OCCASIONAL PAPERS IN ROMANIAN STUDIES
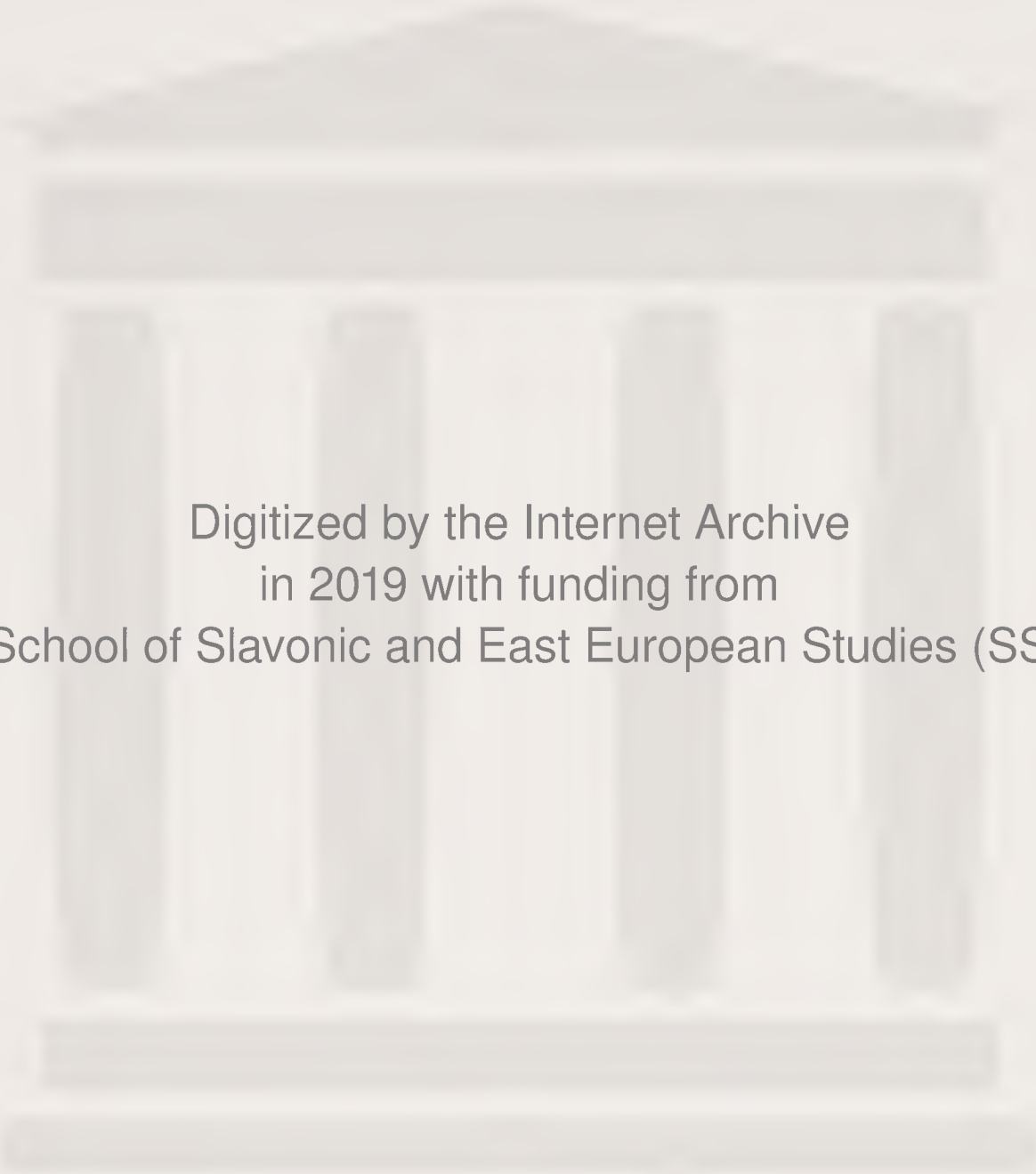# No. 2
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Introduction

Rebecca Haynes

The last few years have witnessed increasing research opportunities for those of us working in the field of Romanian studies. Since 1989, Romanian archives have been open to Western scholars. In addition, a large number of memoirs and works of secondary literature have been published in Romania, relating in particular to the history of the inter-war period and the imposition of Communism. These new research possibilities are reflected in the papers presented in this volume. Contributions by Dennis Deletant and Rebecca Haynes are the outcome of recent research in the Bucharest archives and of the use of materials to which access would have been impossible a decade ago. Romanian original sources can now be used to complement the extensive British archival sources regarding Romania, especially those of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The paper presented here by Mark Percival is thus a product of both Romanian and British Foreign Office material, while that by Maurice Pearton reflects the wide range of sources available in London regarding British interests in Romania prior to the Communist period.

The opening of the archives and the interest amongst Romanians in aspects of their history hitherto either neglected or distorted by the Communist regime is only one aspect of the changes which have affected Romanian society in the years since 1989. Romania has become a peaceful participant in the democratic process in a way that could not have been foreseen at the time of the revolution. The contributions in this volume by Peter Siani-Davies analyse the elections of 1990 and 1996 and make use of the contemporary resources now available to the observer of present-day Romania.

The greater openness both within Romanian society and towards the outside world which has taken place since 1989 is reflected in Dennis Deletant's second contribution and in that by Martyn Rady. As Deletant shows in 'The Post-Communist Security Services in Romania', despite the often dubious activities of the security services since 1989, the Romanian security apparatus has increasingly come under public scrutiny, especially

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since the installation of the government led by Emil Constantinescu in November 1996. Romania's relations with Hungary have also improved considerably since Ion Iliescu made his 'historic opening' speech in 1995 and despite the many gloomy prognostications made in 1989 and 1990 regarding relations between the two countries. Hungary and Romania are now collaborating in NATO's 'Partnership for Peace' programme and a friendship treaty was signed between the two countries in 1996. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the time is ripe for strengthening the academic collaboration which has been going on at a personal level for a number of years. The resources of the Romanian archives can now be used to complement those in Hungary and hopefully prevent the nationalist arguments which surrounded the publication in 1987 of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' edition of the *History of Transylvania*. The importance of Hungarian sources for a fuller understanding of Romanian history is reflected in Martyn Rady's contribution to this volume.

But the current climate in Romania is not only favourable to foreign scholars of Romania. It is now possible for Romanian scholars to re-examine their history and society free from the censorship and intellectual restrictions of the Communist period. Nowhere is thorough examination more overdue than in the field of Romanian historical myths. It is therefore with great pleasure that we include here a discussion of such myths by one of the new generation of Romanian historians, Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu.

Historic myth-making and its manipulation for political purposes is, however, by no means a Romanian monopoly. As a number of commentators have pointed out, historic myths are a necessary component in cementing communal identities and in facilitating and sanctioning political action in all societies.[1] In particular, myths of ethnic origins, or 'foundation myths', and the related myth of the nation's historic 'Golden Age' have served as potent forces of national mobilization and consolidation among modern nations. An important aspect of such myths is that the nation's glorious past should act as a call to collective action and self-renewal, either against foreign domination and invasion or to reverse the perceived trend of national decline. As Anthony Smith has written, 'By returning to "basics", by purifying ourselves of the dross of an uninspiring and ambiguous present through a return to the glorious past and its

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1   William H. McNeill, 'Mythistory, or Truth, Myth, History and Historians', *American Historical Review*, 91, 1986, 1 (February), pp. 1–10; George Schöpflin, 'The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths' in Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (eds), *Myths and Nationhood*, London, 1997, pp. 19–28.

heroism, we can shed our mediocrity and enter upon the "true" destiny of our community'.[2]

It is within this cycle of foundation and 'Golden Age' myths that the Romanians most famous historical myth belongs: the Roman and Daco-Roman continuity theory. The 'myth' of the Romanians' pure Roman descent from Trajan's colonists and their continuous presence since the Roman era in the Romanian lands was put to political use by Romanian intellectuals in Transylvania in the later eighteenth century. These argued that the Romanians' 'noble' Roman ancestry justified their present-day demands for political equality with their Hungarian, Saxon and Sekler neighbours.[3]

The Roman continuity theory can, however, be placed within the broader framework of the late-eighteenth-century European classical revival. This was particularly important in two nations aspiring not for political equality amongst co-nationals but for imperial splendour: Britain and France. In both countries the classical world was regarded as an 'ancestral civilization' which served as an inspiration for modern empire-building. In France, in particular, writers 'exhorted their countrymen to emulate the virtues of antique Rome [...] because that way they could ensure a glorious revival for France, Rome's heir and spiritual successor'.[4] The natural culmination of this particular foundation myth was Napoleon's appropriation of the imperial purple.

During the nineteenth century, the Roman theory of Romanian origins gradually gave way to the Daco-Roman continuity theory. According to this version of the foundation myth, the modern Romanians were descended from the 'native' Dacians who had created the thriving kingdom of Dacia, under heroic kings such as Decebal and Burebista, before the arrival of the Romans, with whom they subsequently intermarried.[5] Their Daco-Roman descendents had remained in Dacia following the withdrawal of the Roman legions and had retained their unique identity and Latin tongue in the face of subsequent barbarian invasions. The Daco-Roman continuity theory is one of many European ethnic foundation myths which stress the 'nativist', tribal origins of the modern nation. Nineteenth-century German nationalists, for instance, claimed descent from Arminius and the Teutonic tribes which he led to

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2   Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, 1996, p. 182.

3   Keith Hitchins, *The Idea of Nation: The Romanians of Transylvania 1691–1849*, Bucharest, 1988, pp. 94–140.

4   Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, pp. 195–9 (199).

5   For the conflict between the 'Latinists' and the exponents of the Daco-Roman theory, see Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania*, Berkeley, CA, 1991, pp. 30–40

victory over the Romans in remote antiquity.[6] Likewise, Irish nationalists showed interest in Ireland's pre-Christian Celtic past, personified in the shadowy figure of Cuchulain. Meanwhile, in Victorian England the works of historians, poets and artists reflected the popular enthusiasm for England's Christian Celtic traditions and Anglo-Saxon roots. The cults of King Arthur and Alfred the Great flowered accordingly.[7] In all these cases, the foundation myths and related 'Golden Ages' served as inspiration for national self-renewal to achieve liberation from foreign domination or invasion or, in the case of independent nation-states like Britain, as inspiration for the pursuit of national glory.

Historical myth-making, therefore, should not be regarded as a uniquely Romanian preserve. Indeed, some of the time-honoured Romanian myths owe their origins to non-Romanian sources. The belief that the Romanians were descended from the Romans was already centuries old by the time of its political use by Romanian intellectuals in Transylvania. It is older still than the Moldavian Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723), generally regarded as the first Romanian to put forward the theory. In the twelfth century, Kinnamos, secretary to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus, observed that the Vlachs were the descendents of colonists formerly from Italy.[8] In letters written to the self-proclaimed Bulgarian 'Emperor' Ioannitsa between 1199 and 1202, Pope Innocent III made a number of references to the Roman origins of the Vlachs.[9] In later centuries, Transylvanian Saxon historians were extremely important in perpetuating the theory of the Romanians' pure Roman origins. In two works produced in 1541, the Saxon humanist Georg Reicherstorffer put forward the view that the Romanians were descended from the Romans on the basis of language.[10] In the following century, a number of works by Saxon writers, most notably David Hermann in 1655 and Johann Tröster in 1667, put forward the same argument. In addition they claimed that there had been a continuous Romanian presence since antiquity on the territory of the former province of Dacia which corresponded geographically to the

6 Andreas Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik: Sinnstiftung durch symbolische Formen am Beispiel des Hermannsmythos*, Opladen, 1995, pp. 130–5, 213–15.

7 Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, pp. 195–208.

8 Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor: Istoria unei idei*, Bucharest, 1993, pp. 31 and 36.

9 Ibid., pp. 32–4; Robert Lee Wolff, 'The "Second Bulgarian Empire": Its Origin and History to 1204' in Wolff, *Studies in the Latin Empire of Constantinople*, London, 1976, pp. 167–204 (190–3). This article was first published in *Speculum*, 27, 1952.

10 Karl Kurt Klein, *Transsylvanica: Gesammelte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze zur Sprach- und Siedlungsforschung der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, Munich, 1963, p. 279.

Romanian lands of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. It was another Saxon, Martin Felmer of Sibiu (1720–67), who first applied the German 'Romanien' to describe ancient Dacia.[11]

Neither have the Romanians' seemingly entrenched historical myths been writ in stone since time immemorial. It would be easy for the outside observer to gain the impression, for instance, that Romanian historians had universally and consistently denied the Slavonic input into the Romanians' ethnic and cultural identity. This impression is a distortion, however, created by the Ceauşescu regime's obsession with the Daco-Roman theory.[12] Romania's first major Slavicist, Bogdan P. Hasdeu (1838–1907), argued that the Romanians were a product of the fusion of Slavs, Thracians, Dacians and Romans. He further argued that the Romanians had developed as a people on both sides of the Danube.[13]

As this example shows, prior to the Communist period Romanian historiographical traditions were relatively open and a number of scholars put forward the 'late immigration' theory of Romanian origins now more associated with Hungarian historians. According to this argument, the bulk of the Romanian nation developed south of the Danube and only migrated to the north bank several centuries after the withdrawal of the Roman legions. Thus, Radu Rosetti (1853–1926) argued that the Romanians were Romanized Slavs from the Balkan Peninsula who crossed to the northern side of the Danube seeking relief from Byzantine tax collectors.[14] According to Gheorghe Brătianu (1898–1953), the withdrawal of the Roman frontier to the Danube in AD 271 did not prevent contact, or population exchange, between the Romanized population left in Dacia, however small, and the Romanized Balkan population south of the river. The arrival of the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula, which profoundly

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11 Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor*, pp. 193–201, 260–1. The word 'Romania' itself has a long history. It appears to have been first used in a chronicle of *c*. 330 to contrast the Roman world with that of the barbarians. By the eleventh century it was used by the Byzantine emperors to describe Byzantium and later to describe the Latin Empire established after the Fourth Crusade. See Robert Lee Wolff, 'Romania: The Latin Empire of Constantinople' in Wolff, *Studies in the Latin Empire of Constantinople*, pp. 1–34. This article was first published in *Speculum*, 23, 1948.

12 For the Ceauşescu regime and the Daco-Roman continuity theory, see Dennis Deletant, 'The Past in Contemporary Romania: Some Reflections on Recent Romanian Historiograpy' in László Péter (ed.), *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, Boulder, CO, 1992, pp. 133–58.

13 Frederick Kellogg, *A History of Romanian Historical Writing*, Bakersfield, CA, 1990, p. 31.

14 Ibid., p. 41.

modified the Romanian language, led to the flight of part of the Romanized population of the Balkans to the north of the Danube.[15]

A second strand in Romania historiograpy, however, ultimately came to overshadow this theory. In seeking to justify the creation of the modern Romanian state, nationalist historians such as A. D. Xenopol and Nicolae Iorga argued for a continuous and substantial Romanian presence north of the Danube. In a major work on the subject, Xenopol (1847–1920) sought to refute the claims of a number of scholars, most notably the German Robert Rösler, who had put forward the 'late immigration' theory. On the contrary, argued Xenopol, the Romanized peasantry of Dacia had remained following the withdrawal of the legions in AD 271 and only temporarily withdrawn to the mountains, during the period of the barbarian invasions.[16] The numerous works of Nicolae Iorga have been perhaps even more influential in effacing all other theories other than the Daco-Roman continuity theory from respectable Romanian publications. Iorga denied that the Slavs had had any important influences on the development of the Romanians and maintained that the Romanized Thracians of Dacia had retained their unique, and Roman, identity throughout the period of the barbarian invasions.[17]

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15 Gheorghe Brătianu's classic account has recently been translated into English: G. I. Brătianu, *An Enigma and Miracle of History: The Romanian People*, Bucharest, 1996. While most Hungarian scholars have propounded the 'late immigration' theory, arguing that the Romanians only entered the Carpatho-Danubian area and Transylvania between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, some have been prepared to concede that the Romanians may have been present earlier. István Kniesza, for instance, suggests that Romanians may have been present in Hunyad county as early as the eleventh century: see István Kniesza, 'Ungarns Volkerschaften im XI. Jahrhundert', *Archivum Europae-Centro-Orientalis*, 4, 1938, pp. 241–412 (369). The importance of the Vlachs south of the Danube has long been acknowledged. For their contribution to the establishment of the Second Bulgarian Empire, see Robert Lee Wolff, 'The "Second Bulgarian Empire": Its Origin and History to 1204' in Wolff, *Studies in the Latin Empire of Constantinople*, pp. 167–204.

16 A. D. Xenopol, *Une énigme historique: Les roumains au moyen-âge*, Paris, 1885; for a short summary of some of Xenopol's arguments, see also Maria Matilda Alexandrescu-Dersca and Valeriu Bulgaru 'A. D. Xenopol şi continuitatea poporului român în Dacia pe baza permanenţei îndeletnicirilor sale agricole' in L. Boicu and Al. Zub (eds), *A. D. Xenopol: Studii privitoare la viaţa şi opera sa*, Bucharest, 1972, pp. 47–60.

17 The English reader may also have the benefit of Iorga's arguments, put forward in numerous works in Romanian, in Nicolae Iorga, *A History of Roumania*, London, 1925, esp. pp. 11–40. According to Iorga, 'the descendant of the Dacian shepherds and of the emigrant peasants from Italy remained a "homo romanus": a Roman' (ibid., p. 32).

Maurice Pearton has written elsewhere about the problems of reconciling the tasks of the disinterested academic historian with those of the political activist. In Iorga's case, historical inquiry was undermined by his political objectives: the creation and maintenance of the Greater Romanian state. As a historian, 'Iorga, if presented with positive irrefutable evidence, *might* have come to recognize the Hungarian thesis about Transylvania; Iorga [...] determined to rectify the frontiers, was most unlikely to have been able to do so'.[18]

For the modern historian researching into the origins and early history of the Romanians, it is surely necessary to disassociate ourselves from the nineteenth-century nationalists' conviction that the state is congruent with the ethnic nation. Dark-age and medieval polities were invariably ruled by 'foreigners' (one need only think of the Angevin Kings of late-fourteenth-century Hungary or the Normans in England), while their subjects were ethnically diverse. The Kingdom of Hungary, wrote Miklós Oláh in 1536, 'includes peoples of various kinds, there being, apart from the Hungarians, Germans, Czechs, Slavs, Croats, Saxons, Seklers, Romanians, Serbs, Cumanians, Jazygians, Ruthenians [...] all of whom speak different languages'. As Jenő Szűcs concludes in his study of the ethnic diversity of the Hungarian kingdom, 'in the medieval view the entirety of these dozen or so "nationes" made up the "people" of Hungary ("gens Hungariae")'.[19] Modern historians would do well to keep this in mind.

Nevertheless, as Ungureanu points out in this volume, Romanian historical myths continue to be highly potent and politically charged, especially owing to their proliferation during the 1980s. Paradoxically, the result has been to obscure the very history Romanian historians have claimed to be most concerned about: that of the ordinary Romanian people. As Martyn Rady points out in his contribution, Romanian historians have established a congruence between the modern Romanian state and the historic Romanian nation. In so doing, historians have overlooked the history of those Romanians who lived or moved beyond the boundaries of the modern Romanian state. Rady goes on to explain that Romanian shepherds from Transylvania may well have been tending their flocks on the Great Hungarian Plain as early as the Middle Ages. Historical justification of the modern Romanian state, as Rady points out, has led to an incomplete history of the Romanian people.

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18 Maurice Pearton, 'Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician' in Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (eds), *Historians as Nation Builders: Central and South-East Europe*, Basingstoke and London, 1988, pp. 157–73 (169–70).

19 Jenő Szűcs, 'The Peoples of Medieval Hungary' in Ferenc Glatz (ed.), *Ethnicity and Society in Hungary*, *Etudes historiques hongroises*, 2, 1990, pp. 11–20 (11 and 20).

The 'historical justification' of the modern Romanian state to which Rady refers could also be described as a 'myth of territory', in which a nation's right to its present territory is justified by ancestral occupancy of the same land. In his recent taxonomy of myths, George Schöpflin has referred to a number of myths, including the 'myth of territory', which can be found alive and well in Central and Eastern Europe. I would like to refer here, however, to another myth to which Ungureanu alludes and which Schöpflin refers to as the 'myth of unjust treatment'. According to this myth, history has singled out a specific community for negative treatment. 'Implicit in this myth', according to Schöpflin, 'is that [...] Europe owes those who have suffered a special debt, that the victims of the suffering [...] suffered for the wider world and the wider world should recognize this'.[20]

This myth of unjust treatment and victimhood is very clear in Romanian historiographical writing. As a recent pamphlet published by the Romanian government states, 'The history of the Romanians is perhaps one of the most tormented in European history'.[21] This outlook is no less apparent in the historiography of inter-war foreign policy. In accounts of the diplomatic events leading up to the Second World War, Romania is traditionally portrayed as loyal to the Western powers. Only Western perfidy and appeasement of Germany finally forced Romania into the Axis camp in 1940. Such a view of Romania as the victim of outside forces casts Romania and her governments as passive and helpless. As Schöpflin points out, within the myth of unjust treatment, suffering is seen as the fate of the group and 'the motif of helplessness tends to be strong'.[22] This view of Romania's foreign relations was especially prevalent in the Communist period, during Romania's enforced isolation, but it is no less apparent in works produced since the fall of Communism during a period of strong expectations of Western help for Romania.[23]

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20 Schöpflin, 'The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths' (see note 1 above), pp. 19–35 (31).

21 *Romania: History*, Bucharest, undated, p. 1.

22 Schöpflin, 'The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths', p. 30.

23 An interesting case in point are the works of the prolific historian, Viorica Moisuc. See, for instance, her articles produced in the Communist period, such as 'Ofensiva Germaniei hitleriste pentru acapararea economiei României în perioada ianuarie 1938–mai 1940', *Revista română de studii internaţionale*, 4, 1971, 14, pp. 113–35. In 1991 she produced a book in which the blame for Romania's pre-war isolation is placed squarely on the West. Indeed, the reader is left with the impression that the West, owing to its appeasement policy, was a greater evil than Nazi Germany: Moisuc, *Premisele izolării politice a României, 1919–1940*, Bucharest, 1991, esp. pp. 331–72.

A similar myth of unjust treatment surrounds the notorious 'percentages agreement'. According to this 'myth', Churchill's agreement with Stalin of October 1944 to accord the Soviet Union 90 per cent influence in Romania in return for Britain having a 90 per cent interest in Greece led directly to Romania's incorporation into the Soviet-controlled Eastern Bloc. While Western Europe remained (or, indeed, in order that it could remain) free, Romania suffered Soviet domination. The corollary once again is that the West should bear the responsibility for Romania's present condition.[24]

Yet this view of Romania's relationship with the former 'Great Powers' is far from accurate. As the paper in this volume by Rebecca Haynes point out, Romania was far from being a passive victim of the Great Powers in the 1930s. Romanian diplomats skilfully sought economic and diplomatic advantages in their dealings with the Powers. Foreign Minister Grigore Gafencu's pursuit of economic benefits and a territorial guarantee from Germany led him to reject British overtures to create an anti-German alliance in Eastern Europe in 1939. As D. C. Watt has pointed out elsewhere, far from being a 'victim' of the West's unwilligness to assist South-East Europe, Romanian foreign-policy initiatives were a major factor in thwarting Britain's attempts to create an anti-Nazi bloc in the area.[25]

Likewise, in his paper in the first volume in this series, Maurice Pearton has discussed the infamous percentages agreement in the context of Britain's increasingly difficult relations with the US in 1944 and the realities of the growth of Soviet power in Eastern Europe.[26] The Romanian sense of victimization over the agreement also conveniently ignores Romania's active participation in the war against the Soviet Union from 1941 to 1944 and the decision taken by her own leaders, albeit probably unavoidable, to come to terms with the Red Army in August 1944. It was this decision to allow the Red Army into Romania (rather than to resist it)

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24 See, for example, Traian Golea, *Romania Beyond the Limits of Endurance — A Desperate Appeal to the Free World*, Miami Beach, FL, 1988, p. 8. This 'myth' has, if anything, become more powerful since the collapse of Communism. See, thus, Ioan Scurtu, 'Instaurarea regimurilor Democrat-Populare in statele din Europa Centrală şi de Sud-Est: O analiză comparativă' in Venera Achim (ed.), *6 Martie 1945: Începuturile comunizării României*, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 215–36.

25 D. Cameron Watt, 'Misinformation, Misconception, Mistrust: Episodes in British Policy and the Approach of War, 1938–1939' in Michael Bentley and John Stevenson (eds), *High and Low Politics in Modern Britain: Ten Studies*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 214–55.

26 Maurice Pearton, 'Puzzles about the Percentages' in Dennis Deletant (ed.), *Occasional Papers in Romanian Studies, No. 1*, London, 1995, pp.7–14. See also Dennis Deletant, 'British Policy towards Romania: 23 August 1944 – 6 March 1945' in Achim (ed.), *6 Martie 1945* (see note 24 above), pp. 102–14.

which speeded up the imposition of Soviet rule in the Balkans and Central Europe and helped seal the fate of Eastern Europe as a whole.

The 'myth of unjust treatment' has also attached itself to the events surrounding the revolution of 1989. According to this version of the myth, the people of Romania threw out the dictator in 1989 in the expectation of freedom and democracy, only to discover that the revolution had been 'hijacked' by a group of former party functionaries. As Peter Siani-Davies point out in his analysis of the 1996 elections, the victory of Emil Constantinescu and the PNŢ-CD was seen as the 'real' Romanian revolution, which swept away Iliescu and his cronies who had 'betrayed' and 'stolen' the 1989 revolution. In reality, however, all revolutions are inevitably 'stolen' as idealism and popular participation give way to the realities of power politics, and as 'mystique' gives way to 'politique'. Moreover, Iliescu and his companions in the Central Committee building in late December 1989 were just as crucial to the overthrow of Ceauşescu as the demonstrators outside on the streets, regardless of their ultimate objectives. A recent commentator has noted the unrealistic expectations which surrounded the events of December 1989.[27] The current emphasis on Romania's 'stolen revolution' is simply another aspect of the myth of unjust treatment, the corollary of which is that Europe (that is, the West) owes Romania a particular debt. As the above commentator has stated: 'Everybody hoped for a fast economic recovery, the more so as the developed West, too, was expected to support it [...] the Romanians expected a special prize, given that they made a revolution'.[28]

Another myth deserving scrutiny, and closely related to the myth of unjust treatment, concerns the solidly anti-Communist credentials of the Romanians. In his contribution here, Ungureanu points out the strength of armed resistance to the imposition of Communism after August 1944. This is borne out by Dennis Deletant in his discussion of repression during the Gheorghiu-Dej era.[29] Nevertheless, the Communists succeeded in polling some 20 per cent of the vote in the November 1946 election.[30] Mark Percival's contribution to this volume suggests that Soviet backing for Romanian claims to Transylvania may have been an important factor in this show of support for the Communists. Moreover, as R. V. Burks

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27 'What did people expect and hope from the revolution? Almost everything': Vladimir Pasti, *The Challenges of Transition: Romania in Transition*, Boulder, CO, 1997, p. 85.

28 Ibid., p. 88.

29 See also Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul comunist*, Bucharest, 1997, pp. 78–85.

30 Martyn Rady, *Romania in Turmoil: A Contemporary History*, London, 1992, pp. 32–6.

pointed out as early as 1966, the Romanian Communist Party's policy of independence from Moscow, especially with regard to industrialization, rejection of Soviet cultural models and cultivation of national traditions, must surely have raised the popularity of the party and its leaders.[31] It is also clear that Ceauşescu was popular during the early years of his regime. Following his decision to speak out about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, millions of Romanians joined the newly formed worker-guards organization.

Although the imposition of Russian-backed Communism was undoubtedly unpopular, 1940s Romania was surely ripe for social revolution.[32] The Romanians' relationship to Communism is a complex issue requiring careful scrutiny. The Communist myth of the Romanian people's revolutionary tradition should not give way to an equally unchallengeable anti-Communist myth which will prevent open discussion of this vital historical issue.

Nevertheless, as Ungureanu's contribution itself indicates, Romanian scholars are in the process of coming to terms with their national mythologies. A work recently produced by Lucian Boia scrutinizes the Communist regime's construction of Romanian history through the manipulation of myth and legend and examines how this distorted interpretation of Romanian history was used for political ends.[33]

But scrutiny of myths regarding Romania need by no means be confined only to Romanian scholars. Western researchers also have a rich mythology, or series of misunderstandings, with regard to Romania. In 1837, following visits to Paris and Berlin, the Romanian historian and future foreign minister Mihail Kogălniceanu wrote: 'Everywhere I have found that no one has the slightest true idea about Wallachia and Moldavia [...]. The smallest countries of Africa and America are better known than these two Principalities'.[34] It is a comment that is probably equally true today. This ignorance has, of course, been compounded by Romania's isolation during the Communist period. Even before the Communist era, however, Romania was a relatively little-known country for most other

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31 R. V. Burks, 'The Rumanian National Deviation: An Accounting' in Kurt London (ed.), *Eastern Europe in Transition*, Baltimore, MD, 1966, pp. 93–113.

32 Henry L. Roberts's classic work, *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, New Haven, CT, 1951, gives a vivid account of the grinding agrarian poverty, political violence and corrupt government of Romania in the decades preceding the imposition of Communism.

33 Lucian Boia, *Istorie şi mit in conştiinţa românească*, Bucharest, 1997.

34 Barbara Jelavich, 'Mihail Kogălniceanu: Historian as Foreign Minister, 1876–8' in Deletant and Hanak (eds), *Historians as Nation Builders* (see note 18 above), pp. 87–105 (89).

Europeans. As Maurice Pearton points out in his contribution to this volume, Romania was beyond the scope of Britain's immediate foreign policy and economic interests in the inter-war period. Britain, as a colonial power, had only limited diplomatic interest in Romania until the growth of German influence in Eastern Europe forced her to review her attitude towards Romania in 1939.

This relative lack of interest and knowledge with regard to Romania has at times led to some quite dramatic misunderstandings. In the 1970s, the British Government and Foreign Office fully accepted Ceauşescu's self-perpetuated myth of independence from the Soviet Union. Ceauşescu was fêted accordingly, culminating in his visit to London in 1978 and his award of an honorary knighthood. Faith in Romania's independence from the Soviet Union even led General Sir John Hackett to envisage anti-Soviet partisan activity in a number of East European countries, including Romania, bringing down the Soviet Bloc in a future war.[35] Be that as it may, the reality in the 1970s, as Mark Percival has pointed out elsewhere, was that Romania was playing a full part in the activities of the Warsaw Pact.[36]

Another Western myth pertaining to Eastern Europe in general, and Romania in particular, is that the area is fundamentally unstable, conflict-ridden and a threat to Western security. As Hugh Seton-Watson once put it, 'There is a belief, rather widespread in English-speaking countries, that the eastern half of Europe is inhabited by a number of endlessly quarrelling small nations whose conflicts keep endangering the quiet and comfort of Anglophones'.[37] Following the 1989 revolution, a number of books were published which perpetuated this image of a politically unstable Romania in which ethnic unrest and a cycle of military coups and weak parliamentary government were probably the best that could be expected.[38] A similar attitude is apparent in Paul Hockenos's work analysing the re-emergence of the right-wing in Eastern Europe since 1989. According to his melodramatic account of the political scene in Romania, 'post-communist Romanian nationalism has already shown a face far more menacing than that which underpinned Ceauşescu's particular brand of "national communism"' during the ethnic unrest in

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35 General Sir John Hackett et al., *The Third World War: A Future History*, London, 1978, p. 243.

36 Mark Percival 'Britain's "Political Romance" with Romania in the 1970s', *Contemporary European History*, 4, 1994, 1, pp. 67–87 (81–2).

37 Hugh Seton-Watson, 'On Trying to be a Historian of Eastern Europe' in Deletant and Hanak (eds), *Historians as Nation Builders*, pp. 1–15 (9).

38 See, for instance, the otherwise extremely useful works by Martyn Rady, *Romania in Turmoil* (see note 30 above), and by Tom Gallagher, *Romania after Ceauşescu: The Politics of Intolerance*, Edinburgh, 1995.

Târgu-Mureş in 1990.[39] Meanwhile, Hockenos claims that the short-comings of the 1989 revolution 'cast a black cloud over the flickering hope that finally, this time, Romania might wrest itself from its centuries-long history of despotism and ethnic strife'.[40] Hockenos gives the reader no illumination regarding the exact course of Romania's history of despotism, or how this might compare with the despotic histories of other European countries, let alone the 'centuries-long [...] ethnic strife', which this historian is hard-pressed to recount. Certainly, with the exception of the Târgu-Mureş violence in March 1990 and isolated incidents against members of the Roma minority, Romania's record in ethnic conflict compares extremely favourably with that of Northern Ireland or the activities of Basque separatists.[41]

Edward Said has argued in his book *Orientalism* that during the Western imperial period the Orient, especially the Islamic Middle East, came to be regarded as a barbarous, inferior area, to be contrasted with the civilization of the Occident.[42] In a similar fashion, Maria Todorova has argued that within Europe itself 'the Balkans have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the "European" and the "West" has been constructed'.[43] If, for the sake of argument, we regard Romania as part of the Balkans, the image of Romania often perpetuated by Western commentators both before and after 1989 would seem to justify Todorova's assertion.[44]

Connected to the above image of an unstable, somewhat 'barbarous', Romania is the Western 'myth' regarding Romania's apparent failure to 'modernize' and 'develop' her economic, political and social structures in line with Western institutions. In other words, there is a widely held 'myth' that Romania is a 'backward' country. Originally a 1960s social

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39 Paul Hockenos, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, London, 1993, pp. 167–209 (169).

40 Ibid., p. 170.

41 As Martyn Rady has pointed out with regard to ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe outside former Yugoslavia, 'Even in Transylvania, one of the region's greatest ethnic hotch-potches, communal violence has accounted so far for fewer lives then a bad day in Belfast': Rady, 'History and Eastern Europe', *Contemporary European History*, 1, 1992, 2, pp. 199–202 (202).

42 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1979.

43 Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford, 1997, p. 188.

44 According to the French secretary to the Prince of Moldavia, based at Iaşi in 1785–87, the inhabitants of Moldavia 'at first seemed to me barbarous, the costume absurd, the uniforms ragged, the houses holes of mud, the priests beggarly and hypocritical riff-raff, and the language frightful': Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, CA, 1994, pp. 293–4.

science concept, used to analyse Third-World societies and their relationship to the world's economically powerful nations, modernization theory has subsequently influenced, consciously or otherwise, many works dealing with the countries of the former Communist Bloc.

Modernization theorists have been greatly influenced by earlier liberal economic theorists, in particular Adam Smith, who held that peoples and societies had a natural propensity towards economic growth, political and social 'development', and 'progress' in general. Contact with Western 'modernized' societies would thus produce similarly 'progressive' systems throughout the world. Although various internal 'institutional perversions' might block this natural development, elimination of these factors, so the theory ran, would restore the conditions for natural growth and development. According to this version of the modernization theory, therefore, the world's modernized and economic 'core' acts as an incentive to change in the rest of the world.[45] This theory has also been greatly influenced by the Darwinian theory of evolution. Just as mankind developed from primitive ape to complex (and supposedly rational) modern man, human societies are regarded as naturally progressing from the primitive to the more complex and rational.

According to Immanual Wallerstein's 'world-system theory', however, the 'core' of modernized, industrial Western nations has had the effect of suppressing the 'periphery' of undeveloped, agricultural countries. Through unequal trading relations which exploit the poorer countries as a source of cheap agricultural products and raw materials, the 'periphery' has become a 'neo-colony' of the West. According to this theory, therefore, the modernized 'core' acts as an impediment to growth on the 'periphery'. The fate of Eastern Europe from the late Middle Ages onwards in relation to Western Europe is held to be analagous to that of today's so-called 'Third World' in relation to the industrialized countries.[46]

Clearly, the concepts of 'modernization' and 'development' are useful and important. Debates about whether Romania should follow the West's path of industrialization or retain her more traditionally based agricultural

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45 Important exponents of this theory in relation to Eastern Europe are Iván T. Berend and György Ránki. See, for instance, their *The European Periphery and Industrialization 1780–1914*, Cambridge, 1982, esp. pp. 21–7.

46 For a discussion of Wallerstein's theory and its shortfalls, see Martyn Rady, 'Core and Periphery: Eastern Europe' in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *National Histories and European History*, London, 1993, pp. 163–82. For a discussion of Wallerstein's theory with regard to Wallachia, see Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of a Balkan Colony*, New York, 1976.

social structures have occupied Romanian intellectuals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[47]

There are a number of criticisms of modernization theory, however, made even as early as the 1970s. First, there is no consensus over the precise meaning of the term 'modernization', and hence of its opposite, 'backwardness'. For some, 'modernization' is equated with industrialization and man's technological control over his environment. For others it is a 'total transformation of all aspects of human existence, ranging from individual personality to international relations': a definition surely so broad as to be almost meaningless.[48] Secondly, proponents of modernization theory evaluate the progress of nations according to how closely this corresponds to the norms of the West. In other words, the Western experience of 'modernity' is held to have universal applicability. Little attempt is normally made to define or specifically describe the course of Western modernization. 'Modernization' hence appears as a vague and unspecified process taking place over several centuries. It is usually not clarified which countries make up the modernized 'West' to which Romania is being contrasted; still less is any attempt made to differentiate between the experiences of modernization in the various Western countries. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that the timing and stages of development in the West are repeatable in other 'developing' nations. Critics of modernization theory have also argued that the role of traditional institutions in modernizing societies has been misunderstood. Rather than disappearing as modernization marches forward, 'traditional institutions have proved durable, flexible, and long lasting, adapting to change rather than being overwhelmed by it. They have served as filters of modernization and even as agents of modernization'.[49] More specifically, proponents of modernization theory have failed to take into account Otto Hintze's paradox. As Hintze points out, it was the states which failed to succumb to the 'modernizing' and 'progressive' forces of absolutism in the

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47 For the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century debates on this topic, see Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947*, Oxford, 1994, pp. 55–90 and 292–335. The Communist period witnessed a concerted attempt to 'catch-up' with the West in terms of industrialization and 'modernization'. For an analysis of this, see Trond Gilberg, *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceauşescu's Personal Dictatorship*, Boulder, CO, 1990.

48 Dean C. Tipps, 'Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 15, 1973, pp. 199–226 (203).

49 Howard J. Wiarda, 'Concepts and Models in Comparative Politics: Political Development Reconsidered - and Its Alternatives' in Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul Erickson (eds), *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*, New York, 1991, pp. 32–53 (37).

eighteenth century, such as Britain, and which preserved their antique representative institutions, which provided the breakthrough to parliamentary democracy in the nineteenth century.[50]

Some crucial aspects of modernization theory have simply proved, over time, and with the application of some sorely needed empirical research, to have been plain wrong! In 1959, Martin Lipset proposed that democracy appears as countries develop economically. A recent study, however, has concluded that 'there are no grounds to believe that economic development breeds democracy'. Democracy may, or indeed may not, emerge at any level of a country's economic development.[51]

Yet despite the many criticisms levelled against modernization and development theory, the modernization 'imperative' has crept into numerous Western works on Romanian society and indeed many other societies. Such works are very often marred by a naive teleological determinism which frequently succumbs to the worst excesses of Marxist vocabulary. Individuals, classes and institutions which are not expected to be present at any given moment in the process of modernization can thus be branded as 'unhistorical' or as 'forces of reaction' in the best traditions of a Ceauşescu speech. As Tony Judt has pointed out in his critique of modern social history, instead of the Whig idea of history as progress, 'we are offered "the modern world"; and all incidents along the line are either causally linked to some stage in the process or, where this is wholly implausible, declared to be "atavistic"'.[52]

Yet, in reality, it is surely non-development and lack of 'modernization' which has been the global norm until very recently. What requires explanation is not the failure of Eastern Europe to 'develop' but the economic breakthrough to a capitalist system within *specific* areas of

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50 Otto Hintze, 'Typologie der ständischen Verfassungen des Abendlandes' in Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung*, 3rd edn, Göttingen, 1970, pp. 120–39 (136–7).

51 Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, 'Modernization Theories and Facts', *World Politics*, 49, 1997 (January), pp. 155–83 (167).

52 Tony Judt, 'A Clown in Regal Purple: Social History and the Historians', *History Workshop*, 7, 1979 (Spring), pp. 66–94 (68). For additional examples of modernization theory as applied, consciously or unconsciously, to Romania and Eastern Europe, see Andrew C. Janos, 'Modernization and Decay in Historical Perspective: The Case of Romania' in Keith Jowitt (ed.), *Social Change in Romania, 1860–1940: A Debate on Development in a European Nation*, Berkeley, CA, 1978, pp. 72–117; Paul E. Michelson, *Conflict and Crisis: Romanian Political Development, 1861–1871*, New York and London, 1987; David Turnock, *The Romanian Economy in the Twentieth Century*, London and Sydney, 1986; Daniel Chirot (ed.), *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages until the Early Twentieth Century*, Berkeley, CA, 1989.

Western Europe. As Robert Brenner has pointed out, it was England and the Netherlands alone which underwent a capitalist breakthrough in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[53] Even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, industrial development has been more marked in some areas of Western Europe than in others. Large areas of France, surely a 'core' Western country, have continued to retain a largely 'pre-modern' agrarian character well into the present century.

Political, social and economic 'modernization' on the Western model, however, remains something of a moral imperative within the literature concerning Romania. The supposed failures of successive Romanian governments to achieve these 'standards' has resulted in continual censure by Western commentators.[54]

Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that increasing access to resources both in and about Romania will lead to a growing understanding of Romania's history and of her contemporary situation by Western scholars. This volume is a start in this direction. The School of Slavonic and East European Studies, to which all the contributors to this volume are connected, is an important component in the attempt to increase public awareness of this hitherto poorly understood and under-researched country.

The study of the Romanian language, history and society has been built up over the decades since the School's foundation in 1915 by a number of distinguished scholars. R. W. Seton-Watson, one of the School's founders, produced his classic *History of the Roumanians* in 1934. In 1945, Professor Grigore Nandriş produced the first substantial manual for learning Romanian, *Colloquial Romanian*, recently updated by Professor Dennis Deletant in 1983 and again in 1995. In the post-war decades, Romanian studies at the School have gained an international reputation under Professor Eric Tappe and Dennis Deletant, the current Professor of Romanian Studies.[55] It is to be hoped that the School will continue to provide a focus and meeting-place for Romanian studies within Britain and Europe in the decades to come.

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53 Robert Brenner, 'Economic Backwardness in Eastern Europe in the Light of Developments in the West' in Chirot (ed.), *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe* (see note 52 above), pp. 15–52 (50).

54 This underlies much of the otherwise useful literature produced since 1989. See, for instance, Tom Gallagher's *Romania after Ceauşescu* (see note 38 above), p. 233: 'Clearly, Romania is not moving in the direction of the West European political systems'.

55 For the School's contribution to the study of Romania and other countries of Eastern Europe, see I. W. Roberts, *History of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies: 1915–1990*, London, 1991.

The Fate of Romanians' Contemporary Historical Myths: Do They Have a Future? A Historiographical Review

Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu

> History is like a little girl, for people to dress up as they fancy.
>
> (Hu Shi)

There are no inventories of Romanian historical myths, unless one wishes to include the textbooks used by Romanian pupils in school. This lack is a major blow to the credibility of Romanian historiography, since describing and analysing historical myths implies a degree of awareness as to what the more accurate representations of the national history might be. The changes in the Romanian political system in 1989 should have cleared the way for an unbiased discussion of historical myths, but unfortunately this has not occurred. Answers to certain important historical questions and corrections of misinterpretations of Romania's past are still awaited. For the time being, therefore, it appears that Romanian historiography has not fully delivered itself of the burden of myths. As well as their use in justifying a particular interpretation of the past, historical myths also have a role in shaping and explaining the present. Historical 'explanations' continue to be frequently employed in contemporary Romanian political discourse, thus demonstrating the mobilizing appeal of myth within Romanian society.

Historical myths perform a definite historiographical role by re-shaping history into a comfortable and bearable past. Through myths, a nation can come to terms with its guilt and sins of omission. Pointing them out and analysing such myths, therefore, is an important exercise for the historian. The contemporary Romanian philosopher, Andrei Pleşu, has described this process as 'a matter of national maturity', which may eventually foster the transformation of Romanian culture into 'a culture of truth'.[1] Pleşu thus

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1 Andrei Pleşu, 'Rigorile ideii naţionale şi legitimitatea universalului' in Pleşu, *Chipuri şi măsti ale tranziţiei*, Bucharest, 1996, pp. 217–26.

alludes to the link between national consciousness and the understanding of history. When the former is 'ripe', Pleşu believes, a nation will accept its own history for what it is. At this point, myths will cease to have an appeal. Such a step may appear difficult, since accepting the past for what it is eventually ends in shattering entrenched opinions and mentalities. It also engenders historical relativism, since if there are no secure interpretations, past events seem to dissolve into a mass of uncertainties.

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In defining historical myths I am indebted to William McNeill's interpretations published in 1986.[2] In their archaic meaning, 'myths' are stories or narratives which confer meaning and moral value to the lives of individuals or social groups. Myths codify belief and provide prototypes for individual and group behaviour. Indeed, McNeill points out that political culture cannot function in the absence of myths, which represent 'an instrument for piloting human groups in their encounters with one another and with the natural environment'. As these sorts of myths are usually transposed in a narrative, they become 'mythistories' — transhistorical constructs providing collective identity, vision and coherence to a human group. Greco-Roman myths and *Der Niebelungenlied* would fall into this category, as described by McNeill.

There is, however, a second group of narrativistic explanations of the past which all historians have to deal with, that is, historical myths. McNeill describes these as 'allegedly empirical generalizations that either have not been or cannot be supported by the evidence'. They represent re-creations of the past 'as we want it to be' instead of a Rankean reading of the past, that is, *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. Imagination colours the past, theory takes the place of explanation, presumption becomes evidence and replaces logic. According to McNeill, historical myths result from 'the efforts to provide "factual" underpinning for metahistorical theories, disguised as explanations of the historical', or from loose and fallacious historical reasoning, and are deliberate attempts to deceive.

