact* and Aurel Braun's *Romanian Foreign Policy since 1965* provide the best descriptions and analyses of postwar developments in Romania's defense policy and armed forces.

Information on more current developments in the Romanian military establishment can be found in several sources. Radio Free Europe analysts have written extensively on Romanian arms sales, military budget, major command changes, and the professional military establishment's relations with the PCR and General Secretary Ceaușescu.

There are few sources of information on Romania's system of law and order. *Radio Free Europe Research* [Munich] produces highly reliable articles on dissidence in Romania. Lieutenant General Ion Pacepa's *Red Horizons* is a highly interpretive firsthand account of the structure and domestic and foreign activities of Romania's security and intelligence services. He was deputy director of the DIE and a personal adviser to Ceaușescu before defecting in 1978. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

## Appendix

### Table

- 1 Metric Conversion Coefficients and Factors
- 2 Structure of Investments by Economic Sector, Selected Years, 1951-80
- 3 Projected State Budget Revenues, 1989
- 4 Projected State Budget Expenditures, 1989
- 5 Structure of the Labor Force by Sector, 1950 and 1982
- 6 Trading Partners, 1960, 1970, and 1980
- 7 Foreign Trade by Commodity Group, 1950, 1975, and 1985
- 8 Planned Changes in the Energy Balance, 1980-90
- 9 Growth of the Electric Power Industry, Selected Years, 1950-90
- 10 Membership of the Romanian Communist Party, 1970 and 1988

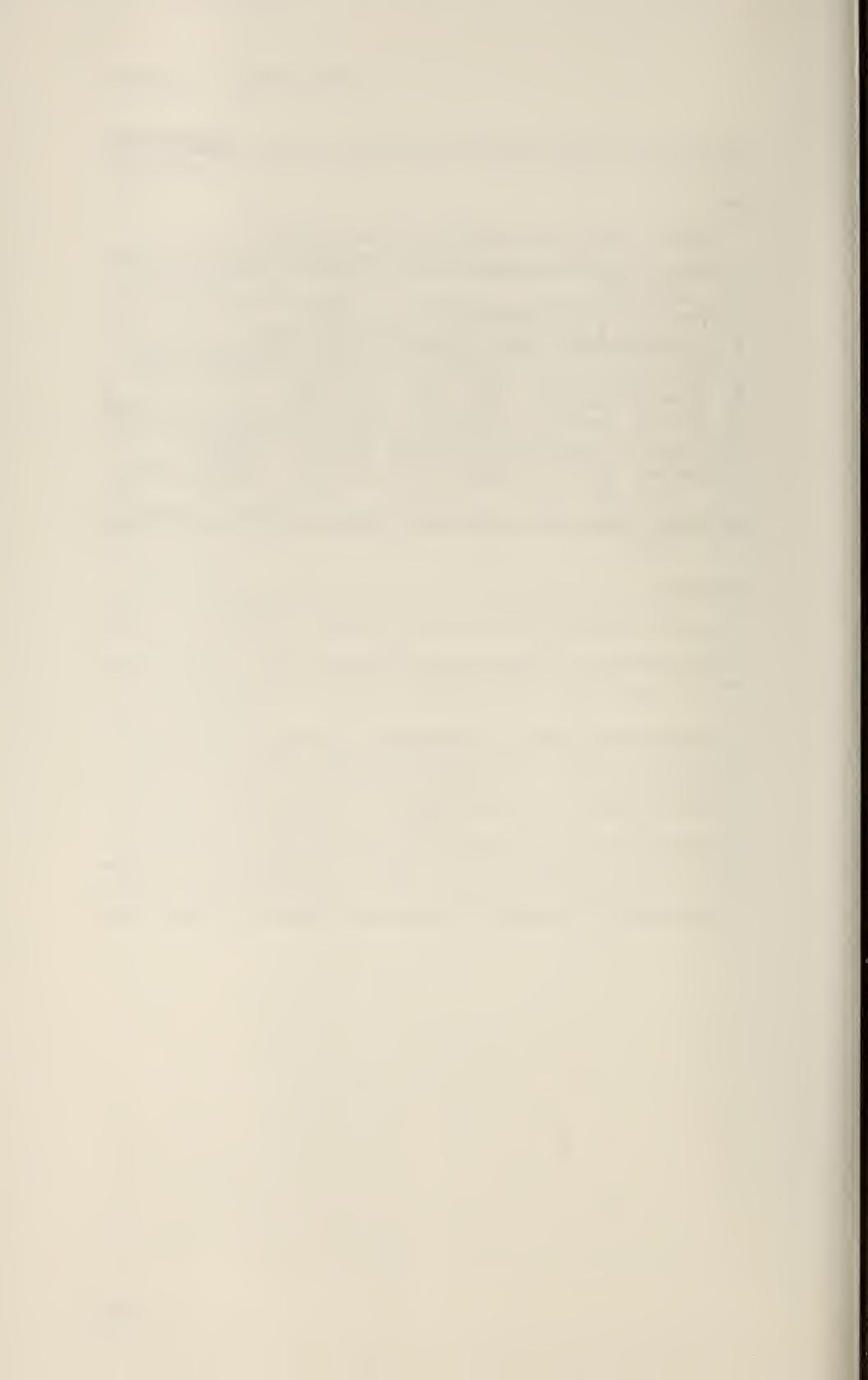


Table 1. Metric Conversion Coefficients and Factors

When you know	Multiply by	To find
Millimeters .....	0.04	inches
Centimeters .....	0.39	inches
Meters .....	3.3	feet
Kilometers .....	0.62	miles
Hectares (10,000 m <sup>2</sup> ) .....	2.47	acres
Square kilometers .....	0.39	square miles
Cubic meters .....	35.3	cubic feet
Liters .....	0.26	gallons
Kilograms .....	2.2	pounds
Metric tons .....	0.98	long tons
.....	1.1	short tons
.....	2,204	pounds
Degrees Celsius .....	9	degrees Fahrenheit
(Centigrade)	divide by 5 and add 32	

Table 2. Structure of Investments by Economic Sector,  
Selected Years, 1951-80  
(in percentages)

Sector	1951-55	1966-70	1976-80
Industry			
Group A (heavy industry) .....	46.7	42.3	42.1
Group B (light industry) .....	7.0	7.6	7.1
Total industry .....	53.7	49.9	49.2
Construction .....	3.6	3.8	5.9
Agriculture and forestry .....	11.3	16.0	13.7
Transportation and communications	10.3	10.2	10.6
Housing .....	10.1	9.4	10.2
Other .....	11.0	10.7	10.4
TOTAL .....	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Based on information from Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics, and Society*, Boulder, Colorado, 1985, 108.

Table 3. Projected State Budget Revenues, 1989  
(in millions of lei)\*

Source of Revenue	Amount
Self-financed state enterprises, cooperatives, and public units	
Profit payments .....	55,220.2
Turnover taxes .....	233,283.0
Taxes on incomes of public units and cooperatives .....	2,658.0
Total .....	291,161.2
Income taxes on the wage fund .....	50,924.0
State social insurance .....	47,275.0
Direct income taxes .....	5,727.4
Taxes on agricultural cooperatives .....	1,590.0
Unexplained sources of revenue .....	26,795.9
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>423,473.5</b>

\* For value of the leu—see Glossary.

Source: Based on information from "Legea planului național unic de dezvoltare economico-socială a Republicii Socialiste România pe anul 1989," *Știința* [Bucharest], December 2, 1988, 1-2.

Table 4. Projected State Budget Expenditures, 1989  
(in millions of lei)\*

Sector	Amount
Financing the national economy .....	183,373.4
Social and cultural needs .....	107,041.8
Defense .....	11,753.3
Administration, court system .....	4,000.7
Scientific research and development and application of new technologies .....	1,103.0
Expenditures not itemized .....	116,201.3
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>423,473.5</b>

\* For value of the leu—see Glossary.

Source: Based on information from "Legea planului național unic de dezvoltare economico-socială a Republicii Socialiste România pe anul 1989," *Știința* [Bucharest], December 2, 1988, 1-2.

Table 5. Structure of the Labor Force by Sector, 1950 and 1982  
(in percentages)

Sector	1950	1982
Industry . . . . .	12.0	36.5
Agriculture . . . . .	74.1	28.6
Construction . . . . .	2.2	7.7
Transportation . . . . .	1.9	6.2
Trade . . . . .	2.5	5.9
Municipal services, education, and arts . . . . .	2.3	4.1
Public health . . . . .	1.1	2.8
Science and scientific services . . . . .	0.2	1.1
Telecommunications . . . . .	0.3	0.8
Administration . . . . .	1.7	0.6
Forestry . . . . .	0.2	0.4
Other . . . . .	1.5	5.3
TOTAL . . . . .	100.0	100.0

Source: Based on information from *East European Economic Handbook*, London, 1985, 202.

Table 6. Trading Partners, 1960, 1970, and 1980  
(in percentages)

Type of Partner	1960	1970	1980
Comecon countries . . . . .	66.8	49.0	33.7
Other socialist countries . . . . .	6.2	6.8	6.8
Advanced capitalist countries . . . . .	22.1	35.6	32.8
Developing countries . . . . .	4.6	8.2	25.2
Other countries . . . . .	0.3	0.4	1.5
TOTAL . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Based on information from Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics, and Society*, Boulder, Colorado, 1985, 49.

Table 7. Foreign Trade by Commodity Group,  
1950, 1975, and 1985  
(in percentages)

Commodity Group	1950		1975		1985	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Fuels, minerals, and metals . . . .	33.8	23.5	22.7	30.4	24.9	51.0
Machinery and equipment . . . . .	4.2	38.3	22.8	40.3	34.7	26.7
Industrial consumer goods . . . . .	1.3	10.2	18.1	5.5	16.9	4.2
Chemical products . . . . .	1.7	4.5	7.0	6.7	9.8	6.4
Other nonfood raw materials . . . .	28.9	21.4	10.2	10.1	4.4	5.6
Foodstuffs . . . . .	14.1	0.3	12.1	3.0	6.3	2.3
Other . . . . .	16.0	1.8	7.1	4.0	3.0	3.8
TOTAL . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Based on information from Romania, *Anuarul Statistic al Republicii Socialiste România, 1986*, Bucharest, 1987, 294.