Historical reality, by contrast, provides an analysis of the past, supporting generalizations with empirical evidence. Historical reality avoids camouflaging metaphysical hypotheses as propositions of fact and adheres to the canons of logical argumentation.

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2　For what follows, see William McNeill, *Mythistory and Other Essays*, Chicago, IL, 1986; some of his conclusions have been published in McNeill, 'Mythistory or Truth: Myth, History, and Historians', *American Historical Review*, 91, 1986, 1, pp. 1–10.

Romanian historical myths are impressive in number and in their narrative quality. Yet almost all the historical myths one can come across when browsing through a high school textbook are relatively new: they date from the mid-nineteenth century. These myths reflect the vision of the past held by the 1848 revolutionary generation and are intimately linked to their political ideals. Most of these myths were handed down into the Communist era without substantial change. They were simply remodelled to support a totalitarian ideology and to provide arguments to justify the political beliefs and aims of the Communist regime.

The most interesting and reliable accounts on the subject of Romanian historical myths are written by Anglo-Saxon and German historians, rather than by Romanians. This is by no means a paradox, since it seems likely that those born and raised in a different political and cultural tradition to that of the Romanians would develop a more objective approach to the question of Romanian historical myths. Geographical and cultural distance may well help to nurture objectivity.

Klaus P. Beer[3] and Manfred Stoy,[4] for instance, have shown interest in the relationship between Romanian historiography and ideology over the past fifty years. Stephen Fischer-Galați[5] and Paul Michelson[6] reacted promptly to the proliferation of historical myths in 1980s Romania and tried to detect their ideological roots and possible consequences.

Fischer-Galați has pointed out the ideological role which myths played under the Communists to legitimize their rule. None of these myths had been invented by the Communists themselves, however; they had a history of their own. According to Fischer-Galați, 'the historical mythology is ultimately rooted in the search for legitimacy by Romanian rulers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.[7] Fischer-Galați singles out two main aspects of this family of myths as inherited from Romanian nineteenth century historians: an external aspect, designed to justify Romanian historical rights to possession of Bessarabia, the Bucovina, Transylvania, the whole of the Banat and the Dobrudja; and an internal aspect, in which

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3 Klaus P. Beer, 'Die Interdependenz von Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik in Rumänien von 1945 bis 1980', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 32, 1984, 2, pp. 241–74.

4 Manfred Stoy, 'Politik und Geschichtswissenschaft in Rumänien, 1965–1980: Die Historiographie über den Zeitraum von der Gründung der Fürstenthümer Moldau und Walachei bis 1859', *Südostforschungen*, 41, 1982, pp. 219–59.

5 Stephen Fischer-Galați, 'Myths in Romanian History', *East European Quarterly*, 15, 1981, 3, pp. 327–34.

6 Paul Michelson, 'Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development', *International Journal of Rumanian Studies*, 5, 1987, 2, pp. 5–33.

7 Fischer-Galați, 'Myths in Romanian History', p. 328.

the argumentation of current policies are justified in terms of their relationship to the so-called 'national and revolutionary traditions' of the Romanian nation. Romanian historical rights were derived thus from the ancestral Romanians, be they Thracians, Dacians, Romans, Daco-Romans — that is, Proto-Romanians. Since they had continuously ruled over territories which later proved to be inhabited by Romanians, modern Romania's borders should be extended to include them also. Greater Romania, created at the end of the First World War, was subsequently justified by this unsubstantiated argument. This historical mythology was also meant to represent the highest peak of Romanian history itself, an accomplishment of historic struggles against malevolent neighbours and the fulfilment of a historical task. The history of the Romanians would therefore appear to be the embodiment of the Romanians' efforts to secure their territorial rights while facing fierce opposition from external and internal enemies.

One of the most widespread mythic narrations pertaining to this family of myths which Fischer-Galaţi singles out runs as follows: the Romanians, 'History's Cinderellas', were prevented from attaining national liberation, political unification and social justice by wicked neighbours who either tried to dominate them or conquer the Principalities. The Habsburg Empire (including Hungary, or Austro-Hungary), the Ottoman Empire and Russia (either tsarist Russia or the Soviets) represent perfect examples of what the Romanians can expect from their neighbours. Since the Romanians were absorbed in fighting against enemies who surrounded them on all sides, they were unable to develop a national culture simultaneously with their Western peers. Their neighbours' territorial greed, therefore, determined the Romanians' cultural backwardness, severed Romanian culture from that of the West and consequently forced the Romanians to rely only on eastern, that is, Orthodox, cultural values. As a result of having to fight for their own political existence, the Romanians were denied the opportunity to make major cultural advances.[8]

The history of Romanian nationalism and national consiousness, as it has been written thus far, has engendered a host of historical myths. Let us browse through some of those which seem to enjoy nationwide acceptance: the claim that modern Romanian nationalism is rooted in the Daco-Roman experience; that Michael the Brave possessed a developed sense of national awareness which guided his policy of unifying the Principalities with Transylvania, and which in turn led to the inevitable formation of Greater Romania after the First World War; and that the goal of a Greater Romania has been the essential part of the programme and

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8   Ibid.

aspirations of Romanian intellectuals and political leaders since the early years of the nineteenth century, to name but a few. Romanian historians become very emotional when discussing national heroes, for a great number of them regard Romania's past as a series of overlapping heroic biographies. According to such a version of events, Romanian history can be construed as a succession of personal stories, deeply embedded with an acute sense of 'Romanian awareness'. It is questionable, however, whether one can depict medieval Romanian rulers and subsequent political or social leaders as national heroes by virtue of their commitment to a presumed national or nationalist struggle. Vlad the Impaler has been portrayed as a national hero committed to law and order, not to mention the defense of the national patrimony against Ottoman and Hungarian 'imperialism'. Stephan the Great has been pictured as a defender of Romanian rights against Ottoman and Polish expansionism. Tudor Vladimirescu has been transformed into the leader of a Romanian revolution, both preceding and contemporary to the Greek revolution. Outstanding figures of 1848 such as Nicolae Bălcescu, Avram Iancu, Mihail Kogălniceanu and C. A. Rosetti are marked as people obsessed with the accomplishment of the national unification of all Romanians into an independent state.

There is, therefore, much truth in Dennis Deletant's observation that 'Official post-1960s Romanian historiography regards the achievement of the "national unitary state" in 1919 as historically inevitable and every step in its realization is interpreted as preordained'.[9] Romanian historiography conceives of the formation of Greater Romania as a single, pre-determined process spanning several centuries, and posits that, simultaneously, the Romanians' conflicts with their neighbours fostered the development of a Romanian national consciousness.

Paul E. Michelson has pointed out the methodological fallacies which lead Romanian historians to assert the existence of a determinist process which finally engendered both state and nation. According to Romanian historians, this process took place over the previous two centuries, and they define the Romanian state in Rankean terms, that is, they represent the state as the primary vehicle of historical change. But, as Michelson points out, the primacy of the state 'places the cart before the horse', as there was no Romanian state as such before 1866, namely for half the period in question. On the contrary, the successful creation of a Romanian national state should rather be ascribed to the action of individuals and to

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9   Dennis Deletant, 'The Past in Contemporary Romania: Some Reflections on Current Romanian Historiography', *Slovo*, 1, 1988, 2, pp. 77–91 (78).

specific political circumstances. These factors brought the Romanian state into being, and not vice versa.[10]

Thus, one of the most all-pervasive accounts of Romanian history is to regard 'Romanian development as part of a relentless movement towards national state unity'. This 'relentless movement', however, is nothing but a metaphysical construction used to justify a historical argument. This teleological approach to Romanian development cannot stand as an accurate explanation.[11]

Another persistent obsession amongst Romanian historians is the so-called 'process of national renaissance and/or awakening', which falls, according to Michelson, who bases his account on Mircea Eliade's taxonomy of myths, into the category of myths of rebirth.[12] As a precursor to the century of national awakening, the eighteenth century has been universally depicted by Romanian historians as an era of unmitigated decline and decay. Interestingly enough, the Romanian eighteenth century never figured among the four national 'golden epochs' which Ceauşescu believed Romanian modernity to consist of: 1859–66 (the reign of Prince Alexandru I. Cuza), 1881–1916 (the Kingdom of Romania under King Charles I), the inter-war period (1918–39) and the Communist epoch itself.

Romanian historians generally regard the era of the Romanian 'national renaissance' to be closely connected with national revolutions. Ever since Romanian nineteenth-century politicians and historians began to regard the 1848 revolution as paving the way for Romanian national development, thus apparently breaking with the traditions of the past, Romanian historiography has shown an increasing tendency to interpret modern history as an uninterrupted chain of revolutions, whether political, social, or economic.[13] When the Communist regime began to seek historical legitimacy, historians were set to work seeking 'evidence' of the continuous socialist and revolutionary commitment of the masses. Such historians had only to trim the nineteenth-century Romantic vision of history, according to which modernization and state-formation were brought to fruition by means of successive revolutions (1848, 1859, 1866, 1918 and so on). As a result of this interpretation, Romanian modern history appears fragmented, the natural flow of events shattered by sudden changes which profoundly affected social structures and collective

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10 Michelson, 'Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development', p. 12.

11 Ibid., p. 13.

12 Ibid., pp. 14–17.

13 For a comprehensive review on nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalist historiography, see Al. Zub, 'Istorie şi mit in epoca modernă' in Zub, *Istorie şi finalitate*, Bucharest, 1991, pp. 36–53 (English version in *International Journal of Rumanian Studies*, 5, 1987, 2, pp. 35–58).

mentalities. Instead of reading the past as it appears to have been — that is, rarely interrupted by riots, uprisings or court-plots — Communist historians strove to invent a revolutionary past which broke with historical tradition. According to this view, the element of continuity was the revolutionary consciousness itself, or as Ceauşescu put it, 'a dialectical comprehension of Romanian history'.

Let us not debate the ontological basis of the so-called 'revolutionary consciousness'. It is extremely difficult to find examples of such an awareness, since Romanians rarely seem to have been revolutionary by nature. 'The Romanian component of the East European revolutionary tradition is remarkably small', as Fischer-Galaţi asserts.[14] By definition, national revolutions should have been instigated by the whole of the Romanian nation: peasants, workers, intellectuals, the middle class and representatives of the Orthodox clergy. Contemporary documents, however, demonstrate that this was far from being the case. The Romanian peasantry, the presumed agent of revolution, has generally been unsupportive of any revolution, either in 1848 or thereafter. The peasantry's adherence and support for the national goals of leaders such as Bălcescu or Rosetti depended on the quality of the relationship between peasants and landlords, or their agents, and between the peasantry and the foreigners enjoying economic and social privileges in their midst. 'It was seldom pro anything', writes Fischer-Galaţi, referring to the ambiguity of the peasantry's commitment to the national cause.[15] An identification by the peasantry of their specific socio-economic aspirations with their rulers' political projects cannot be historically demonstrated. On the contrary, the peasants regarded such projects, and modernization in general, with growing hostility, since modernization was perceived as leading to economic and social changes at the expense of more traditional ways of life.

This lack of a social and revolutionary tradition among the peasantry is also fundamentally true of the workers. Working-class movements were largely apolitical and tended to take the form of trade unions rather than class parties. In the few instances when workers' organizations adopted a clear political stance, their character was hardly militantly left-wing revolutionary. Some workers joined the Social Democratic Party before the First World War. During the inter-war period, however, a large number of workers registered with different right-wing parties, such as the League of National Christian Defence or the Iron Guard. Together with students and members of the middle class, many industrial workers joined the latter,

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14 Fischer-Galaţi, 'Myths in Romanian History', p. 330.
15 Ibid., p. 331.

and espoused a xenophobic anti-Communism as their expression of Romanian patriotism. Hence one can argue that the Romanian workers had no clear orientation towards a specific 'working-class movement'. Indeed, even the historical existence of a working class cannot be traced back much further than the last decade of the nineteenth century. Hence, the 1848 revolution cannot be ascribed to their political activities. Indeed, the more one studies the social status of participants in the nineteenth-century revolutions, the more the complete lack of broadly based national participation has to be acknowledged.[16]

I have already mentioned the reasons why the Communists formulated a mythic history of the Romanians. The Romanian peasantry, workers and intellectuals were seldom responsive to Communism. Their attitude, as the history of Communist repression clearly demonstrates, did not change significantly after the Communist Party seized power after the Second World War. The Romanians' resistance to Communist rule gave birth to the longest armed insurgency in the Eastern Bloc, from 1945 to around 1964. A large number of people withstood and fought back against the Securitate and the military. They paid for their struggle with thousands of lives. This widespread resistance to the imposition of Communism forced the Communist Party to reinvent the Party's history. In other words, in order to overcome their unpopularity, Communist ideologues resorted to finding allies in the past. By so doing, the regime sought to claim legitimacy as the inheritors of Romania's historical traditions. The history of the Romanians thus became the prehistory of the Romanian Communist Party.

In an effort to secure popular support for the 'socialist transformation of Romania', Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceauşescu sought to identify their rule with that of well-known figures from Romania's past. This process later became essential for them in the face of growing Soviet enmity. Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceauşescu identified themselves with Romania's 'national heroes', who had, allegedly, stood for social justice and the preservation of the Romanian patrimony against hostile foreign forces. They adopted for themselves spurious titles such as 'heirs of the patriotic leaders'. Past events were distorted in order to back up, explain and justify the realities of contemporary Communism. Once political friendship with the USSR was replaced, from 1964, by 'national Communism', justification of Communist rule came to form the very core of Romanian official historiography. This Communist version of history filtered throughout society by way of the history textbooks used in schools during the Communist period. Consequently, this interpretation of

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16 Ibid.

Romanian history is still very much apparent today. Just as the Communist leader was regarded as the embodiment of the nation state, so the Romanian Communist Party and its leaders assumed the role of executors of the historic legacy and presumed aims of the Romanian nation. Hence the past had to be adapted to contemporary ideological needs, and later to the political whims of Communist leaders. The only scholars available to meet the demands of the Communist Party were historians, who were ready and indeed sometimes even eager to produce a new and ideologically relevant reading of the past.[17]

Understanding the reasons for the survival of historical myths in Romania can perhaps provide an answer to the question posed in the title of this chapter. Paul Michelson has listed the following as the most important reasons for the continuation of these myths:

The precariousness of the Romanian state's existence. This precariousness is beyond doubt given that during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the Romanians have been surrounded by potentially hostile neighbours. This 'destiny', as some contemporary historians like to put it, has nourished an acute sense of political and cultural uncertainty. This uncertainty has led to what might be called today 'the national identity complex'. This complex is revealed in public discourse in rhetorical questions, such as 'Are the Romanians Europeans, or not?'. The search for an answer to this question has stirred up a fashionable intellectual debate in the 1990s.

The relatively late entry of Romania into the mainstream of European modernization, and consequently into the common consciousness of other European peoples. As Romanian scholars began to acknowledge that there were significant cultural differences between Romania and the 'core' Western countries, they also became aware of the effects which these differences had on the image of Romania in the rest of Europe. The widespread feeling among Romanian intellectuals that Romanian culture would have to 'catch up' with that of the West added to their sense of deep political and cultural insecurity.

The extreme intellectualization of Romanian politics is closely related to the above phenomena. The process of cultural modernization, and its consequent problems, led many intellectuals to consider the adaptation to Western cultural standards either as dangerous to the so-called 'national spiritual core', or as very necessary for the allegedly non-European Romanian culture. Disputes regarding Romanian culture very quickly

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17 For a general analysis on the role played by the Romanian intelligentsia, see Katherine Verdery's *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania*, Berkeley, CA, 1991.

moved from the intellectual domain into the political arena. For more than a century of parliamentary life, from the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth century, Romanian politics has been marked by discussions regarding major cultural directions.

The complete political involvement of Romanian intellectuals. Intellectuals appealed to history as the ultimate argument in their assertions. Recourse to history became a rhetorical weapon and a behavioural stereotype of Romanian intellectuals after 1848. This could be accomplished only by resorting to historical myths in order to strengthen the arguments. Nationalist ideology in the inter-war period, as well as under the Communists, tended to further amplify the creation of historical myths.[18]

The cultural shock of fast and incomplete modernization and the intellectualization of Romanian politics remain important cultural issues. After 1948, the Communist regime continued the thorough politicization of national history and historiography, which eventually produced an almost complete distortion of the past. As Dennis Deletant has pointed out, the Communist regime's 'manipulation of the past was so blatant in much of what poses as Romanian historiography that young Romanians have remained largely ignorant of the historical basis of their national identity'.[19] Furthermore, none of the factors which have caused Romanian historical myths to survive have vanished. On the contrary, their number has increased because of their extensive use as justification in contemporary political debates.

I therefore suspect Romanian myths to be perennial. The current status of Romanian historiography supports my scepticism. This, however, should not deter scholars from undertaking basic historical research, in order to attempt to prevent the spread of historical myths.

As Frederick Kellogg pointed out in 1990, in spite of a rich treasury of outstanding national histories, by Nicolae Iorga or C. C. Giurescu, for example, there is 'no pivotal survey of the Romanians from earliest times to the present'.[20]

Reference tools of all sorts are still missing, thus rendering the task of writing a national compendium of Romanian history well-nigh impossible. A series of documentary collections and updated critical editions of medieval and early modern sources are yet to be published. Financial

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18 Michelson, 'Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development', pp. 5–8.
19 Dennis Deletant, 'The Past in Contemporary Romania: Some Reflections on Recent Romanian Historiography', in László Péter (ed.), *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, Boulder, CO, 1992, pp. 133–58 (156).
20 Frederick Kellogg, *A History of Romanian Historical Writing*, Bakersfield, CA, 1990, pp. 106ff.

constraints are little excuse for not accomplishing these elementary methodological tasks.

Many regional and national aspects of Romanian modern history, whence most historical myths stem, merit closer scrutiny. An institutional history (modern bureaucratic systems, communications, banking, administrative bodies and so on), including both formal and informal types of social association, also need to be studied. The few histories currently available are out of date or coloured by Marxist interpretations. A reassessment of modern social history is also essential. The history of social and political categories, urban and rural history and demographic history are areas Romanian historians need to explore. Despite the focus on peasants' and workers' history in the past fifty years, their role in Romania's modern development has yet to be disclosed. In Paul Michelson's words, 'because of the too-frequent need to force the peasant into the Procrustean bed of Marxist analysis', the peasantry's true role in Romanian history has not been fully explored. Meanwhile, the same holds true for the history of the Romanian working class.[21]

Historical myths also prevent historians from pursuing unbiased research into the scope and degree of external influences on Romania's modern development. Even today, 'the tendency of Romanian historians to concentrate mainly on outstanding accomplishments of Romanians and to mention foreigners only in passing or as challenges to Romanian continuity and ethnic unity' remains widespread.[22] Original research into the nature of Romanian intellectual and cultural history and the relationship between culture and modern politics would therefore be most appropriate. Social and cultural history are closely related to the study of collective mentalities, ranging from the analysis of the so-called *esprit publique* to attitudes towards marriage, sex and children.

One of the forms the 'national identity complex' takes within the realm of historiography is the emphasis on national histories and the consequent lack of substantial regional histories. The same complex can be blamed for delaying an accurate assessment of the role which ethnic and cultural minorities have played in the recent past of the Romanian Principalities and of the modern Romanian state. The writing of impartial biographies of medieval and modern political and cultural personalities is also long overdue.

Interdisciplinary methods of research will surely help scholars disclose more of the cultural roots of historical myths, thus providing the means to understand them properly. Indeed, the whole methodological core of

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21 Michelson, 'Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development', p. 31.
22 Kellogg, *A History of Romanian Historical Writing*, p. 108.

Romanian historical research needs to undergo major structural changes. As long as historical researchers only seek to expose facts, regardless of their context, and pay no attention to methodologies and the results of research from the social sciences, modernizing an ailing historiography will remain a dream. Interdisciplinary research may help to change the atrophied landscape of Romanian historiograpy into a more realistic image of the past. These new methodological approaches could, for instance, be used in conjunction with fresh historical research into the much-neglected 'black centuries' of Romanian history: the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which received inadequate scrutiny during the Communist era. The 'historiographical haze', as Michelson has defined the current condition of Romanian historical writing, is due to the lack of regard for the benefits of interdisciplinarity, together with the continued respect paid to the Marxist conceptual framework.[23]

This is only a minor part of what Romanian historians will have to confront when struggling against the symbolic power of historical myths and aiming to accurately research a misty past. For 'mist' is what most historical myths have produced since the end of the nineteenth century. I am, therefore, unsure as to whether Romanian historiography will be able to dismantle its historical myths, given how painful this process may be, or whether these myths will continue to have a secure cultural future. I can as yet, therefore, offer no definite answer to the question posed by the title of this chapter.

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23 Michelson, 'Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development', p. 31.

Romanian Shepherds on the Great Hungarian Plain in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Martyn Rady

There can scarcely be subjects more given to historical and political controversy than the ethnogenesis and settlement of the Romanian people. To begin with, there is the familiar debate over whether the modern Romanians are the descendants of migrants coming from south of the Danube or whether they represent an autochthonous population group. Within the autochthony school itself, however, two historiographical trends are evident. The first of these lays emphasis upon the Roman origin of the Romanians; the second stresses the pure Getic element in, as it were, the collective Romanian gene pool. According to this second school, which acquired prominence in Romanian historiography during the 1980s, the Romanians are the direct descendants of the Geto-Dacians, who acquired the language but never interbred with the Roman conquerors.[1]

Nevertheless, two contrasting opinions are evident even within the Getic school concerning the early history of the Romanian people. On the one hand it is alleged that, following the evacuation of the legions in AD 271, the Romance-speaking population took refuge in the fastnesses of Transylvania. Only much later, in a process lasting from roughly the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, did they 'dismount' on the plains of Wallachia and Moldavia.[2] On the other hand, it is claimed that substantial pockets of Romance-speaking Getes survived for most of the Dark Ages in the lowlands north of the Danube and in the Dobruja. The Romanian princes from Transylvania who entered Moldavia and Wallachia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries erected their states, therefore, on top of an already existing Romanian population.[3]

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1 Dennis Deletant, 'The Past in Contemporary Romania: Some Reflections on Recent Romanian Historiography' in László Péter (ed.), *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, Boulder, CO and New York, 1992, pp. 133–58.

2 This approach is typified by Constantin C. Giurescu, *Transylvania in the History of Romania: An Historical Outline*, London, undated, esp. chapter 5.

3 See thus Şerban Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, Bucharest, 1993, pp. 56–8; Stefan Pascu, *Voivodatul Transilvaniei*, 4 vols, Bucharest, 1972–89, III,

All the theories outlined above argue an ancient and intimate historical relationship between the lands and populations of Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia. In this respect, they all perform a discrete political purpose by vindicating the construction of the modern Romanian state out of the fusion in 1918 of Transylvania with the Regat. Nevertheless, the partisan history of a state often has as its consequence the partial history of a nation. This is particularly the case with regard to Romanian historiography. By seeking to establish a congruence between state and nation, Romanian historians have tended to overlook those of their countrymen who have in the past lived or moved beyond the political boundaries of Romania.

The Romanian shepherds of the Great Hungarian Plain represent a population group which, although small, dwelled for part of the year outside the border of modern Romania. Moreover, by traversing east to west in the search for pastures, these shepherds migrated in an opposite direction to that which has always been politically and historiographically fashionable. For these reasons, both in Romanian and Hungarian scholarship, the story of the Romanian shepherds of the Plain has been hitherto largely confined to ethnographic studies.

It would be entirely reasonable to suppose that even as early as the Middle Ages Romanian shepherds brought their flocks down from Transylvania's Bihor Mountains (Erdélyi Szigethegység) to winter on the Great Hungarian Plain. The Plain was traditionally the homeland of semi-nomadic tribes, such as Pechenegs and Cumans, and until the fourteenth century nomadism may, along with transhumance, have also been a characteristic of Romanian sheep-farming.[4] Moreover, the Plain's population was sparse, thus permitting opportunities for unimpeded grazing. Nevertheless, neither place-name evidence nor the surviving documentary record attest to the presence of Romanian shepherds on the Plain before the sixteenth century.[5] Although arguments *ex silentio* are not altogether convincing in the context of the Hungarian Middle Ages, we should probably reckon that the valleys and heaths of Transylvania

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pp. 382–3; see also the important new work of Gheorghe Postică, *Românii din codrii Moldovei în evul mediu timpuriu*, Chişinau, 1994, pp. 105–23.

4   István Györffy, *Magyar falu magyar ház*, Budapest, 1943, p. 162; László Makkai, *Magyar-Román közös múlt*, 2nd edn, Budapest, 1989, p. 57.

5   Károly Mezősi, *Bihar vármegye a török uralom megszűnése idején (1692)*, Budapest, 1943, p. 11. On Anonymus's *pastores Romanorum*, see Dennis Deletant, 'Ethnos and Mythos in the History of Transylvania' in Péter, *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, pp. 67–85 (75–7) and Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor: Istoria unei idei*, Bucharest, 1993, pp. 36–41.

provided at this time sufficient winter-grazing for those flocks which were not wintered in Moldavia or Wallachia.[6]

It is only really from the eighteenth century that we have firm evidence pointing to a substantial Romanian presence on the Great Hungarian Plain. With the reconquest of Hungary from the Turks, not only was the Plain safe as pastureland but also landowners and the agencies of royal government were anxious to populate the region and to renovate its economy. Fixed Romanian settlements were thus founded during the course of the century on the edge of the Plain, most notably between the Fekete Körös (Crişu Negru) and Sebes Körös (Crişu Repede) rivers.[7] According to an account written in the mid-eighteenth century by a priest in Békés county, Romanians were also employed in large numbers as casual labourers for ploughing and gathering in the harvest.[8]

During the same period, Romanian herdsmen with flocks of sheep became a feature of the Plain. The depopulation of the Plain during the Turkish period made it an attractive location for winter grazing. In addition, since labour was short, landowners had little alternative but to use their estates for pasture rather than for agriculture. A letter sent in 1754 from the Transylvanian gubernium to Szabolcs county noted, therefore, the frequency with which shepherds drove their flocks from the defiles of Transylvania to winter in Hungary, and went on to complain that they were being unfairly taxed by the county.[9]

No clear indication exists of the number of shepherds wintering on the Plain. Figures for the number of sheep grazing in Békés county suggest, however, a rapid growth and quite substantial number. Whereas in 1717 there had only been 455 sheep recorded in the county, by 1773 there were almost 61,000.[10] This number of sheep would require the ministration of at least several hundred shepherds.[11] One account deriving from the middle of the eighteenth century noted that it was possible 'all the time to see Wallachians spread out everywhere in great numbers on the plains and in the towns and villages' of Békés county.[12] In addition to Békés, Romanian

6   See generally in this context Pascu, *Voivodatul Transilvaniei*, III, pp. 106–7.

7   Mezősi, *Bihar vármegye*, end maps.

8   József Implom, *Olvasókönyv Békés megye történetéhez*, II (1694–1848), Békéscsaba, 1971, p. 65.

9   István Balogh, 'Adatok a román pásztorok XVIII. századi alföldi legéltetéséhez', *Műveltség és Hagyomány*, 3 (*Studia Ethnologica Hungariae et Centralis ac Orientalis Europae*), 1961, pp. 213–17 (214).

10 Implom, *Olvasókönyv Békés*, p. 185.

11 A tentative ratio of sheep to shepherds may be established by reference to Béla Gunda, 'Organisation sociale des pâtres dans la Grande Plaine Hongroise' in Gunda, *Ethnographica Carpatho-Balcanica*, Budapest, 1979, pp. 199–211 (204).

12 Implom, *Olvasókönyv Békés*, p. 65.

shepherds wintered in Szabolcs and Bihar counties, more particularly on the Hortobágy and Nyirség. Fragmentary figures from the mid-eighteenth century record flocks in a dozen separate locations on the Nyirség alone.[13]

Although Romanian shepherds are simply described in the extant sources as coming from Transylvania, some more precise information survives as to their place of origin. Most of those so recorded appear to have come from Szeben county, although even this century shepherds from as far afield as Fogaras (Făgăraş) are reported.[14] Their routes from the Transylvanian interior to the Plain most probably followed the valleys of the Szamos (Someş) and Körös (Crişu) rivers. Many would appear to be driving their own flocks, customarily appearing on the Plain in late September, on St Michael's Day, and then returning to the hills on St George's Day in April once lambing was over. During the winter the flocks frequently grazed on common pastures owned by the local towns. The shepherds had to pay for this right, according to the number of sheep in each flock, and they normally negotiated the terms of the lease several months in advance with the municipal authorities. This arrangement was clearly profitable to the towns of the Plain, which often forbade private landowners from leasing out their own pastures.[15]

A large number of shepherds were, however, employed by other leaseholders to care for flocks. A significant proportion of the animal-trade in the Balkans lay in the hands of Greek, Armenian and Bulgarian merchants. They frequently used the pastures of the Great Plain to winter sheep and cattle previously bought in Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia.[16] Armenians, possibly from Szamosújvár (Gherla), appear to have been predominant in this activity. In the 1760s, Armenian leaseholders had over 12,000 sheep grazing in Békés county. In 1799 the pastures around Balmazújváros were leased out by twenty-four Armenian merchants who were accompanied by shepherds coming from Szilágy, Szolnok-Doboka, Szatmár and Kolozs counties.

There are also scattered references to Romanian shepherds being taken on as labour after the flocks had returned to the hills in April. In Magyarpécska (Rovine) in Arad county, a Romanian labour market was held annually on St George's Day. Landowners and peasants from upto twenty miles away would attend the market and bid for the shepherds. Elsewhere we learn of shepherds being employed on a permanent basis by

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13 Balogh, 'Adatok a román pásztorok', p. 215.
14 Béla Gunda, 'Rumänische Wanderhirten in der grossen ungarischen Tiefebene', *Ethnographica Carpatho-Balcanica*, Budapest, 1979, pp. 213–14 (219).
15 Ibid., p. 216.
16 For this and much of what follows, see Balogh, 'Adatok a román pásztorok', pp. 214–15.

local landowners. Some of these evidently stayed on the Plain for long periods, even up to twenty or thirty years.

It is unlikely that the sheep on the Great Plain were used primarily for their wool. Transylvania and Hungary imported most of their wool, mainly from the Balkans.[17] It is more likely that the sheep were sold off as livestock for the meat trade. At the end of winter, consignments of sheep were thus driven westwards from the Plain to the markets in Vienna and Buda. Most of these would appear to have followed the wide cattle routes to the west, with the shepherds paying for fodder and passage along the way. One arrangement followed was for the shepherd to present a village with a ewe, in return for which the flock was allowed to graze overnight beside the road.[18]

Sheep were also sold off after winter at local markets. Cattle and sheep markets were held at Világos (Şiria), Simand and Zaránd in Arad county, and at Mátészalka, Csengér and Erdőd (Ardud) in Szatmár county. The Szatmár markets appear to have attracted purchasers from as far afield as Upper Hungary.[19] A major cattle market was also held every spring at Debrecen.[20] It is probable, however, that a substantial quantity of sheep returned to Transylvania, where they were eventually purchased by Greek merchants. The sheep would then have been driven southwards in order to feed Constantinople's enormous demand for meat. As early as the second half of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman capital was annually receiving for slaughter almost four million sheep and three million lambs.[21] A letter sent by the Sultan in 1621 required the citizens of Beszterce (Bistriţa) in Transylvania to provide the Porte with cattle and sheep and advised them to entrust their deliveries to Greek merchants.[22] Trade with the south is likely to have been facilitated by the presence on the Plain of resident commercial agents working for merchant companies in the Ottoman Balkans.[23]

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17 Márta Bur, 'Das Raumgreifen Balkanischer Kaufleute im Wirtschaftsleben der ostmitteleuropäischen Länder im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert' in Vera Bácskai (ed.), *Bürgertum und bürgerliche Entwicklung in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, 2 vols, Budapest, 1986, I, pp. 1–88 (30–1, 39, 44).

18 Balogh, 'Adatok a román pásztorok', p. 220.

19 Ibid.

20 Gunda, 'Rumänische Wanderhirten', p. 217.

21 Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City 1400–1900*, Seattle, WA and London, 1983, p. 100; see also Adrian Radulescu and Ion Bitoleanu, *A Concise History of Dobruja*, Bucharest, 1984, p. 155.

22 Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitore la Istoria Românilor*, 15, 1913, 2, pp. 912–13.

23 Bur, 'Das Raumgreifen Balkanischer Kaufleute', pp. 47, 66.

Relations between the Romanian shepherds and the Hungarian population and authorities were frequently strained. As one Scottish visitor to the Great Plain in the 1830s noted, the shepherd 'has a system of morality peculiar to himself. I know not why, but nomadic habits seem to confuse ideas of property most strangely in the heads of those accustomed to them; nomadic nations are always thieves'.[24] In addition, the Romanians as a national group were closely associated in the popular imagination with robbery. As the town council of Nagybánya (Baia Mare) put it in the 1660s, 'the Wallach always steals and thieves'.[25]

A principal source of complaint was that Romanian shepherds went off with sheep which did not belong to them. For this reason, it was required that they retain proper paperwork so that ownership of their sheep could be promptly established in the event of a dispute. In the case of unfamiliar 'wandering shepherds' and newcomers, permits of passage and letters from previous employers might also be required. Without the proper documentation, shepherds faced the prospect of summary arrest.[26] A further cause of friction was that Romanian shepherds released their flocks on pastureland without permission, thus jeopardizing the livelihood of local shepherds. In 1823 fighting broke out between Romanian and Hungarian shepherds over pasturing rights in Bihar county.[27]

Women were a further point of contention between the pastoral and settled populations of the Plain. The persistent harassment of womenfolk by shepherds contributed to local legislation limiting the length of time shepherds might stay in settlements. As it was, the sexual mores of shepherds aroused concern. Although Slovak prostitutes were available, certainly at Kecskemét, and there were plenty of 'loose women' (*szömélyek*) employed in the inns of the Plain,[28] many shepherds engaged in homosexual relations. Indeed, among the Hungarian shepherds of the Plain, homosexuality was sufficiently commonplace to be ritualized in dress and facial appearance. When male partners were unavailable among

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24 John Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania; with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical*, 2 vols, London, 1850, I, p. 499. Paget is here talking specifically of Hungarian shepherds; Romanian shepherds do not enter into his account.

25 Sándor Kolozsvári and Kelemen Óvári, *Corpus Statutorum*, 5 vols, Budapest, 1885–1904, III, p. 658.

26 *Corpus Statutorum*, III, pp. 79, 399; Implom, *Olvasókönyv Békés*, pp. 295–95.

27 Gunda, 'Rumänische Wanderhirten', p. 218. Shepherding remains a dangerous activity. In 1997 two shepherds from the Sibiu area were killed on the road in a clash with other shepherds. (I owe this information to the kindness of Michael Stewart.)

28 Béla Gunda, 'Sex and Semiotics' in Gunda, *Ethnographica Carpatho-Balcanica*, pp. 371–80 (379).

the shepherd community, recourse might be had to Gypsies or to the flock itself. The latter was clearly a desperate remedy which, if detected, could lead to the execution both of the offender and of his dumb victim.[29]

Although travelling Gypsies appear to have retained corporate institutions for the adjudication of offences, presumably wherein they were the defendants, no such separate jurisdiction applied to shepherds.[30] Although minor disputes between shepherds might doubtless be resolved by a local 'strongman', as was the case with Hungarian herdsmen, most cases passed to the jurisdiction of landowners and municipal courts.[31] These were adjudicated according to local custom, the *ius valachorum* having long passed into desuetude.[32] The frequency with which Romanian shepherds passing through Veszprém county fled upon charge from one jurisdiction to another prompted the decision in 1730 to present all actions involving shepherds and wanderers before the county courts. In order to prevent shepherds absconding, it was laid down that half of their flock should upon indictment be taken as surety.[33]

Nevertheless, cultural interchange as much as conflict distinguished relations between the Romanian shepherds and their host communities. First, the shepherds provided income, labour, commodities and a ready market for hay and agricultural produce in an otherwise desolate part of Hungary. Secondly, Romanian varieties of sheep (in particular the *ovis strepsiceros dacicus*), as well as sheep-rearing techniques, were adopted by Hungarian shepherds. In much the same way, Romanian shepherds themselves began herding traditional Hungarian breeds (most notably, the *ovis strepsiceros hortobagyensis*).[34] Thirdly, Romanian and Hungarian methods of herding may be considered complementary. Hungarian shepherds largely left their flocks to roam on the Plain, providing them only with open pens and windbreaks and with a ratio of shepherd to sheep of 1:500. Romanian herding was much more labour-intensive and often involved the construction of roofed pens. Although it would be unwise to make too great a distinction between the two types of herding, the

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29 Gunda, 'Organisation sociale', p. 203.
30 Implom, *Olvasókönyv Békés*, p. 66. The institutions of the *cigányvajda* and Gypsy council were eventually abolished in 1767.
31 Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania*, I, p. 500.
32 Makkai, *Magyar-Román közös múlt*, p. 66; see also in this context Walter Kuhn, 'Flämische und fränkische Hufe als Leitformen der mittelalterlichen Ostsiedlung' in Kuhn, *Vergleichende Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Ostsiedlung*, Cologne and Vienna, 1973, pp. 1–51 (30); Frigyes Pesty, *A szörényi vármegyei hajdani oláh kerületek*, Budapest, 1876, p. 25.
33 *Corpus Statutorum*, V, Budapest, 1902, p. 464.
34 Gunda, 'Rumänische Wanderhirten', p. 221.

Romanian technique was clearly more suitable for the less hardy varieties of merino sheep which made their advent on the Plain during the nineteenth century.[35] Exchange may also be demonstrated with regard to vocabulary. As was noted earlier on this century, technical terms used in Hungary with regard to sheep-farming frequently derived from Romanian, while for their part Romanians borrowed their vocabulary of cattle and horse-breeding from Hungarian.[36]

During the nineteenth century large parts of the Plain were drained and converted to agricultural use. Pastureland was divided up into plots which were then planted with varieties of wheat. By the end of the century, the Plain was providing the bulk of the agricultural produce which would make Budapest the world's second largest milling centre.[37] The corresponding decline in the area of common land available for grazing on the Plain obliged shepherds to winter their flocks instead in Transylvania, or to drive them to the Lower Danube or Bessarabia, or even as far as the Crimea. Numbers settled for good in the Dobruja. Over the course of the century, the rearing of sheep in Transylvania was increasingly undertaken by peasant proprietors rather than transhumand shepherds.[38]

Many years ago, Nicolae Iorga suggested that the shepherd was 'the key representative of Romanian unity'.[39] Iorga's opinion may now be unfashionable in a historiography which endeavours to give the Romanian people a more illustrious ancestry than mere shepherding. Nevertheless, if the complete history of the Romanians is to be written, rather than just a history of the Romanian state, attention will need to be paid to those fragments of the population which for several centuries wintered across the contemporary political frontier.

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35 Györffy, *Magyar falu*, pp. 175–86; János Poór, *A hajdúvárosok gazdasági és társadalmi helyzete (1607–1720)*, Debrecen, 1967, pp. 32–33.

36 Lajos   Lóczy,   *A   magyar   Szent   Korona   országainak   földrajzi, társadalomtudományi, közművelődési és közgazdasági leirása*, Budapest, 1918, p. 157, noted by Mariann Nagy, 'Nineteenth Century Hungarian Authors on Hungary's Ethnic Minorities' in László Kontler (ed.), *Pride and Prejudice: National Stereotypes in 19th and 20th Century Europe East to West*, Budapest, 1995, pp. 29–51 (41).

37 Ivan T. Berend, *The Crisis Zone of Europe: An Interpretation of East-Central European History in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 10.

38 Béla Köpeczi (ed.), *Erdély története*, 3 vols, Budapest, 1986, III, pp. 1537–8.

39 Cited in Nicolae Stoiescu, *Age-Old Factors of Romanian Unity*, Bucharest, 1986, p. 65.

Grigore Gafencu and Romanian Policy towards Germany, December 1938 to June 1940

Rebecca Haynes

The aim of Romanian foreign policy in the inter-war period was to retain the territorial integrity of the Greater Romanian state created after the First World War. In the 1920s and early 1930s this was achieved through adherence to the French-backed collective security system and the League of Nations. By the mid-1930s, however, French power was waning fast and revisionist Germany and the Soviet Union were re-emerging in European power politics. Responding to this potential threat, the Romanian Foreign Ministry, directed by King Carol II, moved in the mid-to late 1930s towards a policy of 'appeasement'. The aim of Carol's 'appeasement' policy was to avoid, where possible, tight commitments to Romania's allies and any extension of alliances. Carol also sought to retain flexibility towards, and to achieve balance between, the Great Powers in order to be free to negotiate his country out of danger. By so doing, Carol hoped to avoid his country's involvement in any war and to preserve its territorial integrity. It was with these aims in mind that Carol appointed Grigore Gafencu as Foreign Minister in December 1938, a post he held until June 1940. King Carol and Gafencu's policy bears comparison with that pursued by Neville Chamberlain in Britain. In similar fashion to Chamberlain's, the Romanian government's 'appeasement' policy unravelled by degrees by 1939–40 as opportunities for striking balances and bargains with the Great Powers shrank. In this sense, the history of Romanian appeasement bears resemblance to the larger history of appeasement policy in the late 1930s.

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Although by 1939 the term 'appeasement' had already assumed the pejorative meaning of 'peace at any price', the original policy had arisen from specific military and strategic considerations. In the inter-war period, Britain was a satiated power with no new territorial ambitions. Her vast global commitments were such as to stretch her limited military resources.

A Chiefs of Staff report of late 1937 revealed that Britain would be unable to defend her vital global interests against Germany, Italy and Japan. Neither was it clear that the Dominions, the United States, or even France would have any determination to help fight for the *status quo* in Europe.[1] Until rearmament was completed, the British government felt it necessary to seek ways of reducing the potential number of Britain's enemies.[2] 'Appeasement' therefore implied the avoidance of tight alliances, which were held to have led to the First World War. This dislike of tight alliances coincided with an increasing lack of faith in the ability of the collective security system and the League of Nations, an alliance system writ large, to keep the peace.[3] By the same token, 'appeasement' also implied a flexibility of approach in dealing with foreign governments, involving direct negotiations, untrammelled by treaty obligations, between leaders of state, together with a willingness to offer reasonable concessions in the face of valid grievances so as to avoid recourse to war.[4]

More specifically with regard to Germany, Chamberlain's 'appeasement' policy was motivated by a number of important additional factors. A prosperous Germany was the basis for Britain's economic recovery following the Depression.[5] Many in the British government also believed that Germany had natural and legitimate interests in Eastern Europe and were thus prepared to accept some peaceful changes to the Versailles settlement in her favour. 'Appeasement' was also partially motivated by the fear of Bolshevism prevalent amongst members of the British Conservative Party. Chamberlain himself believed that war was not only wasteful in itself but foresaw (accurately as it turned out) that it would lead to the destruction of Europe and its Bolshevization by the

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1   R. J. Q. Adams, *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935–39*, Basingstoke and London, 1993, p. 156; William R. Rock, *British Appeasement in the 1930s*, London, 1977, pp. 44–6; Keith Robbins, *Munich 1938*, London, 1968, pp. 156–7.

2   In their 1937 report, the Chiefs of Staff concluded that 'we cannot [...] exaggerate the importance [...] of any political or international action that can be taken to reduce the number or our potential enemies and to gain the support of potential allies': Rock, *British Appeasement in the 1930s*, p. 46. R. A. C. Parker has recently stressed that the main purpose of British 'appeasement' was to persuade Germany to begin a policy of arms limitation: see Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War*, Basingstoke and London, 1993, pp. 20, 23, 42, 307.

3   Rock, *British Appeasement in the 1930s*, p. 47; Robbins, *Munich 1938*, p. 159.

4   Rock, *British Appeasement in the 1930s*, pp. 26–30.

5   Adams, *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement*, pp. 14–15; P. M. H. Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, London, 1986, pp. 178–9; Robbins, *Munich 1938*, pp. 165–6.

Soviet Union. Any alliance with the Soviets would not only provoke Germany by reviving memories of pre-1914 'encirclement', but was also ideologically repugnant.[6]

Romanian 'appeasement' of Germany also arose from similar considerations. Like Britain, Romania was a satiated country with no new territorial ambitions. Nevertheless, she was militarily weak and surrounded by the revisionist Soviet Union, Hungary and Bulgaria, who coveted Bessarabia, Transylvania and southern Dobruja respectively. A study undertaken in 1933 by General Ion Antonescu as Chief of Staff revealed that, in the event of war, Romania could only mobilize ten equipped divisions. The government launched a ten-year rearmament programme in 1935, but since Romania lacked a well-developed industrial sector she was dependent on arms supplies from Czechoslovakia and France.[7] Romania's military problems were compounded by the relative weakness of her alliances. By the mid-1930s disunity was appearing within the Little and Balkan Ententes. Czechoslovakia's entry into the Franco-Soviet security system in 1935 aroused fears among her Romanian and Yugoslav Little Entente allies. The value of the Balkan Entente as a bulwark against Bulgarian revisionism was undermined by Yugoslavia's rapprochement with Bulgaria and Italy in early 1937.[8]

The West, although regarded as vital by the Romanian government for Romania's defence, had limited obligations towards Romania and was geographically distant. Britain's obligations towards Romania were limited to her role as a guarantor of the League of Nations. No specific political or military alliance existed. Romania had a treaty of friendship (1926) with France, the country which the Romanians regarded as the chief pillar of the Paris peace settlement and the League of Nations' collective security system. The treaty, however, did not oblige France to come to Romania's military aid in the event of aggression. The suspicion that France would be unlikely to defend Romania in the event of an attack seemed confirmed by France's failure to respond adequately to Hitler's re-militarization of the

6   Rock, *British Appeasement in the 1930s*, pp. 43, 50–1.
7   Mark Axworthy, *Third Axis Fourth Ally: Romanian Armed Forces in the European War, 1941–1945*, London, 1995, pp. 27–40.
8   For the growing disunity of the Little and Balkan Ententes, see Nicolae Titulescu, *Politica externă a României (1937)*, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 69–86. For a full account of Romania's alliances during the inter-war period, see Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947*, Oxford, 1994, pp. 426–37. The Little Entente was a defensive alliance against Hungarian revisionism; the Balkan Entente obliged its members (Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey) to defend each other against Bulgarian revisionism; the Romanian treaty with Poland provided for mutual defence against any Soviet aggression.

Rhineland in March 1936. The Rhineland crisis led to a decline in French prestige in Romania.[9]

Since the Romanian ruling class shared, together with many British Conservatives, a profound distrust of the Soviet Union, France's 1935 alliance with the Soviet Union did little to endear her to Romanian hearts. Foreign Minister Nicolae Titulescu's attempts to incorporate Romania into the Franco-Soviet security system during 1936 were a major factor in his fall from power in August of that year. In particular, Titulescu had failed to secure Soviet recognition of Romanian sovereignty over Bessarabia. Many Romanian politicians now began to see in Germany a possible counterweight to the Soviet threat and to the traditional French alliance.[10] Courting Germany was also seen as necessary in order to prevent her backing Hungarian revisionist claims on Transylvania.

In late 1936, a number of foreign policy debates took place in the Romanian parliament and press. Many politicians took the opportunity to advocate rapprochement with the Reich, stressing as justification the Soviet threat and the need to neutralize Hungarian revisionism. Such debates reflected, as in Britain, a growing distrust of tight alliances and of the collective security system which curtailed the government's freedom of action in foreign policy. The debates revealed a consensus in favour of more flexibility for Romania *vis-à-vis* her allies and a desire for effective, but unofficial, neutrality towards all the Great Powers.[11]

In addition to these strategic interests, Romania shared with Britain an interest in Germany as an economic partner. By the mid-1930s Germany was fast re-emerging as Romania's main trading partner, a position she had held, together with Austria–Hungary, prior to 1914. The March 1935 economic accord between Germany and Romania was the first in a number

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9 I. M. Oprea, *Nicolae Titulescu's Diplomatic Activity*, Bucharest, 1968, pp. 138–9.

10 Ibid., pp. 155–70; Dov B. Lungu, *Romania and the Great Powers 1933–1940*, Durham, NC and London, 1989, pp. 53, 34–6, 60. King Carol seems to have favoured a degree of rapprochement with Germany from as early as 1934, against Titulescu's programme of collaboration with the Soviets. See, I. Chiper and Fl. Constantiniu, 'Din nou despre cauzele înlăturării din guvern a lui Nicolae Titulescu (29 august 1936)', *Revista Română de Studii Internaționale*, 2, 1969, 6, pp. 37–53 (40–2).

11 See, for example, the foreign-policy debate on 15 December 1936, Arhivele Statului, Bucharest, Statele Unite ale Americii (hereafter SUA), roll 297, frames 433618–433625, German Legation in Bucharest to the Foreign Ministry, Daily Report no. 3168/36, 15 December 1936, signed Fabricius, and Georges I. Brătianu, 'La Politique éxterieure de la roumanie' (short pamphlet), Bucharest, 1937. In his concept of 'neutrality', Brătianu was influenced by Belgium's declaration of 'independence' in October 1936, whereby she claimed neutral status but not the full juridical neutrality of pre-1914.

of important barter agreements in which Germany absorbed Romania's agricultural produce and raw materials in exchange for industrial goods. Such barter arrangements were particularly important following the Depression, when Romanian agricultural produce became largely unsellable on the world market. From 1936 Germany also became an important supplier of arms to Romania, as deliveries from Czechoslovakia and France ran into difficulties.[12]

Following the fall of the pro-French Titulescu in August 1936, King Carol, like the British government, attempted to steer Romania into a position of greater flexibility in her dealings with Germany and into a less rigid adherence to the Western-based collective security system. It was a policy which the politician Constantin Argetoianu described as 'a policy to allow [Carol] a free hand for tomorrow'.[13]

The Foreign Ministry, directed by Carol, sought to avoid any actions or extension of foreign-policy commitments which could be construed as anti-German. Carol was encouraged in this policy by the declarations of German leaders to the effect that if Romania maintained neutrality towards Germany, entered no combinations against her and avoided any alliance or military agreement with the Soviet Union, then the Reich would guarantee Romania's territorial integrity against revisionist attacks by Hungary or Bulgaria. During talks with the Romanian Minister in Berlin, Petrescu-Comnen, on 4 December 1936, Field Marshal Goering offered Romania a territorial guarantee against Hungarian and Bulgarian revisionism if the Romanian government agreed not to enter any political or military combinations against Germany. In addition, Goering expected the Romanian government to prevent the passage of Soviet troops through Romania.[14] On 20 March 1937, Petrescu-Comnen confirmed to Goering,

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12 Romania's growing economic dependence on Germany is discussed in William S. Grenzebach's *Germany's Informal Empire in East-Central Europe: German Economic Policy Toward Yugoslavia and Rumania, 1933–1939*, Stuttgart, 1988, esp. pp. 69–95 and 173–220.

13 Arhivele Statului, Bucharest, Fondul Constantin Argetoianu, Însemnări Zilnice, Dosar no. 72, vol. 3, 1937, p. 9, 26 July 1937. See also Lungu, *Romania and the Great Powers*, p. 96, for a description of Carol's foreign policy after the fall of Titulescu.

14 Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, Bucharest (hereafter MAE), Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 75, pp. 178–83, Legation in Berlin, only for HM the King, the President of the Council, the Foreign Minister and the Subsecretary of State, Telegram no. 3698, 4 December 1936, Comnen. Goering repeated his offer of a frontier guarantee during the Munich crisis in return for Romanian neutrality towards Germany and her promise not to allow Soviet troops to pass through Romania to help the Czechs. See N. P. Comnène, *Preludi Del Grande Dramma (Ricordi e documente di un diplomatico)*, Rome, 1947, p. 138. In April 1938, Hitler authorized the Romanian

in the name of his government, that Romania would not enter any combination directed against Germany.[15]

Concrete evidence of the Romanian government's determination to retain flexibility towards Germany was not slow in coming. In early April 1937, Romanian and Yugoslav delegates at the Little Entente conference ensured the postponement and ultimate failure of the proposed Franco-Little Entente mutual assistance pact. This pact would have obliged Romania and Yugoslavia to defend Czechoslovakia in the event of a German attack upon her. As the then Foreign Minister, Victor Antonescu, declared to the German Minister on 6 April, the pact had been laid to rest 'because it would interfere with the more favourable development of links with Germany', particularly in the economic sphere.[16] The 1938 Sudeten crisis also saw Romania exerting pressure on Czechoslovakia to offer concessions which conformed to German demands.[17]

The Munich agreement made a Romanian policy of 'appeasement' even more necessary, since it gave Germany a dominating strategic and economic position in Central Europe. Munich seemed proof that European affairs would no longer be based on the collective security system but on decisions reached by the four Great Powers.[18] This made it essential for the Romanian government to retain flexibility in her dealings with the Great Powers (and especially Germany, in view of her geographic and economic importance) and to make contact with the leaders of state of the respective powers.[19] To this end Carol undertook visits to Britain, France and Germany in November 1938.

Minister in Berlin to inform Carol that he was prepared to guarantee Romania's frontiers. See, MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 76, pp. 56–8, Legation in Berlin to the Foreign Ministry, Telegram no. 3888, 22 April 1938.

15 MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 75, pp. 264–79, Absolutely Secret. Comnen to the Foreign Minister, Telegram no. 37056, 25 March 1937.

16 Arhivele Statului, SUA, roll 297, frames 433672–433676, German Legation in Bucharest to the Foreign Ministry, 6 April 1937, Daily Report no. 899/37, signed Fabricius.

17 William O. Oldson, 'Romania and the Munich Crisis August–September 1938', *East European Quarterly*, 11, 1977, 2, pp. 177–90.

18 Argetoianu noted that Munich heralded 'the end of the utopianism and the folly of Geneva. The tribunal of the Great Powers is re-established as in the time before the war': Arhivele Statului, Fondul Constantin Argetoianu, Însemnări Zilnice, Dosar no. 73, vol. 3, 1938, p. 33, 1 October 1938.

19 According to a Romanian commentator, the period of collective security had come to an end following the Munich agreement, giving way to bilateral relations between nations. Romania sought a free hand in foreign policy which also provided the opportunity for stronger collaboration with Germany: N. N. Petraşcu, *Evoluţia politică a României în ultimii douăzeci de ani (1918-1939)*, Bucharest, 1939, pp. 129–37.

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Such, then, was Romania's foreign policy position on the eve of Grigore Gafencu's appointment as Foreign Minister on 21 December 1938. In particular, relations between Germany and Romania were now highly charged. Corneliu Codreanu, the pro-German leader of the Romanian Legionary movement, had been murdered at the command of Carol's government only days after the King's meeting with Hitler in late November 1938. This had particularly angered the Führer since it suggested his own complicity in the murder.[20] Gafencu's immediate task on appointment was to rebuild Romanian links with Germany while maintaining Romania's traditional alliances.[21] Gafencu put forward a number of measures in early 1939 in an attempt to 'appease' the Reich by offering concessions. These included the incorporation of the German *Volksdeutsche* minority into the Romanian government party; admittance of Germany into the European Danube Commission; and, most importantly, economic concessions.

German leaders had often hinted that the German attitude towards a country was influenced by how well that country treated its German minority. Most recently this had been pointed out to Carol by Goering during their meeting in Germany on 26 November 1938.[22] The minority of some 700,000 were duly incorporated into the government party, the National Renaissance Front, in January 1939. Under the terms of its entry, the minority had the right to create their own economic, social and cultural organizations. This represented an important departure from the attempts by the Romanian government throughout the 1920s and 1930s to 'Romanianize' the German minority.[23] In early March, in an acknowledgement of the Reich's role as the most important trading power on the Danube, Germany was admitted to the European Danube

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20 MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 76 bis, p. 56, Meeting between Marcovici and Atta Constantinescu, Berlin, 20 January 1939.

21 Grigore Gafencu, *The Last Days of Europe: A Diplomatic Journey in 1939*, London, 1947, p. 25.

22 *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945* (hereafter DGFP), Series D, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, HMSO, London, and Open Door Press, Arlington, IL, 14 volumes, 1949–76, V, Doc. no. 257, 30 November 1938, Minute on the conversation between the Field Marshal and King Carol of Romania on Saturday 26 November 1938 in Leipzig.

23 MAE, Fondul 71/România, vol. 383, p. 6, 'Timpul', 12 January 1939, 'German minority incorporated into the National Renaissance Front'. For government policies towards the minorities during the inter-war period, see C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and its Consequences, 1919–1937*, Oxford, 1937, and Elémer Illyés, *National Minorities in Romania: Change in Transylvania*, Boulder, CO, 1982, pp. 86–94.

Commission, which had policing and administrative powers over the Lower and Maritime Danube.[24]

It was through economic gestures, however, that Foreign Minister Gafencu best hoped to reforge friendly links with Germany. Gafencu was keen to realize the long-term economic plans discussed by Carol and Goering at their meeting in November 1938, during which Carol had expressed his wish for a new trade and clearing agreement with Germany and for a five- to ten-year economic plan.[25] Gafencu's aim was to link a new economic agreement to a political guarantee by Germany of Romania's territorial integrity and to make concrete the many verbal promises of a guarantee made by German leaders to Romanian officials over the previous years. Such a guarantee would have the effect of reducing the threat of Hungarian, Bulgarian and Soviet revisionism and would give Romania the protection of a continental, land-based Great Power which was now the major arbitrator of the fate of Central Europe.

Following the arrival in February 1939 of Hermann Wohlthat, Goering's chief economic negotiator, Gafencu held several discussions with him in an attempt to ensure the incorporation of a political agreement into the final economic accord.[26] Although Gafencu failed in his attempt to have a guarantee incorporated into the final economic treaty, pursuit of a German guarantee continued to be part of his policy towards Germany.[27]

Notwithstanding the conventional view that the Wohlthat economic treaty was foisted on an unwilling Romania as the price of placating Germany, it should be noted that there was extensive support for increased economic links with Germany in all political circles.[28] The economic treaty

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24 Germany joined France, Britain, Italy and Romania as members of the Commission. MAE, Fondul 71/România, vol. 6, p. 111, 'Universul', 3 March 1939, 'Germany enters into the European Danube Commission'.

25 DGFP, D, V, Doc no. 257.

26 MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 97, pp. 126–9, Note on a conversation of 14 February 1939 between Minister Gafencu and Wohlthat at the Foreign Ministry, and pp. 130–2, Note on a conversation of 22 February 1939 between Minister Gafencu and Wohlthat at the Foreign Ministry.

27 The treaty, signed on 23 March, referred only to the 'peaceful aims' of the two countries. The German Foreign Office had authorized its negotiators to conduct negotiations without giving any political commitments. See, DGFP, D, V, Doc no. 298, Director of Economic Policy Department to the Legation in Romania, Berlin, 18 February 1939, Wiehl.

28 The Romanian literature to this effect is vast. See, for example, V. Moisuc, 'Tratatul economic româno-german din 23 martie 1939 şi semnificaţia sa', *Analele Institutului de Studii Istorice şi Social-Politice De Pe Lîngă C.C. al PCR,* Anul 13, no. 4, 1967, pp. 130–46; Gheorghe Zaharia and Ion Calafeteanu, 'The International Situation and Romania's Foreign Policy between 1938 and 1940',

was seen not only as a way of 'buying time' in the tense diplomatic situation which had developed with Germany, but as a necessity for Romania's industrial and agricultural development. In January 1939 the High Command of the Army undertook a study as to how to ameliorate the strained relations which existed between Romania and Germany following the murder of Codreanu. The study recommended economic collaboration with Germany, not only as a form of conciliation, but also because it 'would bring about a blossoming of our state'.[29] Even staunchly pro-French politicians such as Ion Mihalache, one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party, had long advocated strong economic links with the Reich.[30]

A blueprint for an economic treaty, which included large-scale German support to build up the Romanian economy, had already been drawn up by the Romanian government in December 1937.[31] In February 1939, it was members of the Romanian government who drew up the initial terms of economic collaboration upon which Wohlthat then based his proposals. The Romanian government was apparently aware that its programme would give Germany predominance in the Romanian economy and considered this to be in the country's interests. Indeed, it had been decided that 'Germany generally shall regain the position of economic predominance in Romania which she had before 1914'.[32] During the negotiations in February and March 1939, Gafencu turned down British and French offers of economic collaboration in order to 'give expression to the earnest desire of the Romanian government to reach an understanding with Germany first of all'.[33] The final treaty outlined plans for co-operation with Germany in the development of all branches of agriculture, industry, banking and communications and the joint exploitation of raw

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Revue Roumaine d'Histoire, 18, 1, pp. 83–105 (91–4). D. C. Watt has also claimed that the treaty was forced on Romania, in *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938–1939*, London, 1989, p. 175.

29 Gheorghe Zaharia and Constantin Botoran, *Politica de Apărare Națională a României în contextul european interbelic 1919–1939*, Bucharest, 1981, pp. 275–9 (279).

30 See his speech at the 15 December 1936 foreign policy debate: Arhivele Statului, Casa Regală, Dosar no. 44/1939, pp. 3–27, Foreign Policy Declarations made by Ion Mihalache to the Parliamentary Commission on 15 December 1936.

31 DGFP, D, V, Doc. no. 155, Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat to Minister President General Goering, Berlin, 14 December 1937.

32 Ibid., Doc. no. 293, Legation in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 14 February 1939.

33 Ibid., Doc. no. 306, Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat to Ministerialdirektor Wiehl, Berlin, 27 February 1939.

materials and petroleum, as well as delivery of arms to Romania and German help to build up the Romanian air force.[34]

Nevertheless, it was clear during the negotiations that Gafencu and King Carol had no wish for Germany to have an exclusive economic or political monopoly in Romania. This issue became particularly acute following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939, which tilted the balance of power in Central Europe overwhelmingly in Germany's favour. In keeping with the policy of maintaining flexibility and balance between all the Powers, Gafencu ordered the Romanian minister in London, Viorel Tilea, and Gheorghe Tătărescu, the ambassador in Paris, to notify the British and French governments of the danger of having 'only one arbiter left in Europe who decides upon the security, the independence and the peace of nations'.[35] Although Gafencu denied Tilea's story of a German 'ultimatum' to Romania, the Western governments remained suspicious.[36] Considerable British pressure was placed on Gafencu to prevent him signing the economic treaty with Germany.[37]

As British diplomacy began to move away from its policy of 'appeasement' in the wake of the 'Tilea affair' towards a more alliance-based 'French' system, the Romanian government was determined to continue its policy of 'balanced neutrality'. Gafencu did not wish his country to be brought into any Western-led combination which could be construed as anti-German.[38] On 20 March Gafencu informed the British

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34 For the full terms of the German–Romanian Economic Treaty, see DGFP, D, VI, Doc. no. 78, 23 March 1939.

35 Quoted by Dov B. Lungu in 'The European Crisis of March–April 1939: The Romanian Dimension', *International History Review*, 7, 1985, pp. 390–414 (392).

36 MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 76 bis, p. 212, To all Legations from Foreign Minister Gafencu, Telegram no. 17798 of 19 March 1939. There is a vast literature discussing the 'Tilea affair'. See, for instance, David Britton Funderburk, *Politica Marii Britanii față de România 1938–1940. Studiu asupra stratagiei economice și politice*, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 95–103; Gheorghe Buzatu, *Dosare ale războiului mondial*, Iași, 1979, pp. 11–43; Paul D. Quinlan, 'The Tilea Affair: A Further Inquiry', *Balkan Studies*, 19, 1978, pp. 147–57; Sidney Aster, *1939: The Making of the Second World War*, London, 1973, pp. 61–78.

37 DGFP, D, VI, Doc. no. 80, Minister in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 24 March 1939.

38 In fact, British policy was already moving away from 'appeasement' in the months preceding the 'Tilea Affair': see, for instance, Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe* (see note 5 above), pp. 247–8, and Funderburk, *Politica Marii Britanii față de România*, pp. 61–92. For the effects of Romanian foreign policy in thwarting British attempts to create an anti-German bloc in South-East Europe following the 'Tilea affair', see D. Cameron Watt, 'Misinformation, Misconception, Mistrust: Episodes in British Policy and the Approach of War,

that he was not interested in any bilateral arrangements, since these could be construed as provocative to Germany. Gafencu suggested instead that the West should give Romania a unilateral guarantee to protect her borders which would not involve Romania in any obligation to help the West fight Germany. On 31 March, following their guarantee to Poland, the Western governments informed Gafencu that they would defend Romania if the Polish–Romanian alliance, directed solely against the threat of attack by the Soviet Union, was transformed into an *erga omnes* agreement against any aggressor.[39] Gafencu was unwilling to transform the alliance because this would be 'aimed against Germany and gives the whole agreement the character of a new attempt to encircle Germany'.[40] In early April, Gafencu suggested to the Western powers a 'northern system', linking Poland and the West, and a 'southern system' linking Romania to the West through a unilateral declaration. Gafencu was still hoping for a German guarantee, since he argued that 'this system would have the advantage that it could be extended, Germany participating in the ranks of the guaranteeing states, while Yugoslavia could enter that of the guaranteed states'.[41]

The Anglo-French guarantee of 13 April 1939 was, as the Romanian government had wished, a unilateral guarantee by the West to defend Romania's borders against attack. Romania was not bound by any reciprocal pledges to help either Britain or her allies. In this way, the Romanian government could retain its links with Germany and use the Western guarantee as a bargaining tool for requesting a similar guarantee from Germany. Prior to Gafencu's visit to Berlin in mid-April, King Carol instructed him 'not to make commitments to anybody, but if we can obtain from the Germans a guarantee like the Anglo-French, it would be very good'.[42] Although no German guarantee was forthcoming during Gafencu's meetings with German leaders, he pleaded with his government to avoid any expansion of the Western guarantee which could compromise

1938–1939' in Michael Bentley and John Stevenson (eds), *High and Low Politics in Modern Britain: Ten Studies*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 214–55.

39 MAE, Fondul 71/1920–1944, Dosare Speciale, vol. 398, pp. 209–33, Memorandum put together by Grigore Gafencu, 15 April 1939.

40 MAE, Fondul 71/România, vol. 503, pp. 37–8, Note by Minister Gafencu, 31 March 1939.

41 MAE, Fondul 71/România, vol. 503, pp. 86–7, Instructions given by Gafencu to Al. Cretzianu on 7 April in view of his mission to London and Paris. Lungu has also stressed Gafencu's wish to avoid being drawn into an anti-German coalition during discussions with the West in March and April 1939: Lungu, 'The European Crisis of March–April 1939' (see note 35 above).

42 Arhivele Statului, Portugalia I-021-85-21, roll 21, Academia Portugheză De Istorie, Donația Monique Urdăreanu, Însemnări Zilnice, Carol II, 1937–1951, vol. 8, Monday 13 March 1939–Sunday 2 July 1939, 15 April 1939, p. 453.

Romania's relations with Germany.[43] Consequently, Gafencu sought to avoid any mention of Romania or the Balkan Entente in the negotiations which took place between the West and Turkey for a mutual assistance pact during the summer and autumn of 1939. According to article three of the Anglo-Turkish Declaration, published on 12 May, if Britain and France were to aid Romania or Greece in accordance with the 13 April Guarantee, Turkey was to help make this aid effective. Under paragraph six, Turkey and Britain agreed to consult together 'to ensure the establishment of security in the Balkans'.[44] Turkey's pledge to help Britain in enforcing the April guarantees and the reference to establishing Balkan security threatened to destroy attempts by Romania and the Balkan Entente, of which Romania was currently President, to retain flexibility towards all the Great Powers, by attaching her to the Western security system which sought to 'encircle' Germany in South-East Europe. In late May, Gafencu informed the Western governments that relations between the Balkan Entente countries and the West should not be deepened beyond the unilateral April guarantees and the proposed bilateral Anglo-Turkish pact.[45] During his visit to Ankara in June, Gafencu sought to persuade the Turkish Foreign Minister to ensure the exclusion of paragraph six of the Anglo-Turkish Declaration from the final accord. This would ensure that there was no reference to the countries of the Balkan Entente or of the need to secure Balkan security. Gafencu also endeavoured to get paragraph six deleted from the forthcoming Franco-Turkish Declaration.[46]

The final treaty between Britain, France and Turkey was signed on 19 October 1939. The treaty included article three, which related to Turkish help in the event of the West fulfilling its guarantees to Romania and Greece, but excluded paragraph six.[47] Technically, therefore, Romania had received no new guarantees. The German Minister in Bucharest, Wilhelm

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43 MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 77, pp. 29–33, From the Legation in Berlin (Minister Gafencu) to the Foreign Ministry, Telegram no. 39227, 19 April 1939.

44 David Britton Funderburk, *Politica Marii Britianii faţă de România*, p. 147.

45 MAE, Fondul Înţelegere Balcanică, vol. 7, pp. 168–73, 20 May 1939, Instructions given by Minister Gafencu to Alexandru Cretzianu, Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affaris, regarding conversations to take place in Geneva with Lord Halifax and Mr Bonnet during the May session of the Council.

46 Ibid., pp. 265–8, From Minister Gafencu in Istanbul to the Foreign Ministry, Telegram, no number, 14 June 1939; Biblioteca Academiei Române, Bucharest, Arhiva Istorică, Fond no. 13, Dosar no. 1313, 5–6, pp. 111–12, Telegram no. 189 of 12 June 1939, Ankara to the Foreign Ministry, von Papen. The German Minister in Ankara, von Papen, believed 'that Gafencu has conducted himself here in accordance with our expectations'.

47 DGFP, D, VIII, Doc no. 296, Memorandum by the Director of the Political Dept, Berlin, 24 October 1939.

Fabricius, nevertheless pointed out that the Reich feared the creation, with Romanian help, of an anti-German front.[48] The treaty thus increased tension between Romania and Germany at the very time when German support was being seen as essential against the Soviets.

On 6 September 1939, three days after the outbreak of war, Romania announced her formal neutrality. With the Western powers distant, however, and increasing Soviet sabre-rattling against Romanian 'occupation' of Bessarabia, Germany was increasingly regarded as Romania's only potential 'Fairy Godmother' who could save her from the Soviet threat.[49] The need to come to terms with Germany was therefore greater than ever. Despite the 23 August Nazi–Soviet Pact, and Romanian fears that German agreement to an annexation of Bessarabia was the price of Soviet friendship, the Romanians hoped that German leaders would still wish to prevent Soviet encroachments into the Balkans. Gafencu reminded German officials that Romania had complied with their demands not to enter the Soviet security system or enter any combination against Germany. He hoped that the German government would find a way to help Romania come to terms with Germany's new Soviet ally, without any territorial losses to Romania.[50]

Fears of Soviet intervention in Romania were increased by the Soviet entry into Poland on 19 September and the subsequent massing of Soviet troops on the Romanian border.[51] There was now a generally held belief that the Soviets had become more of a threat to Romanian security than the Germans. Even Interior Minister Călinescu, who had long regarded the Reich as at least as much of a danger as the Soviets, noted in his diary for 19 September that 'the march forward of the Russians changes the situation. The German danger is fading. We must turn around our military positions and concentrate our troops in the Siret valley'.[52]

The Foreign Ministry under Gafencu now became involved in plans for the creation of a bloc of neutral states in South-East Europe which would

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48 MAE, Fondul 71/1939 E9, vol. 92 (-71/1939 E9 II 1-), pp. 52–5, To the Legation in Berlin, Telegram no. 66022, 20 October 1939, Gafencu.

49 Despite Gafencu's post-war claims that Britain abandoned the Balkans to Germany, 'he himself was evidently prepared to stage-manage the transformation-scene that thus so swiftly changed the German Demon King into a Fairy Godmother': C. A. Macartney and A. W. Palmer, *Independent Eastern Europe*, London, 1962, p. 421.

50 See, for instance, MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 77, pp. 307–9, Note on a conversation of 29 August 1939 between Minister Gafencu and Colonel Gerstenberg, German Military Attaché, at the Foreign Ministry.

51 Florin Constantiniu, *Între Hitler şi Stalin. România şi pactul Ribbentrop-Molotov*, Bucharest, 1991, p. 88.

52 Armand Călinescu, *Însemnări politice, 1916–1939*, Bucharest, 1990, p. 432.

act not only as a dam against possible German expansion but also as a deterrent against the Soviet Union. The Romanian government hoped that the Soviets would not be disposed to attack a Romania at peace with her revisionist neighbours and protected by a bloc which had Axis backing.[53] Gafencu's plan, drawn up in late October, was for an Italian-led bloc, which was to comprise the Balkan Entente as well as Hungary and Bulgaria.[54] It was the negative German reaction to the publication of the Anglo-Turkish Treaty on 19 October which provided the initial motivation for Gafencu's plan. Gafencu subsequently informed the German Foreign Ministry that his government intended to create an independent, neutral bloc in South-East Europe. The bloc was to include Turkey in order to reassure Germany of Turkey's neutrality and that of the Balkan Entente, to which both Turkey and Romania belonged.[55] The proposed plan failed, due primarily to lack of interest on the part of Italy and the revisionist Hungary and Bulgaria. Romania thus remained still exposed to the Soviet threat.

In December 1939, Molotov proclaimed that Soviet foreign policy aims lay in South-East Europe and the Black Sea.[56] By now it was also clear to the Romanian government that the West's obligations to Romania under the Anglo-French Guarantee and the Anglo-Turkish Treaty did not include help against possible Soviet aggression.[57] Consequently, Gafencu now renewed his efforts to win German support to help Romania in her problems with the Soviets by stressing the Reich and Romania's common opposition to the spread of Bolshevism and pan-Slavism in the Danube

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53 Lungu, *Romania and the Great Powers*, pp. 202–5. Lungu points out that although the bloc was to provide a bulwark against German and Soviet expansionism, in reality the Soviets were more feared. While Germany could be 'appeased' by economic measures, the Soviets sought the return of Bessarabia (ibid., p. 205).

54 For full details of the 'bloc of neutrals', and the preceding plan for a 'Balkan bloc', see Frank Marzari, 'Projects for an Italian-Led Balkan Bloc of Neutrals, September–December 1939', *Historical Journal*, 13, 1970, 4, pp. 767–88.

55 MAE, Fondul 71/1939 E9, vol. 92 (-71/1939 E9 II 1-), pp. 52–5, To the Legation in Berlin, Telegram no. 66022, 20 October 1939, Gafencu.

56 H. W. Koch, 'Hitler's Programme and the Genesis of Operation Barbarossa' in H. W. Koch (ed.), *Aspects of the Third Reich*, Basingstoke and London, 1985, pp. 285–322 (293).

57 On 2 November 1939, Sir Reginald Hoare, the British Minister in Bucharest, informed Gafencu that 'when we gave you the [Anglo-French] guarantee, no one could foresee an aggression on the part of the Soviet Union and today we can see no material possibility of fulfilling our guarantees against Russian aggression': MAE, 71/1939 E9 I General, vol. 2, p. 46, To the Romanian Legation in London, Telegram no. 68914, 3 November 1939, signed Gafencu.

Basin. Gafencu frequently reminded German officials of talks to this effect which he had had in the past with German leaders.[58]

Gafencu's stress on common ideological aims coincided with massive economic concessions to Germany by the Romanian government in the winter and spring of 1939–40. Romanian economic relations with Germany, however, were complicated by Western attempts to prevent petroleum deliveries reaching the Reich. Since some three-quarters of Romanian petroleum production was controlled by Anglo-French capital, German imports were particularly vulnerable to Western obstruction and sabotage.[59] By November, Germany was receiving only 60,000 tons of petroleum, while 100,000 tons per month were required for the war effort.[60] On 6 December 1939, Gheorghe Tătărescu, now Minister President, guaranteed the Reich petroleum purchases of 130,000 tons per annum in exchange for armaments as an attempt to offset such Western tactics.[61] In the same month, the Romanian government imposed a quota system for petroleum sales to all countries. Through this measure the government prevented the West buying up huge quantities of petroleum to forestall its sale to Germany.[62]

From the autumn of 1939, the Romanian military secret service (Serviciului Special de Informaţii) under General Moruzov began to collaborate with its German counterpart, the Abwehr. The two organizations sought to counteract British sabotage of the oilfields and the petroleum deliveries bound for Germany. An organization was created from amongst Romanian-speaking members of the ethnic German community to secure the Prahova valley and the course of the Danube. King Carol allowed German agents to enter the country freely.[63] In keeping with the policy of balance between the Great Powers, however, General Moruzov also co-operated with Western secret services. British secret agents operated from within Romania. It was partly as a result of successful British sabotage that the Reich's petroleum deliveries fell

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58 See, for instance, MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 78, pp. 196–9, Note on a conversation of 4 December 1939 between Minister Gafencu and Fabricius, German Minister, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

59 Elisabeth Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*, London, 1976, pp. 32–3.

60 DGFP, D, VIII, no. 402, Director of the Economic Policy Department to the Legation in Romania, Berlin, 30 November 1939, Wiehl.

61 DGFP, D, VIII, Doc. no. 422, Legation in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 6 December 1939.

62 Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe*, p. 33.

63 For the story of SSI links with the Abwehr, see Eugen Cristescu, *Asul Serviciilor Secrete Româneşti*, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 139–47. Cristescu was Moruzov's successor as head of the SSI.

sharply during the autumn of 1939.[64] Thus the winter and spring of 1939–40 witnessed something of a 'tug of war' between Western and German agents operating in Romania, with the Romanians attempting to balance between the two. The 'Oil for Arms' pact of 6 March 1940, however, represented an important victory for the Germans. Under the provisions of the pact, Romania bartered 200,000 tons of oil for weapons from Poland and Czechoslovakia. More importantly, the pact shattered the higher prices for petroleum which had been set by Britain in the autumn of 1939 to prevent Germany, whose foreign currency reserves were low, from buying more petroleum. The agreement ensured that the price for both petroleum and war materials would be calculated at pre-war prices.[65]

With the ending of the Soviet–Finnish war on 12 March 1940, the Soviet Union was able to renew its pressure on Romania. Molotov's speech to the Supreme Soviet on 29 March reopened the question of Romanian sovereignty over Bessarabia.[66] On 30 March, Minister President Tătărescu informed German officials that it was his government's fear of the Soviets and determination to keep German friendship which had 'caused Romania to go to the utmost limits to accommodate us in economic matters'. Tătărescu pledged to the German officials that he would compel British and French companies to supply more petroleum to Germany and had, indeed, already secured the full quotas for April and May.[67]

Thus, despite the fact that Gafencu's policy of balance between the Powers was, theoretically, being maintained, the spring of 1940 saw the economic balance shifting towards Germany. Romanian–German anti-sabotage measures were strengthened by the appointment of Manfred von Killinger as 'Inspector of German Diplomatic Missions in the Balkans' in December 1939. His real purpose was to impede the work of 'secret enemy organizations, operating in South-East Europe'. A major success in Romanian–German counteraction of British sabotage on the Danube came on 1 April 1940, when the Romanian Secret Service and Abwehr

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64 British sabotage included the chartering of Danube oil barges to take them out of German hands. For British sabotage activities in Romania, see Ivor Porter, *Operation Autonomous: With the S.O.E. in Wartime Romania*, London, 1989, pp. 39–47, and Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe*, pp. 28–43.

65 Lungu, *Romania and the Great Powers*, p. 217. Lungu states that while the appearance of neutrality was maintained by similar concessions to France, the pact represented 'a disguised retreat from neutrality' (ibid., p. 200).

66 Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *Bătălia diplomatică pentru Basarabia, 1918–1940*, Iaşi, 1991, p. 139.

67 DGFP, D, IX, Doc. no. 27, Legation in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 30 March 1940, Clodius, Fabricius.

prevented a British attempt to blow up the Iron Gates. The British had hoped thereby to make the river unnavigable to German petroleum barges.[68] The execution of economic agreements between the two countries was facilitated by the appointment of Hermann Neubacher to Bucharest as Special Representative for Economic Questions, in January 1940. It was he who successfully negotiated the 'Arms for Oil' pact of 6 March.[69]

Throughout the winter and early spring of 1940, King Carol had continued to support Gafencu's policy of flexibility towards the Great Powers and appeasement of Germany.[70] In a document drawn up in late March, Gafencu proposed that, while the government should maintain a friendly attitude to the West, it should avoid what he called 'the sometimes unscrupulous machinations of Anglo-French diplomacy' which was unable to give Romania effective support. At the same time, while resisting any German moves which could threaten Romania's political or economic independence, Romania should seek not to provoke Germany. Unconvinced of an ultimate German victory, Gafencu believed Romanian neutrality was to be maintained in case the war was won by the West or resulted in a compromise peace. To have been seen to maintain strict neutrality would give the Romanian government a stronger hand at the post-war negotiating table.[71] Despite Gafencu's hopes, however, fear of the Soviet Union had created the momentum for a clear economic drift towards Germany by March 1940.

German military successes in the West in the spring of 1940 speeded up the pace of economic collaboration still further. On 9 April, Germany occupied Denmark and Norway. On 10 May, she began her offensive in Western Europe. On 27 May, the 'Oil Pact' was signed, which finalized the preliminary arrangements of the 6 March pact and ensured that German armaments and Romanian petroleum were to be exchanged at pre-war prices.[72] The following day, neutral Belgium, who had been the model

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68 DGFP, D, IX, Doc. no. 166, Minister Killinger to the Foreign Minister, Bucharest, 14 April 1940. An early friend of Hitler, von Killinger became Minister to Slovakia in 1940 and Minister in Romania from January 1941, when he replaced Fabricius.

69 Former Mayor of Vienna, Neubacher had been the underground leader of the NSDAP in Austria from 1933–38.

70 Arhivele Statului, Portugalia I-021-85-21, roll 22, Academia Portugheză De Istorie, Donația Monique Urdăreanu, Însemnări Zilnice, Carol II, 1937–1951, vol. 11, Friday 15 December 1939–Tuesday 9 April 1940, Wednesday 20 March, pp. 180–1.

71 MAE, Fondul 71/România, vol. 275, pp. 436–43, Note following a conversation with Clodius, signed Gafencu, 26 March 1940.

72 Neubacher observed that the pact 'frustrated the attempts of the enemy powers to throttle German petroleum purchases by extraordinary price increases': DGFP, D,

for the Romanian attempt to sustain neutrality between the Great Powers, capitulated to Germany.

It was the capitulation of Belgium which sounded the death-knell of Gafencu's 'appeasement' policy. On the night of 27 May, Gafencu had a discussion with Minister President Tătărescu and the Court Minister, Urdăreanu, who sought to convince Gafencu that Romanian foreign policy should 'be adapted to realities'. Owing to the threat of Soviet aggression, both Tătărescu and Urdăreanu believed Romania should ask for concrete political support in Berlin. Carol, who had supported Gafencu's flexible policy upto now, was in agreement.[73] Consequently, on 28 May Minister President Tătărescu made an official declaration to the German Minister in Bucharest on behalf of the Romanian government, in which he pointed out Romania's wish for closer collaboration with Germany 'in all domains'.[74] Feeling unable to pursue a policy of unconditional rapprochement with the Reich, Gafencu resigned as Foreign Minister on 1 June.[75]

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With the capitulation of Belgium, Gafencu's policy finally crumbled, but it had long been in difficulties. As British policy moved away from one of 'appeasement' to 'encirclement' of Germany in 1939, Gafencu had found it increasingly difficult to maintain a balance between the Great Powers; with the onset of the Second World War and Romania's subsequent geographic isolation from the West, it became ever more difficult to retain a free hand in dealing with them. Romania now lay isolated between the pincers of the economic and military German colossus and a Bolshevik, expansionist Russia. In this situation, an increasing reliance on Germany, and willingness to grant economic concessions in return for potential support, became inevitable. With the fall of France on 22 June 1940, the West was apparently defeated. The Soviet annexation of Bessarabia in late June left Germany as the sole Great Power who could possibly protect Romania from further territorial truncation, either by the Soviet Union or

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IX, Doc. no. 338, The Special Representative for Economic Questions at the Legation in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 28 May 1940.

73 Ion Ardeleanu and Vasile Arimia (eds), *Grigore Gafencu: Jurnal iunie 1940-iulie 1942*, Bucharest, undated, p. 18.

74 MAE, Fondul 71/Germania, vol. 78, pp. 466–7, Communication made by Tătărescu, President of the Council of Ministers, to Fabricius, German Minister, on 28 May 1940, in the presence of Foreign Minister Gafencu and Ernest Urdăreanu, Minister of the Palace.

75 Ion Ardeleanu and Vasile Arimia (eds), *Grigore Gafencu: Jurnal iunie 1940-iulie 1942*, pp. 18–19; Stelian Neagoe, (ed.) *Raoul Bossy: Amintiri din viața diplomatică (1918–1940)*, 2 vols, Bucharest, 1993, II, p. 268.

Hungary. On 1 July King Carol, who had once said that he would 'rather see the Germans as enemies in his country, than the Russians as friends', informed the German Minister of his wish for a political alliance with the Reich because 'lacking such protection, Romania [...] is subject to Soviet Russian influence'. Carol also announced his government's intention to abrogate the Anglo-French Guarantee.[76] On the following day, Carol made the first of several requests that a German military mission be sent to Romania to train the army and air force.[77] In the ever more tense diplomatic situation of 1939–40, Gafencu's attempts to 'appease' Germany had failed to preserve Romania's territorial integrity. It remained for General Antonescu, in full alliance with the Reich, to pledge Romania's support for the German war against the Soviet Union, in the vain hope of restoring Romania to her pre-1940 borders.

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76 Arhivele Statului, SUA, roll 298, frames 435507–435510 (435509), German Legation, Bucharest, Daily Report no. 3380/38 to the Foreign Ministry, 30 September 1938, Fabricius; DGFP, D, X, Doc. no. 68, Minister in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 1 July 1940.

77 Ibid., Doc. no. 80, Minister in Romania to the Foreign Ministry, Bucharest, 2 July 1940.

British Policy towards Romania 1939–41

Maurice Pearton

Academic analysis of the Guarantee of 13 April 1939 has dwelt almost exclusively on questions of 'haute politique'. In maintaining this emphasis, historians have faithfully followed those in Whitehall who took the decision: ministers and officials discussed the problem in no other terms. They were, after all, concerned to put the German Government on notice that certain kinds of action which had been successful in Central Europe would not go unchallenged in the South-East. No one paid much attention to the instruments of policy and how they were to be used. I wish to make a belated enquiry into this aspect of British policy towards Romania from 1939 until 1941.

The Guarantee had been solicited by the Romanians, but was made to look like a British initiative to which Romania had responded so as not to affront the Germans too obviously. (Gafencu, the Foreign Minister, remarked that he would be happy to accept guarantees from any quarter.) In itself, the Guarantee was a minor 'diplomatic revolution' in that, historically, Britain's relations with Romania had never been so direct but had been a function of relations with some other power: Ottoman Turkey, Austria–Hungary and, in particular, Russia. This was a matter not just of 'haute politique' but of practical necessity. British power was sea-borne: where ships could go, British governments, if they wished, could exercise power and influence. Projecting power into the Black Sea depended entirely on the state of relations between Russia and Ottoman Turkey, especially over access to the Bosporus. Britain tried to influence such decisions but, as the record shows, was far from uniformly successful. The one major success, giving direct access to Romania — the Crimea in 1854–56 — was for the Romanians a precedent, for the British an exception.

Additionally, in terms of strategy, Britain approached Balkan questions from the south. The dominant preoccupation was to ensure that no major power controlled Salonika and the Greek islands, in order to protect not only imperial comunications but also the supply of wheat from southern

Russia. On this reasoning, the practical question was how far up the Balkan peninsula one had to exert influence to secure that objective. Romania was at the 'wrong' end. The alternative approaches by land were controlled by Austria and Germany.

Furthermore, in an age when British liberalism was enthusiastically supporting every emergent nationalism in sight, Britain played no role in the creation of the Romanian nation-state comparable with, for example, its role in the unity of Italy during much the same period. Ancient Rome resonated in the educational system, but the texts — one recalls — dealt with the exploits of Caesar in Gaul, not Trajan in Dacia. Contemporarily, the British flocked to Florence and Venice and, at Ruskin's behest, celebrated the Renaissance in art and literature. No such interest can be observed regarding Romania, which remained, at best, the preserve of individual romantic travellers and collectors of folklore. Hence, the British interest in Romania was specialized rather than general and tended to be narrowly defined in terms of trade and investments; that is, it was 'normal' for a state devoted to Free Trade. One result of this concentration was that Romania's main export items, grains and, later, oil, became much more important to the Romanian balance of payments than they were to Britain's import patterns for these products. This imbalance caused endless difficulty.

On this reading, Britain's *direct* political or strategic relations with Romania, notably in 1917, were atypical responses to an emergency and, to that extent, improvisations.

The converse was, broadly, true of Romanian relations with France. When the Romanian élites talked about 'the West', they meant France — and with very good reason. French governments and intellectuals had supported the creation of Romania; their pervading cultural and educational influence thereafter is well documented and a shared Latinity implied a bond which was, in some mystic way, held to be superior to that with other nations. On a less metaphysical plane, France was the external guarantor of *România Mare*, in consequence of which Romania was an important element in the structure of French alliances in Central and Eastern Europe and in French strategic planning. Britain, however admirable, stood in the penumbra of *la ville lumière*. The British, deliberately eschewing alliances in the area and with strategic ideas focused elsewhere, were content to accept this position.

The Guarantee upset this pattern of expectations and responses. On the record, one could have expected it to have been presented as a *French* initiative, the logical outcome of acknowledged French interest in Romania. In fact, it was launched as a British move, though made with full French concurrence. Britain had been induced to assert a direct concern in

Romania's security, but, due to the circumscribed definition of British interests, the announcement in April 1939 was more hope than substance.

In seeking to remedy this, Britain had two traditional instruments on which to rely; diplomatic representation and commercial accommodation. The strength of the first depended not just on the character and ability of the Minister, Sir Reginald Hoare, and his staff, but on what he had to offer. On the whole, it was not what the Romanians wanted. The second instrument was, at the time, even less promising. The British once again observed that, in economics as well as politics, the brutal fact of Anglo-Romanian relations is that Germany is inconveniently in the way: opportunity, proximity of manufacture and the logistics of supply all told in favour of the Third Reich. Commercial relations with Romania, therefore, could involve little more than tidying up debt and Clearing problems. Romanian spokesmen, for their part, urged their British counterparts to take the big, broad, generous view about outstanding liabilities, and concentrate instead on strengthening the Romanian economy so as to underwrite Britain's position in the Balkans and the Near East. This in practical terms meant preferential treatment for oil and wheat in the markets of the sterling area. Thus, on the morrow of the Guarantee, the prospects of translating it into anything other than diplomatic manoeuvres were not rosy. To underpin the new relationship, attitudes and expectations on both sides had to be brought into line.

Reconciliation was the more difficult in that, thanks to the activities of Dr Schacht and Herr Wohlthat, a significant proportion of Romania's economic needs was being met by Germany or was under agreement to that end. British governments during the immediately preceding years had conceded this priority to the Germans on the unimpeachable grounds of economic rationality already mentioned. In British strategic planning, oil — of which so much was to be heard — featured only to the extent that Romania was considered a source or replacement for supplies from the Persian Gulf needed further east for a war against Japan. The Romanian Government, for its part, was well aware that its collaborative arrangements with Germany might be used to turn Romania into 'a dependency of the Reich', as the Foreign Minister, Grigore Gafencu, put it, and therefore sought to establish more comprehensive economic relations with Britain not just for their own sake but to put demonstrable limits on German activity. At every level, Anglo-Romanian relations were not primarily bilateral but tended to be a reflex of the two states' attitudes towards Germany. In this respect, as in the details of their mutual exchanges, Britain and Romania were not seeing the problems in the same perspective. Nevertheless, it was clear that if the Guarantee was to be anything but a polite warning notice, it had to be given some economic and

— albeit remotely — military substance. Ten days after Mr Chamberlain's announcement, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, the Treasury's Chief Economic Adviser, arrived with a mission in Bucharest.