Table 8. Planned Changes in the Energy  
Balance, 1980 and 1990  
(in percentages)

Energy Source	1980	1990
Oil and gas . . . . .	40	5
Coal . . . . .	40	44
Hydroelectric . . . . .	18	24
Nuclear . . . . .	0	18
Other . . . . .	2	9
TOTAL . . . . .	100	100

Source: Based on information from Richard F. Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, Stanford, California, 1988, 206.

Table 9. Growth of the Electric Power Industry,  
Selected Years, 1950-90

Year	Installed Capacity (in megawatts)	Output (in gigawatt-hours)
1950 .....	740	2,113
1960 .....	1,779	7,650
1970 .....	11,578	53,721
1980 .....	16,109	67,034
1990 * .....	23,018	n.a.

n.a.—not available.

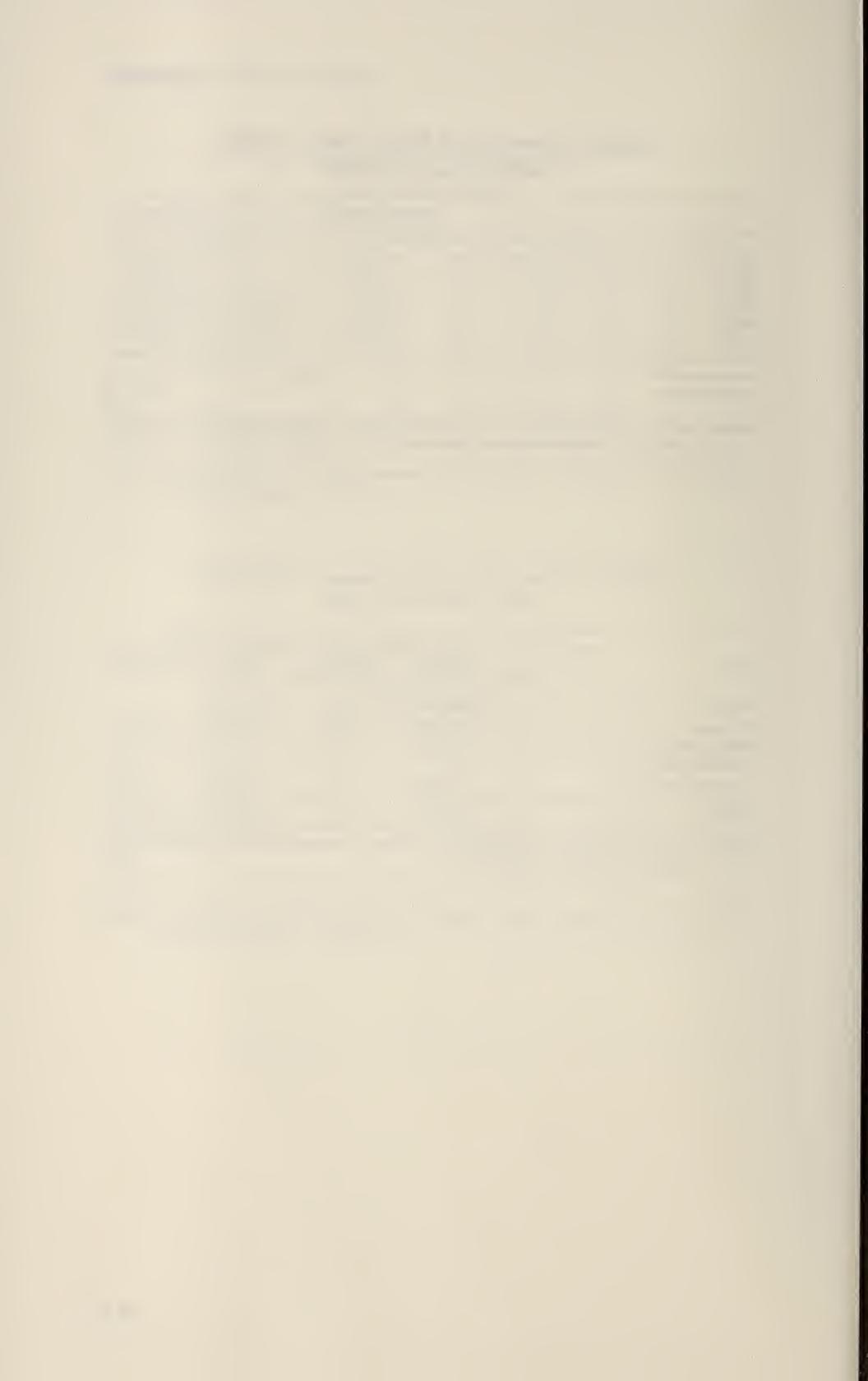
\* As projected.

Source: Based on information from "Elektroenergetika Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki Rumynii," *Elektricheskie stantsii* [Moscow], No. 11, 1986, 74-75.

Table 10. Membership of the Romanian Communist  
Party, 1970 and 1988

Group	1970		1988	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Workers .....	867,290	43.4	2,042,951	55.1
Peasants .....	531,447	26.6	575,751	15.5
Intelligentsia .....	481,083	24.0	757,157	20.4
Pensioners and housewives .....	119,900	6.0	333,876	9.0
TOTAL .....	1,999,720	100.0	3,709,735	100.0

Source: Based on information from Richard F. Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, Stanford, California, 1988, 196.



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## Chapter 5

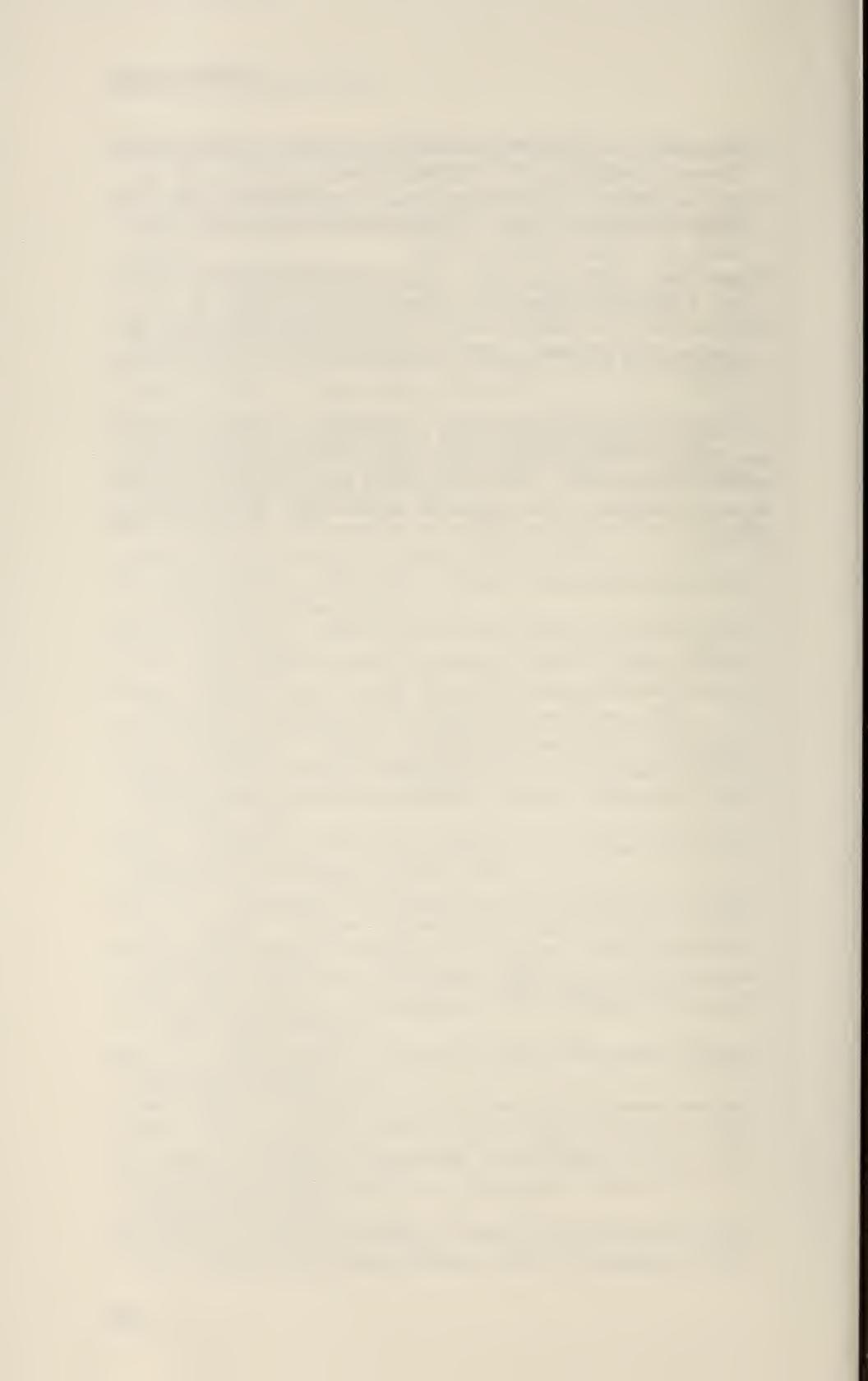
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## Glossary

Banat—Region bounded by the Tisza River on the west, the Mureş River on the north, the Transylvanian Alps on the east, and the Danube on the south. After World War I, it was divided between Yugoslavia and Romania.

Bessarabia—Region between the Dniester and Prut rivers north of the Black Sea. Seized by the Soviet Union in 1940, it was merged with Bukovina (*q.v.*) to form the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Bukovina (var., Bucovina)—Region in the foothills of the Eastern Carpathians at the headwaters of the Prut, Siret, and Dniester rivers. The region belonged to Romania between World War I and World War II, but was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

*central* (pl., *centrale*)—Large industrial associations created by economic reforms in the late 1960s ostensibly to assume some of the decision-making authority of the various economic ministries. They had little real autonomy.

Comecon—Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Founded in 1949; headquartered in Moscow. In 1989 members were Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Soviet Union, Vietnam. Purpose was to promote economic development of member states through cooperation and specialization.

Dobruja (var., Dobrudja and Dobrogea)—Black Sea coastal lands lying south of the Danube in southeastern Romania and northeastern Bulgaria.

Extensive economic development—Expanding production by adding resources rather than by improving the efficiency with which these resources are exploited.

Fiscal Year (FY)—One-year financial accounting period; in Romania coincides with calendar year.