The British Government had not reacted *that* quickly; a mission had been mooted by, among others, Gheorghe Tătărescu, former Minister President on his visit to London in June 1938. Then, the official reaction had been cool. The Guarantee, however, changed the context in which British policy had to be considered and gave a stronger argument to those who, like Leith-Ross, advocated a more positive policy. So he went. En route, he met Gafencu, who recorded that Leith-Ross was going to Bucharest: 'afin d'étudier les moyens par lesquels la Roumanie pouvait être aidée a se maintenir sur le marché mondial et ne pas disparaitre dans l'espace économique ferme du Reich allemand'.[1]

That outcome Leith-Ross knew could not be achieved overnight: he had far less to offer than the Romanians wanted, but, through tackling the short-term problems, he wished to establish a basis for collaboration which went some way towards meeting their requirements. Essential to that was the generation of confidence, hitherto notably lacking.[2]

There was at the time an additional source of misunderstanding in that proposals made from the Romanian side, by the King during his visit to London in November 1938 or subsequently by his ministers, were put forward not simply to improve economic exchanges but were designedly tests of the British commitment to Romania. In Romanian thinking, the British Government's willingness to buy the wheat crop would indicate its broader intentions towards Romania in a political sense. In this context it was natural to introduce schemes for a comprehensive economic pact rather than deal with individual and mundane matters of trade and accounting. Such overtures the British received with scepticism, or with the suspicion that German pressures were being used to renew attempts to secure Romanian products a preferential position in British markets.[3]

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1   Grigore Gafencu, *Derniers jours de l'europe*, Paris, 1947, p. 145.

2   Leith-Ross told Max Auşnit (who wished him to intervene with Lord McGowan of ICI) that 'our investments in Romania had been more fruitful of difficulties than of repayment and [...] this had made the investment concers rather shy': Note of Conversation, 13 December 1938, T188–297. [All file references are to archives in the Public Record Office, unless otherwise stated.]

3   The basic problems in current Anglo-Romanian trade relationships were (i) that the Romanian demand for UK goods was running in excess of the allocation of sterling in the financial agreements, and (ii) that the ruling export prices of the two main Romanian products, oil and wheat, were above world levels, since the Romanian Government looked to them to maximize the return in hard currencies. This reduced their competitiveness and set limits to the number of possible destinations. There were, additionally, continuing problems about the discriminatory affect and

In Bucharest, the range of Romanian requirements appears from Leith-Ross's record[4] of his conversations with leading personalities, including Călinescu, the Prime Minister, Bujoiu, Minister of National Economy, and Constantinescu, Governor of the National Bank. Their respective emphases varied in detail but, collectively, they put forward a programme of purchases, in which armaments and credits to allow the building of stocks against deprivation in war were the dominant items. The Romanians also proposed more wide-ranging collaboration, particularly in the form of a special British bank, a shipping line and a trading corporation or, alternately, special product-based exporting companies such as the Germans had set up. These measures would entail a complete overhaul of the Clearing system in vogue.

Negotiations were concluded on 11 May, when a Protocol[5] listed the arrangements on which the two governments had agreed. From our present point of view, the important features were paragraph five, promising guarantees by the British Government of a line of credit of £5 million 'in respect of the purchase of United Kingdom goods or for the purpose of other agreed expenditure in the United Kingdom'[6] and at interest of 5 per cent, and Annex 1 paragraph two, by which the British Government undertook to buy 200,000 tons of wheat for its own stocks from the next harvest 'if available at world prices'. The remaining items either concerned technical matters for the Clearing or indicated lines of future joint action.

This outcome was severely criticized in London and Bucharest, broadly for being a palliative when the situation clearly demanded a more

operational irrationality of current oil legislation and the treatment of oil products in the Clearing. On these latter issues, see M. Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, Oxford, 1971, ch. 8.

4 T188–231, 25 April 1939.

5 *Protocol between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Roumanian Government regarding Commercial and Economic Relations with Roumania*, Bucharest, 11 May 1939, Treaty Series no. 25 (1939), Cmd 6018. The Protocol was complemented by a Trade Agreement in July.

6 In conversation with Leith-Ross, Bujoiu identified the allocation of the loan as follows:

£2,400,000	army equipment
100,000	motorcycles
500,000	aircraft
1,000,000	ambulances, medical equipment
450,000	equipment silos
200,000	road building
350,000	various materials, including copper; refined zinc; rubber; tin; special steels; quebracho; glycerine
£5,000,000	

Leith Ross's note, 11 May 1939, T188-244.

thoroughgoing re-evaluation of policy.[7] Leith-Ross was aware that all he could do was to conduct 'a holding operation', while opinion changed in Whitehall. The Government had not been fully converted to the idea of reaping political benefits by economic means; indeed, in April 1939, it was only edging reluctantly towards the idea.[8] An inter-departmental committee had been exploring the possibilities since the previous June but had not ended its search by the time the Guarantee precipitated action at the level of 'high policy'.

There remained, additionally, two related problems: that, if the Government was going to invest from its restricted resources to get a political return, then Romania was not necessarily the most obvious candidate, and that regardless of the intended 'market' the British Government did not have at its disposal the specialized mechanisms for such a policy. This vital point was ignored by contemporary critics in their legitimate desire to halt the spread of German influence.

Leith-Ross himself was fully convinced of the need for new principles. Writing at the close of the negotiations from Bucharest, he argued:

> The Roumanians are making great efforts to put themselves into a state of readiness for war and if we are urging on them an active policy of resistance to German demands, it is not unreasonable of them to expect that we shall go as far as possible to help them in the matter of financial credits. I have the feeling that Departments tend to treat these political credits too much on the basis of the ordinary rules applying to commercial credits. This attitude is compared unfavourably with that of the Germans, who are tumbling over themselves to get control of the resources of Roumania and I think that if we insist on being meticulous, we shall lose a great deal of credit without really assuring ourselves of getting much cash. In fact, if we are to succeed in our policy here, the Government ought to make up its mind that these credits must be administered on different lines to those on which purely commercial business has been done.[9]

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7   The German Government did not take the same view as Leith-Ross's domestic and Romanian critics. The *Völkischer Beobachter* (no. 119, 29 April 1939, p. 13) reported the Mission as showing 'eine lebhafte Geschäftigkeit' in solving not merely immediate problems but also setting up an anti-Axis framework at Romanian expense. 'Offenbar kommt es den Engländern weniger darauf an, wie sie vorbeben, wirtschaftliche Aufbauarbeit in Rumänien zu leisten und Rumänien wirtschaftliche Hilfe zu bringen, als vielmehr *Rohstoffquellen für Deutschland nach Möglichkeit zu verstopfen*' (italics in original).

8   The reluctance, as far as Mr Chamberlain was concerned, stemmed ultimately from the apprehension that any war with Germany would make Britain dependent on an unsympathetic, when not totally hostile, United States. In this particular, the Prime Minister was proved percipient, but the argument was not one which could be advanced in public at the time.

9   T188–244, Leith-Ross (Bucharest) to Sir William Brown (Treasury), 1 May 1939.

The dénouement of the wheat deal showed how far attitudes and practices had to change. The Protocol provided for the bulk purchase of wheat on Government account. The Government had in being an agency — the Food (Defence Plans) Department of the Board of Trade, set up in November 1936 'to formulate plans for the supply, control, distribution and movement of food [...] during a major war'[10] — but it had no facilities of its own; it was indeed not authorized to have them, and therefore had to work through the trade. As regards wheat, this constraint brought it into conflict with millers and grain importers, whose relationship was one of mutual acrimony and who, additionally, were divided among themselves.[11] Progress, accordingly, was neither smooth nor rapid. The trade was given a formidable argument in its representations to the Board of Trade by the Romanian Government's pricing policy: it demanded seventy-four shillings per metric tonne f.o.b. Brăila, approximately 14 per cent above world market levels, which were then falling. The transaction was eventually concluded at 62.5 shillings. Shipments began in October, but the grains, found unsuitable for long-term storage, had to be milled as part of the current supply. Even to achieve this, the Board of Trade found itself having to back the millers against the grain importers. Mr Hammond concludes:

> The diplomatic merits of the Roumanian purchase cannot be discussed here. But it not only risked the goodwill of the millers by dictating the composition of their grist; it roused all the antagonisms latent among the private interests handling grain. To them it seemed that the Government was aiding and abetting a millers' buying ring, at a time when the enormous world wheat surplus was causing markets to tumble.[12]

The lesson, at least, was clear: pre-emptive buying operations demanded not only decisive action in the 'target' markets but also adequate techniques and instruments of disposal elsewhere. In the spring of 1939 the British Government lacked not only these but more: the authority to compel others to work as it desired. It was not that kind of system. For these reasons — with wheat as a partial exception — the immediate consequences of the Guarantee were negligible. The sudden reorientation of diplomacy had overtaken the fixed ideas about policy at other levels.

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10 R. J. Hammond, *Food*, 2 vols, London, 1951–62 (History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series), I, ch. 1.

11 Ibid., p. 26.

12 Ibid., p. 26.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 changed the terms of the relationships between the two states. Britain was a belligerent and rejected any accommodation with Germany; that, for Romania, was still an option. Further, the Soviet Union enjoyed a different status in the respective calculations of the two governments: for Britain it was an ally of Germany and as such an unstoppable leak in the blockade, but one about which little could be done. Romanian governments, for their part, knew that the Soviet Union was an adjoining state with a demonstrated interest in revising its frontiers: the idea of a Soviet invasion of Britain was derisory; a Soviet invasion of Romania was only too feasible.[13] This thought added urgency to Romanian representations that Britain's position in South-East Europe and the Near East depended on Romania and that in consequence Britain should help to equip its armed forces and provide credits to that end.

To policy-makers in Whitehall and Westminster in the autumn of 1939 that rationale was by no means self-evident. Accessibility remained *the* problem, and Greece and Turkey were better placed in that respect. Turkey, in particular, could provide defence in depth for the Suez Canal, the oil fields of Iraq and Iran and the route from Palestine to Basra. The Turkish army was considered capable of offering resistance to German invasion. If a choice had to be made between the two, then Turkey offered a better strategic return, particularly in view of the limited investment of 'material' which Britain could make.[14] Later, from March 1940 onwards, Soviet activity on the Bessarabian frontier and in the mouths of the Danube reinforced these arguments: there was clearly little point in mounting a big

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13 In their negotiations for the Pact of 23 August 1939, the German Government had already acquiesced in its partner's declared interest in Bessarabia (Secret Additional Protocol, 3). The Soviet Government was quick to draw its dividends from the Agreement. In the following month, Molotov indicated to Sarajoglu, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, during his visit to Moscow, that Russia was interested in re-establishing the frontiers of 1914. At much the same time, the journal *Communist International* put forward the idea of a Mutual Assistance Pact between the Soviet Union and Romania on the lines of those recently concluded with the Baltic States. At the end of November, the Red Army attacked Finland. These indications of Soviet intentions rather offset the assurances of the chargé d'affaires in Bucharest that the Soviet Union had no aggressive designs towards Bessarabia, and the *démenti*, published by Tass in early December, stating that the article in the *Communist International* did not represent the views of the Soviet Government. Thus, virtually from the outbreak of war, Romanian Governments could not be certain of Soviet policy and their apprehensions entered into their policies towards Germany and Britain.

14 I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, 6 vols, London, 1954–88 (History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series), I, p. 49.

effort in Romania if the country were going to be partitioned between Germany and Russia, as Poland had been.[15]

The contemporary processes of government in Romania did not help to clarify British strategic judgements. Although the King dictated policy, he was not able to impose his will but could get his way only by a complex process of political bargaining with adherents of the former parties and other interests. Hence personalities were important and the identity of the President of the Council offered a clue as to Romania's orientation. A cabinet headed by Călinescu was likely to take a tough line with Germany: one run by Gigurtu could safely be reckoned to do the opposite.[16] The balance of political forces inside the country offered a constant constraint on what Britain could do in Romania.

Irrespective of the personalities in office, Romania had assumed substantial commitments to Germany — but how far did they extend and how far *in practice* could they be modified by British action, either by comprehensive military support or otherwise? It was widely expected that British interests already long established could be used to bolster pro-Allied sentiments in the determination of policy in Bucharest. But these interests were industrial and commercial and they were 'strong' only if one looked at their formal position rather than their immediately deployable power.[17] The so-called 'British' companies were legally or beneficially owned by British nationals and as such their managements could be reckoned to be responsive to British Government requirements, but the vital consideration was that the companies, however British in other respects, were *Romanian*-registered institutions subject to Romanian jurisdiction. This by itself gave the Romanian authorities a lien on the companies if they cared to exercise it. Managements were acutely aware of this ultimate restriction on their freedom of action.

Additionally, it was by no means the case that managements or employees as a whole supported the British shareholding orientation in their own political preferences. Many were nationalist, hoping that

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15 In terms of the politics of the initiators, the take-over of Bessarabia (June 1940) and the Vienna award (August 1940) resembled the Partition of 1772, not that of 1795 or 1939, but this thought was, in itself, hardly encouraging.

16 Cabinets from 1939: Călinescu (till 21 September 1939), Argeşanu (till 27 September 1939), Argetoianu (till 23 November 1939), Tătărescu (till 30 June 1940), Gigurtu (till 4 September 1940). After September 1940, a National Legionary State was not going to be anything but enthusiastically pro-German, until that is in January 1941, when General Antonescu wound up the experiment. Thereafter his own regime was pro-German but from policy rather than from conviction.

17 The Germans, correctly, discerned that the important thing was to tie up the government, then economic interests could be made to bend to policy.

wartime conditions would allow expropriation of the foreign interest; others were pro-German either from conviction or from tactical sensitivity. The 'control' freely ascribed to Britain at the time or since has to be interpreted with these conditions in mind. Indeed any hope of successful action rested not on 'British-controlled enterprises' but on individuals within them, who might be able to use the assets in a pro-British sense. Such individuals, however, were scattered over the country and had no social cohesion or organization as, for example, the French had.

So the fact that Britain had interests in Romania did not offer a blanket solution to the problem of stopping the Germans. In any case it was pertinent to ask what, in the twilight circumstances of Romanian neutrality, *was* 'pro-British' policy? Did it mean action which would not offend the Romanian Government to the point of its succumbing to pro-German temptations, convictions or pressures, or did it imply action by the British or their Romanian sympathizers damning all the consequences? The answer to this question depended on the political circumstances of and in Romania, and especially on its attitude towards Germany, at any given time. Sir Reginald Hoare, in a letter to Lord Halifax, identified the crucial oscillations in Romanian behaviour:

> the Roumanians will make promises to us, not really believing that they can keep them but hoping that something will turn up to enable them to do so, whereas they make promises to the Germans hoping that circumstances will break them for them or that in a month or two they will themselves dare to evade or break them.[18]

This remained so as long as the Romanian Government considered it had any effective power to manoeuvre at all.

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In view of the interacting uncertainties discussed in the preceding section, it is not surprising that in September 1939 Britain accorded Romania a minimum role in its overall strategy. Commercial operation seemed to offer more immediate possibilities for the time being; if Romania were not to be consigned straight away to the enemy, action was not to be 'military' but 'economic'. 'Economic warfare' was designed 'to disorganise the enemy's economy [so] as to prevent him from carrying on the war'.[19] It had affinities with the traditional aims of blockade but its scope was far wider: if war was now to be 'total', action would have to be taken against all the enemy's actual and possible sources of supply — a category which,

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18 Halifax papers (1938–40), 26 January 1940, FO 800/322, vol. 14.
19 W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, 2 vols, London, 1952–59 (History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series), I, p. 1.

by definition, included 'neutrals'. I have shown elsewhere[20] that in the industrial age neutrality as defined by lawyers has been inadequate to describe what actually happens and have suggested that neutrals are to be functionally regarded as 'non-belligerent participants'. But the issues between them and the belligerents are within the framework of international legal rules which attempt to discriminate between 'neutral' and 'unneutral' behaviour.[21] So, in exercising the option of being neutral, the Romanian Government was adopting a policy which the German Government — through the Wohlthat Agreement, its effective command of armaments' supply and the *Volksdeutsche* organizations — was already in a position to challenge. By the same token, that position defined in practice the objective of British policy. Romania became a 'battleground' for economic warfare, in which however the Romanian Government was no mere bystander: it was involved not in a bilateral but in a triangular series of relationships.

As conceived in September 1939, such warfare proceeded on a number of assumptions, all of which were dubious. In a conflict between two heavily industrialized states, each unable to cover its own material requirements, that neutral sources of supply would be crucial to the outcome was indisputable, but the early practitioners concluded from this premise that there must be one vital factor — *the* supply bottleneck, *the* raw material or *the* manufacturing capacity — interruption or deprivation of which would bring the German war machine satisfactorily to a halt. That once established, what to be done at source could then be arrived at deductively. The relevant Ministry was appropriately housed in the London School of Economics. (It later moved to Berkeley Square.) Academic theorists, under the guidance of Leith-Ross, soon learned to dispense with abstraction and to regard successful policy as the outcome of welding together successive links in a chain, the length of which could not be foreseen.[22] They also had to learn that in a general war, the

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20 In general terms in *The Knowledgeable State: Diplomacy, War and Technology since 1830*, London, 1982, part 5, and with special reference to Romania in 'The Theory and Practice of Neutrality in the First World War — The Romanian Contribution, 1914–1916' in G. Buzatu and S. Pascu (eds), *Anglo-Romanian Relations after 1821*, Iaşi, 1983, pp. 111–25.

21 But as one British official observed, 'As is generally the case nowadays, the important question is not what the legal position is but the view the "X" are likely to take of the facts and the action which they are likely to take': PRO FO 24995, p. 177.

22 In justice to the officials, it must be urged that they had a very narrow field of expertise on which to draw. As already noted, in 1939 there were few experts on Romania, and those who did exist tended to identify themselves with Romanian

traditional policies of neutral states do not just stop, they merely assume different modalities. In Romania, therefore, policies aiming to deprive the Germans of materials depended on there being a clearly demonstrable advantage for the Romanians. That advantage might be political, for example, the ability to resist German demands, or economic, for example, a solution to a problem of production or finance, or both, but success had to be *bought* by conferring benefits: otherwise, there was no reason why the Romanians should co-operate.

These conditions dictated the measures followed in the case of the main commodity: oil. Before analysing them, we need to consider how oil was traded. The companies which were affiliates of international groups supplied them under long-term contract: such oil, either crude or products, never entered the Romanian market. The parent organizations, however, could not take all the output; hence there existed an open market for the exportable surplus. This market was also supplied by the companies operating with indigenous capital, especially those which lacked their own refining capacity. Both British and German agencies were anxious to secure that surplus, or as much of it as possible, for themselves and deny it to their enemies. The ultimate disposal, however, depended not just on the competition between the agencies but also on the Romanian Government, which had its own ideas about the return expected from the sale of Romanian output. This concern extended not only to the financial return but also to the precise currency in which it was to be made.[23] Further, with the exception of supplies traded under inter-governmental arrangement, whether oil from Romania could be distributed to a particular available market depended on its being competitive and that in turn depended on two factors: the ruling landed price of supplies from alternative sources and the fiscal requirements of the Romanian Government which entered into the 'f.o.b. Constanţa' quotation.[24] This restricted the radius within which Romanian oil could be sold competitively, so that, for example, in Alexandria the landed price of basic products brought by sea from the US Gulf was lower than that for the products of the same specification from Constanţa.

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objectives to the point of being anti-Bulgarian and anti-Hungarian. This did not assist policy-making.

23 From the British point of view, the Romanian Government's insistence, at the beginning of 1940, that supplies to Greece be paid for outside the Clearing and not in sterling but in US dollars, ruled out what would otherwise have been a most convenient market for oil from the export surplus. Similar Romanian tactics with Yugoslavia, with whom the Clearing was suspended, merely caused the Yugoslav Government to turn to the Italians.

24 See Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, p. 39.

Until September 1939, these circumstances were burdensome only to Romanian exporters; after 12 September when the British Government decided on an all-out effort to divert oil from Germany, they became a problem for British policy.

The 'British' companies went into the market with large purchasing contracts, and by March 1940 the Treasury agreed to provide a subsidy to cover the difference between Gulf and Constanţa prices in Egypt and other markets in the Levant.[25] Commercial action was successful: it removed the surplus from the market, enabling the Romanian Government to plead to the Germans that there was insufficient oil available to fulfil the inter-governmental agreement, and at the same time driving up prices to levels which endangered the German–Romanian Clearing. It also helped to establish beyond doubt that the Romanian Government, its denials notwithstanding, *had* taken a firm commitment to supply Germany. That at once posed a problem: the commitment, which the Germans were pressing to be honoured against armaments, was far larger than the surplus; hence further Allied buying[26] to reduce availability might cause the Romanian Government to compel Allied companies to sell to Germany — which of course it was legally entitled to do. They accordingly withdrew and straight commercial policies came to an end.[27]

Deprivation measures, additionally, extended to facilities. The same Cabinet decision which ordered the purchase of the oil export surplus also authorized the chartering of barges and rail tank cars. For the Danube shipping, a ready though not entirely suitable instrument lay to hand in the form of the Anglo-Danubian Trading Corporation. Its object was to deprive the Germans of 'neutral' tugs and barges and lighters on the river. The latter comprised about one third of the total lighter numbers and represented between 330,000 tons and 470,000 tons freight capacity in a

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25 Ibid., pp. 247, 248.

26 It did not help at this stage that the British and French governments pursued their common aim by diametrically opposed methods. Britain and the 'British' companies sought to maintain the principle of 'freedom of destination', so that the companies could not be forced to sell to the enemy. The French Government made an agreement under which participants pledged their exports to France, that is admitting the right of the Romanian Government to set destinations. The British argued that if it could order supplies to France, it could also order supplies to Germany.

27 Eric (later Sir Eric) Berthoud was attached to the Legation in Bucharest to help resolve problems of policy locally. See his memoirs, *An Unexpected Life* (privately printed), 1980, pp. 71–84.

ten-month operating year.[28] Anglo-Danubian went into the market, acquiring ships from Yugoslav and, from May 1940, French owners. By that time, its role had been assumed by a company founded by the British Government in February 1940, the Goeland Transport and Trading Company. Its purpose was 'to purchase, charter and operate [...] tugs, tank-barges, lighters and auxiliary craft on the Danube including vessels in the Black Sea and Aegean as could potentially be used on the Danube'.[29] These terms make it plain that whereas Anglo-Danubian was an improvisation, Goeland was a considered instrument of economic warfare. It readily took over the existing techniques — laying up vessels, prolonging refits, causing congestion — all designed to cause maximum inconvenience to the Germans without giving the Romanian Government cause to scrutinize the charter party or to yield to German threats to police the entire river themselves. Goeland added to the repertoire by suborning crews on German vessels and inviting Iron Gates pilots on extended holidays with pay. It tried, however, to conduct a 'normal' commercial business when the opportunity occurred, with a view to entering the river export trade to Yugoslavia and Switzerland, thus depriving the Germans of both ships and cargoes.[30] Goeland also toyed with the idea of investing in a stone quarry near Orsova, upstream of the Iron Gates, which would allow explosives to be stored in their proximity. This particular scheme collapsed when, in consequence of the exposure of the British Danube expedition,[31] policing of crews and vessels and scrutiny of documentation were all tightened up. This unwelcome development prompted Goeland to move all its vessels downstream to Brăila. Its range of effectiveness was thereby seriously curtailed.

Tank cars could not be treated in similar fashion since the Romanian Government, through the state railway, the CFR, owned and operated a fleet on its own account and hired out cars to oil exporters, on contract. This category covered about three-fifths of the total stock. Additionally — and in contrast to the river — the Government controlled the number of oil trains per day. The ordinary traffic control exercised by any railway management was made more necessary in Romania till March 1940 by reason of the single track (Predeal–Braşov) common to the two main

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28 In 1939, the Danube handled only 24 per cent of Romania's oil exports, compared with 59 per cent by sea and 17 per cent by rail: see *La Navigation sur le Danube*, *Moniteur du Pétrole Roumain*, 1940, no. 29, pp. 1097–8.

29 FO 371–24899.

30 See Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, pp. 248–51.

31 See pp. 75–82 below.

export routes. The Government, therefore, had a far greater command over the day-to-day operation of the railway than it did over the river.[32]

These conditions offered the 'British' companies little room for manoeuvre. Their efforts were, accordingly, directed at maintaining the status quo and warding off any attempts by Romanian authorities to impound company-owned cars under emergency regulations. The success of this policy depended on the oil concerns' continuing to find use for the cars, and the Romanian Government's own willingness to use conditions in the transport sector as reasons for not fulfilling its contractual obligations to Germany. Both disappeared after May–June 1940. In July, the companies were presented with a month's notice of termination of all hiring contracts. The CFR, however, did not wait for the month to expire but commandeered cars as soon as they returned to Ploeşti. In August, the authorities requisitioned all cars and put them into a central pool, from which the needs of the individual company were to be met. By that stage, of course, any significant economic warfare in these terms had finished.

In the sphere of overt action, commercial operations were paralleled by propaganda, in the sense that both could be undertaken immediately and also that their impact was overstated by their practitioners. In propaganda, however, Britain enjoyed two advantages: a nucleus of pro-British sentiment clustered round the British Institute and the initial activities of the British Council;[33] and the fact that the Romanian desk in the Ministry of Information was occupied by D. J. Hall, author of *Romanian Furrow*.[34] These advantages were to a large extent dissipated by the in-fighting between the Institute and the Council and the feeble nature of the propaganda effort. For that, E. H. Carr, then an official in the Ministry of Information, blamed Sir Reginald Hoare, as 'ein Geist der stets verneint', and wanted to send out 'young Seton-Watson' to ginger up the Press Attaché, Mr Pember.[35] Hall, visiting Bucharest, observed the operational difficulties: Pember had no office but, with his Romanian typist, occupied

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32 In the winter of 1939–40, Nature was pro-Ally. Very severe conditions closed the Danube for navigation for some two and a half months. The ice started to move on 13 March 1940 but the water level obligingly flooded a large part of Giurgiu, making the petroleum area unusable for ten days. The river began to rise again at the end of March and by 9 April the petroleum area was again under water. Oil exports were thereupon diverted to another part of Giurgiu, but capacity was restricted to three trains a day.

33 The Treasury refused funds for the construction of a British Council centre until reminded that King Carol had personally donated the site to that end. The Treasury rapidly sanctioned the expenditure. See correspondence between Sir John Simon and Lord Halifax, March 1940, FO 371-24995.

34 London, 1933, re-issued 1939.

35 Carr to Nichol (Foreign Office) 1 November 1939, FO 371-23852.

space in a corridor; further, due to the under-staffing of the Legation, he was so occupied with Legation work that he had little time for his proper duties. Hence it was not surprising that

> perceptive and quick-witted Romanians however much they might distrust and dislike the Germans [...] observe that, while the Germans always have a ready explanation of any and every event, we continually fail to give an adequate reply, let alone an explanation first. As a result Romanians [...] not infrequently conclude that we have nothing to say and that therefore the Germans may be right.[36]

Hall cited four telling instances: uncorrected German reports of sinkings by magnetic mines suggested that Britain had suffered 'a calamitous blow'; similar effects followed belatedly challenged reports of RAF losses in the raid on Heligoland; no reply had been given at all to German charges that the British agents had been responsible for an explosion in a chloride factory at Braşov; and the only articles appearing in the Romanian press about the destruction of the *Graf Spee* had been written by Romanian journalists basing themselves on Havas and Reuters.[37] Of British newspapers, only *The Times* had a regular British correspondent; the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mirror* had temporary ones[38] and the rest were represented by Russians or Romanians. Equally unsatisfactory was the way British news appeared in the local journals: over such vital aspects of layout as size and blackness of type, the editors had no control; that decision rested with the typesetters. Hall could recommend no way of dealing with them 'except the simple one of bribery'.[39]

The course of events presented British propaganda with an uphill task. It was not lost on Romanians that Poland had also been given a Guarantee — a theme echoed by Polish refugees who blamed it for their downfall.[40] In the spring of 1940, the Norwegian campaign was widely considered as a test case of whether the Allies could seriously help a small state

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36 *Visit of DJ Hall to Romania. Report part 2: Propaganda*, 15 March 1940 (FO 371-24988).

37 Britain subsequently improved on this performance, notably in the field of 'black' propaganda.

38 The *Mirror* correspondent was David Walker, who recorded his experiences in *Lunch with a Stranger* (London, 1957), p. 51.

39 *Visit of DJ Hall to Romania* (see note 36 above).

40 The idea of sending a team of experts to counter this opinion was scotched by Hoare: 'This country is not ripe for such war propaganda for the excellent reason that the sum of success has not hitherto been greatly in evidence', Hoare/Nichols, 13 October 1939, FO 371-23852.

subjected to aggression.[41] After the collapse on the Western front, Britain's expressed determination to fight on recalled to one of Hoare's contacts 'les derniers jours de Byzance' — and all Romanians knew what had followed that epoch.

After June 1940, the British propaganda effort in Romania petered out, since the German claim that the ultimate victory of the Reich was inevitable was far more plausible than the British assertion that it was not. Britain could only seek to influence Romanian opinion through the BBC from London, and even there the Corporation and the Foreign Office were at loggerheads over what the latter rightly stigmatized as serious gaffes. By 1941 co-ordination had improved, but in the two years covered by this paper, Britain failed to capitalize on evident Romanian goodwill. In fact, the claim to fame of this aspect of British policy rests on its having provided the setting and the materials for an entertaining novel — on the record, a not inappropriate outcome.

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From the British point of view, the declaration of war resolved a number of ambiguities and hesitancies, notably in finance, and allowed actions to be considered which 'peace' had previously ruled out. In particular, the range of covert action was extended. 'Covert' in this context implies not the usual espionage[42] but secret action of which the Romanian Government was aware or in which it co-operated, on the grounds that such anti-German policies served the interests of both states. The obvious candidate was oil.

The fields and installations had been partially destroyed by an *ad hoc* mission improvised in 1916, but the execution at the time had been marred by divergent views between the Romanian Government and the mission of the extent of the damage necessary to deny oil to the Germans. The latter had their own experience of repair and renovation in the oil fields and refineries on which to draw. So, in 1939, the British Government was determined that the Romanian Government should be fully committed in advance, while the Germans, knowing themselves after their Agreement of 23 August 1939 with Russia to be in a far stronger position *vis-à-vis* Romania than in 1917, determined to save themselves the trouble of a second invasion and infiltrate Romania's oil areas to the point that they could either forestall the British or immediately repair any damage. This

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41 Hoare/FO, no. 335, 4 May 1940, FO 371-24988.

42 Evidence for conventional intelligence activity and the kind of operations indulged in by what became SOE — apart from memoir literature such as David Walker's *Lunch with a Stranger* — is only just beginning to emerge. For that reason these aspects of British policy are not discussed in this chapter.

action was to be coupled with representations stressing the need for Romania to protect its oil resources in order to keep oil flowing to Germany against the supply of arms, of which it was pointed out that Germany enjoyed a *de facto* monopoly.[43] British covert policies had to be framed in this context.

From its beginning, the increasing German orientation of Romanian exports provoked individuals, British and Romanian, to isolated acts of sabotage, often but not invariably assisted by British agents or their contacts. It was useful to obstruct deliveries by causing the failure of locomotives on single-track systems, but such induced breakdowns only strengthened the Germans' determination to ensure that they ceased, by bringing pressure to bear on the Romanian Government and encouraging the vigilance of *Volksdeutsche* employees of the companies and the CFR. Rather more subtle in intention was the arrangement between Otto Stern, of Astra Româna, and his colleague Dr Kruspig, of Rhenania Ossag. Kruspig was a lawyer who had helped to bring about the merger of the oil business of Stern's father with other interests to form Rhenania. There was thus personal confidence of long standing, which permitted the two to work out techniques of administrative confusion designed to keep rail tank cars shuttling between Ploeşti and Hamburg for long periods of time. Kruspig, however, was killed in a car accident at Braşov on his way back to Germany (enquiry showed that the accident was not contrived). The scheme therefore came to nothing, since Stern did not have the same relationship with Kruspig's successor.

Any such efforts were unsystematic and could amount to no more than a series of cumulative pinpricks. The larger problem, from the British point of view, was to stop the flow of oil to Germany completely, or at least inhibit it as much as possible. This was in itself a valid aim of policy, even though the premise on which it was erected — namely that it would curtail the operations of the Luftwaffe — was not.[44] Since the large tonnages went by the Danube to Vienna and Regensburg, that was the obvious target for interdiction, and on the Danube itself the vulnerable section was

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43 The exchanges on this issue are to be found in the relevant section of *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series B, vol. 8.

44 The Luftwaffe relied on German production and captured stocks. In 1940 Romania contributed only 12,600 tons of high octane aviation gasoline for the whole year. It was not designated a major supplier of high octane aviation fuels to the Reich until 1942. In more general terms the argument was correct. German requirements in 1940 were of the order of 10–12 million tons, of which 6 million tons derived from hydrogenation plants and stocks. Romania was looked to for about three million tons. Hence the 'Oil Pact' of May 1940; hence also the interest in the security of facilities.

the Kazan Gorge and the rapids known as the 'Iron Gates' where the river broke through the mountains. There the channel narrowed and the current ran at about 15 km/hour. A by-pass canal eased transit but special pilots were required for that stretch. It was the classic bottleneck beloved by theorists of economic warfare.

The idea of impeding the flow of war materials, especially oil, to Germany via the Danube at the Iron Gates seems to have occurred to several people.[45] The favoured method was either to blast the cliffs into the channel, or to sink blockships, but in both cases to destroy the by-pass canal and the associated workings. A cliff-blasting operation was attempted in the winter of 1940 and failed when Yugoslav police inconveniently discovered the tunnels.[46] For our present purposes, the attempt by river originated in the office of the Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral John Godfrey, acting in liaison with the Naval Attaché in Bucharest, Captain Max Despard. Service personnel were recruited from three sources: London (travelling overland as minor officials), Malta and Alexandria. The vessels were a motley collection, assembled locally by the Goeland Company, of tugs, self-propelled barges and dumb lighters, all flying the Red Ensign.[47] The crews, equally motley, comprised personnel from the Royal and Royal Australian navies, and Greeks, Hungarians and Romanians normally engaged in Danube traffic. The expedition was under the command of Commander A. P. Gibson, RN.[48]

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45 Analysis of this episode poses a number of problems about sources, so far unresolved: the main published works by participants are Minshall, *Guilt-edged*, London, 1975, and Mason, *One Man's War*, London, undated. The official Admiralty report (ADM1-21717) and intermittent references in the correspondence files between the Legation and the Foreign Office (FO 371-24988) are in the Public Record Office. On these materials I have had the benefit of discussion with the late Commander C. E. T. Warren RN (retd), one of the Malta party. I have not yet been able to examine the files of the Abwehr; the report of the German Minister in Bucharest, von Killinger, is mentioned in documents but seems to have disappeared. Minshall and Mason to some extent complement each other but their accounts appear to have the most tangential of relationships with the official documents: this points not so much to the self-regarding nature of their autobiographies as to the difficulty of establishing who knew or did what at any given time.

46 See B. Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, London, 1969, p. 22.

47 One was Italian-owned and sailed under the Greek flag on charter to the British.

48 Gibson lost his life at sea three days after submitting his 'Letter of Proceedings', 20 August 1940 (enclosed Admiral Cunningham to Secretary of the Admiralty 22 November 1940 ref. Med 01102/0700/32), ADM1-21717. The report covers the operation in Romania and its aftermath in Turkey and Greece. It is not written in

At the time, the Danube from the Black Sea to Brăila was juridically Romanian — the International Danube Commission having hauled down its flag at Sulina in 1938. The international regime, however, continued upstream from Giurgiu. The initial problem for Commander Gibson was therefore to get the ships through the first two hundred miles of waterway without giving the Romanian authorities, already susceptible to German pressure, grounds for forbidding passage. In this regard the proclivities of port officials — whether their sense of Romania's advantage led them to be pro-Ally or pro-German — was crucial to the outcome of the expedition.

At first, all went tolerably well. The three groups assembled in Brăila for passage through Romanian waters. The arms and explosives, sealed in cases by Customs as 'oil drilling spares' in transit to Budapest, were loaded into a separate lighter, *Termonde*, to be towed to Giurgiu. All ships sailed on 1 April (the date was ominous), each towing lighters. They arrived at their destination in the afternoon of 3 April. They were promptly inspected:

> The authorities duly arrived and searched the ships properly. They found uniforms, arms and money; the latter appeared to excite them as much as anything. We had about five hundred pounds in lei [...] which was apparently very wrong. They also found a tear gas pistol, which they thought fired Verey Lights and so did not worry about. The ship was prepared for a fairly thorough search but not for such a one as was given at Giurgiu. On conclusion of the search the authorities collected the pistols etc. that they had found and threw them all into a suitcase; the last item which they lightly tossed into the melée being a cigar box with detonators.[49]

Commander Gibson further relates that, on it being represented to the Romanians that certain items might be dangerous, they decided to leave all the arms on board and the matter was referred to Bucharest by telephone.

The search had been initiated not by Customs but by the Port Captain, Drencianu, an official, Gibson reported, whose career in the Romanian Navy had abruptly terminated by reason of some peccadillo and who had entered his present employment through the agency of a relative, Admiral Pais. When Gibson wrote, Pais was Secretary of State in the Ministry of Air and Marine. Drencianu was pro-German.

There began a 'cat and mouse' game between the Port Captain and the British. The immediate response to the telephone call was that the Port Captain was ordered to desist. The vessels, however, had to stay where

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the usual form, since it cites no instructions at the beginning; internal evidence suggests that Cdr Gibson burnt his, with other confidential documents on 9 April.

49 Gibson, 'Letter of Proceedings', paragraphs 14 and 18.

they were, in part because Giurgiu was the only available store of suitable fuel. The Port Captain dragged out, for thirty-six hours, the process of giving permission to go to the oiling berth. On 5 April, while the first vessels were oiling, Gibson was ordered to Bucharest to see Captain Despard, who was 'fairly satisfied the incident was closed'. That evening 'came the news that *Termonde* had been searched and the arms and explosives taken over by the Rumanians'.[50] The ships were virtually under arrest, and it was blowing a gale.

At this point, the politics of the episode become more complicated, just where the evidence becomes more tenuous. Essentially, the ships were stuck at Giurgiu, while the British Legation and their Romanian well-wishers, such as Gafencu, tried to work out a solution which would leave the expedition more or less intact, and with the option of proceeding up-river. Against them were the Abwehr, which had monitored the whole British operation from the time it left Sulina, and German diplomats, suggesting that if the Romanians failed to intervene, arms deliveries from the Reich might well fail to materialize. Ultimately, this argument was to prove conclusive. Further down in the hierarchy, the Port Captain and his well-placed relative and other local officials were manoeuvering to ensure that any concessions about movement of vessels or personnel gained by the Legation were inhibited by applying local regulations. The combination of pressures worked. After another search, on 9 April (which revealed nothing), the ships left not for the Iron Gates but for Brăila, where they remained until the beginning of May. At that juncture, it was considered possible that the flotilla could retrieve its arms and explosives through negotiation with the Romanian General Staff and yet fulfil its mission. (Present evidence cannot suggest how realistic this possibility was.) At the same time, Gibson noted, the authorities began rigorously controlling the movement of foreigners and the International Commission of the Danube produced new regulations about vessels and navigation on the river, both of which left the flotilla highly vulnerable to further official intervention.

Success depended on other than local conditions, in particular on Romanian belief in Britain. The expedition took place at a time of rapidly declining British credibility; Gibson reports that when on 10 May news came through of the invasion of the Low Countries, the Watson and Youell manager remarked, 'now there can be no neutrals, all must make their choice' — a sentiment which Gibson identified as the prevalent opinion. News of the surrender of Dutch forces on 14 May and of Belgian forces on

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50 Ibid., paragraphs 24–7. On this episode see also A. Hillgruber, *Hitler, König Carol und Marschall Antonescu*, Wiesbaden, 1954, pp. 68–9, and H. Neubacher, *Sonderauftrag Südost 1940–1945*, Göttingen, 1956, pp. 43–4.

28 May and the course of battle in France deprived Britain of all but the most dedicated support. The replacement of Gafencu as Foreign Minister by Gigurtu on 3 June was taken to measure how decisively the balance had turned against Britain. The hesitancies and reticencies of minor officialdom made that even more evident. An uncommitted official who might turn a blind eye in March was far less inclined to do so in May.

German propaganda agencies in Bucharest made the most of Britain's discomfiture. Mussolini, in a letter to Hitler, warned that the fact that 'the Romanian authorities did not decide to detain the flotilla of the Intelligence Service until it had travelled 200 miles on the river' was evidence of Romania's 'ambiguous attitude'.[51] German officials drew the opposite conclusion: the outcome had helped towards putting an end to ambiguity. The Legation tried to limit the damage; summoning all its resources of understatement, it agreed with the Romanian authorities a covering explanation to the effect that they had found in Giurgiu on a vessel flying the British flag, certain goods — among them a few revolvers — 'which did not correspond to the ship's manifest'.[52]

On 2 May, the ships were ordered by the Naval Attaché to Sulina to be prepared for sea. That process took another month, till 19–20 June. Now the problem for the flotilla was not how to proceed up the Danube but how to avoid being trapped in it. Eventually, the vessels returned to Alexandria via Turkey and Greece.

The British had acted on the belief that the Romanian Government had acquiesced in, if not actually supported, the idea of an expedition and were surprised when officials behaved otherwise. Their expectation under-estimated the capacity of the Romanian bureaucracy for procrastination and its divided loyalties and expectations. The expedition played into the hands of any ill-wishers by its blatant disregard for security and the indiscipline of some of the participants. One must add, however, that no one seriously expected the cover to be any more than that necessary to encourage Romanian officials to turn a blind eye. Minshall, arriving in Bucharest, found his cover 'blown' in advance, in circumstances he felt constrained to embrace.[53] Gibson noted 'When we were still at Brăila [that is, at the end of March] people in the street were openly talking about the arms and explosives the Englishmen were bringing into the country.'[54] Admiral Cunningham retrospectively attributed the fig-leaf security to the 'apparent urgency of the operation at the time [...] it was hoped that

51 Mussolini/Hitler, 11 April 1940, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D*, Document no. 92, vol. 9.
52 Hankey/FO, 8 April 1940, FO 371-24988.
53 Minshall, *Guilt-edged*, pp. 155–6.
54 Gibson, 'Letter of Proceedings', paragraph 14.

dislike of the Germans and a little judicious bribery might cause Romanian officials to shut their eyes to what was going on'.[55]

Romanian officials were expected to be able 'to shut their eyes' to rather a lot. Two officers 'involved in an incident ashore' in Brăila on 28 March were arrested by Romanian police, released on bail, summoned to Bucharest by Captain Despard, the Naval Attaché, and quickly sent out of the country.[56] Since the vessels were supposedly merchantmen, flying the Red Ensign, it was impossible to advertise their real character by posting sentries to prevent personnel from going ashore. The trouble in Giurgiu started when one crew member in a brothel found himself with insufficient money to pay for services rendered, and attempted to shoot his way out with a revolver. The madam took exception to this behaviour and, not unreasonably, called the police. In a somewhat different order of insouciance, personnel who thought that they exhibited early symptoms of venereal disease took themselves for treatment ashore by a *German* doctor.

The observance of more scrupulous security might have made the German counter-measures more difficult, but was unlikely to have affected the ultimate outcome. It was subsequently considered that the expedition had been betrayed either in Malta or through the Romanian Legation in London. The suspicion can be noted but, on present evidence, not proved. What was undeniable was that the expedition was shadowed by the Abwehr from the beginning,[57] and that had it reached its objective it would have had a stiff fight on its hands: select troops from the fifth Brandenburg commando, in plain clothes, monitored all movements through and provided a security watch over the Iron Gates.[58]

The fact remained that the attempt had not only failed but failed ignominiously; vessels and crew were simply being deported. The failure might have been more resounding had not events in the West put the episode into a different perspective. On 10 May, the German forces broke into the Low Countries and France. Nevertheless, in international relations impotence is dissuasive. The expedition had proved several points made to

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55 Cunningham to Secretary of the Admiralty, 22 November 1940, MED 01102/0700/32, ADM1-21717.

56 Gibson; 'Letter of Proceedings', paragraph 11, and Hoare/Nichols, 30 March 1940, FO 371-24988.

57 Von Killinger reported that the Abwehr worked with Romanian Intelligence on 'discovering and preventing the act of sabotage planned by the English on the Danube': Killinger/Ribbentrop, 14 April 1940, *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, vol. 9, p. 165.

58 See H. Spaetor, *Die Brandeburger: Eine deutsche Kommandotruppe*, Munich, 1971, pp. 126, 127.

the Romanian Government over the previous months by the Germans; from then on, they effectively held the Danube under their control.

Admiral Cunningham subsequently charged the participants, when they got back to Alexandria, with having run away in the face of the enemy. On the evidence, the charge was unjust, but the whole episode demonstrated a certain lack of determination (though knowledge of Gibson's orders might modify this conclusion). The Military Attaché, Lt.-Col. Geoffrey Macnab, attributed the failure to 'grossest mismanagement and culpable lack of discipline among the crews'. The Foreign Office singled out the Naval Attaché as 'almost solely responsible' for the débâcle. Certainly far too much was taken for granted about Romanian reactions and especially the ability of officials in Bucharest to make their writ run elsewhere, above all at a time when the Germans already had an intelligence and military presence in the country, and superior ability to make their wishes respected. Perhaps the episode demonstrates confusion between action limited and action damning the consequences. In the prevailing conditions, one suspects only the latter had any chance of success.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

When the Guarantee was announced, British military planners were deep in debate about Romania's role in case of war with Germany. The dominant opinion in Whitehall advocated implicating Romania in hostilities as quickly as possible; she was, after all, the ally and military protégé of France, with good infantry, capable of being brought to bear on Germany from the south-east. From Bucharest, Sir Reginald Hoare vigorously opposed this line of argument, pointing out that the indispensable condition of Romania's participation was an Allied army of 100,000 men backed by a formidable air force in Cyprus.[59]

The Military Attaché, Lt.-Col. Macnab, reinforced the need for the reployment of Allied strength in the region, after observing the army in Transylvania. While expressing his admiration for the qualities of the Romanian soldier, he considered the army's leadership defective, lacking in appreciation of modern developments and bedevilled by slackness in administration and matters of detail. He concluded 'In another 18 months the Army may well become a force to be reckoned with seriously. At present it has every hope of success if called to fight any of its neighbours, but in a conflict with a western [that is, industrialized] power its chances of protracted resistance are not worth betting on'.[60] His arguments, taken with the fact that Romania, not being dependent on sea-borne trade, was

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59 Hoare/Ingram, 15 June 1939, recapitulating a debate in train since January (FO 371-23852).

60 Macnab/Hoare, 18 April 1939 (FO 371-23852)

the less open to British persuasion, were conclusive. Hence when war broke out British planning excluded Romania, as other states in the region, from military participation:

> The whole essence of this problem [that is, whether to immediately seek to involve the Balkans or not] is not to involve countries which can be overrun until the proper moment and that proper moment is when we can support them; otherwise they merely become a tempting invitation to the Germans and can be put out of action in a short time.[61]

This became and remained the basic principle, but it had already been recognized that Romania's oil wells offered a special kind of temptation and plans had been made to put them out of action in the case of a German *coup de main*.

Plans for destroying the oil fields and installations had been agreed with the Romanian Government in August 1939.[62] From September onwards details were jointly worked out with the Romanian General Staff and a British Military Mission assembled from Britain under the orders of the Military Attaché. The specific demolition plans necessarily involved engineering expertise provided by individuals in the 'British' companies, but the actual demolitions were to be entrusted to a special Corps of Royal Engineers flown in from Egypt, with a detachment of troops from Syria. Lt.-Col. Macnab and his French counterpart were the official links with the Romanian Government but were to take no part in the operation.

For seven months arrangements went smoothly, under the operational guidance of Commander Watson. They depended on the active co-operation of the Romanian army, although contingency plans were naturally made in case the army should find itself unable to hold up the Germans for the requisite length of time, or find itself politically committed to the Germans. Training went ahead, both in Romania and elsewhere.[63] Then two events compromised the Romanian Government: in France the Germans got hold of documentary evidence of the co-operation between the three governments,[64] and locally the abject failure of the Danube

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61 Director of Military Operations and Planning: Minute, 'Strategy IV: The Balkans', 23 September 1939–15 August 1941, WO 106-3130; see also 'Strategy: Roumania: Appreciation in the event of attack by Germany', WO 190-864.

62 King Carol informed the German Air Attaché, Gerstenberg, that the British and French had recently submitted a plan for sabotaging the oil fields in the event of war but that he had rejected it: see Fabricius to Foreign Ministry, Telegram no. 373, 28 August 1939, *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, vol. 7, no. 386.

63 See Geoffrey Household, *Against the Wind*, London, 1958, pp. 101–8

64 And also the names of British participant engineers, given to the Romanian General Staff.

expedition left the Romanian Government, even if willing, less able to withstand German pressure. Macnab's relations with the Romanian military became formal and intermittent. The Romanian co-operation necessary to the carrying out of the plan was no longer forthcoming; by the same token, the British could afford to pay less regard to Romania's position.

At that point, at the beginning of June 1940, Leslie Forster of Astra Româna devised a simpler scheme whereby significant damage could be done in Tintea, currently the main producing field, where gas pressures were high enough to sustain widespread fire and the installations were all 'British'. They were guarded by employees. The operation was, in Macnab's view, 'risky but perfectly feasible'. Immediately before the plan was to be put into operation the company guards were without warning replaced by soldiers. The Romanian Army took control of the oil fields; anti-aircraft defences multiplied and the whole area was placed under restriction.[65]

Amateurs of strategy, especially in the newspaper world, complained that Ploeşti was not bombed. The reason was obvious to anyone who compared the distances on a map with the known range and payload of the aircraft then in squadron use and already in the Near East. Bristol Blenheims just about had the range; flying heavier Wellington bombers into the area — even had they been available — would have been impossible to conceal and would have alerted the defence. Refineries in fact are dispersed targets and not too difficult to repair[66] unless damage is inflicted continuously. Isolated raids by themselves with the size of bomb available were inadequate. There were two vital elements in the decision arising from Britain's policies towards other Balkan states. First, any operations required the use of landing fields in Greece.[67] Some were in use but expressly *not* for offensive operations, and General Metaxas's refusal to extend even that facility to the use of an airfield at Salonika showed he

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65 This brief account should dispose of the notion, which surfaces again as recently as 1976 in M. R. D. Foot's *Resistance* (London, 1976), that the oil concerns were half-hearted about participating in the destruction of their property on the grounds that it would diminish their profits. Planning would have been impossible without the full co-operation of directors in London and individuals in management positions in Romania, while the skills of engineers employed by those companies in the target areas were vital to identifying sensitive points in the systems of gathering and refining. They were not acting without the knowledge or against the will of their employers.

66 Especially as the Germans included oil-field and refinery specialists among their 'tourists' in Romania.

67 In order to allow a small force of aircraft the maximum number of attacks with the most favourable weight ratio between bombs and fuel.

was determined to impose limits. Secondly, any attacks would violate Bulgarian air space, which might well provoke a German occupation 'to help Bulgaria defend her neutrality'. In sum, it was judged more advantageous not to tempt Germany into Bulgaria and Greece than to inflict temporary and inadequate damage on heavily defended oil refineries. That the British community in Romania were hostages did not lack weight in the final decision.[68] The wisdom of this policy was demonstrated in 1943, when a heavy raid on Ploeşti by the USAAF inflicted easily reparable damage at a severe cost in aircraft.

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Britain's position in Romania might, conceivably, have survived the débâcle on the Danube; it could not survive the débâcle in France. On 29 May the Romanian Government, feeling itself under threat from the Soviet Union, decided to align itself with Germany. The King reconstructed his Cabinet to include members of the Iron Guard. On 1 July, immediately after the loss of Bessarabia and northern Bucovina, Gigurtu announced 'the reorientation of foreign policy as determined by the European order in course of establishment' — in consequence of which the Guarantee was renounced. The next day, Germany was asked for a military mission.

The new alignment negated all the plans made with previous cabinets. Hopes of destroying the oil fields or installations were immediately dashed when, on 3 July, seventeen British subjects resident in Ploeşti were summarily ordered to leave Ploeşti by 9.00 a.m. on 4 July and Constanţa by midnight the same day. The intervention of Sir Reginald Hoare could only produce delay. The General Staff claimed to have definite information of 'a widespread plan of sabotage [...] organized by the British'.[69] The only plan was, of course, that worked out with the General Staff under Călinescu. Of the seventeen expellees, eleven had been involved in the oil-field planning, so all the effort was nugatory and the oil fields could henceforward be operated for the benefit of the German war effort. Hoare summed up: 'Avowed Axis policy of Romanian Government must mean that Germany and Italy will obtain all the oil they can transport, that transport will be reorganised in their favour and oil exports directed in accordance with their wishes.'[70]

Britain's policies in Romania had relied upon the maintenance at all levels of reasonable working relationships with Romanian governments

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68 In 1940, the taking of hostages was not as commonplace as it has since become; there were moral reservations. These might conceivably have yielded to purely military considerations had it been possible to inflict overwhelming, decisive damage. As that was not the case, the issue was never fought out.

69 Hoare, no. 645, 4 July 1940, FO 371-24988.

70 Hoare/FO, no. 666, 7 July 1940, FO 371-24988.

and till now had succeeded, partly because Britain had been able to counterbalance the main German pressures. From June 1940 it no longer had the ability to do so. The Legation nevertheless still had some room for manoeuvre, and as long as the King was there and officials unenthusiastic about Germany continued in the bureaucracy, it had something to work on. By September, however, the King was gone and the state handed over to what was perhaps the only enthusiastically pro-Nazi force in Romania. The Iron Guard regime introduced an authority which was totally inaccessible to British pressures. Moreover, throughout the country the Guardists either had or assumed a licence to act as they pleased under the protection of their leaders occupying the Ministry of the Interior, the Security Service and the Prefecture of the Police.

In these circumstances, what was the point of Britain's continuing to have relations with Romania? The first recorded instance of doubt is yielded by the discussion in the Foreign Office about the *agrément* for Minister Tilea's successor. 'The main argument in favour of maintaining [relations]', noted Sir Alexander Cadogan, 'is that Germany seems to wish to see a rupture'.[71] If relations were severed, then the country would be left in the undisputed control of Germany, but an alternative might be to set up a Romanian National Committee in London. The idea withered on consideration of the Committee's possible leadership. Tilea was already in Britain but the equivocal antecedants to the Guarantee had generated a degree of official reserve about him; Maniu, in Romania, preferred to remain where he was. There were in any case those in Whitehall who thought it better that he should lead a *coup d'état* rather than yet another government-in-exile; Titulescu was found to be in no mental condition to offer leadership — a consequence of his unremitting efforts to stimulate a degree of virility which Nature denied him. The Foreign Office also flirted with the notion of offering King Carol refuge, but the thought that he would inevitably seek to resume political leadership and that he was, perhaps, not quite the sort of refugee ruler Britain required, rapidly dispelled any sentimentality about his relationship with Queen Victoria.

The arrest and maltreatment of British subjects focused minds on the possibilities of withdrawal, turning what had been a marginal comment by Sir Alexander Cadogan into a matter for serious consideration. The victims in each case were senior executives in the oil or oil supply industry and all except one were based in Ploeşti, where the Iron Guard was more concentrated than in Bucharest and where the Germans — in contrast to the British — had a Consul and one who at the time was a Gestapo officer. There had been incidents — the throwing of incendiary bombs through

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71 'Note on Agrément for Stoica', 9 September 1940, FO 371-24989.

windows — but the kidnapping of individuals was taken to indicate a concerted drive by the Guard. This remains doubtful. There was more than enough generalized resentment in its ranks to make life uncomfortable, if not actually dangerous, for British nationals, however employed, in the autumn of 1940. People capable of more sophisticated political thinking than the Iron Guard blamed the Guarantee, which had been thrust on Romania, for the plight of the state. (That Romania had solicited the Guarantee was not generally known, but such intellectual distinctions were not the Guardists' *métier*.)

Alexander Miller, of Astra Româna, contributes an interesting analysis of the Guard's outlook in his report on his own arrest and torture:

> I can only summise that the Legionaries were not satisfied with the case they had established against the others and thought that a corroboratory statement by someone else, even if unsupported by any other proofs, would be sufficiently damning and enquiries by them in Ploeşti may have elicited my name and nothing more.
>
> During my captivity in the hands of the Legionaries I was able to form certain general impressions of them which are probably representative of the general mass of the movement. They seemed sincere in their mission to clean up the administration of the country, and were especially violent against those who had been responsible for the suppression of their movement. All those I met had been in prison, some had suffered tortures worse than anything they themselves administered, and they told me that 8,000 of their people had been killed. They were convinced that it was the British who had financed the Roumanians to suppress the Iron Guard, and they considered it more than significant that their leader Codreanu had been murdered just when King Carol returned from his visit to England. They were convinced that the defeat of England was inevitable, and I was repeatedly vilified for taking part in sabotage which might have brought their country into difficulties with Germany.[72]

Miller points to another feature of the situation: that the regular police and military officials had little sympathy with the Iron Guard 'although they dared not express this openly'. The Legation, for its part, noted fissures within the Guard itself, and further, that General Antonescu seemed genuinely anxious to have 'correct' relations with Britain, though how far he remained a free agent was doubtful.[73]

Miller's arrest, coming as it did after official protests about the detention of the others, was taken to prove that the Government could not make its writ run; that it was more than likely to succumb to pressure from the Iron Guard or the Germans, (who were pouring troops into Romania in September and October); and that accordingly the British needed to make contingency plans for withdrawal. On 3 October a meeting at the Foreign

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72 Miller's report, 'Maltreatment of British Nationals', FO 371-29992.
73 Hoare/FO, 1 October 1940, FO 371-24989.

Office, under Sir Orme Sargent, discussed this possible course of action and in doing so provided an interesting conspectus of views as to what Britain stood to lose. It soon appeared that the only substantial loss would be of ideas and information about German intentions and policies, but events had shown that Romanian sources of information were under threat and alternative arrangements could be made. Otherwise, interested departments such as the Ministry of Economic Warfare reported they had nothing to lose — a striking contrast to the expectations of only two years before when Romania had been identified as a crucial area. The meeting decided that adequate time was to be given for the quiet liquidation of interests such as the Goeland organization and the dispersal of personnel. Sir Reginald Hoare was to be given discretionary authority as to the timing of the withdrawal.[74] This he formally received on 8 October: four days later, the first officials from the Legation and their families left Romania for Istanbul.

Their departure coincided with the arrival of the German army in full force. At first Romanian officials maintained that these arrivals were training units, numbering 20,000, but by December it was abundantly clear that forces were being built up in divisional strength. Hoare reported: 'This country is already an enemy protectorate and the occupation is daily more effective. It is an open question how long we shall be able to remain.'[75] The British were still capable of making public gestures: spectators of an impressive German military parade down the Chausée Kisselef were surprised to see it followed by Sir Reginald Hoare in his official Rolls Royce, flying the Union Jack.

German troops took over vital installations such as the bridge at Cernavoda, Giurgiu, the oil fields, pipelines and railways and airfields. They also assisted Antonescu in putting down the Iron Guard in January 1941. That action clarified in British minds ambiguities about his status, namely, how far he was committed to the Guard, whether he was trying to salvage some independent sphere of action for Romania, and whether his personal friendliness to Hoare could ever be translated into policies which allowed official British representation to continue. In fact, the grounds for withdrawal entirely rested on the German presence, as the note addressed to Antonescu on 10 February 1941 makes clear:

> It has become abundantly evident that this country's Government which you have directed for six months has become entirely dependent on Germany. Not only actual facts but also numerous statements published by yourself confirm this. Some months ago you informed me that a small number of German troops

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74　'Minutes of Meeting', 3 October 1940, FO 371-24989.

75　Hoare/GFO, 4 November 1940, FO 371-24989.

were arriving in Roumania in order to instruct the Roumanian Army in modern methods of warfare and that the necessary equipment was likewise being despatched from Germany for the re-armament of the Roumanian troops. Some instruction has no doubt been imparted, but the essential development is that the German High Command is building up in Roumania all the elements of an expeditionary force, and is concentrating at various strategic points large supplies of munitions and oil fuel. Roumanian territory is thus being used by Germany as a military base in furtherance of her plans for prosecuting the war. These measures are being taken without one word of dissent from you. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided to recall me and to withdraw the diplomatic Mission and the Consular Officers under my control. I therefore propose to leave this country on the 15th February or as soon after as a ship is available to convey my party to Istanbul, and I have been instructed by His Majesty's Government to request that all the facilities and courtesies which are customary in the circumstance may be accorded to my Mission and the British Consular Staffs.[76]

The 'customary courtesies' were far from apparent; the embarkation area was thronged with 'Greenshirts' and attended by German troops. The former, assisted by the Director of Customs, made the departure formalities prolonged and designedly humiliating, shouldering aside the regular port and customs officials. To this was added the derision of the Germans. Newspaper correspondents got out on their own initiative.[77] Whether Britain could play any further part in Romania depended on the larger conduct of the war. 'For the present' remarked Sir Reginald Hoare, 'the game is up'.[78]

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In view of the nature of the materials so far available, any conclusions must be even more tentative than usual; nevertheless certain broad judgements can be attempted.

The first must be that in the spring of 1939, the Guarantee was not the result of an extended process of reconsideration but was a sudden, and to that degree uncharacteristic, response to a Romanian initiative. Hence it was form without substance. Substance could only be developed with time: all the consequences disclosed in this chapter stem from that. Such time as there was before the war broke out was not put to best use, partly through the detritus of past problems but more for lack of suitable mechanisms. The war at least imparted a sense of urgency to British thinking, but made Romania as a 'neutral' a more tricky field of operations, since German threats about penalties for unneutral behaviour

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76 Text, FO 371-29992.
77 See P. Maitland, *European Dateline*, London, 1946, pp. 139–40.
78 Hoare (Istanbul) to Eden, no. 62, 21 February 1941 , FO 371-29975.

were more credible than British threats could be, and Romania's attitude towards Germany was dictated by its anxieties about the Soviet Union.

'Nothing could put Romania on Germany's side', remarked a member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Sir Reginald Hoare in March 1940, 'except the conviction that only Germany could keep the Soviets out of Romania.'[79] That conviction formed rapidly after the military collapse of the Western allies and the astutely timed seizure of Bessarabia in June 1940. Romanian support for the Allies disintegrated; the Guarantee was renounced as a necessary concomitant of declaring support for the Axis; and, after the expulsion of the King, Romania formally adhered to the Tripartite Pact on 23 November. The withdrawal of the Legation followed; thereafter any British policy in Romania was a matter for clandestine organizations.

To the extent that Britain's position in Romania during this *dégringolade* responded to external political forces about which she could do little before June 1940 and nothing after, it is highly probable that had Britain given every type of support the Romanian Government wished, the ultimate outcome would have been much the same. A well-equipped Romanian army could have put up the costs of occupying Bessarabia (just as Finnish forces put up the costs of Soviet border readjustments with Finland) but could have done little more. The Guarantee of April 1939 had been trumped by the Pact of August 1939.

The two years' effort demonstrated the impossibility of putting together efficacious policies when the opponents were already in part-possession of the ground. To have any chance of succeeding, any challenge to Germany required far longer conscious preparation based on unambiguous conclusions about objectives. This was not the case in Whitehall before 1940. Furthermore, the conditions on which Britain could project power had changed: the support or acquiescence of Italy and Turkey were vital to any policy in Romania.

Those officials who accepted this premise logically advocated doing as little as possible: pre-war expectations had consigned Romania to Germany, it was too late to retrieve the situation, and any attempt to do so would require a misuse of resources which were, as everyone knew, very limited. Their argument had, at least, the merit of coherence and simplicity but, as we know, international relations are rarely coherent and never simple. That apart, it is unwise entirely to disregard possible friends, especially when, as in 1940, their ranks are rapidly depleting. Such friends, however, included those whose entire vision of British policy in South-East Europe or the Near East — depending on definition — revolved

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79 Ibid.

round Romania. This is natural if one is Romanian, but the argument was, in fact, more plausible for the Germans: for them Romania, apart from any intrinsic value, was conveniently on the way to somewhere else — Istanbul and points south, or the Caucasus. Hence, in debates about policy, Romania reinforces the general argument. For the British, Romania lay not so handily for policy; it was not on the way to anywhere that could not be reached more easily by other routes. So in Whitehall policy debates Romania tended to be desirable but not essential, and advocates of 'strong' action there always found themselves not in the centre of argument (as were their opposite numbers in Germany) but on its periphery.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that, in 1940, the Germans could parade a motorized division while the British could display only a Rolls Royce.

British Policy on the Hungarian–Romanian Frontier Settlement, 1944–47

Mark Percival

From 1943, when Roosevelt and Stalin vetoed Churchill's plan for a Balkan invasion at the Tehran conference, Romania did not figure as a significant British foreign-policy interest.[1] Britain's indifference to Romania's fate, which it was powerless to prevent because of the military balance of power, was most strikingly demonstrated by the notorious 'percentages agreement' of October 1944, the importance of which has nevertheless been exaggerated by Romanian historians. An equally stark demonstration of British indifference, which has received far less attention, was the equivocal attitude taken by London to the post-war frontier settlement with Hungary. The consequence of this uncertainty, which was largely a result of US pressure, was a diminution in the political influence of the Western powers in Romania and an increase in the influence of the Soviet Union, the only power which from March 1945 supported the complete restoration of the Trianon frontier.

Ambiguity over Romania's frontier was evident from immediately after the August 1944 coup. The armistice itself stated that 'Transylvania (or the greater part thereof)' would be returned and the qualification was included partly at the instigation of the British.[2] The statement was further qualified by the condition that the return of territory was subject to the decisions of the Peace Conference.[3] In September 1944, in response to a memorandum from Otto von Habsburg suggesting that the ideal solution would be a 'union' (a vague term) involving Hungary, Transylvania and the rest of Romania as member states, the Foreign Office reply involved merely a statement that a final conclusion on these questions could not be reached

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1   Maurice Pearton, in his article 'Puzzles about the Percentages' in D. Deletant (ed.), *Occasional Papers in Romanian Studies, 1*, London, 1995, p. 9, argues that 'in strategic terms, Romania's fate was sealed at Teheran'.

2   London, Public Record Office, Foreign Office FO 371 (hereafter PRO FO 371), 43989, R20647, Minute by Pink, 25 December 1944.

3   PRO FO 371, 44019, R14642, Handwritten minute by Reed, 18 September 1944.

until the peace settlement.[4] After the coup, the BBC was told to avoid discussing Transylvania and to avoid anti-Hungarian polemics.[5] British Foreign Office officials regularly criticized Romanian politicians who assumed that the Trianon frontier would be restored. In September 1944, for example, Romanian Foreign Minister Grigore Niculescu Buzeşti made a statement justifying the undeclared war on Hungary for the recovery of northern Transylvania and commented that the armistice terms recognized that it would be returned to Romania. This prompted John Reed in the Foreign Office to note that 'it is to be hoped that Mr Niculescu has not forgotten the provision in the armistice terms that Transylvania — or the greater part thereof — shall be given back to Romania *subject to the decisions taken at the Peace Conference*'.[6] Iuliu Maniu's statements on Transylvania at the National Peasant Party rally on 29 October prompted George Clutton, another Foreign Office official, to write that 'these lands have not yet been restored to Roumania. This event, *if it occurs at all* waits for the Peace Conference.'[7] In a comment on a memorandum by Iuliu Maniu dated 25 November 1944, in which the National Peasant Party leader criticized the Soviet refusal to allow Romanian officials and troops access to northern Transylvania, Ivor Pink, another official from the Southern Department, wrote that 'there is much to be said for this [the Soviet policy] at least until the Hungarian–Roumanian frontiers are decided, as uncertainty over who is to have northern Transylvania is a good way of keeping both Hungary and Roumania in order'.[8] Thus in the autumn of 1944, despite the fact that Romania was fighting on the Allied side while Hungary was still an enemy, the British Foreign Office was equivocal as to whether or not the 1940 Axis-imposed Vienna Award should be annulled.

Initially, Soviet policy on the Hungarian–Romanian frontier was very unclear. According to reporting from the British Embassy in Moscow, when the Soviet and Romanian troops moved into northern Transylvania in 1944, a local Romanian civil administration independent of Bucharest was set up. By January 1945, however, the Soviets had reintroduced Hungarian administrative units and the Hungarian currency. Public notices, which had been restored to the Romanian language in 1944, had been returned to

4   PRO FO 371, 43985, R15633, Minute by Reed, 30 September 1944.
5   PRO FO 371, 43986, R14652, Political Warfare Executive Weekly Directive to the BBC Romanian Service, 15–22 September 1944.
6   PRO FO 371, 44019, R14642, Minute by Reed, 30 September 1944 [emphasis in the original].
7   PRO FO 371, 43989, R18553, Minute by Clutton, 16 November 1944 [emphasis added].
8   PRO FO 371, 48577, R461, Minute by Pink, 10 January 1945.

Hungarian by January 1945. Romanian army units had been moved out of the area and the Romanian University of Cluj, which had returned to the city after the Hungarians had been driven out in 1944, had by January 1945 been sent back to Sibiu by the Soviets. Ostensibly, the Soviet motives for these actions had been complaints from Transylvanian Hungarians that the reintroduced Romanian administration was inefficient and oppressive.[9] Such complaints, however, were inevitable at a time when the majority of northern Transylvania's Hungarians bitterly resented the re-imposition of Romanian rule. It is probable that Hungarian ill-feeling was simply used by the Soviets to justify their policy of sowing uncertainty as to the future status of the region. This was a convenient tool for blackmailing the Romanian authorities, and in particular King Michael, into co-operation with Soviet policy in Romania. The threat of the permanent loss of Transylvania was undoubtedly a factor in persuading King Michael to appoint the Communist-dominated Petru Groza government under heavy Soviet pressure on 6 March 1945. The link between the two issues is graphically demonstrated by the fact that Romanian administration of northern Transylvania was restored by the Soviet occupiers on 9 March 1945, three days after the imposition of the Groza government.[10]

From this point onwards, Soviet policy was to support the return to Romania of all of the territory which it had lost to Hungary in 1940, in other words the complete restoration of the 1920 Trianon frontier. Nevertheless, the attitude of Britain and the US remained uncertain. Although the idea of a revision of the Trianon frontier in Hungary's favour was largely Washington's, the British went along with it because they were keen to see a new regime for the Danube, re-establishing it as an international waterway. The Americans were far less interested in this question and so British tactics were to support the US stance on Transylvania in the hope of encouraging US support over the Danube. (Although the exact delineation of the frontier according to the US proposal is not given in British or Romanian documents, the British papers suggest that the proposal would have entailed half a million Magyars returning to Hungarian rule, while Romanian documents refer to Hungary gaining 24,000 square kilometres of territory.)[11]

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9   PRO FO 371, 48461, R1220; Telegram, Moscow to Foreign Office, 16 January 1945, Minute by Warner, 18 January 1945.

10 G. Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania, 1944–62*, London, 1964, p. 110.

11 PRO FO 371, 57194, U1608, Minute by Marjoribanks, 30 January 1946; Archive of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Fond Conferinţa de Pace de la Paris, vol. 70, Telegram, Stoica (Romanian Head of Mission in the Hague) to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 4 August 1946.

The Groza government was able to extract considerable propaganda advantage from the fact that only Moscow supported the full restoration of the Trianon frontier. This led Ian Le Rougetel, head of the British Political Mission in Romania in 1944–46, to criticize strongly London's position. Le Rougetel often differed with his political masters in London over policy towards Romania generally, favouring a much more pro-Romanian line. On this issue he argued that Britain should unequivocally back the return of the Trianon frontier. In October 1945 he forwarded a copy of a letter from Alexandru Negreu, a lawyer, to Maniu. Negreu claimed to have had an audience with Groza, in which the Prime Minister said that he was presiding over the government in order that Romania could benefit from the Soviet promise on the return of Transylvania. According to Negreu, Groza offered to resign in favour of Maniu, leader of the National Peasant Party, if the British and Americans would give Maniu an official assurance on the Transylvanian boundaries.[12] While Groza's alleged promise was highly dubious, and would almost certainly not have been kept, it proved that he was able to gain considerable political capital out of the failure of Britain and the US to state their position clearly. Although he was sure Groza was bluffing about resignation, Le Rougetel nevertheless felt that the bluff should be called, and urged the Foreign Office to drop ideas of revising the Trianon frontier: 'We have everything to lose and nothing to gain by flogging this dead horse', he later wrote.[13]

D. L. Stewart, the officer responsible for dealing with Romanian affairs in the Foreign Office, noted, however, that Britain could not call Groza's bluff and even if this could be done 'the net gain would only be to give Maniu a debating point against Groza'. While Stewart acknowledged that Groza was making considerable political capital out of the failure of the Western powers to guarantee their support for a return to the Trianon frontier, he noted that 'if we lose anything [...] in Roumania, at least we do not lose it in what is now the much more promising field of Hungary'.[14]

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12 PRO FO 371, 48578, R18430, Despatch, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 25 October 1945.

13 PRO FO 371, 48578, R18430, Despatch, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 25 October 1945; PRO FO 371, 48607, R21534, Despatch, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 28 December 1945.

14 PRO FO 371, 48578, R18430, Minute by Stewart, 22 November 1945. The fact that Stewart appeared so indifferent to the outcome of any political struggle between Maniu and Groza is testament to the distant attitude taken by Britain to the historic parties in Romania (see M. Percival, 'British Attitudes Towards the Romanian Historic Parties and the Monarchy, 1944–47' in D. Deletant (ed.), *Occasional Papers in Romanian Studies, 1*, 1995, pp. 15–24). Since Maniu represented the political grouping with the most support in Romania, and Groza was a stooge imposed by Moscow, the statement effectively amounts to a

Stewart's motives for regarding Hungary as 'more promising' are unclear, particularly since Britain had more commercial assets in Romania. It is possible that the rationale behind British policy at this time, however, was that Britain regarded it as almost inevitable that Romania would come under heavy Soviet influence. This British view was reinforced by the position taken by the Soviets at the London Foreign Ministers' conference the previous September, and the attitude of US Foreign Secretary James Byrnes that concessions should be made to Moscow over Romania and Bulgaria. The Communization of Hungary proceeded much more slowly than in Romania and the 1945 elections were more or less fair, with the historic parties maintaining control. In November 1945, Hungary appeared far less likely than Romania to come under Soviet domination. It may therefore have been considered more sensible for the Western powers to cultivate influence in Hungary by supporting a modification of the Trianon frontier than in Romania, which was probably regarded as 'lost'.

Even if this was British policy in 1945, however, there is little evidence that the desire to promote Western influence in Hungary was a major factor behind Britain's stance on the frontier question in subsequent months, a fact which makes Stewart's comment difficult to comprehend.[15] On 10 November 1945, Le Rougetel drew London's attention to discussions which had taken place between Romanian Foreign Minister Tătărescu and representatives of the National Bank at the end of October. During this meeting, the Romanian Foreign Minister had said that because of British and American opposition to the return of the whole of Transylvania to Romania, Credit Minier had been sacrificed to the Sovrom Bank in order to encourage Soviet support over Transylvania.[16]

In January 1946, Le Rougetel reported that King Michael's principal advisors, in a conversation on 14 January with James Marjoribanks, First Secretary at the British Legation, had said that one of the reasons why Groza wanted to delay the elections was to capitalize on the diminishing popularity of the British and American governments as a result of their support for adjustment of the Trianon frontier in favour of Hungary. In the same month, Le Rougetel reported that all the Romanian political parties

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demonstration of indifference as to whether or not the Soviet Union colonized Romania.

15 On the Communist take-over in Hungary, see F. A. Vali, *Rift and Revolt in Hungary*, Cambridge, MA, 1961, pp. 28–35.

16 PRO FO 371, 48578, R19765, Despatch, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 10 November 1945.

were making a strong stand over Transylvania.[17] In February 1946, Le Rougetel had a conversation with Savel Rădulescu, King Michael's chief political adviser, who repeated the point that the government was trying to postpone the elections in order to exploit popular reaction to British and US revisionism. The British political representative strongly favoured statements by Britain and the US to the effect that they did not intend to raise the frontier issue. This would undermine the government's efforts to postpone the elections. Le Rougetel paraphrased the statement he had made the previous December: 'We seem to have everything to gain and nothing to lose by making this gesture.'[18] On 26 February, at a lunch with Le Rougetel and other members of the British Legation, King Michael asked if Britain would come out in favour of maintaining the Trianon border and pointed out that the government was making considerable capital out of the frontier issue. This prompted the Foreign Office to question its policy. William Hayter, head of the Southern Department, noted that although he thought there were arguments in favour of revision, it was unlikely to take place and so the idea should be dropped.[19]

There was, in fact, some debate about policy on this question within the Foreign Office in January and February 1946. James Marjoribanks, who had served with Le Rougetel in Bucharest (as Consul) and who by 1946 was a senior Foreign Office official in London working on peace treaties, wrote a memorandum on 30 January questioning the British policy of supporting US proposals for revision of the frontier. He took issue with Washington's argument that such a change would make the frontier fairer. It was generally accepted both by advocates and by opponents of revision that the railway which ran from Oradea to Satu Mare should be in the territory of one power or the other, since partition would create serious local economic difficulties. (The railway had also been a factor behind the fixing of the original Trianon frontier.) Marjoribanks argued that if the railway were to be given to Hungary, more Romanians would be transferred to Hungarian rule than Magyars, and the most homogeneous Magyar group in Transylvania (in the east of the province) would still be under Romanian rule. Marjoribanks further argued that the Soviet Union was solving the problem already, by encouraging the Groza government to give substantial autonomy to the Magyars of Transylvania and to develop

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17 PRO FO 371, 59095, R7891, Telegram, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office 15 January 1946; PRO FO 371, 59145, R1057, Telegram, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 20 January 1946.

18 PRO FO 371, 59145, R2866, Telegram, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 22 February 1946.

19 PRO FO 371, 59097, R3199, Telegram, Le Rougetel to Foreign Office, 26 February 1946; Minute by Hayter, 28 February 1946.

the closest possible relations with Hungary. (Petru Groza, who spoke Hungarian, went so far as to advocate a customs and currency union.) Marjoribanks was well aware of Soviet motives for encouraging close relations between Romania and Hungary. Since Romania was already very much under Moscow's control, the policies advocated by Groza would also have helped enhance Soviet influence in Hungary. He recognized, however, that despite Moscow's cynical aims, the policies were good ones for resolving the Hungarian–Romanian conflict. Marjoribanks seemed to think that British policy was not to support Hungarian claims on the grounds that Romania was much more heavily under Soviet influence and hence the West should concentrate on cultivating Hungary. However, he pointed out that even if this was a consideration, Britain would not gain much influence in Hungary if it supported Budapest's claims and then had to retract under Soviet pressure. He also thought it would be unwise for Britain to accept that Romania was lost to the Soviets, since antipathy to Communism was so deep-seated. Just as Le Rougetel was arguing at the same time, Marjoribanks also emphasized how damaging British and US policy on the frontier issue was to Western influence in Romania, and the deep concern of pro-British circles from the King downwards. One reason why the Groza government wanted to postpone the elections until after the peace conference was to capitalize on Moscow's clear support for restoring the Trianon frontier. Marjoribanks concluded that, while it would have been difficult for Britain to go back on its agreement with the US that revision should be considered, the US delegation should be strongly dissuaded from raising the matter at the peace conference.[20]

Marjoribanks's views, however, were strongly opposed by Professor C. A. Macartney, the Habsburg scholar from Oxford University who was seconded to the Foreign Office Research Department during the war and immediately afterwards. A month after Marjoribanks's memorandum, Macartney expressed 'the strongest dissent' from its conclusions and the 'strongest hope' that the British Government would not go back on the policy elaborated in 1940 by the then Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax. Halifax had said that the British Government would 'use all its influence' to obtain a settlement 'so just and equitable as to give hopes of its durability'. Macartney interpreted Halifax's statements as meaning that the British Government had pledged itself to support the revision of the Trianon frontier in Hungary's favour. Macartney's argument, based mainly on Hungarian and Transylvanian Magyar sources, was that the Groza policy was a facade and that ill-treatment of Romania's Magyars was continuing. He said that large numbers of Seklers wanted to move into

20 PRO FO 371, 57194, U1608, Minute by Marjoribanks, 30 January 1946.

Hungary and some had applied for admission into the Soviet Union in preference to living under Romanian rule. (Macartney was naive to take this at face value. It is probable that if such statements had been expressed by Seklers, they were arranged by the Soviets prior to March 1945 as a means of putting pressure on Romania to accept the Soviet choice of government.) Macartney suggested population transfers, and believed that if the Seklers moved, one of the great difficulties in the way of a settlement would be eliminated. He appeared to advocate a frontier along the line of the Bihar mountains, and to consider that an equitable solution would involve equal numbers of Magyars and Romanians living outside Hungary and Romania respectively. This argument ignored the fact that the Hungarian population of Transylvania is, with the exception of the Sekler counties in the east, far more dispersed than the Romanian and such a settlement would have involved large areas in which Romanians form a majority being annexed to Hungary. Unlike Marjoribanks, Macartney believed Britain stood a better chance of cultivating political influence in Hungary than in Romania and that this was a further motive for supporting Hungary's claims.[21]

Macartney's views on the frontier, however, did not represent the general Foreign Office line. Sir Orme Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary (number two in the Foreign Office hierarchy) decided that the US should make the running on the border question, and that the British representatives at the peace conference, if they had to say anything at all, should state that the question needed examination but that the UK was not yet convinced that the case for a change in the Trianon frontier had been made.[22] Thus the British line was midway between the position set out by Marjoribanks and that of Macartney. There was little enthusiasm among top officials for Macartney's pro-Hungarian views (and the Professor

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21 PRO FO 371, 57194, U1608, Minute by Macartney, 28 February 1946. There was a certain subjective sympathy for Hungary among the staff of the Foreign Office Research Department. In February 1944 a paper produced by that Department on the social structure of Romania (PRO FO 371, 44021, R7397) noted that in Transylvania the Romanians' 'contact with their Hungarian and Saxon neighbours has produced amongst them a slightly more advanced type of civilisation'. Hungarian political memoranda tended to be received more favourably in the Foreign Office than Romanian. In June 1946, in response to a letter from Cardinal Mindszenty protesting at the return of Transylvania to Romania when, according to the Cardinal, it had a 'Western' culture, as opposed to Romania's 'Eastern' culture, the official responsible for dealing with Romania in the Foreign Office Research Department noted that the Hungarians presented their memoranda on good quality paper and in readable form 'in strong contrast with some effusions we have recently received from Roumanian sources' (PRO FO 371, 59148, R10831).

22 PRO FO 371, 57194, U1608, Minute by Sargent, 4 February 1946.

resigned in May 1946, a move which pro-Hungarian sources interpreted as resulting from his differences with the Foreign Office over the Hungarian–Romanian frontier).[23] Nevertheless, the failure of Britain to come out openly in support of the Trianon frontier, as Marjoribanks and Le Rougetel wanted, meant that the Groza government in Romania was able to continue to make propaganda gains in the run-up to the November 1946 elections. The fact that Britain wanted US support for a new arrangement for the Danube was given as justification for the failure to adopt a more openly pro-Trianon policy.[24]

Le Rougetel and Marjoribanks clearly understood the importance which a statement that Britain supported the Trianon frontier (as King Michael had requested) would have had in the promotion of Western influence in Romania. Neither Michael Williams, the Assistant Head of the Foreign Office Northern Department, nor Adrian Holman, who succeeded Le Rougetel in March 1946 as the British political representative in Bucharest, however, saw any pressing need for the British position to be clarified, in spite of the fact that the uncertainty was so damaging to Britain's position in the country. A minute by Williams summed up the Foreign Office's uncertain attitude: 'We propose to agree with the Americans that this frontier question needs examination, but not to press for any changes, unless the course of the negotiations [at the Peace Conference] seems to warrant this.'[25] Holman, who had admittedly arrived only recently in Bucharest, appeared rather lost on the Transylvanian issue. He reported a conversation with his Turkish colleague on 1 April, who said that the story was constantly being put about that while the USSR supported the return of all of Transylvania to Romania, the UK and US favoured some sort of partition. Holman reported that he had 'heard the same story from other sources'. He clearly did not realize that the 'story' had a strong element of truth, and suggested that a statement should be made to the effect that Britain stood by the terms of the Armistice with regard to Transylvania.[26] Such a statement would not have clarified the British position, however, since the Armistice itself was vague on this question, as Williams recognized. He said that no statement could be made, although 'there would [...] be no harm in telling the King that we

23 PRO FO 371, 59147, R8149, *Magyar Nemzet*, 29 May 1946. Internal Foreign Office minuting, however, suggests that Macartney left simply because the time had come for him to return to Oxford following his wartime secondment (ibid., Minute by Warner, 3 June 1946).
24 PRO FO 371, 57194, U1608, Minute by Hood, 3 February 1946.
25 PRO FO 371, 59145, R2866, Minute by Williams, 28 February 1946.
26 PRO FO 371, 59145, R5227, Telegram, Holman to Foreign Office, 2 April 1946.

are well aware of Romanian views and they will be given full weight'.[27] One justification for Britain's uncertain position advanced by officials in London was a technicality — Britain could not commit itself publicly on one clause of the Peace Treaty before any statement was made on the progress of the Treaty as a whole, and all of Romania's post-war frontiers should be agreed at the same time. (There was still some doubt as to the exact delineation of the Soviet–Romanian frontier.)[28]

In a despatch sent from the Foreign Office to the British Legation in Bucharest on 17 April 1946, Holman was advised that he could tell the King for his own information that Transylvania was being discussed at the Council of Foreign Ministers and that Britain did not intend to suggest any change to the Trianon frontier, but would recognize any change agreed by Romania and Hungary themselves. The suggestion that negotiations might take place between Romania and Hungary was a recurring idea in British thinking during 1946 — until August, when it seems to have been abandoned. In practice British support for such talks amounted to a *rejection* of the Trianon frontier and support for an adjustment in favour of Hungary. Romania vehemently opposed the idea of talks because it regarded the Trianon frontier as non-negotiable. Moreover, the King was told that Britain could not make a public statement.[29] Thus Holman's elaboration of the British position to the King, which was intended to be reassuring, had the opposite effect, and merely fuelled the propaganda machine of the Groza government. The British failure to make a public statement was seized upon by the Romanian Government and the Soviet Union. On 13 April, Holman reported a noticeable increase in propaganda to the effect that only the Soviet Union favoured the return of all of Transylvania to Romania. 'Less informed public therefore assumes', he wrote in a telegram to London, 'that the Americans and ourselves are the stumbling block. [...] The position has therefore become more embarrassing for us.'[30]

British equivocation over the Hungarian–Romanian frontier question led to criticism from Hungarian quarters too, and to anti-Western propaganda from pro-Soviet interests in that country. In June 1946, Hungarian Communist leader Mátyás Rákosi made a speech at the Forum Club in Budapest in which he commented that Britain was supporting the restoration of the Trianon frontier. In Rákosi's view, Britain was 'selling out' Hungarian interests, because of its interest in Romanian oil. This

27　PRO FO 371, 59145, R5227, Telegram, Holman to Foreign Office, 2 April 1946.
28　PRO FO 371, 59145, R5227, Despatch, Foreign Office to Bucharest, 17 April 1946.
29　Ibid.
30　PRO FO 371, 59145, R5797, Telegram, Holman to Foreign Office, 13 April 1946.

prompted William Hayter, the head of the Foreign Office Southern Department, which covered Hungary and Romania, to suggest that Rákosi should be reminded that it was the Soviet Union which had been the main advocate of the return to the pre-war frontier.[31] Later in the same month, a Hungarian Government delegation visited London, and a junior Foreign Office Minister stated that the frontier question had been considered at length but that Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, had 'felt it would be useless to raise the matter again' because of 'Soviet intransigence on this subject'.[32] Prime Minister Attlee said that although the frontier had been settled by the four Powers, 'the best hope would be for Hungary to have discussions with Romania and Czechoslovakia with a view to getting a permanent settlement of the boundaries'. Attlee believed this was necessary to prevent repeated conflict over the territories and stated that any move towards 'stabilization' would have the support of the British Government. (The Romanians, of course, were not prepared to negotiate over the Trianon frontier and Attlee's formula of encouraging the two countries to negotiate for themselves was rejected by the Peace Conference in August, on the grounds that it would provoke the very conflicts which Attlee hoped could be prevented.)[33] British officials formed a favourable view of the Hungarian delegation, which contrasted with the often highly negative view of Romanian politicians and the Romanian people in general. A record of the discussion sent to the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference reported that the Hungarian Prime Minister hoped that the frontier question would be raised 'by another Great Power' (meaning the US) and that Britain would allow the discussion to take its course and not oppose the US initiative.[34] At the Paris Peace Conference British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin echoed Attlee's view. He told a Hungarian government delegation that he had originally supported the US proposal for an adjustment of the Trianon frontier, but had decided it was pointless to press the issue in view of the Soviet position. Bevin hoped, however, that an adjustment could be arranged after the Peace Treaty had been signed and the Romanian elections had taken place. The British Foreign Secretary said that if the

31 PRO FO 371, 59025, R9242, Minute by Hayter, 17 June 1946.

32 PRO FO 371, 59025, R9283, Record of meeting between Hungarian Government delegation and unnamed Foreign Office Minister, 21 June 1946.

33 PRO FO 371, 59025, R9283, Record of meeting between Hungarian Government delegation and British Prime Minister Attlee, 21 June 1946; PRO FO 371, 59099, R7207, Undated minute referring to Hungarian–Romanian frontier; Minute by Williams, 10 April 1946.

34 PRO FO 371, 59025, R9283, Despatch, Foreign Office to Lord Hood, British Delegation to Paris Peace Conference, 22 June 1946.

frontier question came on the agenda, Britain would be sympathetic to adjustments.[35]

The wording of the reference to Transylvania in the Peace Treaty was contentious. The final version read simply 'the decision of the Vienna Award of August 30 1940 is declared null and void. The frontier existing between Hungary and Romania on January 1st 1938 is hereby restored'.[36] Earlier drafts, however, contained additions to this. In a version which the US objected to, the sentence continued 'the whole of Transylvania thus being included in the territory of Roumania'. An American proposal for an additional sentence — 'nevertheless the Allied and Associated powers would be prepared to recognize any rectification of the Roumanian–Hungarian frontier that may subsequently be mutually agreed between the parties directly concerned and which would substantially reduce the number of persons living under alien rule' — was rejected by the Soviets. The British objected to the concluding part of the sentence: 'and which would substantially reduce the number of persons living under alien rule'. An earlier American draft to which the British objected (despite the formula having been endorsed by Attlee the previous June), on the grounds that it would provoke perpetual disputes, read: 'The decisions of the Vienna Award of 30 August 1940 are declared null and void without prejudice, however, to direct negotiations between the Governments of Rumania and Hungary looking toward an adjustment of the frontier, which would substantially reduce the number of persons living under alien rule.'[37] Nevertheless, in 1947 the British Foreign Office had still not entirely ruled out the idea of negotiations between the two countries. London was willing to authorize its representative in Bucharest to inform the Romanian government that Britain welcomed the Hungarian initiative to open negotiations. The qualification which in practice killed the idea was that the Foreign Office was only prepared to take this step if the US and Soviet representatives in Bucharest made similar statements to the Romanian Government.[38]

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35 PRO FO 371, 59025, R9565, Record of meeting at George V Hotel, Paris, between British Foreign Secretary Bevin and Hungarian Government Delegation, August 1946.

36 PRO FO 371, 59099, R7207, Undated minute referring to Hungarian–Romanian frontier.

37 Ibid.; PRO FO 371, 59145, R6146, Draft statement on the Hungarian–Romanian frontier for the Romanian Peace Treaty tabled by the US; Minute by Gladwyn Jebb, 13 April 1946; Minute by Marjoribanks, 17 April 1946.