GATT—General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. An international organization established in 1948 and headquartered in Geneva that serves as a forum for international trade negotiations. GATT members pledge to further multilateral trade by reducing import tariffs, quotas, and preferential trade agreements and promise to extend to each other any favorable trading terms offered in subsequent agreements with third parties.

GNA—Grand National Assembly. Nominally the supreme organ of state power, it was essentially a rubber-stamp legislature of

- 369 deputies elected every five years. It met twice yearly and in special sessions as necessary.
- GNP—gross national product. The total value of goods and services produced in a nation during a specified period, usually one year.
- Greater Romania—Following World War I, Romania incorporated Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, the eastern Banat, and southern Dobruja. It subsequently lost much of this territory.
- IMF—International Monetary Fund. Established along with the World Bank (*q.v.*) in 1945, the IMF is a specialized agency affiliated with the United Nations that takes responsibility for stabilizing international exchange rates and payments. The main business of the IMF is the provision of loans to its members when they experience balance-of-payment difficulties. These loans often carry conditions that require substantial internal economic adjustments by the recipients.
- județ* (pl., *județe*)—Local administrative division corresponding to county or district. There are forty such units plus the municipality of Bucharest and the surrounding Ilfov Agricultural District.
- leu (pl., lei)—Standard unit of currency, divided into 100 bani. The official exchange rate in January 1989 stood at 14.5 lei per US\$1, but the actual rate varied according to type of transaction.
- Moldavia (var., Moldova and Moldau)—Former principality, east of Transylvania (*q.v.*) and north and east of Walachia (*q.v.*).
- multilaterally developed socialist state—The proclaimed goal for Romania's social and economic development to be achieved by the year 2000. The goal envisioned an industrially advanced socialist nation with an efficient and productive agriculture and a well-educated population enjoying a high standard of living.
- national income—The total value of a nation's material production, excluding depreciation, achieved in one year.
- New Economic and Financial Mechanism—Economic reforms introduced in March 1978, the first of numerous efforts to improve economic management and planning by increasing the decision-making powers of individual enterprises and *centrale* (*q.v.*). The reforms were implemented only half-heartedly.
- PCR—Partidul Comunist Român (Romanian Communist Party). The ruling and only legal political party. Founded in 1921, the Communist Party was declared illegal in 1924 and operated underground until 1944. The party came to power as a result of the Soviet occupation during the final year of World War II. In 1948 it merged with one wing of the Social Democratic

- Party to form the Romanian Workers' Party (Partidul Muncitoresc Român—PMR). In 1965 the party assumed its present name.
- Polexco—Political Executive Committee. The politburo of the PCR (*q.v.*), the party's primary policy-making body. In 1988 there were nineteen members, most of whom held other important party and government positions.
- Procuratura—Office of the prosecutor general, established in 1952, it operates the court system, decides jurisdictional questions, compiles crime statistics, and oversees the central criminology institute and forensic science laboratory.
- Securitate—Popular term for the Departmentul Securității Statului (Department of State Security), the secret police. On a per capita basis, Romania had the largest such service in Eastern Europe.
- socialism (adj., socialist)—In Marxist theory, a stage of historical development transitional between capitalism and communism. Romania claimed to have attained socialism by 1965.
- Sublime Porte (short form, the Porte)—Term used by Europeans to designate the Ottoman court or the government of Ottoman Turkey; derived from the gate (port) of the sultan's palace, at which justice was administered in ancient times.
- Transylvania (var., Transilvania)—Region of northwestern and central Romania of triangular shape, bounded on the north, east, and south by the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvanian Alps.
- UGSR—Uniunea Generală a Sindicatelor din România (General Union of Trade Unions). Official organization incorporating all labor unions of blue- and white-collar workers. Membership in 1985 was 7.3 million.
- UTC—Uniunea Tineretului Comunist (Union of Communist Youth). Official organization that functioned as the youth branch of the PCR (*q.v.*). Membership open to young people between ages fifteen and twenty-six. Membership in 1984 estimated at 3.7 million.
- voivode*—A Slavic term designating a military leader, adopted for a time by the rulers or princes of Wallachia and Moldavia.
- Wallachia (var., Wallachia)—Former principality between the Danube and Transylvanian Alps in southern Romania.
- Warsaw Treaty Organization—Formal name for Warsaw Pact. Military alliance of communist countries founded in 1955, with headquarters in Moscow. The Soviet minister of defense was traditionally the supreme commander of Warsaw Pact forces. Members were Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union.

World Bank—Informal name used to designate a group of three affiliated international institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IBRD, established in 1945, has the primary purpose of providing loans to developing countries for productive projects. The IDA, a legally separate loan fund administered by the staff of the IBRD, was set up in 1960 to furnish credits to the poorest developing countries on much easier terms than those of conventional IBRD loans. The IFC, founded in 1956, supplements the activities of the IBRD through loans and assistance designed specifically to encourage the growth of productive private enterprises in less developed countries. The president and certain senior officers of the IBRD hold the same positions in the IFC. The three institutions are owned by the governments of the countries that subscribe their capital. To participate in the World Bank group, member states must first belong to the IMF (*q.v.*).

# Index

- abortion policy, 71, 72-74, 109, 157-58  
academies, 120, 279  
acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), 129-30  
Adriatic Sea, 4  
Aegean Sea, 4  
Afghanistan, 59, 239, 292  
African nations, 247  
Agerpres. *See* Romanian Press Agency  
agrarian reform laws (1917-21) (*see also* land policy), 36  
agreements (*see also* treaties): for bilateral relations (1977) with Hungary, 241; with Germany for resource exploitation, 40; with Soviet Union, 48  
agricultural sector (*see also* irrigation): before and after World War II, 93; agricultural regions in, 180, 182; cooperative farms in, 184, 186, 187-88, 199; employment in, 75-76, 78, 136-37; farming practices in, 183-84; forced collectivization of, xxiii, 51, 54, 77, 87, 95, 138, 156, 159, 184; government intervention in, 95, 183-84, 186-89; impact of land reform on, 36-37; investment in, 136-37; irrigation in, 69, 136, 137; performance of, 137; private farms in, 183, 184, 186, 187-88, 199; productivity in, 186; self-sufficiency program in, 188-89; state farms in, 95, 140, 184, 187-88; systematization program in, xxviii, 78-80, 186-87, 199, 242; taxation of, 38; use of horses in, 184  
agro-industrial councils, 187  
AIDS. *See* acquired immune deficiency syndrome  
aircraft manufacture, 170-71, 286, 288-89  
air defense system, 273  
airfields, 179  
air force: air defense system of, 273; organization of, 271; responsibilities related to ground forces of, 271; size and equipment of, 270-71, 273  
airlines, 179-80  
airports, 179  
Alba-Iulia, 76  
alcoholism, 128  
Alexander I (tsar of Russia), 23, 253  
Alexander the Great, 6  
Alexandru Ioan Cuza Naval Secondary School, 278  
Algeria, 293  
Allied Control Commission, 43, 257  
aluminum industry, 174  
Andropov, Yuri, 239  
Angola, 293  
Anti-Comintern Pact (1940), 255  
anticommunism, 3  
anti-Semitism, xxv-xxvi, 36, 38-39, 41-42, 51-52, 124  
Antonescu, Ion, xxvi, 41-43, 45, 47, 257  
Antonescu, Mihai, 42, 47  
Apostol, Gheorghe, 222, 224-25, 230  
apparel industry, 176  
April Declaration (1964), xxvi, 55  
Apuseni Mountains, 66  
Arad, 88, 172, 176, 242  
Arafat, Yasir, 246-47  
Argeş River, 69, 167, 178  
armaments industry, 286-87, 293  
armed forces: government and PCR control of, 262; importance of ground forces for, 268-70; political indoctrination in, 277-78; potential threat to Ceauşescu of, 266; role of government related to, 262-63; size of, 262  
armistice (1944), 257  
arms control, 244, 261-62  
army ground forces: antitank and air defense regiments of, 269-70; artillery units and missile battalions of, 269; equipment of, 269; losses at Stalingrad (1941), 256; size of, 268-69  
Árpád Dynasty, 10  
Aslan, Ana, 128  
Atlantic Ocean, 64  
Aurelian (Roman emperor), 8  
Aurel Vlaicu Military Academy for Aviation Officers, 279  
Ausgleich (Dual Monarchy), 22, 29, 31  
austerity program, xxv, 58-59, 60, 63, 74, 139  
Australia, 170, 174  
Austria (*see also* Habsburg Dynasty):

## Romania: A Country Study

- relations with, 29, 34, 36, 290; sovereignty over Transylvania, 18-22
- Austrian Empire, 20
- Austro-Hungarian Empire (*see also* Habsburg Dynasty; Ausgleich), 29, 34, 253, 255
- automation-technology industry, 172-73
- automotive industry, 171-72
- Avars, 8
- Averescu, Alexandru, 36
- Axis Powers, xxvi, 41
- Bacău, 171, 269, 278
- balance of payments, 58, 165
- Balkan Entente (1934), 39
- Balkan Peninsula, 64
- Balkan War, First (1912), 31
- Balkan War, Second (1913), 31, 254
- the Banat, 35; agriculture in, 180; as region, 64-65
- banking system, 147-50
- Baptists, 124
- Basarab I (prince of Walachia), 11
- Basta, Giorgio, 16
- Báthory, Gabriel, 16
- Bayezid (sultan), 12
- Bega Canal, 177
- Béla IV (king of Hungary), 10
- Bessarabia, 23, 26, 28, 31, 34, 37; becomes part of Romania (1918), 255; loss to Soviet Union of (1940), 40, 65; return to Romania of, 41; as territory of Soviet Union (1947), 48
- Bethlen, Gábor, 16
- Bibescu, Gheorghe (prince of Walachia), 25
- Birladeanu, Alexandru, 230
- birthrates, 70, 72-75, 109, 136, 157-58
- black market, 127, 151, 278
- Black Sea (*see also* Danube-Black Sea Canal): as physical geographic boundary, 10, 28; in commerce and trade, 12, 13, 25; in early settlement of Romania, 4, 11, 76; navigation and fishing in, 178, 183; oil exploration in, 154, 168; role in national defense, 256, 275
- Black Sea Fleet, 273
- BND. *See* National Democratic Bloc
- Bocskay, Stephen, 16
- Bodnaraş, Emil, 258
- Bogdan, 10
- Border Guards, 275-76
- Bosnia, 30
- Brăila, 173, 179, 273
- Brandt, Willi, 244
- Braşov, 9, 66, 76, 101, 160, 170-71, 230, 278
- Braşoveneau, Theorghe, 161
- Brătianu, Ion, 27
- Brătianu, Ionel, 30, 31, 32, 35, 37-38
- Brezhnev, Leonid, 59, 238-39, 291-92
- Brezhnev Doctrine, 59, 238
- bridges, 177, 289
- Britain, 25, 26, 31, 32, 40, 43, 44, 47, 246, 290
- Bucharest Computer Enterprise, 173
- Bucharest-Danube Canal, 289
- Bucharest Declaration of 1966, 243
- Bucharest Electronics Enterprise, 180
- Bucharest Industrial Center for Electronics and Automation, 172
- Bucharest subway system, 177, 289
- budget, national (*see also* spending, government), 146-47
- Bukovina, 23, 65; becomes part of Romania (1918), 255; ceded to Soviet Union (1940), 40; as territory of Soviet Union (1947), 48; in World War II, 256
- Bulgar Empire, 8
- Bulgaria, 40; attacks Serbia, 32; border with, 64, 69; in First Balkan War, 31; reclaims Dobruja, 40; relations with, 240-41; in Second Balkan War, 31, 254
- Burebista, 6
- cadre rotation principle, xxii, 57, 141, 266
- Caesar, Julius, 6
- Călinescu, Armand, 40
- Calvinism (*see also* Reformed (Calvinist) Church), 14, 82, 124
- Camp David Accords, 246
- Cana, Ionel, 161
- canals, 51, 52, 58, 153, 177-79
- Carol I (*see also* Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), 254
- Carol (king of Romania), 38; actions in Iron Guard period of, 39; at beginning of World War II, 40-41
- Carpathian Basin (*see also* Transylvanian Plateau), 9

- Carpathian Mountains (*see also* Transylvanian Alps), 4, 64, 65, 66, 153, 154, 155, 182, 255, 256, 261
- Catherine the Great (tsarina of Russia), 23
- Ceașescu, Elena, 58, 141, 195, 231; cult of personality around, 227-28; power in government of, xxii; role in Council of Ministers of, 204; role in party-state organizations of, xxii, 207; role in Polecxo Permanent Bureau of, 214
- Ceașescu, Ilie, xxii, 208, 267
- Ceașescu, Nicolae: administration policies of, 3, 56-58; armed forces purges initiated by, 266-67; assimilation policy of, xxvii-xxviii; consolidates power, xxi, xxiii, 57, 222-26; control of armed forces by, xxiii, 262-66; control of government functions by, xxi-xxii; control of state budget by, 146; control over military leaders by, 251, 266; as creator of military doctrine, 258; cult of personality around, 3, 58, 59, 63, 104, 106, 227-28, 258; economic policies of, xxiii-xxiv, xxvii, xxviii-xxix, 57-58, 138-39; elected president of State Council, 202-3; encourages socialist democracy, 217; execution of, xxxi; foreign policy of, 196, 238-41; impact on Romania of, xxi; as leader of PCR, 195, 211-12; as president, 195, 203; protégé of Gheorghiu-Dej, 52-54, 56; relations with Soviet leaders of, 238-41; response to 1989 uprising, xxx; role in party-state organizations of, 207-8; role in Polecxo Permanent Bureau of, 214
- Ceașescu, Nicu, xxii, 221, 228
- Celts, 6, 89
- Center for Studies and Research in Military History and Theory, 265
- Central Council of Workers' Control over Economic and Social Activities, 141, 207-8
- centrale*, 142, 143
- Central Powers, 29, 31, 32, 34, 254
- Cernavodă, 28, 167, 177, 179, 289
- Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, 27-29, 31-32
- Charles Robert (king of Hungary), 11
- chemical agents, 269
- chemical industry (*see also* petrochemical industry), 155-56, 175-76
- Chernenko, Konstantin, 238, 239
- China, People's Republic (PRC): ideological conflict with Soviet Union of, xxvi, xxxvii, 55, 238; relations with, 53, 54-55, 57, 231, 238, 239, 287, 290, 291
- Chișinevschi, Iosif, 54
- Christianity (*see also* religion): adoption of, 8-9
- Churchill, Winston, 44
- Civic Alliance, xxxiv-xxxv
- climate, 70, 152, 180
- Cluj (-Napoca) 54, 76, 88, 90, 160, 173, 241, 242, 269, 302
- coal industry (*see also* Jiu Valley), 169-70
- coal reserves (*see also* lignite), 58, 136, 154-55, 166
- Code on Minor Violations of the Law, 297
- Codreanu, Corneilu Zelea (Capitanul), 38-39
- Coman, Ion, 266
- Comecon. *See* Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation
- Cominform: expels Yugoslavia, 52; founded 1947, 49
- Communist Party (*see also* Romanian Communist Party), 37, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 211
- Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), 49, 213, 237
- computer industries, 172-73
- concentration camps, 41-42
- Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). *See* Helsinki Accords (1975)
- Congress of Berlin (1878), 28, 254
- Congress of the Higher Councils of Socialist Agricultural Units and of the Whole Peasantry, 187
- Conservative Party, 31, 37
- conservatories, 120
- Constanța, 28, 70, 76, 168, 173, 174, 177, 179
- Constanța-Sud port facility, 179
- Constantinescu, Miron, 54
- Constantinople, 11, 12, 14, 22, 23, 31
- constitution (1923), 37
- constitution (1948), 3, 196-97
- constitution (1952): provisions of, 196, 197-98, 199, 204; revision in governmental organization under, 198
- Constitution (1965): amendments (1974), 195, 200, 202, 203; declares socialist

## Romania: A Country Study

- unitary state, 14, 86; provisions for electoral system in, 210-11; provisions for human rights and civil liberties of, 294; provisions for State Council under, 201-3; provisions of, 198; socialism addressed in, 199
- Constitution and Legal Affairs Commission, 200-201
- Control Data Corporation, 172-73
- cooperative farms. *See* agricultural sector
- copper industry, 174
- copper mining, 174
- corn production, 180, 182
- corruption, 12, 22, 27, 36, 37, 38, 41, 64
- Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation (Comecon), xxvi, 50, 54, 55; role in, xxviii-xxix, 87, 108, 140, 159, 162, 164, 168, 172, 174, 190, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240
- Council for Social and Economic Organizations, 141
- Council for Socialist Culture and Education, 231, 234-35
- Council of Forestry, 154
- Council of Ministers: authority over economic policy of, 142; membership in, 195, 204, 216; reorganization of, 205; role in government organization of, 199-200, 203-5
- Council of Romanian Radio and Television, 231, 233
- Council of State (*see also* State Council), 263, 295, 297
- Council of Working People of German Nationality, 86, 220
- Council of Working People of Hungarian Nationality, 86, 220
- councils: agro-industrial, 187; economic coordinating, 140-41; joint party-state, xxi-xxii, 207; judicial, 295; local defense councils, 263; people's, 50, 187, 197; workers', 86-87, 100-101
- coup d'état: in 1944, 257; attempted (1983), xxii, 267
- court system: *județe* courts in, 206; judicial reform (1978), 294; lower courts in, 206; military courts in, 206; under Ministry of Justice, 205, 294; role of GNA in, 200; Supreme Court in, 202, 203, 205-6
- CPSU. *See* Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Craiova, 166, 171, 176, 254, 289
- crime, 129, 297-98
- Crimean War (1853-56), 4, 25-26
- Croats, 80
- Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), 55
- culture (*see also* agricultural sector; minority groups): Greek, 4; Hellenic, 6; Hungarian, 10; Roman, 3; Romanian, 19, 20, 22, 55; Western, 51; under Ceausescu regime, 104, 106, 231-35, 236
- currency (*see also* banking system), 145, 150-51, 162, 165
- currency reform (1947), 94
- Curtea de Argeș, 177
- Cuza, Alexandru Ioan, 26; development of military capability by, 253-54; reform program of, 26-27
- Cyril (saint), 8
- Czechoslovakia: annexation by Germany of Sudetenland, 40; Civic Forum in, xxix; liberation by Red Army of, 44; in Little Entente and Balkan Entente, 39, 255; relations with, 56, 240-41; Warsaw Pact nations invade (1968), 56, 291, 238, 258
- Dacia, 3, 7-8, 137, 252
- Dacian people, 3-8, 252
- Danube-Black Sea Canal, xxiv, 51, 52, 58, 153, 177-79, 289
- Danube Delta, 65, 69, 182, 183
- Danube River, 4, 66, 69, 64
- Darius the Great, 5-6
- debt, external, xxiv-xxv, xxvii, 58-59, 74, 139, 165
- Decebalus, 6-7
- Defense Council, 203, 207, 216; powers related to armed forces of, 262-64; structure throughout government of, 263
- defense policy (*see also* military doctrine), 289-90
- de Gaulle, Charles, xxvii, 238, 245
- democratic centralism principle, 139, 143, 213
- Democratic Federative Moldavian Republic, 34
- Democratic Forum (Hungary), 242
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea. *See* Korea, North
- Democratic Republic of Germany. *See* Germany, East