38 PRO FO 371, 67215, R935, Foreign Office note to US State Department, 10 January 1947.

Romanian documents in the Foreign Ministry Archive in Bucharest emphasize the effect which the British and American attitude to Transylvania had in pushing the Romanian Foreign Ministry, under the control of Gheorghe Tătărescu, closer to the Soviet Union. On 1 April 1946, Richard Franasovici, the Romanian *chargé* in London, reported a lunch with the US expert on South-East Europe at the Foreign Ministers' meeting. Franasovici correctly deduced from this conversation that the Americans definitely favoured a change in the Trianon frontier but did not attach great importance to achieving this. He also assumed that the British position was the same as the American. Franasovici referred to information supplied by the Soviet Ambassador in London, which helped him to deduce the Anglo-American position. On 10 April, Franasovici reported that the Soviet Ambassador told him that Transylvania had not been discussed at the Foreign Ministers' Conference the previous day. In earlier telegrams, Franasovici had reported being given the cold shoulder by the British — Bevin would not see him — and on 30 March, he had reported that in view of the delay in being received by Bevin, he unofficially visited the Soviet Ambassador: 'I was received extremely cordially', wrote Franasovici, 'and he offered me all his help'.[39]

On 11 April, Franasovici reported a conversation with Sir Orme Sargent, which demonstrates the uncertainty of the British position on Transylvania. Sargent began by saying he hoped for a revival of commercial relations 'to which', wrote the Romanian chargé, 'they [the British] attach great importance'. Sargent added that the Romanian treaty 'did not present great difficulties' which prompted Franasovici to deduce that in fact Britain was not thinking in terms of a change in the Transylvanian frontier. 'In general, it was a more cordial meeting than that with Hayter, the head of the South-East European section', wrote Franasovici. (Hayter had been an advocate of supporting the American line on Transylvania.)[40] Franasovici went on, however, to refer to the difficulties which he was having in doing his job because of the cold shoulder which he was being given by Bevin and other members of the British government. On 17 April he reported on the 'cold attitude which England has towards us, an attitude which I feel in every moment'.[41]

39 Archive of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Fond Conferința de Pace de la Paris, vol. 69, Telegrams, Franasovici to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 1 April 1946 and 10 April 1946.

40 Ibid., Telegram, Franasovici to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 11 April 1946; PRO FO 371, 59097, R3199, Minute by Hayter, 28 February 1946.

41 Archive of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Fond Conferința de Pace de la Paris, vol. 69, Telegrams, Franasovici to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 11 April 1946 and 17 April 1946.

On 12 April, the Romanian Ambassador in Moscow reported that the Soviet Foreign Ministry had informed him of the requests of the Hungarian delegation, which was then visiting Moscow, for the cession of 24,000 square kilometres of territory. A senior official in the Soviet Foreign Ministry assured the Romanian Ambassador that the Soviet Union would not change its position and would continue to support the Romanian viewpoint. On 15 April, in response to information from an unknown source that the British and Americans also supported the cession of 24,000 square kilometres to Hungary, Romanian Foreign Minister Tătărescu asked Franasovici to find out 'through our friend' about the possible boundaries and other conditions which would apply to the cession. Although the telegram does not make clear who 'our friend' is, it almost certainly refers to the Soviet Ambassador in London. On 16 April, the Romanian *chargé* in London reported that he had the impression that the Americans would drop their position on Transylvania 'in the face of a decisive Soviet resistance' in return for other concessions. On 17 April, however, he noted that the Hungarian head of mission in London had been received relatively quickly, more quickly than, for example, his Finnish counterpart.[42] Even in August 1946, after the decision on Transylvania had been taken at the Peace Conference, the British and American equivocation over the issue was still influencing the attitude of Romanian diplomats. On 4 August, the Romanian Ambassador in The Hague reported a meeting with his Soviet counterpart at which the Romanian requested and received an assurance that no change would be made to the decisions taken in May regarding Transylvania.[43]

The close contact between the Romanian Legation in London and the Soviet Embassy is significant, given that at this stage the Romanian diplomatic service was by no means staffed entirely by Communists. Although a purge took place on 6 March 1946, it was only after Ana Pauker took over from Tătărescu as Foreign Minister in November 1947 that the Communists established firm control of the service and ousted those not deemed to be fully loyal to the new administration. Prior to this, many high-ranking Romanian diplomats belonged to the Tătărescu clique, many of whom had links with the deposed King Carol.[44] While the

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42 Ibid., Telegrams, Franasovici to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 12 April 1946, 15 April 1946, 16 April 1946 and 17 April 1946.

43 Archive of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Fond Conferința de Pace de la Paris, vol. 70, Telegram, Stoica [Romanian Head of Mission in The Hague] to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 4 August 1946.

44 D. Deletant, 'New Light on Gheorghiu-Dej's Struggle for Dominance in the Romanian Communist Party', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 73, 1995, 4,

Tătărescu clique represented an opportunistic element within Romanian political life, it was not pro-Communist as such. This point is illustrated by correspondence between the Romanian Legation in London and the Foreign Ministry in Bucharest concerning an article in the *Daily Worker* critical of Bevin. The article referred to the fact that Bevin had not seen Franasovici but had seen Grigore Gafencu. In his report to Tătărescu, Franasovici pointed out that Gafencu and Bevin had actually met at the theatre and not officially, and went on to describe the efforts he had made to persuade the Foreign Office that the article had not been inspired by the Romanian Legation. Franasovici thought that it had been inspired by Romanian Communist circles in London. Although Franasovici's word is not necessarily reliable, it is unlikely that he would have had any motives for lying to Tătărescu in a diplomatic report.[45] It is therefore not unreasonable to speculate that had the British and Americans supported the restoration of the Trianon frontier from the outset, Romanian diplomats might have been less inclined to cultivate such a close and even dependent relationship with their Soviet counterparts. The wisdom of the British attitude to the Romanian Legation in London is also questionable. While the Legation obviously represented a government of which Britain disapproved (although by 1946 it had been recognized under the Moscow Agreement), it might have been more subtle to recognize the difference between Romanian diplomats, most of whom owed their allegiance to Tătărescu, and the Communists who were behind the activities of the Romanian Government. While the British Foreign Office was right to be under no illusions about the personal integrity of these people, there were nevertheless good reasons, based on self-interest, for Tătărescu's diplomats to oppose the complete Sovietization or Communization of Romania. There were large-scale resignations among Romanian diplomats abroad following the replacement of Tătărescu by Pauker in November 1947 and after the forced abdication of King Michael on 30 December 1947.

The British authorities failed to appreciate fully the emotiveness of the Transylvanian issue for Romanians. 'This question of Transylvania seems to be very much on the minds of the Roumanians and of our mission in Bucharest', Williams wrote in April 1946.[46] London's vague promises to take Romanian views into account were not enough to satisfy the strong

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pp. 659–90 (684); G. Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, London, 1964, p. 141; H. L. Roberts, *Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, London, 1951, p. 309.

45 Archive of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Fond Conferința de Pace de la Paris, vol. 69, Telegrams, Franasovici to Romanian Foreign Ministry, 18 April 1946.

46 PRO FO 371, 59145, R5227, Minute by Williams, 4 April 1946.

feelings on the subject. The issue was a particularly important one for Romanians at this time, since their armies had suffered heavy casualties in Transylvania's reconquest.[47] The possibility of cultivating influence in Hungary, which appeared less likely to fall under Soviet control, may have been one argument in favour of a policy of supporting revision. Such an approach, however, would have been out of kilter with the general Western policy at this time of trying to reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union. Once the Groza government had been imposed in March 1945, Moscow was in favour of restoring the Trianon frontier with Hungary and was not prepared to compromise. Ultimately neither Britain nor the US were prepared for an altercation with the Soviet Union over the issue. As William Hayter, the Assistant Head of the Foreign Office Southern Department eventually recognized, it would therefore have been better for the idea of revision of the Trianon frontier to have been dropped. Moreover, Britain did not regard Hungary as a priority for the cultivation of Western influence any more than Romania. Sir Orme Sargent had appeared to suggest in his July 1945 paper *Stocktaking after VE Day* that Britain would have to acquiesce in Soviet domination of Romania and Hungary in order to prevent the subjugation of Bulgaria.[48] The main motive for Britain's equivocal position over the Romanian–Hungarian frontier was maintaining faith with Washington in order to secure US support for the protection of the Danube as an international waterway. The trade-off was, however, counter-productive. The uncertain Western position over the frontier issue pushed Romania closer to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, once the Sovietization of Romania had taken place, the Danube in any case came under the control of the Communist Bloc. By 1949, Hungary too had been lost to the Western world, in spite of US support for revisionism and Britain's equivocal stance on the issue.

The case for changing the frontier in Hungary's favour, as set out by Professor Macartney, rested on a misguided belief that this in itself would create greater stability in the region. In practice, a change would at best have done nothing to improve inter-ethnic relations and at worst would have generated considerable hardship and possibly tension, particularly if Macartney's drastic idea of moving the centuries-old Sekler community into Hungary had been put into effect. Population transfers would have destroyed the whole culture of Transylvania, which is enriched by its diverse ethnic groups. In practice, the only long-term solution was and is

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47 PRO FO 371, 59146, R6443, Kingdom of Roumania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Memorandum on the Military and Economic Contribution of Roumania to the War against Germany and Hungary*, Bucharest, 1946, pp. 13–15; Despatch, Holman to Foreign Office, 19 April 1946.

48 G. Ross. *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin*, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 209–16.

for Hungarian–Romanian political, economic and cultural relations to be as close as possible in order to reduce the importance of the frontier. The policy was advocated by Nicolae Titulescu, the former Romanian Foreign Minister, in the 1930s, and was supported in the 1940s by British officials like Le Rougetel and Marjoribanks who had served in Romania. While the Groza government supported Hungarian–Romanian co-operation purely to serve the interests of its masters in the Kremlin, it was unfortunate that more British and particularly US officials did not recognize that the policy in itself was meritorious, despite the cynical motives of those who advocated it. Had Britain and the US concentrated on promoting genuine Hungarian–Romanian reconciliation, rather than on the inevitably divisive issue of the border, Western influence in both Hungary and Romania might have been preserved for longer.

The Repression of the Gheorghiu-Dej Era in the Light of the Securitate Files

Dennis Deletant

Since the fall of Communism in Romania, opposition voices have maintained that the SRI is, if not a crypto-Securitate, then the successor to the Securitate. In an effort to halt the speculation and accusations, Virgil Măgureanu, the director of the SRI, took the initiative in 1994 of printing a multi-volume history of the Securitate. I say printing because the history has not been made available to the general public. The SRI is the first of the post-Communist security services in Eastern Europe to produce such a study. Its aim, to quote the compilers, is 'to present *sine ira et studio* the activity of the Securitate, which between 1948 and 1989 was the principal Romanian institution empowered to defend the security of the state, and to collect and to process information about potential enemies inside and outside the country'.[1] Whilst recognizing the considerable scale of the Securitate's repressive activities, the compilers point out that 'the documents examined by us also show that the Securitate had departments whose exclusive role was to gather and process information relevant to the defence of national values'.[2] What these national values were is not defined by the compilers, yet it is clear from reading the five volumes that the primary 'value' was, until the 1970s, the maintenance of the one-party state under the dominance of the Communist Party. But as the state and party came to be identified from the mid-1970s exclusively with Nicolae Ceauşescu and his wife, so the overriding objectives of the Securitate's work became the protection of the dictator and his family.

In selecting their material — and there are almost 3,000 pages of it in these volumes — the editors have chosen documents which represent several aspects of the Securitate's activity. The work of almost all of the directorates is exemplified, ranging from that of domestic intelligence and counter-espionage to penal investigation and foreign intelligence. Much of

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1   *Cartea Albă a Securităţii*, 5 vols, 1994–96, Bucharest, I, p. 1.
2   Ibid., I, p. 3.

this takes the form of periodic reports on departmental activity and shows that the bulk of senior officers' time was consumed with pushing paper. Not surprisingly, no foreign intelligence operational files are reproduced, that is, material relating to the running of particular operations and agents and the information obtained. Information from domestic agents and informers, on the other hand, appears in abundance, often in the form of 'syntheses' compiled by regular officers. The eyes of the Securitate are permanently vigilant. Even after his release from prison in 1955, the Social Democratic Party leader Constantin Titel Petrescu was kept under permanent surveillance and his conversations with friends reported back to the Securitate.[3] The apparently innocuous singer Maria Tănase was another subject of eavesdropping: 'On 5 November 1957, she [Maria] said in conversation with her husband in a restaurant that when an occasion arose for her to travel abroad, she would remain there permanently'.[4]

Of especial interest to the student of the Gheorghiu-Dej period — represented by half of the material — are the files describing the repressive measures used by the Securitate during those years. There is wealth of detail about the arrest, interrogation, trial, and imprisonment of political opponents, the fate of political prisoners and the administration of jails. Where the compilers have been more coy is on the subject of deaths in the jails and labour camps. Glimpses are given as to the scale of mortality: in January 1953, a list is given of the 133 prisoners who died at work that month on the Danube–Black Sea canal, but of greater use to the historian would have been a consolidated list of all such deaths between June 1950, when prisoners were brought to the canal, and 18 July 1953, the date fixed by the Party Central Committee and the Council of Ministers for the abandonment of the project.[5]

Omissions of this kind raise questions about the criteria for selection of documents and the reasons behind them, and are likely to persuade those who suffered at the hands of the Securitate that what has been left out of the compilation is more important than what has been put in. It is a matter of regret that, in the accompanying notes to the historical introductions to volume two, misleading figures for the numbers of political prisoners held between 1955 and 1960 are given. We are told that 'in 1955, 6,406 political prisoners convicted of crimes against state security were held in jail. In January 1958, their number had fallen to 6,211; in December of the same year it rose to 10,125, only to rise again in January 1960 to 17,613'.[6]

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3   Ibid., II, pp. 529–30.
4   Ibid., III, p. 197.
5   Ibid., II, Anexă, p. 84.
6   Ibid., II, pp. 107, notes 75 and 95.

The important word here is 'convicted'. There is no mention in this note of the several thousand people arrested between 1949 and 1955 and imprisoned 'for administrative reasons', the Securitate's own jargon for 'without trial'. The Securitate's figures state that in 1952, 24,826 persons were arrested and there is no evidence to suggest that between 1952 and 1955 some 18,000 of these arrested persons were set free. Furthermore, the compilers, in their notes, do not account for the 6,635 persons arrested in 1950 and the 19,236 arrested in the following year; most of these would have certainly remained in detention for more than two years, convicted or not.

Despite these inconsistencies, the publication of these documents is invaluable for reconstructing the past. They show in several instances that the Securitate was aware of its own shortcomings and that senior officers sought to address them. This is particularly evident from their efforts to round up partisan groups; the Securitate accounts of these operations often, although by no means always, bear out what the partisans themselves have to say in the memoir literature which has appeared since 1989.

It was only after the overthrow of Ceauşescu that details emerged of how several small bands of self-styled 'partisans' took to the Carpathian mountains in the late 1940s and resisted arrest by the authorities.[7] The last member of the longest-surviving group was not rounded up until 1960. This 'armed anti-Communist resistance', as it has been called, was a spontaneous phenomenon and there were no links between the different groups, but they were driven by a common aim, namely not to submit themselves to consequences of the Communization of their country. The groups, composed on average of between twenty and forty persons, did not pose a major threat to Communist power, yet as long as they remained at liberty they undermined the regime's claim to to have total control of the country.

The groups were formed in the villages in the mountain foothills and were composed of peasants, former army officers, lawyers, doctors, and students. Ill-equipped, they relied on an assortment of rifles, revolvers and machine-pistols left over from the war and were always faced by an acute

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7   For a useful sketch of the activity of these partisan groups, together with a bibliography, see Ştefan Andreescu, 'A Little-Known Issue in the History of Romania: The Armed Anti-Communist Resistance', *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 33, 1994, 1–2, pp. 191–7. This article can be supplemented by first-hand accounts from survivors of groups which have appeared in the review *Memoria*, published by Fundaţia Culturală Memoria since 1990. For an account of the partisan group, led by a forester Nicolae Pop, in the Ţibleş mountains in Maramureş, see Ştefan Bellu, *Pădurea răzvrătită*, Baia Mare, 1993.

shortage of ammunition. They received support from villagers who brought them food and clothing and often gave them shelter. The Communist propaganda of the period dubbed these anti-Communist partisans 'legionaries', that is, members of the extreme right-wing movement known as the Iron Guard, and indeed several of them had been members of it. The partisans, however, were by no means exclusively 'legionaries', as the Securitate's own statistics show. A report of the Direcţia Generală a Securităţii Poporului of 1951 states that the political affiliation of 804 persons arrested for either belonging to or aiding seventeen 'mountain bands' (*bande din munţi*) was as follows: 88 former members of Iuliu Maniu's National Peasant Party, 79 members of the Ploughmen's Front, 73 former legionaries, 42 former members of the Communist Party, 15 members of the National Liberal Party and others.[8] According to another Securitate report, this time dated September 1949, there were 'terrorist bands' active in the regions of Craiova, Braşov, Sibiu, Ploieşti, Suceava, Galaţi, Oradea, Cluj, Timişoara and Constanţa. None of these groups were more than twenty-five strong, and most of them had less than ten members.[9]

The longest-surviving group was the *Haiducii Muscelului* ('Outlaws of Muscel'). Elisabeta Rizea, the only surviving member of the group, has given us an account of the early months of its activity, but her arrest shortly afterwards means that for the remainder of the story we are reliant upon the second-hand versions by relatives of the participants. Many of the dates and incidents are confirmed by the Securitate records but the

8   *Cartea Albă a Securităţii*, II, p. 82. Most of the members of the partisan group led by Major Nicolae Dabija in the Apuseni mountains between 1947 and 1949 were peasants who were not, as the Communist authorities claimed, *chiaburi* or owners of extensive properties. Thirty-two persons were tried as members or sympathisers of the group at the end of September 1949 in Sibiu and seven were sentenced to death and executed on 28 October. Their unmarked graves were identified in the Communal Cemetery of Sibiu in January 1994 (see Andreescu, 'A Little-Known Issue in the History of Romania', p. 191). The memoirs of a former legionary show that caution is required in applying the label 'legionary' indiscriminately to the resistance groups. Filon Verca acknowledges that one of two main partisan groups in the Banat mountains in 1948 was led by Spiru Blănaru, a former legionary, but points out that one of the commanders of the second group was Colonel Ioan Uţă, a prefect of Lugoj county, who had acted against the legionaries in 1939 (Filon Verca, *Paraşutaţi în România vândută. Mişcarea de rezistenţă 1944–1948*, Timişoara, 1993). Blănaru and the bulk of his small group were caught and executed near Timişoara on 16 July 1949. Uţă's band of thirty partisans fought off a company of Securitate troops near the village of Teregova on 22 February 1949, only to be caught on 8 March in a skirmish in which Uţă died.

9   *Cartea Albă a Securităţii*, II, doc. 75, pp. 198–204.

latter give a different interpretation to them. For example, these records allege that innocent civilians were murdered by the 'partisans' who are constantly vilified, being termed 'fascist terrorists'. What is reasonably clear from both sides is that the group, which at any one time never numbered more than thirty or forty persons, was formed by two ex-army officers, Gheorghe Arsenescu (1907–62) and Toma Arnăuţoiu (1921–59), in their native district of Muscel in the foothills of the Carpathians. According to the Securitate records, Arsenescu had hidden weapons at a hermitage in the village of Cetăţeni in the summer of 1947 and in the following spring had set up a 'terrorist group' comprising Gheorghe Hachenzelner, Petre Cojocaru, Longhin Predoiu, Ion Mica and Ion and Gheorghe Purnichescu. Arsenescu spent the autumn and winter in Bucharest and it was there, at the end of 1948, that Toma Arnăuţoiu contacted Arsenescu with a view to setting up a resistance group in the district around Nucşoara in the county of Argeş. From the recent accounts given by contemporaries, Arsenescu seems to have put his faith in a general armed insurrection which was to be led by other former army officers in the west of the country but which never materialized. He agreed to provide Arnăuţoiu with small arms and the latter then returned to Nucşoara with Nicolae Nitu and recruited his brother, Petre Arnăuţoiu, Ion Chirca and the village priest Ion Drăgoi. In March 1949, Arsenescu came to Nucşoara to join the group and in the ensuing months it expanded to include several more villagers.

The Ministry of the Interior was clearly worried that the symbol of resistance posed by the band might be contagious and it was for this reason that it poured troops and Securitate officers into the region. Helped by their local knowledge of the difficult mountain terrain and by several families in the commune of Nucşoara, notably Gheorghe and Elisabeta Rizea, Ion Săndoiu and Ion Sorescu, the group secured provisions and escaped arrest. On the night of 18 June 1949, members of the group were ambushed as they came to collect supplies and in the ensuing gun-fight two Securitate officers, Constantin Apavaloaiei and Florea Lungu were killed. The group's escape under cover of darkness through a security cordon thrown around the area resulted in a massive search being carried out for them by two army batallions and units of the Securitate troops, and in the arrest of families suspected of aiding them.[10]

Among those arrested was Elisabeta Rizea. She has recounted how she was taken to the mayor's office in Nucşoara where she was beaten with a heavy stick by Second Lieutenant Constantinescu of the Securitate. She

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10 A. Marinescu, 'Pagini din rezistenţa armată anticomunistă', *Memoria*, 1992, 7, pp. 47–51.

was then held in the cellar of a peasant house for four days after which she was transported to the prison in Piteşti. Eighteen months passed before she was put on trial. In the meantime she was beaten on several occasions by Warrant Officers Zamfirescu and Mecu. She was finally tried and sentenced in December 1950 to seven years imprisonment for helping the partisan group.[11]

After the ambush of 18–19 June 1949, Arsenescu decided to split his men into two bands, one under his command, the other under the leadership of Arnăuţoiu. The first band, which included Ion Chirca, Titi Mămăligă, Benone Milea, Constantin Popescu and Nae Ciolan, based itself in the Rîul Doamnei valley, and the Arnăuţoiu band, made up of his brother Petre, Titu, Maria and Constantin Jubleanu and Maria Plop, in the Vîlsan valley. Arsenescu's band did not survive for long. Milea was captured on 1 November 1949 and Popescu and Ciolan suffered the same fate three days later. Chirca disappeared without trace. Arsenescu and Mămăligă were caught in a trap by the security troops, the latter being wounded in a shoot-out while Arsenescu fled from the area and led a hermit-like existence in the hills for ten years until he was finally caught in 1960. Mămăligă managed to make his way to the Arnăuţoiu group.

Shortly afterwards, in the spring of 1950, this group too was forced to split up to avoid detection. One band, made up of the husband and wife Titu and Maria Jubleanu, their son Tică and a young doctor, Ion Marinescu, were tracked down and in the resulting gunfight Maria was shot dead. Titu Jubleanu was arrested but the two young men managed to escape, joining the second band, composed of the two Arnăuţoiu brothers, Toma and Petre, Maria Plop and Mămăligă. Marinescu and Mămăligă were killed in skirmishes with the Securitate in 1952 and the remaining four hid out in a cave near the village of Poenărei for several years. On 20 May 1958, the brothers were deceived by a local man into drinking drugged spirits, and after falling into a comatose state were arrested. Plop, who in the meantime had given birth, surrendered with her child, but Tică Jubleanu refused and shot himself. A sweep of the surrounding villages in the district was made and scores of families were detained for assisting the Arnăuţoiu brothers.

The trial of the brothers took place in the following year. Toma and Petre Arnăuţoiu were sentenced to death and executed at Jilava prison by firing squad on 18 October 1959, as were the following persons accused of rendering them assistance: Nicolae Andreescu and Ion Constantinescu, Orthodox priests in Poenărei, Ion Drăgoi, the Orthodox priest of Nucşoara,

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11 *Povestea Elisabetei Rizea din Nucşoara*, Bucharest, 1993, pp. 118–25.

Nicolae Băşoiu, Titu Jubleanu, Constantin Popescu, Ion Săndoiu, Nicolae Sorescu and Gheorghe Tomeci, all peasant farmers, and the teachers Alexandru Moldoveanu, Nicolae Niţu and Gheorghe Popescu. Benone Milea was also sentenced to death and executed but Maria Plop received life imprisonment and died in jail.[12] Others also tried with this group, according to the Securitate records, were Ilie Dragomirescu and Ion Grigore, arrested on 22 June 1958, Nicolae Vasilescu, arrested on 4 July 1958, and Ion Dumitrescu, arrested on 6 February 1959. All received long jail terms.[13] Arsenescu's trial took place in February 1962, two years after his capture. He was sentenced to death and executed at Jilava on 29 May 1962. His wife Maria and his father Gheorghe were also tried for assisting him and were given prison terms of ten and fifteen years respectively.[14]

A second notable resistance group was that led by Ion Gavrilă-Ogoreanu (born 1923) in the Făgăraş mountains. Gavrilă-Ogoreanu, a student at Cluj university, formed his group of eleven from his university colleagues in 1948. For seven years they tied up several companies of Securitate troops before they were captured and sentenced to death in 1957. Gavrilă-Ogoreanu escaped arrest and, with the help of friends, escaped detection until June 1976 when he was finally picked up in Cluj.[15]

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12 Marinescu, 'Pagini din rezistenţa armată anticomunistă', pp.57–8.

13 *Arhiva Serviciului Român de Informaţii*, Fond D, File 9585, UM 0336 Piteşti, pp. 44–66.

14 M. Arsenescu-Buduluca, 'Sunt soţia "teroristului" Gheorghe Arsenescu', *Memoria*, 1993, 8, p. 59. The unwillingness of the post-1989 Romanian authorities to recognize that opponents of the Communist regime were the victims of political assassinations is illustrated by the following case. In December 1951, Traian Murariu, a peasant from the commune of Pădureni in the county of Timiş, was sentenced to death for sheltering Nicolae Mazilu and Ion Mogoş, two members of the anti-Communist group in the Făgăraş mountains. He was executed a year later at Jilava jail for 'plotting against the social order'. In 1992, his daughter appealed to the Supreme Court for the sentence to be rescinded. After three years, the court informed her that the sentence was 'well-founded and legal': *Ziua*, 18 July 1995.

15 Ion Gavrilă-Ogoreanu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc*, 2 vols, Timişoara, 1993–5, II, p. 264. Gavrilă-Ogoreanu's arrest in Cluj is tersely reported in a Securitate note of 30 June 1976 (*Cartea Albă a Securităţii*, IV, doc. 136, p. 372. Gavrilă-Ogoreanu recounts an episode in 1952 which illustrates the motivation of the resistance groups: in order to distract the pursuing forces of the Securitate, Gavrilă-Ogoreanu took part of his group to a tourist chalet near lake Bâlea. After forcing the tourists from the chalet, Gavrilă-Ogoreanu addressed them as follows: 'Spuneţi, vă rog, oamenilor din ţară că mai există un colţ din regatul României, care nu şi-a plecat capul înaintea comuniştilor. Şi atâta timp cât ne vor sta capetele pe umeri, acest colţ de ţară va fi liber. Spuneţi-le să-şi păstreze încrederea că într-o zi toată România va fi liberă. Rugaţi-vă să vă ajute şi să ne ajute Dumnezeu.' (Tell everyone that there is still a place in the kingdom of Romania which has not bowed

Nothing illustrates more graphically the coercive nature of the policies pursued by the Communist regime than its use of forced labour. Just as Beria was, at Stalin's death in 1953, the second largest employer of labour in the Soviet Union, so too the Ministry of the Interior in Romania was effectively charged with managing part of the economy. Forced labour was introduced under the labour code of 8 June 1950. A Directorate for Labour Units was set up in the Ministry of the Interior whose task was 'to re-educate through labour elements hostile to the Romanian People's Republic'. Cosmetically obscured by the euphemism 'temporary labour service', which the Council of Ministers was given the right to demand from citizens, forced labour was used as an instrument of punishment for the thousands charged with economic sabotage and absenteeism. Included among their number were the tens of thousands of peasants who resisted the forced collectivization of agriculture. The 'labour units' were renamed 'work colonies' by a decision of the Council of Ministers of 22 August 1952 and their administration, like that of the prisons, placed in the hands of the Ministry of the Interior.

As yet, only estimates can be given for the numbers of persons deported to the labour camps which were set up under the auspicies of the Ministry of the Interior in June 1950.[16] It is believed that, in the early 1950s, 80,000 detainees were held in camps scattered around the country. The largest concentration of camps — fourteen in all — was for construction work on the Danube–Black Sea canal. These camps were packed with prisoners from every walk of life. Members of the professional classes rubbed shoulders with dispossessed peasant-farmers, Orthodox and Uniate priests with Zionist leaders, Yugoslavs from the Banat with Saxons from Transylvania; all were victims of the denial of human rights which accompanied this particular part of the Romanian regime's programme of political and economic revolution.

The construction of the canal was undertaken on the initiative of Comecon and approved by the Politburo on 25 May 1949. Its official purpose, according to Decree No. 75 of the Grand National Assembly of 23 March 1950, was to provide the cheapest and most direct means of transport by river to the Black Sea by building a canal cutting the Danube's passage to the sea by 260 kilometres. Construction of the canal would also help to industrialize the south-eastern corner of the country,

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to Communism. As long as our heads are on our shoulders, this corner of the country will be free. Tell the people not to lose faith, for the day will come when the whole of Romania will be free. Pray God for it, so help us God): Gavrilă-Ogoreanu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc*, I, p. 304.

16 *Organizarea și funcționarea Organelor Ministerului de Interne de la Înființare pînă în prezent*, Bucharest, 1978, p. 112.

would improve the irrigation of the Dobrogea province, thereby increasing agricultural yields, and would provide training in new engineering techniques to those involved in its construction.[17]

But the canal may also have had a broader economic purpose as well as a military significance: in respect of the former, it could have served as part of a wider Soviet scheme to create an 'Eastern Ruhr', for which Soviet iron ore was to be shipped through a double canal: Black Sea–Danube and Danube–Oder–Rhine; its military rationale lay in the ability it offered Stalin to send many small Soviet vessels up the Danube in the event of a deterioration of relations with Yugoslavia. Support for both scenarios was found in the Soviet decision to give financial backing to the project, backing which would not have been given to other Romanian economic plans.

Work on the canal began at the end of summer 1949 on the basis of construction plans drawn up by a special Soviet–Romanian commission in May. The plans were approved by the Council of Ministers on 22 June under resolution 613 and to run the project a board called the Direcția Generală a Lucrărilor Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră (General Directorate of the Danube–Black Sea Canal Works) was set up. In September, Gheorghe Hossu was appointed director of the project, and Mayer Grunberg was appointed first assistant director and chief engineer.[18] Before excavation proper could be undertaken, a great deal of preparatory work was necessary. This involved the erection of barrack-like wooden shacks to house workers, canteens, access roads to the sites, modifications to the railways, electrical generators, and, of particular importance, measures to remove the mosquitoes which infested the area. Medical care was to be provided by one doctor, a health-worker and two nurses for each 1,500 workers.

The workforce was to be supplied from three sources: volunteer paid labour, forced labour and army conscripts. On 29 June 1949, the Canal Directorate requested all ministries to instruct every factory under their control to recruit manpower for the canal. There was an urgent need for surveyors, mechanical and building engineers, and technicians. Administrative personnel were also required such as managers, and accountants, together with support staff such as typists. Among the skilled labourers sought were welders, blacksmiths, carpenters, locksmiths, plumbers, car mechanics and bricklayers. Recruiting offices were set up in

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17 Doina Jela, *Cazul Nichita Dumitru: Incercare de reconstituire a unui proces comunist*, Bucharest, 1995, p. 28.

18 A special body was established to supervise the construction of the canal with the name Direcția Generală a Lucrărilor Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră: see ibid., p. 26.

Bucharest and in the major towns. It was reported that by September 8,960 persons had been recruited.[19]

Both the planning and execution of the canal was supervised by Soviet counsellors. The whimpering tone of some of the requests sent by Gheorghe Hossu, the director general of the canal, to Shaposhnikov, the head of the Soviet commission for planning the canal, indicates that relations between the two parties were far from smooth, and to judge from a stenogram of a meeting in May 1952 between Hossu and another Soviet specialist called Vorob'ev about the payment of bonuses, the latter considered himself to be a master rather than a partner.[20]

A special newspaper called *Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră* was printed to instil enthusiasm into the workforce. Initially, it appeared as an eight-page weekly, but later appeared two or three times a week. In its first edition, of 3 September 1949, it took up a speech of Ana Pauker, given on the eve of 23 August, the national holiday, in which she saluted the plan for the canal which 'we will build without the bourgeoisie and against it'. In fact, this slogan was hung from a pole in front of the canteen on the site at Cernavodă. Pauker's threatening tones constrasted with the idyllic, exalted character of the other articles in this issue, one of which reported the ceremonial handing-over of a library and a radio to the workers on the sites at Poarta Albă and Canara. The library, it said, numbered almost a thousand volumes, 'many of which were works of Soviet literature'. The festive occasion was crowned by the singing of the *International* and the showing of a Soviet film.

Another article laid down the tasks of the 'agitator', as he was termed. These were to read out loud the party newspaper *Scînteia* in the evening in the dormitory, to get the labourers to listen to the radio in a group, to concoct suitable slogans to inspire the workforce, to encourage workers in the surrounding villages to give support to the canal labourers, and last, but probably not least, to unmask saboteurs. The charge of sabotage against unfortunate scapegoats came to be used with increasing frequency in an attempt to cover up a lack of planning which became all too evident in most areas.

The canal files are revealing: insufficient on-site accomodation meant that many workers were forced to sleep either in or under carts; the unasphalted tracks exacted a heavy toll on lorry tyres, which continually exploded, and there was a shortage of facilities for reparing inner-tubes.

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19 On 9 August 1949, the DGC sent in a request to the Ministry of Trade and Food for 28,500 kilos of salted bacon for the workforce. At the same time, a large number of Ziss lorries were ordered from the State Planning Committee.

20 Jela, *Cazul Nichita Dumitru*, p. 31.

Medical care was administered from peasant houses due to a lack of clinics. Feeding the huge force of voluntary workers not only posed logistical problems but placed an enormous strain on the resources of the Dobrogea region. A report from the Ministry of Industry dated 26 September 1949 expressed alarm that between 600 and 800 sheep were being slaughtered daily to feed the workers on the canal. These sheep were prized for their wool and the Ministry recommended that sheep from other parts of the country who gave poorer quality wool be slaughtered in their place.[21]

It is now possible to give more exact figures about the number of political prisoners exploited on this project, since some 2,400 files on the scheme, held in the State Archives in Constanţa, have been opened for research.[22] Political prisoners were euphemistically termed *forţe MAI* ('labour resources of the Ministry of the Interior') and were held in fourteen camps. By spring 1952, their numbers had reached 19,000. In addition, 20,000 voluntary civilian workers were employed together with 18,000 conscript soldiers.[23] The documents in Constanţa include Securitate material about the technical problems facing the workforce and the poor conditions in which the paid labourers were expected to work, but there is little material about the conditions in which the political prisoners toiled. For these we have to consult memoir literature.

One eloquent record comes to us from no less a figure than Gheorghe Cristescu, the general secretary of the outlawed RCP from 1921 to 1924. He spent periods in prison in the inter-war period as a member of an illegal organization, and in 1949 he was re-arrested for 'rightist deviation'. Asked by a fellow prisoner at the Capul Midia penal colony — one of the fourteen camps supplying labour for the Danube–Black Sea canal — to compare the penal regime under King Carol with that under the Communists, Cristescu replied that treatment at the hands of the 'bourgeois' *Siguranţa* and their prisons was 'luxurious' in comparison with that meted out by his comrades.[24] The prisoners were poorly fed and driven to exhaustion in their attempts to meet the daily quota of digging four cubic metres of earth and carting it up a mound with a wheelbarrow. Many died of heart failure or tuberculosis. One detainee, Şerban Papacostea, who had been arrested in 1949 for the 'crime' of frequenting the French library in Bucharest, was fortunate in his experience at the

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21 Ibid., p. 38.

22 These have been studied by Doina Jela and the results of her research have been published in ibid.

23 Ibid., pp. 21, 148.

24 Communication from Dr Şerban Papacostea, 5 March 1995.

Capul Midia camp. Although suffering from a muscular disability, he was put to the daily task of digging but was unable to fulfil this norm. Expecting severe punishment, he was shielded by one of the guards, a Lieutenant Filip, who often helped the prisoners.[25]

The conditions under which the conscript soldiers were expected to work drove them to protest. Their low morale was the subject of a Securitate report dated 1 October 1949. They complained that they had no underwear, boots or trousers and this had led them to coin the slogan: *Armata democrată, desculţă şi dezbrăcată* (A people's army [is one which is] unshod and undressed). Insufficient food and space in the military canteens, unfinished billets, no washing facilities or soap added to their misery. They therefore washed in the Danube.[26] A report of the following day registered workers' dissatisfaction that they had not received their wages. Other reports signalled soldiers' complaints about their officers who struck them when they criticized the working conditions.

The true reasons for the abandonment of the canal project were never made public but the documents in the Constanţa archives reveal that bad planning played a major part. Work began long before the plans were completed and when they finally arrived, it was discovered that the original estimates in scale and cost of the construction were 50 per cent below the true costs. The geological studies made by Soviet specialists were found to be inaccurate, and the machinery imported from the Soviet Union was either in poor condition or did not work at all, since much of it was brought from the construction sites for the Volga–Don canal and those linking the White Sea and the Caspian Sea. Facing huge losses and robbed of a major propaganda victory, Gheorghiu-Dej sought scapegoats and the Securitate was ordered to organize show trials of workers who were accused of sabotage.

In the summer of 1952, Colonel Mişu Dulgheru, the head of the penal investigations directorate of the Securitate, was summoned to a meeting at the Ministry of the Interior. The principal persons present were the minister, Alexandru Drăghici, politburo member Iosif Chişinevski, Securitate generals Gheorghe Pintilie, Alexandru Nicolski and Vladimir Mazuru, a Soviet official, Agop Garabedian, and the Soviet security counsellors Aleksandr Sakharovskii, Tiganov and Maximov. Chişinevski ordered Dulgheru to organize a show trial of saboteurs at the canal and told him that 'comrade Gheorghiu-Dej wants this trial over quickly'.[27]

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25 Interview with Dr Şerban Papacostea, 14 April 1993.
26 *Cartea Albă a Securităţii*, II, Anexă, doc. 6, p. 13.
27 Ibid., doc. 31, p. 96.

The first of these trials opened on 29 August 1952 in the workers' club at Poarta Albă, some twenty kilometres west of Constanţa. Eight engineers and two mechanics were charged with carrying out premeditated acts designed to sabotage the construction of the canal. One of the charges was that they had neglected the maintenance of machinery, including locomotives, which had consequently broken down. The accused, having undergone long hours of interrogation, confessed to their 'crimes'. Thirty-one witnesses were produced for the prosecution and none for the defence. On 1 September, the military prosecutor, Major Ovidiu Teodorescu, read out the indictment. The proceedings had, he argued, 'removed the mask from the hideous face of the criminals in the dock; this small number of worthless individuals, the scum of society, aided by the British and Americans, those cavaliers of crime and the gun, those propagators of death and destruction, have shown here their true face'.[28]

After expressions of regret for their 'crimes', sentence was passed on the same day: five were sentenced to death and the other five to hard labour for periods ranging from twenty years to life. After the sentencing, the party newspaper reported that 'the working people greeted the just sentence with stormy applause'. Upon appeal, two of the death sentences were commuted to hard labour for life; the other three were upheld. On 14 October 1952, Nicolae Vasilescu, Aurel Rozei-Rozemberg and Dumitru Nichita were executed by firing-squad somewhere in the Dobrogea.

To compensate for the withdrawal from Romania of Soviet troops in July 1958, and to allay Soviet fears that it might demolish the underpinning of the Romanian regime, Gheorghiu-Dej approved the immediate introduction of stringent internal security measures in order to maintain the party's control. Amendments were made to the penal code which were even more draconian in their remit than the provisions for the death penalty enacted in 1949. Under Decree No. 318, of 21 July 1958, new crimes attracting the death penalty were defined. Article 9 of the code imposed the death penalty on any Romanians contacting foreigners to perpetrate an act 'which could cause the Romanian state to become involved in a declaration of neutrality or in the declaration of war'. This was clearly designed to deter those who might be tempted by the example of Imre Nagy in Hungary who, during the 1956 revolution, proclaimed his country's neutrality and thus, implicitly, its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. That temptation might prove even greater in the absence of a Soviet occupation force. The definition of 'economic sabotage' was enlarged to include theft and bribery, as was that of so-called 'hooligan' offences committed by juveniles. By the autumn of 1958, the first death sentences

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28 Jela, *Cazul Nichita Dumitru*, p. 193.

for the new crimes were applied. The application of these new measures, especially that of Decree No. 89 of 1958 which ordered the arrest of former members of the Iron Guard, led to a rapid rise in the numbers of political prisoners. If in 1955 there were, according to official figures, 6,406 persons imprisoned for offences against state security (this does not include those imprisoned without trial, for which official figures are not available), this number had fallen to 6,211 in January 1958 only to rise in December of that year to 10,125, and in January 1960 to 17,613.[29]

Gheorghiu-Dej's rift with Moscow, by striking a chord with the deep anti-Russian sentiment felt by most Romanians, attracted some support for his regime. Drawing on the inherent anti-Russian sentiment offered Gheorghiu-Dej a simple way of increasing the regime's popularity whilst at the same time putting a distance between himself and his Soviet masters. A series of anti-Russian measures introduced in 1963, which involved closing the Russian Institute in Bucharest, eliminating Russian as a compulsory school subject and replacing the Russian names of streets and public buildings with Romanian ones, signalled the wider autonomy from Moscow. With these changes in Romania's relationship with the Soviet Union came a notable shift in the severity of police rule.

The number of persons sentenced to imprisonment for crimes 'against state security' (that is, against the one-party state), stood in January 1960 at 17,613. The first notable decrease occurred between January and December 1962, when the number fell from 16,327 to 13,017, as many former Iron Guardists were freed. In the next twelve months, following pardons decreed by Gheorghiu-Dej in 1963 (Decrees No. 5 and 767), the figure fell to 9,333, and in 1964 (Decrees No. 176 of April and No. 411 of July) most of the remainder were released.[30] The amnesty marked the end of an era of political terror which had cost the lives of tens of thousands of Romanians, but the instrument of that terror, the Securitate, remained intact, unreformed and ubiquitous. The Securitate and its powerful and ambitious head, the Minister of the Interior Alexandru Drăghici, who had held office since May 1952, remained a constant reminder of the past and a threat to the future.

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29 *Cartea Albă a Securităţii*, III, p. 107, note 75.

30 According to official figures, in 1965 only 258 persons were arrested by the Securitate for 'actions hostile to the state'; in the following year, 294 were arrested, and in 1967, 312.

The Traditional Parties and the Romanian Elections of May 1990

Peter Siani-Davies

The Romanian elections of May 1990 were the first multi-party elections to be held in the country since November 1946. At these earlier elections the ruling Communist-dominated coalition, the Bloc of Democratic Parties, had competed in a bitter campaign with the three traditional parties of Romanian politics: the National Peasant Party (PNȚ), the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Romanian Social Democrat Party (PSD).[1] Held at a time when Romania was only just emerging from the chaos of the Second World War, the electoral campaign had been marked by widespread violence, and it is widely recognized that the actual result itself was totally fraudulent. One popular myth holds that the votes of the PNȚ and the Communist-dominated Bloc were merely reversed to give the latter 70 per cent of the vote and 349 of the 414 seats in the new Assembly.[2] In May 1990 a broad left-leaning ruling grouping, the National Salvation Front (FSN), which had only recently adopted the title of party, was faced by an opposition again headed by the three traditional parties. Just as in 1946, the latter went to the polls divided, unable to decide on a common candidate for the presidential polls or a joint list for the parliamentary elections, preferring instead to rely on an informal electoral non-aggression pact. The campaign was again marked by violence, although not on the same scale as in 1946, and one party, the FSN, won an overwhelming

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1   The expression 'traditional parties' is preferred here to the more frequently encountered 'historic parties' because the latter term has often carried pejorative overtones. As, for instance, prior to the 1946 elections, when Andrei Vyshinskii, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, is reputed to have disparagingly remarked that the historic parties could be more fittingly termed 'archaic parties' or perhaps even 'parties which had reached the archive': quoted in Public Record Office, FO 371/48550 R4409.

2   For the reversing of the result in the 1946 election see Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947*, Oxford, 1994, p. 533. For an alternative view see Stephen Fischer-Galați, *Twentieth-Century Romania*, New York, 2nd edn, 1991, pp. 104–6.

victory, gaining 263 of the 387 seats contested for the Chamber of Deputies. In 1990 there were also serious allegations of electoral fraud, not only from the opposition parties themselves but also from international observers who were allowed to monitor the poll. At first glance, the elections of May 1990, therefore, provoke a strong sense of *déjà vu* and some of the protagonists at the time did often seem to be fighting old battles anew. A tendency also existed among some outside observers to see 1990, if not as an extension of 1946, at least as a final battle against Communism.[3] This paper will contend that, although perceptions of the past did play a role in determining the events of 1990, overall the elections can best be evaluated in the context of the collapse of Communism in Romania.

Under Communism all three of the traditional parties had been suppressed and to all intents and purposes had disappeared from the public eye.[4] But within days of the downfall of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) regime, after more than forty years of enforced quiescence, the traditional parties had re-emerged phoenix-like to contest for power once more. Indeed, as early as 22 December, the very day of Ceauşescu's overthrow, five venerable survivors of the old pre-war National Peasant Party, including Corneliu Coposu, Ion Puiu and Ion Diaconescu, had met in Bucharest to reactivate the party and draw up a draft proclamation. This was printed later that night and distributed the next morning.[5] During the following days, the old party seems to have rapidly merged with two new groups, with similar political inclinations, which had appeared during the revolution: the predominantly youth-based Christian Democratic Party and the Christian National Peasant Party.[6] After these mergers the National

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3 An American member of an International Republican Institute team (affiliated to the Republican Party) when asked to define their mission candidly replied to Thomas Carothers 'We saw Romania as one last chance to stick it to the Soviet Union': see Thomas Carothers, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: The Case of Romania*, Washington, DC, 1996, p. 37.