- demographic trends: historical, 70-72; policy to change, 72-75, 157-58
- Department for Contracting, Acquiring, and Storing Farm Produce, 188
- Department of Cults, 120, 121
- Department of External Information (Departamentul de Informații Externe: DIE), 298-99, 305-8
- Department of State Security (Departamentul Securității Statului: Securitate). *See* Securitate
- DGTO. *See* Securitate
- DIA. *See* Directorate for Military Intelligence
- DIE. *See* Department of External Information
- Dinca, Ion, 266
- Directorate for Military Intelligence (Direcția de Informații a Armatei: DIA), 264
- Directorate for Military Publishing, 264
- disease, 128
- disinformation, 231, 307
- divorce: causes of, 110; procedure for and rate of, 109; rules for, 72
- Dobruja, 28, 31, 34; agriculture in, 180, 182; becomes part of Romania (1918), 255; as Bulgarian territory (1947), 48; reclaimed by Bulgaria (1940), 40; as region, 64
- Dobrujan Tableland, 66
- Dózsa, György, 13
- Drăghici, Alexandru, 56, 222, 224
- Dragoș, 10
- Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 76, 88, 172, 173, 179, 287, 302
- Dromichaites, Basileus, 6
- drought, xxiv, 48, 58, 94, 152, 180, 183
- Dual Monarchy (Ausgleich), 22, 29, 31
- Dubček, Alexander, 56, 291
- Duca, Ion, 39
- dynastic socialism, xxii, 58
- earthquake, xxiv, 58, 139
- Eastern Orthodox Church (*see also* Romanian Orthodox Church), 9-10, 11, 14, 83; capitulation to, 19; pressure to accept Uniate Church tenets, 18
- Economic and Social Organization Council, 207
- economic coordinating councils, 140-41
- economic development, 137-38; multilateral development policy of, xxi, 135, 138-39, 165; by Nazi Germany, 40; under King Charles, 28
- economic performance (*see also* labor force; industrial sector): effect of Allied bombardment on, 42, 48; in 1980s, 63, 135-36; impact of energy crisis on, 166; in interwar period (1919-39), 38; post-Ceaușescu, xxxv-xxxvi; in 1950s to 1970s, xxiv-xxv, 57, 138-39
- economic planning: administrative hierarchy for, 142-44; annual and five-year, 138, 139, 143, 148, 157, 159, 168, 171, 173, 176, 179, 190; state planning commission for, 50-51, 141
- economic policy (*see also* economic development): post-Ceaușescu, xxxv-xxxvi; to reduce external debt, 58-59; reform for (1969), 57, 143, 145
- education: availability of, 63; historical lack of, 11; rise in levels of, 71, 102, 105-6; technical and vocational, 90, 116-18
- education, military (Soviet Union) (*see also* training, military), 258
- educational system: administration of, 114-15; compulsory segments of, 117; ideological and political training in, 115-16; importance of, 116; limits to higher education, 120; military secondary schools in, 278; preschool and kindergarten, 117
- Egypt, 246, 293
- election law (1917), 32
- elections: free (1919), 35; post-Ceaușescu, xxxii; rigged (1922-28), 37
- electoral system, 210-11
- electric power generation (*see also* hydroelectric power industry), 58, 69, 136, 153, 166-67
- electric engineering, 173
- elite class (*see also* intelligentsia class): power of, 63-64; remnants of old, 93-94; in post-World War II era, 105-7, 118
- emigration: of Germans, xxvii, xxxiii, 92, 243-44; of Gypsies, xxxiii; of Hungarians, xxviii, xxxiii, 93, 242; of Jews, 52, 92-93; opposition to minority, 91-93; policy for, xxvii, 158; of skilled labor, 136, 157; from Transylvania (13th century), 10
- energy conservation. *See* rationing
- energy resources. *See* coal reserves; electric power generation; natural gas

## Romania: A Country Study

- industry and reserves; natural gas resources; oil industry; oil reserves energy sources, alternative, 168  
Engels, Friedrich, 108  
environmental degradation, 127, 136, 153  
Ethiopia, 293  
ethnic groups (*see also* nationality groups), 65; assimilation policy for, xxvii-xxviii; Croats, 80; distribution in population of, 81-85; diversity in, 80; Germans, 65, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85; Gypsies, 80-81; Hungarians, 65, 80; Jews, 80, 81; Magyars, 82; Serbs, 65, 80; Szeklers, 82; Ukrainians, 80  
European Community (EC), xxxiii-xxiv  
European Economic Community (EEC), 164  
executions, 13, 16, 20, 47, 54, 57, 267, 277, 299  
exports: agricultural products in, xxv, xxxi, 59, 135, 137-39, 164, 188, 190; armaments in, 164, 273, 283, 290, 293; automotive products in, 171; electronic equipment in, 164, 172, 180; for hard currency, 135, 139, 145, 162, 283, 293; forestry products in, 137, 153; furniture in, 176; machine tools in, 136, 164; metallurgical products in, 136, 164; oil-field equipment in, 136, 164, 170; petroleum products in, 168-69; railroad rolling stock and locomotives in, 136, 164, 170, 172; ships in, 164; textiles in, 176  
family law: provisions for increasing family size, 110; Romanian Family Code of, 109  
family structure, 110  
famine and starvation, 23, 42, 48, 71, 94, 123  
fascism (*see also* Nazi Germany), xxv-xxvi, 38-39  
Federal Republic of Germany. *See* Germany, West  
Ferdinand (king of Romania), 32, 34, 35  
Ferdinand V (emperor of Austria), 21  
fertility rates (*see also* birthrates), 71  
fertilizer industry, 176  
Filderman, Wilhelm, 42  
film production, 235  
fishing industry, 69, 183  
FND. *See* National Democratic Front  
food consumption, 189-90  
food-processing industry, 176  
foreign policy: of Ceaușescu regime, xxiii, xxvi-xxix, 196, 235, 238-48; under Gheorghiu-Dej, xxvi, 3, 237-38; GNA responsibility for, 235; Polecso Permanent Bureau framing of, 235; role of Council of Ministers for, 235  
foreign trade  
forestry, 137, 153-54  
forests, 66, 153-54  
France: business dealings with, 149, 171, 271, 289; influence on military sector of, 253; relations with, 25, 26, 32, 39, 40, 47, 49, 245-46, 254, 255, 290, 307  
Francis I (emperor of Austria), 20  
Franco-Prussian War (1870), 27  
Franz Ferdinand (archduke of Austria), 31  
Franz Joseph (emperor of Austria), 21-22  
Frunze Military Academy, 279  
Fulbright program, 104  
furniture industry, 176  
Galați, 167, 170, 173, 174, 179, 273  
GATT. *See* General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade  
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), xxvi, 58, 163, 196  
General Directorate for Agriculture and Food Industry, 187  
General Military Academy, 279  
General Union of Trade Unions of Romania (Uniunea Generală a Sindicatelor din România: UGSR), 161, 220, 221-22, 223, 232  
Geneva Refugee Convention, 243  
Genscher, Hans-Dietrich, 243  
geographic location, xxv, 3, 64-65, 70, 252, 292  
Georgescu, Teohari, 46, 47, 52, 53  
Gepids, 8  
German language, 20, 21, 22, 90, 91, 232, 234  
German people (*see also* Saxon people; Swabian people), 11-12, 22; adopt Lutheranism, 14; emigration of, xxvii, xxxiii, 92, 243-44; in Transylvania, 82-85  
German-Soviet armistice, 34  
Germany (*see also* Nazi Germany): attacks Serbia, 32; Romania as ally of, 4  
Germany, East, 240-41

- Germany, West: recognition of (1967), 56, 238; relations with, xxvi, 243-44
- Getae people (*see also* Thracio-Getian people), 4-7, 252
- Getic Tableland, 66
- Gheorghiu-Dej, Gheorghe: administration of, 3, 52-56, 222, 237; communist party leader, xxiii, 3, 45, 47, 49-50, 52, 196; criticism of regime of, 224; economic policies of, xxvi, 3, 55, 163, 237-38; foreign policy of, xxvi, 3; imprisonment of, 39
- glasnost*, 240
- GNA. *See* Grand National Assembly
- Goma, Paul, 104, 161
- Gorbachev, Mikhail, xxix, 107, 238, 240
- Goths, 8
- government administration: *județe* or county system in, 143, 199, 208, 263, 295, 299; PCR role at local levels, 216-17; people's councils in local, 50, 187, 197, 208-10; territorial reorganization of (1968), 199, 208
- government intervention: in agricultural sector, 183, 184, 186-89; in church activities, 51; control of media, 231-35; in economic and social structure, 63; expropriation, 94; in migration patterns, 77-78
- Grand National Assembly (GNA), 141; responsibility for foreign policy of, 235; responsibility related to armed forces of, 263; role and power in government of, 141, 143, 145, 146, 165, 190, 199-201, 204, 294-95; standing commissions of, 200-201; supervision of people's councils by, 209
- Greater Romania, 4, 36, 37
- Greece, 31; in Balkan Entente, 39; nationalist occupation of Walachia by, 23; trading colonies of, 4-5, 6
- Grosz, Karoly, 242
- Groza, Petru: administration of, 46-48; ties to Communist Party of, 49, 52
- guerrilla detachments (*see also* Patriotic Guards), 268
- Habsburg Dynasty (*see also* Austria), 4, 14, 18, 253
- Hamsa Pasha, 13
- health care system: abortions in, 71, 72; accessibility of, 126-28; funding for, 126; improvement during Russian Protectorate of, 24; prohibition of abortions in, 72
- Helsinki Accords (1975), xxviii, 104, 230, 247-48, 262
- Herodotus, 5
- Higher Political Council of the Army, xxii, 265-66
- highway network (*see also* road system), 177
- Hitler, Adolph, xxvi, 39, 40, 255-56, 257
- Honecker, Erich, 241
- housing, 71, 78, 79, 80, 99, 120, 126
- human rights, xxvii, xxviii, 59, 104, 164, 195, 196, 230, 242, 244, 245, 294, 296
- Hungarian Autonomous Region (*see also* Mureș Autonomous Hungarian Region), 85-86, 197, 199
- Hungarian people. *See* emigration; Hungarians in Romania; nationality groups
- Hungarian Revolution (1956), xxvi, 53, 230, 237
- Hungarians in Romania: attempts to assimilate, xxviii, 80, 90-91, 93; discrimination against, 56, 59; mistreatment of, 240-43
- Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919), 35
- Hungary: abolishes serfdom (1848), 21; border with, 64, 65; debate over Transylvania as part of, 3, 9; dispute with Romania over origins, 9; invaded by Romania (1919-20), 35; Ministry of Culture, 242; reclaims Transylvania (1940), 40; relations with, 196, 241-42; Soviet army invades (1956), 53; territorial gains: World War I, 34; unification with Transylvania of, 21
- Huns, 8
- Hunyadi, János, 12-13
- hydroelectric power industry, 167
- Hymn to Romania campaign (1976), xxviii, 80
- Ialomita River, 69
- Iasi, 24, 26, 32, 39, 70, 172, 179, 254, 256-57, 269
- Iasi-Kishinev Operation, 256
- Iliescu, Ion, xxxi-xxxv
- IMF. *See* International Monetary Fund
- INF. *See* intermediate nuclear forces
- imports: of Australian and Soviet coking