4 Rumours of their activities occasionally reached the West: see, for instance, Vladimir Socor, 'Are the Old Political Parties Stirring in Romania?', *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/69 (Romania), 22 July 1985, pp. 1–7; Vladimir Socor, 'Three Romanians Reported to have Endorsed Joint Dissident Statement', *Radio Free Europe Research*, Romanian Situation Report/12, 6 November 1986, pp. 33–4; Vladimir Socor, 'National Peasant Group Silenced after Human Rights Initiative', *Radio Free Europe*, Romanian Situation Report/1, 6 February 1987, pp. 23–6

5 Interview with Corneliu Coposu, September 1993.

6 Judy Dempsey, 'Romanian Radicals Press Case for Electoral Law', *Financial Times*, 8 January 1990, p. 2; Vladimir Socor, 'Political Parties Emerging', *Radio*

Peasant Party added the epithet Christian Democratic to its historic name.[7] The party was formally re-established on 26 December 1989, at a meeting of more than 100 veterans and younger supporters, and a provisional leadership was elected with Corneliu Coposu at its head.[8] Reports from foreign correspondents at the time speak of scenes of chaos at Nicolae Titulescu's old villa, the party's first temporary headquarters, as elder party members mingled with crowds of youngsters. In these early days the ranks of the party were also boosted by the return of a number of influential exiles, the most important of whom was to be Ion Rațiu.[9] Within a month, the PNȚ was claiming a membership of 260,000 and, although the veracity of this figure may be questioned, its leaders at this time do seem to have believed that the party enjoyed considerable popular support.[10] When this was coupled with their natural obduracy and a conviction that the PNȚ was one of the ruling parties of Romania, it led them to adopt a self-confident posture in the talks then taking place with the FSN over the formation of the Provisional Council of National Unity (CPUN) and produced expectations of a high vote in the forthcoming elections.

Although in the first days after the overthrow of Ceaușescu the pace was largely set by the PNȚ, by the beginning of January former members of the other great traditional party of Romanian politics, the National Liberal Party, had also begun to reactivate their organization. Following two earlier meetings, one of which seems to have designated Mihnea Marmeliuc as chairman, a committee of initiative was registered on 6 January 1990. This had eleven members, with an executive of five headed by another returned exile, Radu Câmpeanu, who was made General

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Free Europe Research, 1:7, 16 February 1990, pp. 30–1, quoting from the NPP journal *Renașterea*.

7   For the sake of convenience and because of historic convention the abbreviation PNȚ has been retained in this work rather than the more cumbersome PNȚ–CD.

8   'Înființarea Partidul Național Țărănesc-Democrat și Creștin', *Adevărul*, 29 December 1989, p. 3.

9   Posted to the Romanian Embassy in Great Britain during the Second World War, Rațiu had remained in exile after the Communist take-over. Subsequently, he combined an extremely successful business career with a public role as one of the most trenchant critics of the PCR regime. See the brief biographical notes in Petre Datculescu and Klaus Liepelt (eds), *Renașterea unei Democrații: alegerile din România de la 20 mai 1990*, Bucharest, 1991, p. 197; and *Personalități publice-politice*, Bucharest, 1993, pp. 182–3.

10 'Romanian's Opposition Cautious about Offer to Share Power', *Financial Times*, 1 February 1990, p. 2.

Secretary of the party.[11] Although they were slightly less prominent than the PNȚ in the demonstrations on the streets, by the end of January the PNL were gathering considerable support in the opinion polls — in the elections they were actually to gain nearly three times as many votes as their PNȚ allies.

The third of the traditional parties, the Romanian Social Democrat Party, has historically played a relatively minor role in a country which, until the advent of Communism, had a limited industrial base and a largely non-unionized workforce. After the Second World War, the left-leaning Social Democrats were placed in a more ambiguous position *vis-à-vis* the PCR than the other traditional parties. Indeed, the largest segment of the party actually joined the Communists in the National Democratic Front, before eventually merging with them in May 1946. An important remnant, however, under the distinguished Social Democrat leader, C. Titel Petrescu, remained outside the Communist-dominated bloc and, instead, aligned themselves with the PNL and PNȚ. It was as heirs to this heritage that some veteran members of the party gathered in Bucharest after the fall of Ceaușescu to resurrect the party. Adrian Dimitriu, a pre-war minister, was declared honorary president and Sergiu Cunescu active president. The party was only to have a modest impact on the political stage in May 1990, however, and thus the comments below will be largely directed towards the more influential PNL and PNȚ.

By resurrecting parties from the pre-Communist past the Romanians were following a pattern seen throughout Eastern Europe in the years after 1989. For instance, within South-Eastern Europe both the Croatian Peasant Party and the Democratic Party in Serbia have reappeared as prominent opposition groupings. In Hungary the Independent Smallholders Party even won a place in the Antall Government after the 1990 elections, but since these heady days the party has declined in importance and the historic parties that have reappeared have in general had a patchy electoral record. By and large, they have been excluded from power in favour of either the heirs of the Communists or other newer political groupings. The Romanian experience, where the traditional parties immediately became the main focus of opposition to the FSN and where the PNȚ and a branch of the PNL are now leading parties in the new post-November 1996

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11 Along with many other PNL leaders, Câmpeanu had been arrested by the Communists in 1947. After his release in 1956 he had worked first as a labourer and then in positions of greater responsibility at the Bucharest Roads and Bridges Department. He obtained political asylum in France in 1973. See the brief biographical notes in Datculescu and Liepelt (eds.), *Renașterea unei Democrații*, p. 196, and *Personalități publice-politice*, p. 29.

coalition government, is something of an exception to the general rule. In looking for an explanation for this several factors would seem to play a role.

First, both the PNL and the PNŢ had particularly strong identities rooted in a history that had seen both closely aligned with state-building in Romania. The PNL had played a leading role in Romanian politics ever since its foundation in 1875 and the PNŢ had its roots in the old Romanian National Party of Transylvania. The strength of these traditions was sufficient to strike an evocative chord within a section of the electorate in 1990. Some members even seemed to have joined the resurrected parties, not so much out of any ideological conviction, but because of past links — if not on their own part, then on the part of their parents. Indeed, it might be said that for some membership was almost a means of expunging the past and honouring the memory of their forebears. Through their own careers the new leaders of the traditional parties underlined this sense of continuity. Radu Câmpeanu, the first post-revolution Liberal leader, was the son of a PNL Prefect of Dâmboviţa and had been a prominent 'Young Liberal' before the war, while Corneliu Coposu, the undisputed leader of the PNŢ until his death, had been a personal secretary of Iuliu Maniu, the party's famous leader in the pre-Communist period. This background gave Coposu an unchallenged legitimacy as leader of his party despite his age and this was to be an important factor in maintaining the cohesion of the PNŢ, immunizing it from the suicidal fracturing of other groups such as the Liberals.[12] Although it may have helped the cause of party unity, however, his advanced age, and that of many other senior leaders, was not without electoral cost. It led to jibes about a gerontocracy which did not aid the party's cause in what is, fundamentally, a youthful society.

The second factor which led to the traditional parties' becoming the main focus of opposition in 1990 was the absence of any other credible alternatives to the FSN during the first months after the revolution. To a large extent this was due to the degree of coercion exerted by the Ceauşescu regime, which had effectively prevented the growth of any opposition movement that might have possibly sought the mantle of leadership after the revolution. Thus, although a large number of other political parties did rapidly emerge — seventy-five stood in the elections — the vast majority were little more than hollow shells that served as platforms for their often vociferous spokesmen. The vagueness of their policies and a lack of knowledge about their past activities meant that the Romanian public in general were to remain deeply suspicious of these

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12 For a profile of Coposu see Tom Gallagher, 'Old Man of Romanian Politics', *Transition*, 12 May 1995, pp. 9–11.

'unknowns' who wished to proclaim themselves as leaders. This left the political spotlight firmly fixed on the three more recognizable political entities of the traditional parties.

Thirdly, amongst some of the population — and especially the young people who had been prominent on the streets during the revolution — the FSN rapidly came to be seen as little more than a neo-Communist organization. Disenchanted, these revolutionaries began to turn towards the traditional parties which, with their impeccable anti-Communist credentials, seemed better to embody the 'true' spirit of the revolution. This was particularly true of the PNŢ which, after the Second World War, had refused all blandishments to participate in the 'bogus coalition' of Petru Groza and had been at the heart of the resistance to the Communist take-over. As a consequence, following the arrest of Iuliu Maniu and other senior members in 1947, it had been officially dissolved and banned.[13] This tradition of resolute anti-Communism and refusal to compromise was fully embraced by the 'new' leaders of the party, many of the more elderly of whom, like Coposu, had endured long terms in jail and suffered great persecution during the preceding forty years. Their intransigence was also buoyed by the myth that the party had been the real victor of the 1946 election, only to be robbed of power when the Communists reversed the vote.[14] This not only produced a belief that the party had a legitimate right to accede to power, once the Communist regime fell, but it also cast the last forty years of Romanian history as an illegal and disastrous interregnum, the malign effects of which could only be expunged by the return of a PNŢ government.

This anti-Communist position, however, whilst proving undeniably popular with the more implacable foes of the past regime, was also something of a double-edged sword. For most Romanians everyday existence under Communism had entailed some degree of compromise, however small this might have been, and this made few so free of sin as to be able to cast the first stone. The edge was also taken off the PNŢ's anti-Communist rhetoric — especially as regards its attempts to tar its FSN opponents — by the fact that within Romania the dominant public perception of the previous regime was that it had been Ceauşescu's personal dictatorship; the view that it was a Communist dictatorship appears to have been only secondary. For many the death of Ceauşescu

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13 'Salami tactics' only netted the relatively insignificant Anton Alexandrescu, whilst the only dissident voice of any stature within the party, Dr Lupu, continued to keep his own council. Maniu was later to die in jail.

14 For the reversing of the result in the 1946 election see Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947*, p. 533.

could be equated with the death of the previous regime, and this perception was encouraged by the leaders of the Front, many of whom were former Communists. By building on this belief and emphasizing their performance during the revolution, they were able to slough off the stigma of their Communist past in the eyes of most of the population. The new leadership was also helped in this task by the fact that, by the time of the elections, the chief concerns of the population had already shifted away from fears of a return of Communism to more everyday issues, such as general living standards and the increasing threat of unemployment.

The position of the PNL, in keeping with the party's traditions, was never quite so uncompromising as that of its PNŢ ally. Prior to the Communist take-over it had been in office for much of Romania's history as an independent state, breeding an expectation of power and a feeling that it was the natural party of government. This belief appears to have often prompted a greater readiness to compromise and participate in governments of various political hues ó an impulse which can most charitably be interpreted as a desire to serve the nation. The most recent and significant example of this practice was the participation of Gheorghe Tătărescu in the post-war Communist-dominated Groza government. These natural tendencies towards compromise may have been reinforced in 1990 by the fact that the party had fared badly in the 1946 elections — older members can remember Brătianu, the leader of the party, being ashen-faced when he heard the result — and so had possessed no myth of victory to sustain itself during the long years of Communism. During this time, the PNL disappeared as a political entity, with many of its members suffering as much as those of the PNŢ. But, unlike the PNŢ, the PNL was never formally dissolved and banned. Instead, it appears to have just 'faded away', leaving the party in a far more ambiguous position *vis-à-vis* the Communist past than the PNŢ. These factors all combined to give the PNL in 1990 a slightly less belligerently anti-Communist air than the PNŢ. Radu Câmpeanu, in particular, seems to have favoured the idea that the party should occupy a distinct position in the centre of Romanian politics between the former Communists of the FSN and the PNŢ. The PNL's tradition of alliance-building coincided well with the initial desire of the Front to build the broadest of coalitions and, shortly after the revolution, a number of party members entered the new administration. Most prominently, Mihnea Marmeliuc became Minister for Labour and Social Security, but Nicolae Grigorescu was installed as an advisor to the Prime Minister and Câmpeanu himself was later to be one of the Front's nominees for the Executive Bureau of the Provisional Council of National

Unity (CPUN).[15] Conspicuously, this gesture of support was not extended to the PNȚ nominee, Ion Diaconescu.

Contradictions, however, were inherent in the PNL's attempt to maintain an intermediary position within the political spectrum. Even as it was building these often personal links with the National Salvation Front, the PNL was also joining the PNȚ and the Social Democratic Party (PSD) in organizing a series of demonstrations in Bucharest and other major cities to protest at the Front's decision to participate in the forthcoming elections. These demonstrations gathered substantial public support and at first it did seem that this recourse to the politics of the streets would pay dividends, since shortly afterwards the Front announced the formation of the CPUN and with it a place for the traditional parties within the structure of power. At the same time, however, the Front also took measures to counter the demonstrations as, following the example of the previous regime, it began to mobilize large numbers of worker auxiliaries in support of its own cause. In a day of angry violence, on 29 January, these auxiliaries attacked the headquarters of both the PNL and the PNȚ in Bucharest, with Coposu only escaping from an intimidating situation when the Prime Minister, Petre Roman, arrived to escort him personally from the scene in an armoured personnel carrier.[16] This day heralded the onset of a period of political violence that was to stretch up to the May elections and beyond, as rival supporters of the regime and the opposition transformed the streets and squares of Bucharest and other cities into the main competitive political arena.

Against this backdrop of growing instability, the FSN, although it undoubtedly enjoyed substantial advantages, entered the election campaign looking increasingly vulnerable. In contrast, the traditional parties, starting from a much lower base, seemed to be growing in strength, with one opinion poll in March suggesting that the Liberals might gain 24 per cent of the vote. In some quarters there was even talk of the possibility of a coalition government, with 15 per cent of the population apparently

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15 But note the disclaimer from the PNL stating that Marmeliuc and Grigorescu took office in a personal capacity and not as representatives of the party: *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* (hereafter *BBC*), EE/0675, B/7-8:18, 30 January 1990, Bucharest Radio, 20.00 GMT, 27 January 1990.

16 Celestin Bohlen, 'To an Old Party Chief, the Menace is Familiar', *New York Times*, 30 January 1990, p. A.12 (Bohlen seems to have been inside the PNȚ headquarters at the time); Nicholas Kotch, 'Opposition Chiefs Flee Iliescu Supporters', *Independent*, 30 January 1990, p. 1; Victor Mallet, 'Bucharest Mob Attacks Opposition', *Financial Times*, 30 January 1990, p. 2; Christopher Walker, 'Mob Attacks Opposition in Bucharest', *The Times*, 30 January 1990, p. 9; *BBC*, EE/0676, B/7:6, 31 January 1990, Bucharest Radio, 16.00 GMT, 29 January 1990.

believing that the PNL would win the largest share of the vote.[17] Yet, by the beginning of May, this figure had slumped to just 7 per cent, as only the PNL's most stalwart supporters remained optimistic regarding the party's electoral chances.

An examination of the 1990 election is not simply a question of charting the abject failure of the traditional parties to make any impact on the Romanian electorate after the fall of Communism. It is also necessary to examine why, after a relatively promising opening to the campaign, they fared so badly in the actual polls. Indeed, the performance of the opposition presidential candidates and parties was not just disappointing but, in many instances, downright disastrous. The PNȚ, for example, polled just 2.56 per cent of the national vote for the Chamber of Deputies (Table 1). Even these poor results, however, were not without some crumb of comfort for the traditional parties. A closer analysis of the results reveals that in terms of both the geographic distribution of the vote and the constituency, the traditional parties were laying the foundations for their future electoral success even at this early stage of post-Communist politics.

If the votes of the two presidential candidates from the traditional parties are added together to give an aggregate of the anti-Iliescu vote — an exercise which is not without validity given the subsequent coalition building between the PNL and PNȚ — the outline of the geographical division that has marked post-Communist Romania is revealed for the first time. In every county in the Banat, Crişana, Transylvania and the Dobrogea, Câmpeanu (PNL) and Rațiu (PNȚ) gained a combined figure of 10 per cent or more of the vote. In Moldavia, Muntenia and Oltenia they fared far worse, generally gaining less than 10 per cent. The only exceptions to this rule were the urban centre of Bucharest and the relatively developed county of Prahova, along an axis between the capital and Transylvania. The aggregate vote of the traditional party presidential candidates was highest in the Hungarian dominated areas of Harghita (80.43 per cent) and Covasna (67.89 per cent), but they also gathered a strong vote in Timiş (29.85 per cent) and Bucharest (23.28 per cent). Outside these areas they scored far less well, with the lowest collective vote being the 3.8 per cent recorded in Botoşani in the far north-west of the country. The striking feature about this electoral map is that it is

17 Datculescu and Liepelt (eds), *Renaşterea unei Democrații*, p. 83. For a less optimistic poll see Pavel Câmpeanu, Adriadna Combes and Mihnea Berindei, *România înainte şi după 20 mai*, Bucharest, 1991, p. 35. For opinions about which party will do best see Datculescu and Liepelt (eds), *Renaşterea unei Democrații*, pp. 91–2, and for talk about a coalition government see Daniel N. Nelson, 'Romania', *Electoral Studies*, 9, 1990, 4, p. 356.

Table 1: Results of the 20 May 1990 elections.

Presidential	% of Vote	Total Vote	Seats
Ion Iliescu (FSN)	85.1	12,232,498	—
Radu Câmpeanu (PNL)	10.2	1,529,188	—
Ion Rațiu (PNȚ–CD)	4.3	617,007	—

Senate			
FSN	67.01	9,353,006	92
UDMR	7.20	1,004,353	12
PNL	7.06	985,094	9
PNȚ–CD	2.15	348,687	1
MER	2.50	341,478	1
AUR	2.45	300,473	2
PER	1.38	192,574	1
Independent			1

Chamber of Deputies			
FSN	66.3	9,089,659	263
UDMR	7.2	991,601	29
PNL	6.41	879,290	29
MER	2.62	358,864	12
PNȚ–CD	2.56	351,357	12
AUR	2.12	290,875	9
PDAR	1.83	250,403	9
PER	1.69	232,212	8
PSDR	1.12	143,393	5
PSD	0.53	‡	2
GDC	0.48	‡	2
PDM	0.38	‡	1
PLE	0.34	‡	1
PRNR	0.31	‡	1
PTLDR	0.31	‡	1
FDG	0.28	‡	1
UL 'Brătianu'	0.26	‡	1
UDRR	0.21	‡	1

Key
‡ = less than 100,000 votes.

FSN=National Salvation Front, UDMR=Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania, PNL=National Liberal Party, PNȚ=National Peasant Party–Christian Democratic, MER=Romanian Ecological Movement, AUR=Alliance for Romanian Unity, PDAR=Romanian Democratic Agrarian Party, PER=Romanian Ecological Party, PDSR=Romanian Socialist Democratic Party, PDS=(Romanian) Social Democratic Party, GDC=Centre Democratic Group, PDM=Democratic Labour Party, PLE=Free Exchange Party, PRNR=Party of Romanian National Reconstruction, PTLDR=Romanian Free Democratic Youth Party, FDG=Germans' Democratic Forum, UL 'Brătianu'=Brătianu Liberal Union, UDRR=Democratic Union of Romanies in Romania.

Table 2: Distribution of presidential votes by region.

Region	Voters (as % of whole country)	Contribution of each region in % of vote for:		
		Ion Iliescu	Radu Câmpeanu	Ion Raţiu
Banat	7	6	11	11
Crişana	7	6	12	7
Dobrogea	5	5	2	4
Moldova	20	23	8	11
Muntenia	20	22	8	12
Oltenia	11	12	5	6
Transylvania	20	17	43	22
Bucharest	10	9	11	27
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Petre Datculescu and Klaus Liepelt (eds), *Renaşterea unei Democraţii: Alegerile din România de la 20 mai 1990*, Bucharest, 1991, p. 115.

precisely in those counties where the traditional party candidates achieved over 10 per cent of the vote in 1990 that Emil Constantinescu gained a higher proportion of the vote than Ion Iliescu in the 1996 elections.

If the votes for the three presidential candidates are broken down by region, it can clearly be seen that Câmpeanu gained most of his votes in Transylvania (see Table 2). This was largely because he received the support of the majority of the Hungarian community of Romania. Exit-poll evidence suggests that 63 per cent of Hungarians voted for Câmpeanu, 20 per cent for Iliescu and 7 per cent for Raţiu.[18] Outside the Hungarian areas, although Câmpeanu gained slightly more votes than Raţiu in every county, the difference between the two was usually not so striking.[19] For instance, in Bucharest they each gained approximately 11 per cent of the vote.

If the support the candidates of the traditional parties received is broken down by age and profession, the first signs of another pattern which was to lead to later victories is also discernible (see Table 3). Exit-poll findings show a slight preference for the candidates of the traditional parties amongst young voters (although this seems to have sharply diminished during the actual campaign) and older voters, who presumably identified with the pre-Communist traditions of the parties. A general picture is also revealed of support for the traditional parties rising with levels of education. Proportionally they seem to have gained their highest vote from professional groups and from students. Their lowest support was

18 Datculescu and Liepelt (eds), *Renaşterea unei Democraţii*, p. 140.
19 Ibid., pp. 113–14

Table 3: Voting patterns within key groups

Group	Ion Iliescu	Radu Câmpeanu	Ion Raţiu
Male electors	81	13	6
Female electors	85	10	5
Aged 18–34	80	14	6
Aged 35–64	86	9	5
Aged 65+	83	10	6
Workers	87	10	3
Skilled staff	84	11	5
Professionals[a]	71	17	12
Collective Farm Workers	94	4	2
Private Peasants	85	9	6
Pensioners	84	10	5
Students	66	21	13

[a] Defined as holder of a higher degree.
Source: Petre Datculescu and Klaus Liepelt (eds), *Renaşterea unei Democraţii: Alegerile din România de la 20 mai 1990*, Bucharest, 1991, pp. 134–8.

from collective-farm workers. Amongst this group fears of the effect of the introduction of a market economy on their livelihood would have provided ready ammunition for local FSN officials. Similar concerns were shared by the workers, who also solidly backed Iliescu and the Front, but within the more urban and industrialized counties with better-developed service industries there were also the first signs of a trend which was to become far more important in subsequent elections. Already in 1990 these were beginning to show greater support for the opposition than the more heavily agricultural counties which leaned even further towards the FSN.[20]

In searching for the reason for their failure in the elections, the losing presidential candidates and the parties they represented were quick to point an incriminating finger at an alleged FSN connivance in widespread voting irregularities.[21] In making these allegations they received some moral support from a number of foreign observer groups who were also critical of the election process.[22] Suggestions were made that ballot boxes

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20 Ibid., p. 117
21 See, for instance, *BBC*, EE/0775, B/11, 28 May 1990, Bucharest Radio, 13.00 GMT, 24 May 1990; *BBC*, EE/0770, C/12, 22 May 1990, Rompres, 22.25 GMT, 20 May 1990; *BBC*, EE/0771, C1/2, 23 May 1990, 15.00 GMT, 21 May 1990.
22 A US IRI–NDI joint mission suggested that the elections had been flawed and the US State Department later pointed to 'serious distortions': see *BBC*, EE/0771, C1/1, 23 May 1990, Rompres, 18.07 GMT, 21 May 1990; Nora Boutsany, 'State Department Says Elections in Romania Were Tainted', *Washington Post*, 26 May

had been stuffed and that the extension of polling by one hour, ostensibly because long queues of people were still waiting to vote, had merely been a mechanism to facilitate fraud. Lingering doubts also remained over the actual number of electors. This was officially given as 17,200,722, a figure which the opposition suggested was an extremely large percentage of a total population which numbered 23,206,720. Eventually, 14,826,616 of these electors were to cast their vote in the presidential poll giving (on the basis of the official figures) an exceptionally high turnout of 86.2 per cent. These figures raised some suspicions, and these tended to be centred on the special registration lists which allowed electors to vote in any polling station in the country merely on production of an ID card, even if they were not on the electoral list. Such an open voting procedure, which was partly justified because of the incompleteness of the Ceauşescu-era registration lists, seems to have received wide usage. Theoretically this procedure could have permitted widespread double-voting, although little firm evidence seems to have been produced of such abuses.

A large number of votes were also ruled as invalid: 3.02 per cent in the presidential poll, 5.85 per cent in the election for the Senate and 7.54 per cent, or 1,117,753 votes, for the Chamber of Deputies. In subsequent elections the opposition was to charge that the invalidation of ballot papers had occurred at their expense. In this first poll after the revolution, however, the very complexity of the ballot papers, which for the Chamber of Deputies were between ten and twenty-five pages long, meant that such a rate of nullification might not have been so extraordinary.[23] Despite all the suspicions of widespread irregularities, actual evidence of fraud was hard to gather. The totally overwhelming nature of the victory of Iliescu and the FSN made it difficult for the opposition to argue that it had been robbed of victory, and they were perhaps aware of this when they began to speak in more general terms of an unspecified 'moral fraud'.[24] It seems clear that 1990 was not the same as 1946. Most independent observers concluded that, although the elections were marked by a high number of irregularities, they did broadly conform to the preferences of the Romanian people. Significantly, this view also seems to have been shared by the voters of Romania, with only 8 per cent in a post-election opinion poll

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1990. See also the views of an Austrian observer in *BBC*, EE/0771, C1/1, 23 May 1990, Vienna Radio, 05.00 GMT, 21 May 1990.

23 It is interesting to note that this rate of invalidation is far lower than that recorded in the more fiercely contested 1992 elections and about the same as that registered in 1996, when the opposition won both the parliamentary and presidential polls. In 1992 the rate of invalidation for the Chamber of Deputies was 12.73 per cent and in 1996 it was 6.38 per cent.

24 Nelson, 'Romania', p. 361.

stating that they considered the elections to have been conducted in an incorrect fashion — a figure far lower than the 17.5 per cent who said the result was not as they wished.[25] The fact that the vast majority of the Romanian electorate considered the vote to have been gathered by fair means, as much as the Front's success in the polls themselves, legitimized the new regime. This prevented the population as a whole from questioning the FSN's right to rule, even after the miners' rampage through Bucharest in June 1990.

Whilst the vote itself can broadly be said to have reflected the preferences of the Romanian people, there is little doubt that the preceding electoral campaign was marked by unacceptable levels of violence and intimidation. Not only was this the dominant image projected in the Western media but, inside Romania, most of the electorate also seems to have felt that the campaign was unfolding in an atmosphere of social tension — although to a certain extent this perception seems to have been influenced more by the inter-ethnic disturbances in Târgu Mureş in March 1990 than by the election campaign itself.[26] Prior to the elections, scores of incidents were reported, with Coposu claiming that during this period two PNŢ members were killed, 113 injured and 162 party offices attacked. Both the opposition presidential candidates were involved in unpleasant affrays, with Radu Câmpeanu stating that one attack on him in Brăila was a clear 'assassination attempt'.[27] The opposition alleged that these attacks received official sanction, but the extent to which the FSN leadership was involved is far from clear. Daniel Nelson has suggested that the leadership of the FSN did not support the violence and that they were, on the contrary, concerned that they could not track down the culprits.[28] Dennis Deletant also broadly concurred with this point of view and suggested that the localized and largely spontaneous intimidation was in part caused by the failure of Front activists to see the opposition as 'adversaries rather than enemies'.[29] This is undoubtedly true but it can nevertheless be argued that the flames of intolerance were at least partially fanned by the official media and the Front press. The FSN had come increasingly to adopt an

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25 Câmpeanu, Combes and Berindei, *România înainte şi după 20 mai*, p. 58. It is interesting to note that this is far below the 34 per cent of voters who did not vote for the FSN, but above the 14.9 per cent who did not vote for Iliescu.

26 Datculescu and Liepelt (eds), *Renaşterea unei Democraţii*, p. 54; Câmpeanu, Combes and Berindei, *România înainte şi după 20 mai*, pp. 40–1, 55.

27 Dan Ionescu, 'Violence and Calumny in the Election Campaign', *Report on Eastern Europe*, 25 May 1990, pp. 37–42.

28 Nelson , 'Romania', p. 357.

29 Dennis Deletant, 'The Romanian Elections of May 1990', *Representation*, 29, 1990, 108, p. 23.

exclusionist stance after the breakdown of the initial post-Ceauşescu revolutionary coalition. It still claimed to be the embodiment of the revolution and, therefore, the voice and will of 'the people', but from being the whole population who rose against Ceauşescu, 'the people' were now subtly redefined within more selective bounds. The theme was fully enunciated by Iliescu in a resounding and passionate speech to Front supporters on the 29 January 1990. In this he declared:

> The Front has gained the trust of the people through everything it has proposed to do in order to promote a true democracy, the people's democracy! [...] The Front holds nothing more sacred than serving the interests of the Romanian people! [...] Our force lies only in the people and the unity of the people around the Front is our guarantee of victory![30]

By Iliescu's definition, 'the people' had thus become those who unified around the Front, leaving those who chose to escape its embrace beyond the political pale, and as the Front leader warned, 'Anybody who detaches himself from the people will represent nothing in this country'.[31]

Such an exclusionist viewpoint clearly left little room for opposition to the Front in the forthcoming elections, but a considerable proportion of the electorate also came to share this view, largely because it articulated some of the more dominant strands within Romanian political culture. Historical experience, nationalism, the ideals of the village and Orthodox preaching on conformism and universality all emphasized above everything else the importance of preserving national unity.[32] As the ultimate source of authority, Iliescu and the Front were able to present themselves as the guarantors of this national unity, allowing them to brand any of those who opposed them as forces antipathetic to social harmony. The strength of the public's aversion to social discord was fully visible in post-revolutionary opinion polls which placed absenteeism from work and the disruptive effect of too many demonstrations high on the list of public concerns.[33] In particular, the beginning of the infamous University Square demonstration, which was eventually to be ended brutally by the miners in June, seems to have had considerable public impact. Iliescu christened the occupiers of the square *golani* (hooligans) and, whilst the demonstrators afterwards bore this name with pride, his description appears to have struck a chord with the public at large, who increasingly associated the young protesters

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30 *BBC*, EE/0676, B/5-6:5, 31 January 1990, Bucharest Radio, 14.00 GMT, 29 January 1990.

31 Ibid.

32 Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics and Society; Political Stagnation and Simulated Change*, London, 1985, pp. 132–5

33 Câmpeanu, Combes and Berindei, *România înainte şi după 20 mai*, p. 21.

with the opposition parties, seeing both as a serious threat to the future stability of Romania.[34]

Indeed, in 1990 a sizeable proportion of the public, lacking in experience of democratic practices and unaccustomed to debate and political competition, seems to have seen the very existence of a multi-party system as a threat to political stability. In a pre-election opinion poll, 40 per cent of the population stated that they considered that the chief threat to the stability of Romania came from the excessive number of political parties (fifty at that time). This yearning for a return to the organic solidarity of the revolution may also explain the paradox that at the same time as they were giving an overwhelming electoral vote to the Front, an opinion poll suggested that the vast majority of the population (82 per cent) wished to see a coalition government established. Indeed, instead of a competitive election, it would appear that much of the population seem to have viewed the May vote as a referendum on the performance of the Front, which had been able to guarantee its success effectively through an early avalanche of decrees rectifying the worst abuses of the Ceauşescu years. There also seems little doubt that Iliescu was a genuinely popular figure. On the evidence of the IRSOP/INFAS exit poll, he seems to have received the votes of 30 per cent of those who voted for the PNL in the parliamentary election and even the votes of 28 per cent of PNŢ supporters.[35]

The traditional parties were also placed at a considerable disadvantage by the control exerted by the Front over the machinery of state and the official media. Radio and television, in particular, were instrumental in securing the successful diffusion of the regime's message, especially in rural areas. The traditional parties, along with all the other political groupings, were not entirely excluded from the official media. Each party was able to get a short presentation on policy read on television, but, as one observer noted, these offered little more than 'cloudy visions of Romania's past ills and future prospects'.[36] A programme called 'Studio Electoral' also allowed the expression of divergent views. All the presidential candidates also participated in a mammoth televised debate lasting two hours forty-five minutes. This seems to have been watched by an astonishing 96 per cent of those with access to a television. Although it was described by one Western commentator as 'a stilted occasion without

34 For the importance of the *golani* as an election issue, see Tom Gallagher, 'Romania: The Disputed Election of 1990', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 44, 1991, 1, pp. 85, 91, and the opinion of a French election observer in *BBC*, EE/0771, C1/2, 23 May 1990, Rompres, 14.55 GMT, 21 May 1990.

35 On the genuine popularity of Iliescu, see Gallagher, 'Romania', p. 87.

36 Nelson, 'Romania', p. 359.

genuine debate about policy options', an opinion poll revealed that 90 per cent of Romanians, unaccustomed to such debates, seem to have viewed it positively.[37] There is also some evidence that it had an impact on floating voters, with both Iliescu and Raţiu recording slight gains after their performance and Câmpeanu a small loss.

Arguably the greatest impact television had on the electoral campaign, however, stemmed from the time of the overthrow of Ceauşescu, when it was largely responsible for turning some of the key actors, such as Iliescu and Roman, into 'icons of the revolution'. Through regular appearance on the screen, then and afterwards, they had been able to project their authority both as guardians of the national consensus and as competent technocrats able to resolve Romania's many problems. They had gained the trust of the nation and in opinion polls at the time this was rated the single most important factor amongst the electorate when they came to decide for whom they would cast their vote.[38] In opinion polls measuring ratings of public trust and confidence, Iliescu constantly gained a figure over 70 per cent, with Petre Roman only slightly lower. In sharp contrast, the ratings of leading members of the opposition, such as Raţiu, Coposu and Cunescu, were usually in single figures or, at best, in the low teens. Radu Câmpeanu did fare slightly better, scoring a figure over 30 per cent in an opinion poll, but he was noticeably unable to translate this into votes at the election, when he received only 10.64 per cent of the presidential poll, and, as already noted, this was mainly because he was the beneficiary of much of the ethnic Hungarian vote. It seems possible that Câmpeanu's initial higher trust rating was based on his apparent willingness to co-operate with the FSN regime. Certainly, once he moved into a more adversarial posture prior to the elections, poll evidence seems to suggest that his trust rating collapsed.

Generally, although they may have had high visibility in the outside world, these opponents of Communism, along with dissidents such as Doina Cornea and Radu Filipescu, did not gain the trust of the people of Romania. They were thus not in a position to translate their moral standing into political capital. Indeed, it might even be extrapolated from the low trust ratings received by many dissidents that the much remarked absence of dissidence in Ceauşescu's Romania may partly stem not from the fact that intellectuals were not prepared to speak out but from the failure of the

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37 Gallagher, 'Romania', p. 89

38 Câmpeanu, Combes and Berindei, *România înainte şi după 20 mai*, p. 70. The second most important factor was an understanding of the problems of the people, an attribute for which neither Raţiu's nor Câmpeanu's years of exile rendered them particularly suited.

general population to respond to their actions due to a political culture which traditionally placed a high value on deference and the preservation of national consensus.

The low levels of trust the public had in the leaders of the traditional parties, as reflected in the opinion polls, was not just due to the fact that the Front was able to suggest that the opposition was undermining the existing national consensus. Equally important was the fact that, in the traditions of Romanian political discourse, the regime was able to brand their leadership as agents of foreign influence and suggest that they displayed a lack of patriotism. At the simplest level, this involved little more than reinforcing crude stereotypes from the Communist past and playing on the fear of change, with often vicious caricatures of the traditional parties — both the PNL and the PNȚ were frequently associated with the monarchy and grasping capitalists. At a Front mass meeting on 28 January, one speaker explicitly linked the traditional parties with the familiar spectre of foreign capitalism, joining this in a rather strange juxtaposition with the recently deceased Communism, when he announced 'we don't want exploitation or Communism and we don't want exploitation from abroad'.[39] The foreign contacts of many of the leaders of the traditional parties — particularly Câmpeanu's and Rațiu's long years spent in exile — were ruthlessly played upon to try and delegitimate their position within the domestic political arena. During the same meeting it was mischievously charged that the leaders of the traditional parties had never suffered the hunger and cold of the Ceaușescu years, and these sentiments were later echoed in the Front slogan 'While we were suffering here under Ceaușescu, they had coffee and croissants in Paris!'.[40]

Aside from these wider perceptions, other more practical factors also explain the relative failure of the traditional parties in the 1990 election. Not only were they unable to draw upon the advantages of power, but their

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39 I. Stefan, C. Varvara, Gheorghe Ioniță and A. Papadiuc, 'Două zile care au zguduit țara, duminică, 28 ianuarie: multe neliniști și întrebări al căror răspuns nu se va găsi, totuși, în piață', *Adevărul*, 30 January 1990, pp. 1, 3.

40 Michael Shafir, 'Schöpflinian Realism and Romanian Reality', *Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:7, 15 February 1991, p. 35; and for a specific rebuttal by Coposu see Mihai Rădulescu, *Tragedia lui Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu: convorbiri cu omul politic Corneliu Coposu*, Bucharest, 1992, p. 5. The sentiments of the time were graphically and crudely shown in a front page cartoon in *Adevărul* of 28 January 1990. In this, a blindfolded 'ordinary' citizen surrounded by caricatures of the other parties (the PNL is represented in crown and ermine, the ecologists as innocent babies and the PNȚ as old peasants and grasping capitalists) is seen desperately searching for the isolated and gagged figure of the Front (dressed in the suit of a technocrat).

electoral campaigns were seriously under-funded, largely because the Front had passed a law preventing political parties from tapping the fortunes of exiles.[41] Lack of funding and resources meant that organizationally the traditional parties tended to be weak, especially in the countryside, where they were often unable to find sufficient representatives to sit on the polling station committees. Much depended on the integrity of these committees, which were not only in charge of the voting process but also counted the ballots. They were also responsible, in the first instance, for adjudicating any matters of dispute. The electoral law stipulated that the president and deputy president of each committee should be a neutral non-party figure, with the remaining committee members being drawn from the various political parties. With representatives of the opposition either not available or, so it seems, sometimes intimidated from attending the polls, especially in rural areas, the committees appear to have been largely left in the hands of FSN supporters.[42] In such circumstances, even if the committee resisted the temptation to actually doctor the ballot, they were still in a strong position to influence what was almost certainly a willing electorate in the direction of the FSN. In doing so, both officials and electors were merely following the practices acquired during the previous forty years of Communist rule.

The consequences of the failure of the traditional parties in the May 1990 election were considerable. They had sought to compete with the Front, but their stance had evoked little public sympathy and both in the ballot box and on the streets they had been worsted by their opponents. With the traditional parties in disarray, other groupings were drawn into the political arena to oppose the FSN, the most important being the Civic Alliance grouping, which sought to be a voice for Romania's intellectuals. The response of the PNL and PNȚ to these challenges was to determine their immediate political futures. The PNȚ, under the leadership of Corneliu Coposu, regrouped and began a process of coalition-building, which led to the party becoming the driving force behind the Democratic Convention of Romania, one of the dominant forces within Romanian politics. In contrast, for the PNL the 1990 elections were for a long time the high-water mark of their post-Communist fortunes. Afterwards the party plunged into a suicidal frenzy of schisms which saw it virtually

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41 Gallagher, 'Romania', p. 84.
42 This was what Dennis Deletant found around Pitești: see Deletant, 'Romanian Elections' (see note 29 above), p. 24. See also the comments of an Austrian observer reproduced in *BBC*, EE/0771, C1/1, 23 May 1990, Vienna Radio, 05.00 GMT, 21 May 1990.

wiped off the electoral map in the 1992 elections.[43] The root cause of the divisions amongst the liberals has often been ascribed to personality and, indeed, too often the vanity of old men out of touch with younger generations seems to have been the spur. Internal debates over the exact position the party should occupy in the political spectrum and, particularly, what posture it should adopt towards both the FSN and the PNȚ also played a part. Underlying all these disputes, however, there were also a number of more fundamental fault-lines which were to tear the party apart.[44]

First, a division can be traced between those liberals who had remained in Romania during the Communist period and those who had fled the country and gone into exile, mostly in France. Too much should not be made of this divide but, nevertheless, two distinct lines of descent can be traced. In particular, those who returned to Romania after December 1989, even if they had earlier served jail sentences under the Communists, lacked the moral authority of those who had remained in the country throughout the whole period. This especially applied in the case of Câmpeanu, who, although he had served many years in jail alongside Coposu, had left for exile in France in 1973. This past, although it conferred on him considerable status amongst the PNL, also meant that his position was never as absolute or as unchallenged as Coposu's in the PNȚ. When this was allied to Câmpeanu's more excitable and contradictory character, it made not only his own position vulnerable within the party but also, given the tendency in Romania for parties to be identified with personalities, it seriously weakened the position of the PNL as a whole.

Secondly, the composition of the PNL leadership also tended to be disproportionately dominated by Bucharest intellectuals. A future member of the party, who attended the first meeting of the resurrected PNL after the fall of Ceauşescu addressed by Lăzărescu and Enescu, both of whom were over seventy years old, was surprised to find that, instead of a meeting expressly concerned with the reactivation of a political party, the gathering resembled more a political lecture. It even contained wild and patently unfounded allegations that the party had conspired in the downfall of Ceauşescu. With the return of the exiles from abroad, the party established a more structured organization and a more serious face but, in

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43 For the process of reshuffling within the various liberal factions see Michael Shafir, 'The "Centripetfugal" Process of Unifying the Liberals', *Transition*, 25 August 1995, pp. 49–53.

44 I am deeply indebted to Professor Nicolae-Şerban Tanaşoca, who provided the inspiration for much of this analysis of the PNL's post-1989 fortunes.

reality, it remained little more than a club with only a small active membership. The traditional image of the PNL as a somewhat aloof party of the higher intellectuals and former aristocracy fitted ill with the needs of a Romanian society which had been transformed by over forty years of socialist homogenization. The result was a party with plenty of potential leaders but few technicians and foot-soldiers. This gave it only a limited local organizational base, although the party was probably stronger than the PNȚ in Bucharest and in certain provincial towns. The preponderance of intellectuals did, in general, make the PNL less inclined to take entrenched positions and fostered an unwillingness to accept uncritical beliefs. Any benefits which may have arisen from this tradition of debate, however, were completely obliterated by the resultant lack of predictability. Frequent contradictions in policy totally undermined electoral support.

Thirdly, the great families of the PNL have historically constituted the political, and frequently the actual, aristocracy of Romania. In 1990 the scions of these dynasties once more came to the fore, reactivating the old political class. Each of these factions sought representation on the party's committees and in its search to accommodate the past — particularly the traditional divide between the Brătianu and the Tătărescu liberals — the party was sometimes in danger of ignoring the present. Indeed, matters were further complicated by the fact that several laid claim to the Brătianu name, including Ion Brătianu, who established a separate party, the Brătianu Liberal Union.

Lastly, by its very name the PNL laid claim to one of the chief ideological alternatives available in post-Ceauşescu Romania. Indeed, since 1989 at least eight different parties at one time or another have appeared with the appellation 'liberal' in their name, including the Liberal Monarchist Party, the New Liberal Party and the Socialist Liberal Party. In the prevailing atmosphere of ideological uncertainty, in which no group seemed to offer a clear vision of the future, the appellation 'liberal' had a certain talismanic quality in drawing supporters, including a number with no prior links to the party. The arrival of these often younger people led to a certain amount of generational conflict, but this was underscored by a more serious ideological rift. For beyond a common belief in individualism and property rights, two distinct interpretations of liberal doctrine could be found within the party. One, generally espoused by older members, looked back to the traditions of the party and the nineteenth-century model of Ion Brătianu, which stressed state-sponsored modernization from above. In this largely paternalistic vision, which placed limited expectations on a populace still thought of as being essentially peasants, the need for

authoritative leadership was accentuated. Indeed, some of the adherents of what may be considered the Brătianu line have even expressed a sneaking regard for Iliescu, who might be seen as embodying this virtue. Competing with this world-view was another liberalism, espoused by members of the younger generation such as Dinu Patriciu, grounded in the historic free market liberalism of Western Europe as interpreted during the 1980s by, among others, Margaret Thatcher. In their view, the application of a free market model with large-scale privatization would be a catalyst for the transformation of Romanian society. After the May 1990 elections, all these forces were to combine to drive the Liberals off the main political stage as, in an apparently interminable and, to the outside observer, often baffling process of reshuffling, the various factions divided and reformed in a kaleidoscope of different permutations.

For the traditional parties the rebirth of political diversity in Romania presented great opportunities. In a political landscape in which the Front was the only major player, the strength of their past traditions allowed them to have an initial impact beyond their actual capacities, but by a twist of fate the same history that had thrust them to the fore also weighed heavily upon them, circumscribing their horizons and often preventing them from fully seizing the opportunities on offer. In 1990 they still did not seem to have realized that in order to succeed they had to combine this legacy of the past with an understanding of the needs of the present, so as to produce a message relevant to the electorate of the day. Only when this lesson was fully learnt did they finally find the key to electoral success and achieve a return to government.

Romania's 'Velvet Revolution'? The Electoral Victory of Emil Constantinescu and the CDR in November 1996

Peter Siani-Davies

The general elections of November 1996 were the third to be held in Romania since the bloody revolution of 1989 which secured the overthrow of the Ceauşescu dictatorship. In contrast to the serious questions raised about the conduct of the earlier polls of 1990 and 1992, the latest elections were judged by most observers to have been a highly successful exercise in mass democracy.[1] Although concerns remained over issues such as the special voting registers and the quality of the ballot papers, the elections were pronounced 'free, reasonably fair and transparent' by the international observers from the Council of Europe. Similar verdicts were also passed by the observers from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the US State Department.[2] The two

1 Concerns about the fairness of the May 1990 poll were raised in Dennis Deletant, 'The Romanian Elections of May 1990', *Representation*, 29, 1990, 108, pp. 23–6; Daniel Nelson, 'Romania', *Electoral Studies*, 9, 1990, 4, pp. 355–66; and Tom Gallagher, 'The Disputed Election of 1990', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 44, 1991, 1, pp. 79–93. For similar concerns about September 1992, see Henry P. Carey, 'Irregularities or Rigging: Romania's 1992 Parliamentary Elections', *East European Quarterly*, 29, 1995, 1, pp. 43–66.