## Romania: A Country Study

- coal, xxix, 170, 174; of Australian and Soviet iron ore, xxix, 155, 174; of electricity, xxix; of foreign technology, xxix, 58; of natural gas, xxix, 154-55; of oil, xxix, 168-69, 240, 293; of Soviet arms and military equipment, 286; of Soviet rolling mills, 174
- indoctrination (*see also* educational system), 231, 234
- Indo-European people, 4
- Industria Aeronautică Română (IAR), 289
- industrial sector: development of, 51, 57, 58, 77, 93, 100; distribution of factories of, 165; effect of development of, 71; growth and performance of, xxiii, 136, 165
- inflation, xxxv, 42, 48
- infrastructure development (*see also* road system; railway system; canals): under Ceaușescu regime, xxiv; first roads linking principalities, 25
- Inocențiu Micu Klein, 19
- Institute for Russian Studies, 55
- Institute of Historical and Social-Political Studies, 219
- intelligence services. *See* Department of External Information; Securitate
- intelligentsia class, 102-5
- intermediate nuclear forces (INF), 292
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), xxvi, 58, 150, 163-64, 165, 196
- investment (*see also* joint ventures), foreign direct, 38, 168
- Ionita, Ion, 267
- Iorga, Nicolae, 38, 41
- Iran, xxx, 164, 169, 246
- Iraq, xxxiii-xxxiv, xxxv, 164, 169, 293
- Iron Age, 4
- Iron Gates (I/II) on the Danube River, 66, 69, 167, 289
- Iron Guard, xxv-xxvi, 38-41
- iron ore deposits, 155
- irrigation system, 69, 136, 137
- Israel, xxvi, 56, 196, 238, 246-47
- Jehovah's Witnesses, 125
- Jewish Federation, 124
- Jews (*see also* anti-Semitism): discrimination against, 39; emigration of, 92-93; mistreatment and repression of, 29, 41-42; population distribution of, 29, 81
- Jiu River, 66, 167
- Jiu Valley, xxxiii, 101, 169, 230
- joint party-state councils, xxi-xxii, 141, 207
- joint trading companies, 164
- joint ventures, 170, 171, 172
- Joseph II (emperor of Austria), 19-20
- județe*, or county system. *See* government administration
- judicial commissions, 206
- judicial councils, 295
- judicial system (*see also* court system), 294
- Kádár, János, 53-54, 239, 241
- Károlyi, Mihály, 35
- Khrushchev, Nikita, xxvi, 53-55, 162, 174, 237
- Kiraly, Karoly, 93
- Kiselev, Pavel, 24
- Kohl, Helmut, 244
- Komsomol, 220
- Korea, North, 239, 293
- Kun, Béla, 35
- Kutzovlachs (Dacian descendants), 8, 31
- labor force: in agricultural sector, 95, 98; military troops employed in, 283, 289; productivity in, 58, 136, 158-62; shortages in, xxiv, 136, 156-57, 289; unrest in, xxiv-xxv, 101, 230, 305; women in, 71-72
- labor movement, 37, 161, 305
- lakes, 66
- land policy: appropriation (1949), 51; distribution in 19th century, 29; reclamation program, 137; reform (1917-21), 32, 36, 93; reform (1945), 48, 94
- languages: compulsory Russian (1948), 51, 55; Romanian, 3, 8, 55; in technical schools, 90; use of Hungarian, 90-91; use of Romanian, 90-91
- LAR (airline), 179
- Latin America, 236, 293
- Law on National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Romania (1972), 259
- Law on the Organization and Operation of People's Councils (1968), 209
- Law on the Organization of Justice (1952), 206
- Law on the Organization of National Defense (1972), 277

- Law on the Organization of the Army (1864), 254
- Law on the Organization of the Court System (1968), 205
- Law on the Organization of the Judiciary (1947), 295
- Legislative Chamber of the People's Councils, 143
- Lenin, Vladimir, 85
- Leopold I (emperor of Austria), 18
- leu. *See* currency
- Liberal Party, xxxii, 29, 31, 37, 38
- Libya, 293
- lignite, 167
- Little Entente (1920–21), 39–40, 255
- livestock raising, 180, 182–83
- locomotive industry, 172
- Lombards, 8
- Luca, Vasile, 45, 47, 50, 52, 53
- Lutheranism, 14, 83, 124
- Lysimachus, 6
- Macedonians, 252
- machine tool industry, 170, 172
- Magyar people, 3, 9, 11–12, 22, 82–83
- Manescu, Corneliu, 230
- Mangalia, 4, 76, 173, 179, 273, 289
- Maniu, Iuliu, 35–37, 38, 44, 49
- Maramureş region, 64, 155
- Marghiloman, Alexandru, 34
- marriage, 109
- Marshall Plan, 48, 49
- marshland, 182, 183
- Marxism (*see also* socialism), xxiv, 63; concept of family in, 108–9; concept of urban development of, 76; position on national identity of, 85
- Marxism-Leninism, 93–94
- mass demonstrations (*see also* labor force), 101, 230
- mass media, xxi, 104, 231–35
- mass organizations, 101, 219–22, 223
- Matei Basarab, 17
- Mátys Corvinus (king of Hungary), 13
- Maurer, Gheorghe, 56, 57, 222, 224, 226
- Mavrocordato, Constantine, 23
- media. *See* mass media
- medical care (*see also* health care system), 128
- Mediterranean Sesa, 11, 64, 70
- Mehmed I (sultan), 12
- metallurgy, 155, 173–75
- methane gas, 66, 168
- Methodius (saint), 8
- Michael the Brave (prince of Walachia), xxv, 14, 16, 17, 253
- Michael V (king of Romania), 4, 41, 42–43, 45, 47, 195; abdication of, xxxv, 49
- migration: of barbarian tribes, 8; patterns of, 77–78; to urban areas, xxiv, 95, 99
- Mihalache, Ion, 49
- Milea, Vasile, xxx, 266
- military budget. *See* spending, government
- military courts, 206, 296
- military doctrine (*see also* Law on National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Romania; War of the Entire People), xxiii; arms control in, 261–62; differentiated from Warsaw Pact doctrine, 280; evolution of, 258–60; Patriotic Guards in, 260, 268; of scorched earth, 261; strategy according to, 260–61
- military equipment industry, 286–87
- Military Publishing House, 264–65
- military regions, 269
- military sector (*see also* armed forces; paramilitary forces): employment in civilian economy of, 283, 289; importance for power of, 252; influence of France on, 253; influence of Soviet Red Army on, 257–58; organization and tactics of, 260–61; ranks, uniforms, and insignia of, 281–83; reserves, paramilitary, and guerrillas in, 251, 261–62, 268, 280; size of, 251
- military service, compulsory, 276–77
- Military Technical Academy, 279
- mineral reserves, 136, 155
- mineral springs, 66
- mining industry (*see also* coal industry), 66, 174–75
- Ministry of Agriculture, 187
- Ministry of Education and Training, 114
- Ministry of Food Industry and Procurement, 189
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 235–36
- Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Economic Cooperation, 235–36
- Ministry of Interior, 294; Directorate for Penitentiaries of, 302; organization of, 299; responsibility of, 299; Service K of, 302
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (*see also* Ministry of Interior), 299

## Romania: A Country Study

- Ministry of Justice, 205; Office of the Prosecutor General (Procuratura), 207, 294-95; responsibilities of, 294
- Ministry of Machine Building, 171
- Ministry of National Defense: Border Guards subordinate to, 275-76; directorates of, 264-65; limited power of, 267-68; role in premilitary training of, 277
- minority groups (*see also* nationality groups), 89-91
- Mircea the Old (prince of Walachia), 12
- Mitterrand, François, 246
- Moise, Vasile, 301
- Moldavia (*see also* United Principalities), 3-4; agriculture in, 180, 182; as battleground, 252-53; decline of, 12; economy of, 11; founded by Transylvanian emigrés, 10; land distribution in (16th century), 17; as region, 64
- Moldavian Tableland, 66
- Moldova River, 10
- Moldoveanu (peak), 66
- Mongols, 9, 10, 11, 12
- Montenegro, 31
- mortality rates, 70-71, 73
- most-favored-nation status, xxvii, xxxiv, 163, 164, 196, 245
- mountain infantry, 269-70, 282
- mountains (*see also* Carpathian Mountains; Transylvanian Alps), 4, 64-66, 155, 180
- Muhammed (sultan), 13
- Munich Agreement (1938), 40, 255
- Muntenia, 64
- Mureş Autonomous Hungarian Region (Mureş Region), 86
- Mureş River, 35, 69
- Muslims, 124
- Mussolini, Benito, 39
- Nagy, Imre, 54
- Napoleon III, 26, 27, 254
- National Agricultural Board, 187
- National Center of the Romanian Aircraft Industry, 171
- National Council for Agriculture, Food Industry, Forestry, and Water Management, 184, 187, 207
- National Council for Science and Education, 207, 231
- National Council for Science and Technology, xxii, 141, 207
- National Council of Working People, 207, 219
- National Democratic Bloc (Blocul Național Democrat: BND), 42-43, 44
- National Democratic Front (Frontul Național Democrat: FND), 45, 47, 50
- nationality groups: emigration of Germans, 243-44; mistreatment of Hungarians, 56, 59, 240, 240-43; nationality councils for, 220, 242; newspapers of, 232; policy for, 85
- nationalism: under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, 3; under Michael the Brave, xxv, 16; Romanian, xxv, xxxii, 19, 20, 29, 106-7
- nationality councils. *See* nationality groups
- nationalization, xxiii, 50, 138
- National Liberal Party, xxxii, 42, 45, 49
- National Minorities Statute (1945), 84
- National Party (Transylvania), 29, 34, 35-36
- National Peasant Party, xxxii, 37, 38, 42, 44-45, 49
- National Salvation Front (NSF), xxxi-xxxiv
- National Union of Agricultural Production Cooperatives, 223
- NATO. *See* North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- natural gas industry and reserves, 58, 136, 154, 166, 169
- natural resources, 66, 151-56; agreement with Germany to exploit, 40; land as, 137, 151; used for industrial growth, 136
- naval bases, 273
- naval shipyards, 173, 273
- navy: Coastal Defense unit of, 273, 275; Danube Squadron of, 273, 275; equipment and ships of, 273-74; organization and mission of, 273; personnel in Border Guards, 275-76
- Nazi Germany: attacks Soviet Union (1941), 256; controls oil industry in World War II, 138; forces Romania to cede territory, 255; funds Iron Guard, 39; invades Poland, 40; nonaggression pact with Soviet Union (1939), 40; occupies Romanian territory, 255; relations during World War II with, 40-44; Romania declares war against (1944), 257; trade with and supplies from Romania, 40, 42

- Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact (1939), 40, 255
- Negoiu (peak), 66
- Negru-Vodă, 10
- Neolithic Age, 4
- nepotism, xxii, 228, 240
- New Economic and Financial Mechanism, 143, 145
- newspapers, 89, 91, 115, 122, 231-32
- Nicholas I (tsar of Russia), 25
- Nicolae Balcescu Military Officers College, 278
- Nixon, Richard M., xxvii, 238, 244
- Nonaligned Movement, xxvii
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 239, 292
- NSF. *See* National Salvation Front
- nuclear power, 166, 167, 168
- Octavius (Roman emperor), 6
- Odessa, 41
- officer corps: attitude toward Ceaușescu and PCR of, 267-68; education of, 278-80; Soviet influence in, 266
- oil-drilling (offshore) rig manufacture, 168
- oil-field equipment manufacture, 170, 240
- oil industry, 48, 58, 138, 166, 168, 256
- oil price shocks, xxiv, 58, 169
- oil refining, 168-69
- oil reserves, 136, 154
- Old Kingdom, or Regat, 36-37, 65, 81
- Olteanu, Constantin, 266
- Oltenia, 64
- Olt River, 64, 66, 69
- Operation Barbarossa, 256
- Oradea, 88, 155, 174, 176
- ore deposits, 66, 155, 174-75
- Ostrogoths, 8
- Ottoman Empire (*see also* Sublime Porte): decline of, 23; domination by, 3-4, 14, 252-53; expansion of (14th century), 12; in First Balkan War, 31; forces invade Hungary, 13; pressure of, 13
- Ovid, 5
- Palace of the Republic, 289
- Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 236, 246-47
- paramilitary forces, 251, 260-62
- Paraschiv, Vasile, 161
- Party Academy for Social and Political Training, 218-19
- Party Academy's Center for the Education and Training of Party and Mass Organization Cadres, 219
- Party and State Cadres Commission, xxii
- party-state councils. *See* joint party-state councils
- Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu, 43, 45, 52
- Patriotic Guards, xxxiv, 260, 268, 277, 280-81, 291
- Pauker, Ana, 45, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54
- PCR. *See* Romanian Communist Party
- Peace of Bucharest (1812), 23
- Peace Unified Power System, 168
- Peasant Party, 37
- Penal Code (1978), 296-97, 298
- Pentacostalists, 124
- people's councils. *See* government administration
- People's Democratic Front, 210
- perestroika*, xxix, 240-41
- periodicals (*see also* newspapers), 231-32
- Persians, 5, 252
- Peter the Great (tsar of Russia), 22
- petrochemical industry, 58, 154, 169, 175
- Phanariot rule, 22-23, 24
- Philip of Macedonia, 6
- Pioneers (youth organization), 115, 221
- pipeline, gas, 169
- Pirvulescu, Constantin, 230
- Pitești, 171, 175, 177
- plains, 65, 69, 151, 154
- Pleistocene Epoch, 4
- PLO. *See* Palestine Liberation Organization
- Ploiești, 28, 175, 256
- Plowmen's Front, 45
- PMR. *See* Romanian Workers' Party
- Poarta Albă-Midia-Năvodari Canal, 178
- Poland, 22; birthrate in, 157; defeats Ottoman army (1683), 18; defiance in 1956 of, 53; invaded by Nazi Germany, 40; private agriculture in, 186; relations with, 240; Solidarity movement in, xxix
- Polexco Permanent Bureau. *See* Romanian Communist Party
- political circumstances: communist manipulation of (1945), 47-48; of Iron Guard activities, 38-40
- political crime, 296-97
- political indoctrination (*see also* indoctrination), 277-78

## Romania: A Country Study

- Pompey, 6
- Popular Democratic Front, 50
- population (*see also* demographic trends; urban settlement): geographic distribution of, 75-78; levels of, 70-73; in Old Kingdom, 81
- port facilities, 177-79, 273
- ports, 136, 273
- Potsdam Conference (1945), 47
- precipitation, 70, 152
- president of the republic: position created by constitutional amendment (1974), 203; powers of, 203
- price mechanism: control of, 144-46; support for agricultural products in, 38
- private farms. *See* agricultural sector
- private ownerships of economic assets, 140, 150, 183, 184, 186, 197
- Procuratura. *See* Ministry of Justice
- propaganda, xxviii, 52, 121, 124, 231, 234
- Protestants (*see also* Calvinism; Lutheranism), 14, 16, 18, 124
- Protocol of St. Petersburg (1913), 31
- Provisional Council of National Unity, xxxi
- Prut River, 64, 66, 69, 153, 177
- public health (*see also* abortion; mortality rates), 126
- publishing industry, 234-35
- Raceneau, Grigore, 230
- Rădescu, Nicolae, 46
- Radio Bucharest, 234
- Radio Budapest, 241
- radio receivers, 180, 233
- railroad freight and passenger car manufacture, 170, 172
- railway system (*see also* Bucharest subway system), 66, 176-77, 289
- Rákóczi, György, 16-17
- rationing: of energy-related products, xxv, 166; of food, xxv, 74, 189-90
- Reagan administration, 245
- rebellion: in Timișoara (1989), xxx; of Hungarian nobles and serfs (1711), 19; of serfs (1784) in Transylvania, 20
- Red Army: influence on armed forces development of, 257; invades and occupies Romania (1944), xxvi, 42-44, 256-57; on Romanian border, 40; Romanian troops under command of (1944), 257; at Stalingrad, 256
- Reformed (Calvinist) Church, 124
- regional divisions (historical), 64
- Règlement Organique, 24, 25
- religion (*see also* Calvinism; Lutheranism; Muslims; Roman Catholicism; Romanian Orthodox Church; Uniate Church; Unitarian Church), 82-83; destruction of churches, 121; impact of family law on, 109; restrictions on practice of, 120-21; state support for some religious groups, 120
- reparations to Soviet Union, xxvi, 44, 48, 138
- reserves, military. *See* military sector
- revolt: at Ploiești (1870), 28; peasant (1437), 11; peasant (1514), 13; peasant (1599), 16; peasant (1907), 29; rumors of military (1980s), 267
- Revolution in Europe (1848), 21
- riots in 1987, 101
- river systems, 65, 66, 69, 136, 183
- road system (*see also* infrastructure development), 66
- Roman, Petre, xxxi, xxxvi
- Roman Catholic Church: government control of, 51, 121-22; under Habsburg rule, 18; in Hungary (9th century A.D.), 9-10; Latin Rite Church in, 121; in Transylvania, 14, 82-83; Uniate, or Eastern Rite Church in, 18-19, 121, 122-23
- Roman Empire: colony in Dacia of, 3, 7-8, 9, 137, 252; relations with Getae people of, 6-7, 52; settlements of, 76
- Romania (*see also* Greater Romania): economy under Charles, 28; history to World War II of, 4; independence of, xxv; joins World War I (1916), 32; as kingdom (1881), 28; official designation (1861), 26; territorial claims of (1918-19), 35; territorial gains of (post-World War II), 36
- Romanian Army (*see also* armed forces; army): move to lessen Soviet influence on (1960s), 258; nucleus of (1945), 257-58
- Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român: PCR), 56; basic party organizations of, 216-17; Ceaușescu as leader of, 195, 203, 222-24; Central Auditing Commission of, 213, 216; Central Collegium of, 216;

- Central Committee and commissions of, xxi, 213-14, 219, 221, 222-26, 231-33, 235, 265-66; control of armed forces by, 251, 262-66; control of government by, 50, 196-97; control of mass media by, 231; control over cultural life by, 217-18; controls judicial system, 294; dominance in economy of, 140-46; Executive Committee of, 222; function of mass organizations in, 219-22; governs people's councils, 209; ideological program of, 218; membership and social composition in, 105-6, 211-13; National Conference (1967), 223-24; organization of, 213-17; Patriotic Guard subordination to, 280-81; Poxeco Permanent Bureau of, xxi, 213-14, 216, 226; Political Executive Committee (Poxeco) of, xxi, 106, 213-14, 216, 226, 266; provisions under 1965 Constitution for, 199; representation in State Council of, 202; role in economy of, 135; role in trade unions of, 221-22; Secretariat of, 214, 216; Standing Presidium of, xxi, 222, 223; Thirteenth Party Congress of, 227; training by, 218-19; Twelfth Party Congress of, 226-27
- Romanian Intelligence Service, xxxiv
- Romanian language: Slavic vocabulary of, 8; source of, 3, 8
- Romanian National Central Council, 34
- Romanian Navy (*see also* navy), 273-75
- Romanian Orthodox Church, xxxii, 22, 27, 37, 121; government control of (1948), 51; Uniate or Eastern Rite Catholics in, 122-23
- Romanian People's Republic (*see also* Socialist Republic of Romania), xxiii, 50, 195
- Romanian Press Agency (Agenția Română de Presă: Agerpres), 233
- Romanian Workers' Party (Partidul Muncitoresc Român: PMR) (*see also* Romanian Communist Party), 49-50, 211; control of government by, 52-55; role under 1952 constitution, 197
- Romtehnica, 293
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 44
- Rudolph II (Holy Roman Emperor), 16
- rural resettlement strategy (systematization), 78-80, 186-87, 199, 242
- Russia (*see also* Soviet Union): coup d'état in (1917), 32; influence in Moldavia and Walachia of, 22-23; invades Walachia, 25; occupation of Moldavia and Walachia (1829), 24; protects Walachia and Moldavia, 4; revolution in (1917), 32; role in revolution of 1848 of, 21
- Russo-Turkish War: in 1828, 24; in 1877-78, 28, 254
- Sachsenboden (Saxon Land), 82
- Sadat, Anwar as, 246
- salt deposits, 66, 156
- Sănătescu, Constantin, 43, 45-46
- Sarmatians, 6, 8
- Satu Mare, 179
- Saxon people, 82-83
- Schmidt, Helmut, xxvii, 243
- Scientific Research and Technological Engineering Institute for Machine Tools, 172
- Scythia, 5-6
- secret police. *See* Securitate
- Securitate, xxii-xxiii, xxvii, xxxiv, 50, 89, 195, 230, 266, 298; control by Ministry of Interior of, 299; Directorate for Counterespionage of, 301; Directorate for Internal Security of, 302; Directorate for Investigations of, 301; Directorate for Mail Censorship of, 301; Directorate for Surveillance of, 301; Directorate IV of, 301; Directorate V of, 302; General Directorate for Technical Operations (Direcția Generală de Tehnică Operativă: DGTO), 301; in 1989 uprising, xxx-xxxi
- Serb, Ion, 299
- Serbia, 30, 31, 254
- Serbs, 12, 65, 80, 86
- serfs: bondage laws for, 13; in Transylvania, 10, 12, 19-20; in Walachia and Moldavia, 17
- Seventh Day Adventists, 124
- Shamir, Yitzhak, 247
- shipbuilding industry, 173, 286-88
- shipping industry, 179
- Shultz, George, 245
- Sibiu, 76, 177
- Sigismund (king of Hungary), 12
- Silistra, 28, 31
- Silviculture Council, 207
- Siret River, 69

## Romania: A Country Study

- Sixtus IV (pope), 13  
Slavs, 8, 9  
Sobieski, Jan, 18  
Social Democratic Party, xxxii, 37, 42, 44-45, 211  
socialism: Brezhnev Doctrine of protection of, 59, 238; completion of transition to, 198-99; establishment of, xxiv, 63; in Romania, 217; transition from capitalism to, 195  
socialist democracy, 217  
Socialist Democracy and Unity Front, 86, 201, 203; directs election organization, 210-11; membership in, 210  
Socialist Republic of Romania, xxiii, 3, 198-99  
Socialist Unity Front, 210, 232  
social structure: changing role of peasant in, 95, 98-99; declining mobility in, 107-8; education for upward mobility in, 116; elite in, 63; intelligentsia in, 102-5; political elite in, 105-7; upheaval in, 63-64; working class, or proletariat in, 99-101  
social unrest (*see also* labor force), 230, 304-5  
Someș River, 69  
South Ukraine Nuclear Power Station, 168  
Soviet General Staff Academy, 279  
Soviet-Romanian economic agreement (1945), 48  
Soviet-Romanian treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance, 50, 238  
Soviet Union (*see also* Red Army): army invades Hungary, 53; attack by German and Romanian forces of, 41; border with, 64, 65; buys Romanian armaments, 293; control of country by, 3; control of Romanian army by, 257-58; control of Romanian government by, 45-46; dependence on, 273; exports coking coal and crude oil, 169-70; expropriates financial and industrial firms, 138; ideological conflict with China (PRC), 55, 238; military presence (1956), 53; Red Army in Romania, 42; relations during World War II with, 40-44; relations with, xxvi, 3, 40, 251; relations with (1953-65), xxix, 52-56, 237-38; relations with (1965-1980s), 56-59, 262; reparations to, xxvi, 138; response to Romania's independent attitude by, 268; role in Warsaw Treaty Organization of, xxix, 290-92; Romanian independence from, 292; as supplier of arms and equipment, 286; trade relations with, 162; withdraws occupying forces (1958), 258  
Sovroms, 48, 53  
special security troops, xxiii  
spending, government: budget for 1989, 147; for military sector, 283, 286  
Stalin, Joseph, 44, 47, 49, 52, 237; denunciation of, 53; encourages anti-Semitism, 51-52  
Stalingrad, 4, 41, 42, 256-57  
Stalinist ideology, 135, 138, 139, 147, 156, 187, 228, 240  
Stanculescu, Victor, xxxiii  
standard of living, 74, 99, 106-7, 135-36, 139, 160, 165, 191  
State Council: under 1952 constitution, 198; under 1965 Constitution, 199, 216; power of, 201-3; powers of GNA devolving to, 202  
state farms. *See* agricultural sector  
State Planning Committee, 141, 145, 148  
steel industry (*see also* metallurgy), 173  
Stefan Gheorghiu Academy for Socialist Political Education and the Training of Leading Cadres, 218  
Stefan Gheorghiu Party Academy, 218  
Stephen I (king of Hungary), 9  
Stephen the Great (prince of Moldavia), 13, 252  
Stoica, Chivu, 56, 222, 224-25  
Strauss, Franz Joseph, 243  
strikes (*see also* Jiu Valley), xxiv; of miners, 101, 230; of railroad workers, 39  
Sturdza, Mihai (prince of Moldavia), 25  
Sublime Porte, 14, 16, 17-18, 22-26  
subsidies, 145, 149  
Suceava, 13, 179  
Sudetenland. *See* Czechoslovakia  
Supreme Council for Economic and Social Development, 141, 207-8  
Supreme Court, 202, 203, 205, 295  
Swabian people, 82-83, 85  
Switzerland, 290  
systematization program. *See* agricultural sector; rural resettlement strategy  
Szekler people, 9, 11-12, 22, 82-83  
Tamerlane, 12  
Tanase, Virgil, 246  
țara Românească, 10  
TAROM (national airline), 179, 271

- tax system: people with or without children, 72; revenues from, 146-47
- technical colleges, 118, 120
- technocrats, 103, 105-6
- telecommunications system, 180
- telephone system, 180
- television, xxviii, xxx, xxxi, xxxiii, 89, 91, 95, 180, 217, 231, 233-34
- territorial boundaries: changes in 1940 for, 40; changes in 1947 for, 257; set at Treaty of Paris (1947), 48
- territorial defense concept, 259-60
- Teutonic Knights, 9
- textile industry, 176
- Thirty Years' War (1618-48), 16
- Thracian tribes, 4
- Thrace-Getian people, 4-5
- timber industry, 136, 153
- Timișoara, xxix-xxx, 13, 171, 173, 179
- Tisza River, 35, 69
- titanium mining, 174, 187
- Tito, Josip Broz, 52, 55, 56, 291
- Tökés, László, xxix-xxx
- topography, 65-69
- trade policy, 58, 162, 196, 289-90
- trade unions: communist party controlled, 47, 221; role of, 100, 161
- training, military: in armed forces, 277; for officers, 278-79; for pilots, 271, 273; premilitary requirement of, 277; in Soviet Union, 258, 279-80, 290
- Trajan (Roman emperor), 7
- Trajan's Column, 7
- transportation system (*see also* infrastructure development): gas pipelines in, 169; railroads in, 176-77
- Transylvania, 3; accepts Austrian protection (1688), 18; agriculture in, 180; as autonomous principality, 14-17; becomes part of Romania (1918), 255; economy of (15th century), 11; ethnic group diversity and conflict in, 82-84; freedom of worship in, 14; integration into Hungary of, 3, 9; Magyar as official language (1843), 20; peasant uprising (1848), 25; Protestantism in, 14; as region, 64, 65; Romanians in, 18, 19; as Romanian territory (1947), 48; settlement of, 9-10; settlement of Hungarians in, 9-10
- Transylvanian Alps, 64, 66, 153, 155
- Transylvanian Plateau, 66, 154
- treaty, Soviet-Romanian (1948), 50, 238
- Treaty of Adrianople (1829), 24, 29
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 34
- Treaty of Bucharest: in 1913, 31; in 1918, 34
- Treaty of Paris: in 1856, 26; in 1947, 48-49, 257
- Treaty of St. Germain, 36
- Treaty of Trianon, 36
- Triple Entente, 31-32, 255
- Turkey (*see also* Ottoman Empire; Constantinople): in Balkan Entente, 39
- Turks, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24, 28, 81, 82, 124
- UGSR. *See* General Union of Trade Unions of Romania
- Ulfiș (bishop), 8
- UNESCO. *See* United Nations (UN)
- Uniate Church. *See* Eastern Orthodox Church; Roman Catholic Church
- unification pressure, 30
- Union of Communist Youth (Uniunea Tineretului Communist: UTC), xxii, 115-16, 212, 220-21, 223; Patriotic Guard subordination to, 280; role in premilitary training of, 277
- Union of Three Nations, 11-12, 14, 16; abolition of (1849), 21; dissolution of, 20
- Unitarianism, 14, 82, 124
- Unitary National Socioeconomic Plan, 142, 143, 204
- United Nations (UN): Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 231; Human Rights Commission, xxviii, 242-43; membership in, 237
- United Principalities (*see also* Romania), 26, 253-54
- United States: bombs Romanian oil fields (1943), 256; Ceaușescu's criticism of, 230; relations with, xxvii, xxxiii, 244-45, 290; trade relations with, 163, 164
- universities, 26, 54, 102, 118
- uranium industry, 48
- urban development, 76-77, 138, 152
- Ursu, Ion, 20
- UTC. *See* Union of Communist Youth
- Vaida-Voevod, Alexandru, 36
- vanadium mining, 174

## Romania: A Country Study

- Vasile Lupu (prince of Moldavia), 17-18  
Vatra Românească (Romanian Cradle), xxxii-xxxiii  
Vietnam, 293  
Visigoths, 8  
Vladimirescu, Tudor, 23, 253  
Vlad țepeș, 13  
Vyshinsky, Andrei, 46
- Walachia (*see also* United Principalities), 3-4; agricultural sector of, 180; as battleground, 252-53; decline of, 12; economy of, 25; founded by Transylvanian emigrés, 10; independence of (1380), 11; invaded by Russia (1848), 25; Jews in, 25; land distribution in (16th century), 17; as region, 64; self-government of, 25  
War of Independence (1877-78), 254  
War of the Entire People (Lupta Intregului Popor), 259, 268, 278  
Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact), 53, 196, 237, 239-41; establishment of Council of Foreign Ministers in, 292; independence from, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, 262, 286, 290-92; members threaten Romania, 291-92; Romania as member of, xxvi, 251, 258  
waterways, inland (*see also* canals; river systems), 69, 136, 177  
wheat production, 180, 182  
Whitehead, John, 245  
women: effect of demographic policy on, 72-75, 109; in agriculture, 96, 98; in armed forces, 276; in education, 112; in military secondary schools, 278; in Patriotic Guards, 277; rights under socialism of, 112; in Romanian Communist Party, 113, 212; in the workplace, 71, 78, 110, 113  
workers' councils, 86-87, 100-101  
working class or proletariat (*see also* labor force), 99-101  
World Bank, xxvi, 58, 163, 196  
World Federation of Democratic Youth, 220  
World Federation of Trade Unions, 220  
World War I, 31-34, 254-55  
World War II, 40-44, 256-57  
Writers' Union, 104
- Yalta declaration (1945), 44, 46, 47  
Youth Homeland Defense detachments, 277  
Ypsilanti, Alexander, 24  
Yugoslavia: border with, 64, 65, 69; expelled from Cominform, 52; in Little Entente and Balkan Entente, 39, 255; relations with, 55, 56-57
- Zhivkov, Todor, 240