2 For the verdict of the Council of Europe observers, see *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* (hereafter *BBC*), EE/2762, B6–7, 6 November 1996, Rompres, 15.31 GMT, 4 November 1996; and for the OSCE see *BBC*, EE/2761, B/5–6, 5 November 1996, Rompres, 14.00 GMT, 4 November 1996. The British observation team, which was part of the OSCE delegation, endorsed this view in their short-term election observation report to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office prepared by ERIS. The US preliminary report characterized the elections as 'orderly and taking place without significant incidents': Sonia Winter, 'Romania: U.S. Calls Elections "Orderly"', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty News*

leading domestic election monitoring groups, the Pro-Democracy Association and the League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADO), also accepted that the elections were broadly sound, although only after the President of LADO, Nicolae Ştefanescu-Draganeşti, had first raised the possibility of serious irregularities.[3]

The success of the elections from a procedural point of view is itself a reflection of the growing maturity now apparent in Romanian post-Communist politics.[4] This increased stability was also evident in the continuity to be seen between the elections of 1996 and 1992. In both cases the principal challengers for the presidency were the same, Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu, and there were only minor changes in the main parties contesting the polls. The Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR) coalition had seen some minor modifications amongst its junior constituents, the Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN) had renamed itself the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR), and the National Salvation Front (FSN), after adding Democratic Party to its name, had entered a new coalition with the smaller Social Democratic Party of Romania as the Social Democratic Union (USD).[5] In both the latter cases the final removal of the appellation 'National Salvation Front', which is forever associated with the revolution, and its replacement with a designation including the word 'party', was not only a symbolic shedding

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(Electronic Edition), 5 November 1996. This appreciation of the polls became more positive following news of the victory of Constantinescu: see Sonia Winter, 'Romania: U.S. Congratulates Constantinescu', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty News (Electronic Edition)*, 19 November 1996.

3   For Ştefanescu-Draganeşti's concerns voiced on election day, see *BBC*, EE/2761, B/5, 5 November 1996, Romanian Radio, 14.00 GMT, 3 November 1996. For a more positive appreciation of the elections from Pro-Democracy see *BBC*, EE/2764, B/6, 8 November 1996, Romanian Radio, 11.00 GMT, 6 November 1996. For agreement from both groups that, although the polls were marred by numerous irregularities, they were basically sound, see Oana Armeanu, 'LADO şi Pro Democraţia nu vor contesta alegerile', *22 Puls*, 6–12 November 1996, p. 3.

4   A number of commentators stressed the growing maturity of the Romanian electorate. See, for instance, Michael Shafir's comments in his interview with Oana Armeanu, 'Un electorat matur', *22 Puls*, 6–12 November 1996, p. 1.

5   In 1992 the CDR, alongside its main constituent, the National Peasant Party–Christian Democratic (PNŢ–CD), included amongst other groupings the Civic Alliance Party, the Liberal Party '93, the Social Democratic Party of Romania (PSDR) and the Romanian Ecological Party (PER). Although the Hungarian Democratic Federation of Romania was formally a member of the Convention, it stood on a separate list in the election. In 1996 of these parties only the PNŢ–CD and the PER remained, although they had been joined by the National Liberal Party and a new grouping, the Party of Romanian Alternative.

of the past but also another affirmation of the growing normality of the Romanian political process.

There can be little doubt that the polls of 1996 were a milestone in Romanian electoral history. They brought the first democratic change of head of state in the country since the foundation of an independent state in 1859 and saw a ruling government voted out of office for the first time since 1937. To the supporters of the opposition in Romania, however, the electoral victory of Constantinescu and the CDR was laden with far greater historic symbolism than a mere exchange of power. After more than fifty years of oppression, they saw it as marking nothing less than the final defeat of Communism in Romania. In his first speech as president-elect, Constantinescu emotionally spoke of his triumph being not only a victory for today's Romanians but also one for those who had endured years of suffering under Communism:

> It is the victory of millions of Romanian citizens who have lived and endured the oppression of the fifty-year-long Communist dictatorship, by preserving their hope for a better life as well as their humanity, honesty and sense of justice. It is the victory of the hundreds of thousands of Romanian citizens who have endured the cruel repression of Communist prisons without betraying their beliefs. It is the victory of those who sacrificed themselves for the love for their nation and for freedom, in the harsh years of dictatorship. It is the victory of those who opposed in thought, word or deed the raw force of the Communist regime, which did not succeed in crushing them.[6]

This contention that the elections marked the final defeat of Communism in Romania was given added emotional impetus by the fact that the main constituent grouping of the victorious CDR, the National Peasant Party–Christian Democrat (PNȚ–CD), is generally held to have been cheated out of office in 1946 in the last pre-Communist polls in Romania when the Communists falsified the result.[7]

The fact that the elections could be interpreted as marking the historic end of Communism also gave them a potential special significance for the Romanian revolution as a process. The PDSR in all its post-1989 incarnations, because of its failure to institute major reforms, its style of leadership and, most of all, because of the background of many of its leaders, has been generally characterized by its opponents as nothing more than a neo-Communist holdover from the previous Romanian Communist

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6   *BBC*, EE/2773, B/6, 19 November 1996, Romanian Radio, 22.18 GMT, 17 November 1996.

7   For the reversing of the result in the 1946 election, see Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947*, Oxford, 1994, p. 533.

Party regime.[8] Although it continued to claim legitimacy from the first FSN administration, created in December 1989, many considered it to have betrayed the ideals of the revolution and to have even stolen it from the crowd on the street. As his bitter rival, Iliescu, faced electoral defeat in 1996, Petre Roman, the leader of the USD, spoke of Constantinescu's victory consecrating the true ideals of the Romanian revolution and marking the 'end of its confiscation'.[9] These themes were also broadly echoed by the president-elect himself in his first speech after the elections, when he declared that the Romanian people had at last secured the 'dignity and justice' promised by the revolution.[10] To many Romanian and foreign commentators the elections of 1996 were nothing less than the 'real' Romanian revolution in which the Communist and neo-Communist past had finally been swept away.[11] Indeed, some even held that the elections marked the actual closing of the revolution, the latter being characterized in this point of view not as a process of change but solely as a political struggle between opposing groups.[12]

The Electoral Framework

During November 1996 the Romanian people in fact went to the polls twice, for three separate elections in which they chose a new president and members for both houses of parliament — the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The elections took place under an electoral law which was broadly the same as in 1992. For the presidential election a French-style dual ballot system was again employed, which stipulated that in order to win on the first ballot a candidate had to gain the endorsement of more than half the voters entered on the electoral register. As this did not occur on 3 November 1996, a second ballot took place two weeks after the first,

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8   The PDSR in its earlier guise of the FDSN had once been part of the National Salvation Front (FSN), which took power on 22 December 1989.

9   *BBC*, EE/2773, B8, 19 November 1996, Rompres, 07.32 GMT, 18 November 1996.

10 *BBC*, EE/2773, B6, 19 November 1996, Romanian Radio, 22.18 GMT, 17 November 1996.

11 For this view, see Roger Boyes, 'Romanians Jettison Past to Elect Dissident Professor as President', *The Times*, 19 November 1996, p. 13.

12 For this view, see Nick Thorpe and Julian Borger, 'Iliescu Bows Out of Office', *Guardian*, 18 November 1996, p. 10, and the discussions in Cristian Preda, 'Sfîrşitul Revoluţiei?', *22 Puls*, 6–12 November 1996, p. 2. Also Aurelian Craiuţu, 'Light at the End of the Tunnel: Romania 1989–1996', paper presented at a conference on Democratization in the Balkans, Centre for Mediterranean Studies, University of Bristol, 16–18 May 1998.

on 17 November, in which the two leading candidates from the first round faced each other in a run-off. Partly because of the powers accruing to him under the constitution but also because politics in Romania tends to be still highly orientated towards personalities, the presidential vote was seen as the crucial poll and the touchstone upon which the election turned.

In order for a person to stand for the presidency 100,000 signatures have to be gathered in support of his or her candidacy. In 1996 a particularly large field of sixteen managed to clear this hurdle and were entered onto the ballot paper. The three main challengers each represented the three leading political groupings in the country: Ion Iliescu (the incumbent) was associated with the ruling PDSR, Emil Constantinescu was leader of the CDR and Petre Roman, the first Prime Minister of Romania after the 1989 revolution, headed the USD. Alongside these three there were also candidates from all the other major parties, including György Frunda of the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR), the first Hungarian to stand for the Romanian presidency, Corneliu Vadim Tudor of the Greater Romania Party (PRM) and Gheorghe Funar of the Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR).[13] There were also a number of fringe candidates, including Radu Câmpeanu, the losing National Liberal Party presidential candidate from the 1990 elections, who in 1996 stood for the National Liberal Ecologist Alliance, Nicolae Militaru, an ageing general who had featured prominently during the revolution and died shortly after the elections on 27 December 1996, and the eccentric Constantin Mudava, who appeared in the presidential television debate sporting an enormous wooden cross and was apparently under the impression that he had been divinely chosen to secure Romania's national redemption.[14]

Both Chambers of the Romanian Parliament are elected by a party-list proportional representation system based on forty-two multi-member constituencies. The threshold for representation in parliament is 3 per cent and, despite the large number of parties contesting the campaign (sixty-five entering the race for the Chamber of Deputies), only six managed to pass this limit (see Tables 5 and 6 below). The number of seats in parliament is

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13 For a profile of Frunda, see Zsolt-Istvan Mato, 'Ethnic Hungarian in the Romanian Presidential Race', *Transition*, 27 December 1996, pp. 18–19.

14 The National Liberal Ecologist Alliance (ANLE) comprised the Ecologist Party, the Câmpeanu National Liberal Party and the Liberal Union Brătianu. The exploits of Mudava in the campaign prompted Michael Shafir to write: 'Indeed, it is enough to watch wonder healer Mudava on television to start wondering whether one has landed in the Kingdom of Absurdity, where playwright Eugen Ionescu would have to be born again and start from scratch to catch up': Michael Shafir, 'When Humor Meets Politics', *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 30 October 1996.

not fixed, but allocated in direct proportion to the number of electors at the rate of one deputy for every 70,000 electors for the lower house and one senator for every 160,000 electors for the upper house. Any increase in the size of the electorate is thus reflected in a rise in the number of parliamentarians and, with over one million new electors on the register in 1996, the number of deputies in the lower house has risen from 328 to 343.[15] The number in the Senate remains unchanged at 143. The actual distribution of mandates is resolved by a complex quota system in which votes surplus to the exact number needed to secure a mandate in a constituency are transferred to a national pool, where they are divided between the parties represented in parliament according to the largest average system. These seats are then redistributed back to the constituencies where the surplus was greatest in a highly proportionate system, which can occasionally produce startling anomalies.[16] Such a case occurred in 1996 in the senatorial allocations for Giurgiu, where the UDMR was awarded a mandate even though the party only gathered 269 votes out of the 112,158 cast within the constituency.

The Media and the Electoral Campaign

The electoral campaign lasted almost the sixty days stipulated by law and was free of major incident or unrest. As in past years, within the towns and cities the campaign was highly visible, with all available surfaces seemingly plastered with electoral posters, although it was noticeable that these were seldom to be seen in the countryside. In contrast to 1992, when the CDR had not mounted a major effort in the countryside, all the main political groups actively campaigned in rural and urban centres of every size. Attendance at meetings and rallies, however, was moderate enough to

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15 Aside from the 328 seats allocated by constituency, fifteen seats in the Chamber of Deputies were awarded to minority organizations which gained a certain proportion of the national vote. These were: Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, Turkish Democratic Union of Romania, 'Bratstvo' Community of Bulgarians of Romania, Hellenic Union of Romania, Union of Poles of Romania, Democratic Union of Czechs and Slovaks in Romania, the Roma (Gypsy) Party, Italian Community of Romania, Democratic Union of the Turko-Muslim Tartars in Romania, Cultural Union of the Albanians in Romania, Democratic Union of the Serbs and the Carasovenians in Romania, Union of Armenians of Romania, Union of Ukrainians of Romania, German Democratic Forum of Romania.

16 For details of this system, see the editor's note in Deletant, 'The Romanian Elections of May 1990' (see note 1 above), p. 26.

raise some concern about voter apathy prior to the polls.[17] In general, the electoral campaigns of the various parties were professionally mounted and, as in previous years, the influence of overseas techniques was again visible. For example, Constantinescu, in imitation of the Republican Party and Newt Gingrich in the USA, also presented his own electoral commitments as a twenty-point 'Contract with Romania', which was to be fulfilled within 200 days of achieving office. The Contract was clearly shaped with the CDR's target electorate in mind, because, in its first proposals, it squarely put the emphasis on the questions of land restitution and peasant pensions. Short and lucid, the document gained a 68 per cent approval rating amongst electors.[18] In contrast, the PDSR presented a far lengthier twenty-one point 'Programme for Romania', which seems to have made far less impact, even though it shared many of the same concerns as the CDR's Contract, stressing social welfare, the necessity of curbing corruption and the need to ensure international economic competitiveness.

On the actual hustings the campaign was often highly negative in tone, although the CDR were careful to avoid the anti-Communist rhetoric of past elections. In particular, Iliescu and the PDSR unsuccessfully tried to play upon the insecurities of the electorate, presenting Constantinescu as an inexperienced and untrustworthy candidate who would be a mere stop-gap ruler until the CDR achieved its real goal of the restoration of the monarchy. Peasants were cautioned that their land was once again under threat, as were their pensions, and emotional warnings were issued that a law allowing tenants to buy property nationalized under Communism would be rescinded, thereby opening up the possibility of mass evictions.[19] The rhetoric of nationalism was also invoked as, following the defeat of the PDSR, in the second round of the presidential contest Iliescu, along with Adrian Nastase, leader of the PDRS, repetitively warned that the CDR–USD coalition had signed a secret pact with the UDMR that threatened the very territorial integrity of Romania. It was alleged that the Hungarians would be granted regional autonomy and also be allowed to use their mother tongue for official business within their ethnic community.[20] As speculation swirled about the possibility of the UDMR

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17 At the local elections earlier in 1996 the turnout had only been 56.9 per cent. The IRSOP–IFES exit poll on 3 November revealed that 45 per cent of the voters were very interested in the election, 32 per cent fairly interested, 18 per cent not very interested and 5 per cent not interested at all.

18 Source: IRSOP–IFES exit poll.

19 Michael Shafir, 'Opting for Political Change', *Transition*, 27 December 1996, p. 12.

20 For the use of nationalism in the campaign, see Zsolt–Istvan Mato, 'Iliescu and his Party Play the Nationalist Card', *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, vol. 1, no. 461; Shafir,

participating in the new government, the CDR–USD coalition repeatedly denied the existence of any formal agreement between the parties and, despite its potential for inflaming emotions, in general the issue seems to have remained of marginal interest for an electorate more concerned with the struggle of everyday life.

One of the most striking differences between the elections of 1992 and 1996 was the political stance adopted by the media which, if anything, might this time be judged to have been slightly more favourable to the opposition than to the ruling regime. Of the three main dailies, *Evenimentul Zilei*, *Adevărul* and *România Liberă*, *Evenimentul Zilei* was less hostile than usual to the PDSR and Iliescu, with Ion Cristoiu instead reserving his ire for Corneliu Vadim Tudor and the independent candidates Nicolae Militaru and Constantin Mudava. *România Liberă* maintained its customary stance of hostility towards Iliescu and usually uncritical support for the Convention, but *Adevărul* displayed more editorial independence than in 1992, when it had supported the FDSN, the predecessor of the PDSR. During the 1996 campaign, however, it did carry a number of scurrilous attacks on the USD. In general, the tendency remains for newspapers to indulge in wild and often poorly researched denunciations of political adversaries in an effort to tarnish reputations.[21]

The circulation of even the most popular national newspaper, *Evenimentul Zilei*, is only 170,000 and, although local newspapers also exist, for most of the population television and radio remain the main sources of news and information. Here, one of the chief differences between the elections of 1996 and those of 1992 was the presence of a number of independent television channels: Pro–TV, Antenna 1 and Tele-7abc. The largest of these stations, Pro–TV, whose coverage includes Bucharest and fifty-one of the biggest urban centres, is a subscription service which enjoys considerable popularity. In general, during the electoral campaign it was seen as favouring the opposition and it offered an important counterbalance to the perceived bias of the state television service (TVR).

Outside the urban centres (45.6 per cent of Romania's population still lives in a rural environment) and amongst poorer families unable to pay the

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'Opting for Political Change', p. 14, *BBC*, EE/2766, B/10, 11 November 1996, Romanian Radio, 11.00 GMT, 8 November 1996; *BBC*, EE/2769, B/6, 14 November 1996, Rompres, 12.53 GMT, 12 November 1996; *BBC*, EE/2769, B/6, 14 November 1996, Rompres, 15.28 GMT, 12 November 1996.

21 For instance, an eve-of-polls edition of *România Liberă* carried an interview with the ex-Securitate defector, Ion Pacepa, which accused Iliescu of being the 'man of Moscow': Gilda Lazăr, 'Persistența Securității, principalul obstacol între România și NATO', *România Liberă*, 1 November 1996, p. 10.

subscription costs, public television and radio remain the prime sources of information. Although the public broadcasting institutions scrupulously respected the criteria stipulated by parliament, according to which they offered free air time to all parties and presidential candidates, as on past occasions the opposition parties voiced serious complaints about the state television's general coverage of the campaign.[22] At issue were not so much instances of specific political bias but what was seen as a more general failure of professional standards and objectivity. Similar concerns were also to be found in the findings of the European Institute for the Media (EIM) which again monitored the campaign.[23] Despite finding the general media coverage better than in 1992, the EIM expressed concern at the complete lack of analysis and commentary on TVR news items relating to the campaign and the generally passive attitude of its journalists, who remained content to announce party press communiqués without any attempts at analysis. It also confirmed opposition complaints that too much uncritical exposure had been given to a succession of meetings held by Iliescu and government ministers with foreign dignitaries, although it should be noted that such items have long been a staple of Romanian news coverage.

As in previous elections, the main public television channel (TVR1) hosted the pre-election presidential debate a few days before the polls. All sixteen presidential candidates were present and each was given equal time to answer the same questions posed by journalists together with a final two minutes to address the nation. The order of appearance was decided by ballot and the time-limits were vigorously applied, with even Iliescu at one point being brusquely cut short when he exceeded his allotted space. Compared with 1992 the debate appeared more stage-managed, and the excessive number of minor candidates, together with the absence of any real polemic, seems to have made it a rather boring affair for many Romanians.

The Election

Partly as a legacy of the highly charged political atmosphere engendered by the revolution and partly as a consequence of a history which has seen election results more often reflect the choice of incumbent governments

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22 Although the costs of parliamentary parties were borne by the state, candidates and parties who were not members of the parliament were required to pay a fee of $11 per minute on public radio and $16 per minute on the television (TVR1) if a pre-recorded cassette was used or $48 if they used a TV studio.

23 My thanks to Dennis Deletant for drawing my attention to the findings of the EIM.

than the choice of the people, the electoral process in Romania does not tend to be seen as politically neutral and non-partisan, as it generally is in the West. Instead, mistrust has tended to prevail as control of the electoral process has regularly come to be seen as the key determinant assuring victory in the polls. The competent and open conduct of recent national and local elections has started to overturn these prejudices, but they still remain well entrenched within Romanian political culture, buttressed by the fact that governments have rarely been voted out of office. Whether or not there is any credible evidence of fraud, it has remained a virtual reflex action for the losing side in any Romanian election to cry foul and point to a host of alleged irregularities which had cheated it of office. Before the 1996 elections, concerns were already being voiced by the opposition that the polls might again be manipulated to the advantage of the ruling party and it was to forestall this possibility that a pre-election protocol was concluded by a number of parties, including the CDR, the USD and the UDMR, in which they agreed to collaborate in monitoring the elections so as to prevent fraud.[24] In the past, the principal aim of the opposition in voicing complaints against the poll has been to undermine the legitimacy of the victorious party, but, as an almost invariable consequence, doubts have also arisen about the general validity of the electoral process.

In recent Romanian elections those scenting a whiff of electoral fraud have focused their attentions on the large number of invalid votes which, it has been claimed, disproportionately counted against the opposition parties, and the provisions within the law permitting special registration lists that enable electors effectively to vote at the polling station of their choice anywhere in the country on the production of their ID card.[25] The scale of some of these problems can be gauged from the 1992 elections, when 12.73 per cent of votes for the Chamber of Deputies and 12.06 per cent of those for the Senate were ruled as invalid. Moreover, as Henry Carey has estimated that 10 per cent of voters in that year were entered on

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24 See, for instance, Marian Chiriac, 'PDSR pregăteşte frauda', *22*, 30 October–5 November 1996, p. 10; and Michael Shafir, 'Romanian Opposition Parties Accuse Government of Planning Election Fraud', *OMRI Daily Digest*, 23 October 1996. The President of the European Union of Christian Democrats, Wim van Velzen, also voiced concerns about the likely impartiality of the polls. For the protocol see *BBC*, EE/2756, B/2, 30 October 1996, Romanian Radio, 11.00 GMT, 28 October 1996. The immediate response of the PDSR was to suggest that now it might be the target of fraud by the opposition: see *BBC*, EE/2757, B/4, 31 October 1996, Rompres, 09.21 GMT, 30 October 1996.

25 Despite having earlier approved the distribution of voters' cards, the PDSR government later claimed that they could not be produced in time for the polls. Voters' cards are seen by many as a significant step forward in the prevention of fraud.

the special lists, it is possible to suggest that approximately 20 per cent of the votes in 1992 may have been affected by one or other of these potentially fraudulent activities.[26] In November 1996 the number of invalid votes was smaller than in 1992, amounting to only 6.01 per cent of the votes cast for the Senate and 6.38 per cent of those cast for the Chamber of Deputies. This figure, however, is still well above the number of invalid votes recorded at elections in most other countries and, in different circumstances, it is tempting to suggest that it might have still been high enough to produce a challenge as to the legality of the election.[27] Although in previous elections fraud cannot be entirely ruled out, another, less emotive, reason for such high levels of vote invalidation in Romania would seem to lie in the adversarial structure of the polling-station committees, which usually contain members of all the major political parties. Theoretically, every vote has to be scrutinized by each representative and, particularly in 1992, this seems to have led to opposing parties invalidating each other's votes on the flimsiest of excuses. The complexity of the ballot papers, which contain pages of often highly similar party names and symbols, does not ease the matter; nor does the practice of requiring the electors to mark their choice by an ink stamp. The rather poor quality of the paper used for the ballots, particularly in 1992, means that it was relatively easy, once the large ballot papers were folded, for some ink to be inadvertently transferred from one page to another and, in an atmosphere of mutual hostility, this was usually sufficient to get a vote ruled invalid. In 1996, not only were the electorate far more familiar with voting procedures, but a greater level of mutual trust seemed to exist within the polling stations, with the consequence that the validity of votes was less challenged. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the lower level of invalidations in 1996 should be taken as evidence of the growing maturity of the Romanian political process and the success of voter education programmes rather than the thwarting of fraud.[28] Similarly, the special lists also seem to have continued to receive wide usage in 1996. Since voter

26 Carey, 'Irregularities or Rigging' (see note 1 above), p. 56.
27 For instance, the following rates of ballot invalidation were recorded in other post-Communist states voting in 1992: Bulgaria 2.7 per cent, Czech Republic 1.7 per cent and Poland 3.5 per cent. In the 1990 Romanian elections, 5.85 per cent of the votes for the Senate and 7.54 per cent of those for the Chamber of Deputies were declared invalid.
28 Some evidence in support of the assumption that voter education is the answer to this problem comes from a table reproduced in Carey, 'Irregularities or Rigging', pp. 56–7. This shows that the number of invalid votes in 1992 was consistently highest in the poorest and least-educated areas of Romania. Of course, as these areas also tended to be the FDSN heartland, it could be argued, as it was by Carey, that fraud was easiest in such counties.

registration in most instances appears to have been fairly comprehensive, it must be presumed that the electors entered on such lists were travellers and those visiting friends and family for the weekend. Although, in the absence of official figures, it is impossible to quantify the number of electors who cast their votes in this way — at some of the polling stations observed by the author it amounted to 10 per cent — in different circumstances it is again possible to imagine that the continued usage of this largely unaccountable voting procedure would have brought protests and a suspicion of falsification.

As a response to the perceived lack of neutrality in the electoral process, the Romanians have adopted two sometimes overlapping strategies. The first has involved introducing a series of confidence-building measures so as to increase the general transparency of the whole electoral mechanism; the most important of these has seen representatives of the political parties involved at every stage of the process and observers permitted to scrutinize the poll. The second strategy has been to create a number of parallel mechanisms to monitor the practices of official institutions. In 1996, this process reached a new level of sophistication, with the opposition mounting a complex parallel count to check the official vote tally and the distribution of mandates.[29] Whilst driven by mistrust, such parallel mechanisms can, if they validate the procedures of official institutions, in themselves act as important confidence-building measures.

As noted before, the most important confidence-building measure involves the participation of party representatives at all levels of the electoral process — from the Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) in Bucharest, which was composed of seven judges and fifteen representatives drawn from all the main parties, to the more than 15,000 local polling-station committees. Each of these consisted of an independent president and deputy president, both preferably judges, and up to seven party representatives. If there were more than seven applicants for the places on these committees, the members were selected by ballot. The local committees were responsible for counting the vote and, in general, this self-regulatory system does seem to have worked reasonably well, as the various members scrutinized each other as well as the ballots. The main weakness in this system is that the committees received no training as to how the ballots should be counted, with the result that the

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29 Part of the CDR parallel count for Bucharest was reproduced in *22 Puls*, 6–12 November 1996, p. 3. Carey notes that LADO were prohibited by the Central Electoral Bureau from mounting an effective parallel count in 1992, although there continued to be some debate about apparent discrepancies between the figures observed by CDR party workers and the official results for some days after the election in newspapers such as *Cotidianul*: Carey, 'Irregularites or Rigging', p. 61.

process regularly degenerated into utter confusion. Often it seems that the final results were only produced after some vigorous 'massaging' of the figures to tally the number of votes counted with the number of votes cast and, whilst this cannot be seen as constituting attempted fraud, it does leave open the possibility of misrepresentation.

Two other potential problems are also still present within this self-regulatory system. First, prior to the polls the opposition charged that in a number of cases county prefects had appointed as the presidents of local committees not the most able neutral candidates but PDSR supporters. Indeed, Shafir and Ionescu have suggested that the PDSR broke with two of its erstwhile coalition partners, the PUNR and the Socialist Labour Party (PSM), because it wanted to impose its own prefects on all the counties so as to be assured of control of the electoral process.[30] The alignment between executive and political power was such that in some counties the prefect was also head of the local branch of the PDSR. Potentially, this situation could have laid the grounds for electoral fraud, but in reality the practical effects of the appointment of such partisan presidents on the polling process were difficult to gauge. In general, all that can be said is that in some cases weak presidents allowed other committee members to dominate the proceedings, but whether this had any effect on the voting or counting procedure is almost impossible to determine.

Secondly, the representatives of the parties on the polling station committees were sometimes not members of the political parties concerned nor even their supporters. The smaller parties in particular seem to have been unable to mobilize enough representatives, and so had, instead, relied on 'friends of friends' to fill their places — not too difficult a task given the fact that members of the committees received payment for their day's work at the rate of 104,000 lei for a president, 80,000 lei for a deputy president and 50,000 lei for other members. As this representation by proxy was supported by the parties concerned, it cannot be judged as an abuse but, once again, the potential for irregularities existed, although no evidence was found of these representatives failing to adequately scrutinize the vote during the counting procedure.

Another confidence-building mechanism introduced into the electoral process is the facility for domestic observers to be present at the polls. Over the years this has been one of the more contentious feature of the Romanian electoral process and 1996 was no exception as, right up until the eve of the elections, considerable confusion persisted over the assignment of observers to polling stations and whether they would have

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30 Michael Shafir and Dan Ionescu, 'Radical Political Change in Romania', *Transition*, 7 February 1997, p. 52.

access to the counting process.[31] In the past, the majority of observers have come from the Pro-Democracy Association and the League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADO), but in 1996 several other lesser-known groups made a determined effort to supplant their dominance. Allegations were quickly raised that these other groups were a political device designed to undermine the scrutiny of the polls, since the law that permitted only one domestic observer at each polling station meant that, after the places were allocated by ballot, only just over half were covered by Pro-Democracy or LADO members (Table 1). In the process over 700 observers were apparently excluded from the polls.[32] To meet criticisms that many of these observers from the other groups were bogus and would not attend the elections, a procedure was initiated by which a substitute observer from another NGO could be registered if the nominated observer did not arrive on the polling day. As proportionately more of the nominated substitutes were from the suspect organizations, however, this move contributed little to defusing the problem. The whole issue caused much comment prior to the elections, and afterwards LADO and the Pro-Democracy Association continued to allege that few observers had been seen from the 'phantom organizations'.[33]

Table 1. Allocation of domestic observers to polling stations by the BEC

NGO	Total Observers	Main Observers	Substitute observers	Substitute observers (%)
AROLID	1,364	1,052	312	23
GADDO	2,263	1,834	429	19
LADO	5,297	4,716	581	11
LIRDOCT	1,483	1,201	282	19
Societatea Timişoara	156	142	14	9
Pro-Democratia	2,927	2,616	311	11
Total	13,490	11,561	1,929	14

Source: BEC Internet site

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31 The PDSR challenged the credentials of a number of observers and secured the removal of thirty-three from the LADO list and ten from Pro-Democracy: *BBC*, EE/2757, B/5, 31 October 1996, Romanian Radio, 05.00 GMT, 30 October 1996. For an overview of the attitudes of the political parties towards observers, see Thomas Carothers, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: The Case of Romania*, Washington, DC, 1996, p. 51.

32 As an example, see Călin Ligia, 'Observatorii "fantomă" vor supraveghea alegerile', *22*, 23–29 October 1996, p. 10. For details of the lot-drawing process, see *BBC*, EE/2756, B/2, 30 October 1996, Romanian Radio, 11.18 GMT, 28 October 1996.

33 Oana Armeanu, 'LADO şi Pro Democraţia nu vor contesta alegerile', *22 Puls*, 6–12 November 1996, p. 3.

The Results: The Presidential Polls

The presidential elections were a triumph for Emil Constantinescu, a former Rector of Bucharest University. In the first round Iliescu had held a slight (4 per cent) lead over Constantinescu, with Petre Roman performing strongly in third place, as he gained over 7 per cent more votes than his own USD coalition in the parliamentary polls. Frunda came in fourth, gaining, as expected, the majority of the Hungarian vote. After the signing of a formal coalition agreement on 7 November between the CDR and USD, which included an electoral pact for the second round of the elections, Constantinescu formally received the endorsement of Petre Roman. The USD leader also agreed to accompany Constantinescu when he campaigned in counties like Prahova, where Roman had secured a sizeable proportion of the vote in the first round of the election.[34] Subsequently, Constantinescu also gained the support of the UDMR and, more surprisingly, the Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania (PDAR), the Ecological Movement of Romania (MER) and even the Socialist Party (PS) (see Tables 2 and 3).[35]

When they voted on 17 November the vast majority of Hungarians faithfully followed the UDMR party line and Constantinescu gained his highest share of the vote in the Hungarian-dominated counties of Harghita (91.59 per cent) and Covasna (86.81 per cent). Petre Roman's supporters seem to have been more fickle. About 50 per cent heeded Roman's advice and voted for Constantinescu but, perhaps mirroring the origins of much of the USD vote (see below), 40 per cent preferred to switch to Iliescu and a further 10 per cent abstained. Somewhat surprisingly, Constantinescu also seems to have picked up about 10 per cent of the PDSR vote from the first round.[36] In all, the totality of these votes were sufficient for him to gain a convincing victory over Iliescu in the second round by almost ten percentage points.

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34 For Roman's endorsement, see *BBC*, EE/2765, B/9, 9 November 1996, Rompres, 12.36 GMT, 7 November 96. For the coalition agreement, see Oana Iuraşcu, 'Emil Constantinescu a devenit candidatul comun al opoziţiei', *România Liberă*, 8 November 1996, p. 1.

35 For the UDMR's endorsement, see *BBC*, EE/2766, B/10, 11 November 1996, Hungarian Radio, 09.00 GMT, 9 November 1996; for the PDAR and the MER, see *BBC*, EE/2769, B/5, 14 November 1996, Romanian Radio, 14.00 GMT, 12 November 1996; and for the Socialists, see Tudor Mohora's statement in *BBC*, EE/2769, B/4, 14 November 1996, Rompres, 13.18 GMT, 21 November 1996.

36 These figures are to be found in Shafir, 'Opting for Political Change' (see note 19 above), p. 15.

Table 2.   Presidential candidates gaining over 1 per cent of the vote on 3
            November 1996

Candidate	Party	% of vote
Ion Iliescu	PDSR	32.25
Emil Constantinescu	CDR	28.21
Petre Roman	USD	20.54
György Frunda	UDMR	6.02
Corneliu Vadim Tudor	PRM	4.72
Gheorghe Funar	PUNR	3.22
Tudor Mohora	PS	1.27

Source: BEC Internet site

Table 3.   Result of the presidential vote on 17 November 1996

Candidate	Party	% of vote
Ion Iliescu	PDSR	45.59
Emil Constantinescu	CDR	54.41

Source: BEC Internet site

Map 1.   Winner of the largest share of the vote by county in the 17
          November presidential elections

Table 4. Results and turnout for the presidential elections of 17 November 1997

Turnout (%)	County	Constantinescu (%)	Iliescu (%)	Winner of Most Votes
86.96	Harghita	**91.59**	8.41	Constantinescu
79.06	Sibiu	**73.82**	26.18	Constantinescu
78.81	Covasna	**86.81**	13.19	Constantinescu
78.68	Braşov	**69.61**	30.39	Constantinescu
76.77	Constanţa	57.85	42.15	Constantinescu
76.40	Mureş	**68.82**	31.18	Constantinescu
75.87	Caraş–Severin	**62.34**	37.66	Constantinescu
75.70	Alba	**62.95**	37.05	Constantinescu
75.65	Arad	**66.96**	33.04	Constantinescu
74.59	Hunedoara	49.94	50.06	Iliescu
74.18	Timiş	**72.72**	27.28	Constantinescu
74.16	Brăila	40.61	59.39	Iliescu
74.09	Suceava	45.71	54.29	Iliescu
73.39	Ialomiţa	39.31	**60.69**	Iliescu
72.75	Iaşi	46.05	53.95	Iliescu
72.72	Sălaj	**64.87**	35.13	Constantinescu
72.02	Bihor	**65.42**	34.58	Constantinescu
72.01	Neamţ	43.53	56.47	Iliescu
71.81	Cluj	**69.03**	30.97	Constantinescu
70.97	Călăraşi	36.40	**63.60**	Iliescu
70.75	Bistriţa–Năsăud	**65.63**	34.37	Constantinescu
70.70	Prahova	53.62	46.38	Constantinescu
70.68	Maramureş	55.03	44.97	Constantinescu
70.67	Buzău	35.40	**64.60**	Iliescu
70.58	Tulcea	52.58	47.42	Iliescu
70.45	Botoşani	31.54	**68.46**	Iliescu
70.37	Satu Mare	**77.70**	22.30	Constantinescu
70.07	Vrancea	58.37	41.63	Iliescu
70.04	Bucureşti	**62.82**	37.18	Constantinescu
69.99	Dolj	46.47	53.53	Iliescu
69.93	Bacău	45.79	54.21	Iliescu
69.47	Ilfov	56.98	43.02	Constantinescu
69.02	Argeş	41.62	58.38	Iliescu
68.20	Teleorman	33.79	**66.21**	Iliescu
68.17	Vâlcea	40.09	59.91	Iliescu
67.89	Vaslui	36.34	**63.66**	Iliescu
67.17	Olt	37.48	**62.52**	Iliescu
66.80	Dâmboviţa	46.25	53.75	Iliescu
66.36	Mehedinţi	45.90	54.10	Iliescu
65.61	Giurgiu	43.94	56.06	Iliescu
65.21	Galaţi	51.41	48.59	Constantinescu
64.22	Gorj	37.31	**62.69**	Iliescu

Figures in bold indicate a share of the vote over 60 per cent

The results from the second round of the presidential elections clearly show the geographic division present in Romanian politics (see Map 1). Constantinescu gained a greater share of the vote than Iliescu in all the counties of the north and west of the country (the Banat, Crişana, Maramureş and Transylvania) bar one, Hunedoara, whilst in the poorer rural areas of the south and east (Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia) the picture was exactly reversed. The exceptions to this rule, counties which voted for Constantinescu in the Iliescu-dominated areas, were the urban centres of Bucharest and Constanţa and their hinterlands, Prahova, a relatively developed axis between Transylvania and the capital, and the anomalous Galaţi, which will be considered below. This geographic distribution broadly reflects the former divide between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, with Constantinescu dominating in the regions once ruled by the former and Iliescu in those ruled by the latter. Too much should not, perhaps, be built into this observation but, when the presidential election results from the second round are mapped against turnout figures (see Table 4), a picture emerges which may, in part, reflect the different political cultures imparted by these historical experiences. Turnout was generally higher in the counties of Transylvania and it was in these areas that Constantinescu recorded his biggest vote, often by a large margin. In contrast, Iliescu dominated the voting in the south and east of the country, often by equally sizeable amounts, but here attendance at the polls was far lower. Despite the allure of competitions, such as that which promised communes recording the highest turnout a chance to win a tractor, it seems that Iliescu was never able to master the problem of mobilizing a large segment of his potential vote.

The figures also reveal a surprisingly low turnout in Bucharest, which may have been because large numbers of people seem to have taken advantage of the electoral period to travel home to their native towns and villages — where they presumably added to the names on the special lists. More intriguing is the case of Galaţi, which recorded the lowest turnout of all the counties of Romania in the 3 November poll — just 60.14 per cent. This low turnout figure may be a clue as to how Constantinescu and the CDR managed to triumph in a rust-belt city, once dubbed 'Red Galaţi', after the victory of the left-wing Socialists in the 1992 local elections — the assumption being that voter apathy amongst potential PDSR supporters allowed the more motivated CDR followers to triumph.

The Results: The Polls for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies

The triumph of Emil Constantinescu in the presidential poll was matched by the CDR in the parliamentary elections. The new ruling CDR–USD–UDMR coalition under Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea enjoyed a clear majority in both houses of parliament — by fifty-seven votes in the Chamber of Deputies and thirty-one in the Senate.[37] In part, the result can be seen as a negative vote against the uncharismatic former premier, Nicolae Văcăroiu, and his regime's poor handling of the economy. All sides apparently agreed it was time for a change, with even the incumbent PDSR advocating a speeding up of the economic reform process.

Strikingly, the CDR seems to have not only achieved success among its traditional constituencies, such as urban professionals and students, but even to have secured a greater proportion of the workers' vote, gaining 32 per cent as against 21 per cent for the PDSR and 13 per cent for the USD (see Table 7). In contrast, the greatest proportion of the PDSR vote seems to have come from the elderly and those who live in the countryside. The CDR also appears to have secured a high percentage of the vote amongst entrepreneurs, which would suggest that this class is beginning to spread beyond the bounds of the former *nomenklatura*, a group which might have been expected to side with the PDSR.

Table 5. Results of the elections for the Senate in 1992 and 1996

Party	1992		1996	
	% of vote	Mandates	% of vote	Mandates
CDR	20.16	34	30.70	53
PDSR*	28.29	49	23.08	41
USD**	10.39	18	13.16	23
UDMR	7.59	12	6.81	11
PRM	3.85	6	4.54	8
PUNR	8.12	14	4.22	7
PS	—	—	2.26	—
PSM	3.19	5	2.16	—
AN–L	—	—	1.92	—
PPR	—	—	1.45	—
PSMR	—	—	1.33	—
PDAR	3.31	5	0.97	—

Source: BEC Internet site
Key as for Table 6 below

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37 For a profile of Ciorbea, see Michael Shafir 'Victor Ciorbea: Romania's Prime Minister-Designate', *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 20 November 1996.

Table 6.   Results of the elections for the Chamber of Deputies in 1992 and
1996

Party	1992 % of vote	1992 Mandates	1996 % of vote	1996 Mandates
CDR	20.01	82	30.17	122
PDSR*	27.72	117	21.52	91
USD**	10.19	43	12.93	53
UDMR	7.46	27	6.64	25
PRM	3.90	16	4.46	19
PUNR	7.72	30	4.36	18
PS	—	—	2.92	—
PSM	3.04	13	2.15	—
AN–L	—	—	1.57	—
PPR	—	—	1.44	—
PSMR	—	—	1.73	—
PDAR	2.99	—	0.87	—

Source: BEC Internet site

Key
CDR=Democratic Convention of Romania, PDSR=Party of Social Democracy in
Romania, USD=Social Democratic Union, UDMR=Hungarian Democratic Union of
Romania, PRM=Greater Romania Party, PUNR= Party of Romanian National Unity,
PS= Socialist Party, PSM= Socialist Labour Party, AN–L=National–Liberal Alliance,
PPR= Pensioners Party in Romania, PSMR= Romanian Socialist Labour Party,
PDAR=Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania.

*   Standing as the FDSN in 1992
** Standing as the FSN in 1992

Table 7.   Voting patterns within key groups (by percentage)

Group	CDR	PDSR	USD	UDMR	PUNR	Others
Aged 18–24	35	17	14	8	7	19
Aged 65+	24	42	7	9	3	15
Entrepreneurs	48	11	11	8	3	19
Students	44	10	14	6	7	19
Workers	32	21	13	9	6	19
Peasants	18	53	11	6	3	9
Urban	43	16	11	6	5	19
Rural	26	34	11	8	4	17

Source: IRSOP–IFES Exit Poll

The USD consolidated its position as the third party of Romanian
politics, gaining just under 3 per cent more of the vote than in 1992. Exit-
poll evidence, however, suggests that the electorate of the USD has
changed radically since 1992, with only 19 per cent of voters remaining
with the party since the last general election. Most of its new recruits seem

to have come from disaffected PDSR supporters, but the USD also seems to have done disproportionately well among young first-time voters (see Table 8).[38] Indeed, the fact that only 49 per cent of the victorious CDR's electorate had remained faithful since 1992 highlights the fluidity of Romanian politics and the ease with which voters apparently change parties. Unlike some of the other political parties the USD recorded a remarkably even electoral performance across all of Romania, gaining its highest votes (over 20 per cent) in counties as geographically dispersed as Bistriţa–Năsăud, Braşov, Buzău, Constanţa, Prahova, Sibiu and Suceava. Despite the relatively good showing of the USD, however, the election in fact brought a polarization of Romanian electors, as they consolidated their votes behind one of the two mainstream parties. Except in those constituencies where there was a large Hungarian vote, the pattern throughout the country was for 70–80 per cent of the vote to go to either the CDR or the PDSR. In Bucharest, for instance, 76.07 per cent of the vote was claimed by these two parties.

Table 8. How voters changed their preferences between 1992 and 1996 (by percentage)

Preferences of voters in 1996	Preferences of CDR and USD voters in 1992				
	CDR	PDSR*	USD**	Others	New voters
CDR	49	25	14	11	10
USD	14	42	19	11	14

Source: IRSOP–IFES Exit Poll

* In 1992 standing as the FDSN
** In 1992 standing as the FSN

This polarization of the vote inevitably had consequences for the smaller parliamentary parties. The PUNR, in particular, suffered a sharp reverse, losing nearly half its vote. Its strongest performance continued to be in its Transylvanian heartland, especially in the counties of Alba (13 per cent of the total vote), Bistriţa–Năsăud (16.98 per cent), Cluj (24.54 per cent), Maramureş (13.76 per cent), Mureş (21.75 per cent) and Sălaj (13.75 per cent). Elsewhere it gained little support, and outside Transylvania its performance was often disastrous. The reasons for the party's decline are diverse, but would seem to include recurrent leadership disputes, association with the 'Caritas' scandal and the recently signed

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38 Dennis Deletant also found that the USD were particularly popular amongst first-time voters in Vaslui county.

Romanian–Hungarian basic treaty, which not only undermined the party's political position but also exposed it to comparison with Hungarian opponents of the same document.[39] The PUNR's main rival on the right, the PRM, did better, slightly increasing its share of the vote from 1992, although it still only registered 4.46 per cent nationwide. In contrast to the PUNR, it did better outside Transylvania and the Banat and, although its vote was in general more evenly spread across all of Romania, a slight clustering was still evident in three distinct areas. These were: (a) northern Moldavia: Bacău (7.36 per cent of the vote), Botoşani (8.72 per cent), Iaşi (8.57 per cent), Neamţ (8.02 per cent) and Suceava (7.89 per cent); (b) northern Oltenia: Argeş (10.8 per cent), Gorj (8.07 per cent), Hunedoara (8.11 per cent), Olt (8.07 per cent) and Vâlcea (7.68 per cent); and (c) eastern Muntenia: Brăila (7.52 per cent) and Tulcea (8.03 per cent). No obvious explanation exists to explain these groupings, but the rather isolated and rural nature of all these areas, where anti-intellectual and anti-urban prejudices might be expected to prosper, could have led PDSR protest votes to congregate with the PRM rather than the CDR. In northern Moldavia it is also possible that the PRM's anti-Semitism might have found some response in an area where in the past there had been a large Jewish presence. The lack of success of the parties of the right in the 1996 elections has led some commentators to suggest that the tide of nationalism is at last ebbing in Romania. It is noticeable that, when Iliescu adopted his more markedly nationalist posture during the second round, presumably in search of the first round votes of Gheorghe Funar and Vadim Tudor, it did him little good among the wider Romanian electorate.[40]

The UDMR secured a slightly lower proportion of the vote than in 1992, but this can be largely ascribed to splits within the Hungarian community, as a number of parliamentarians not re-selected to represent the party chose to fight the elections as independent candidates.[41] Prior to the polls, some concerns were voiced by local UDMR supporters that the decision of the Sekler Youth Forum to stand in the elections might further divide the Hungarian vote. These concerns proved to be illusory as

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39 Shafir, 'Opting for Political Change', p. 13. For 'Caritas', see Katherine Verdery, 'Faith, Hope and *Caritas* in the Land of the Pyramids: Romania, 1990 to 1994', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37, 1995, 4, pp. 625–9.

40 The argument that nationalism is on the wane has been advanced by Aurelian Crăiuţu, 'Light at the End of the Tunnel: Romania 1989–1996' (see note 12). For the use of nationalism in the campaign, see note 22.

41 *BBC*, EE/2746, B/4, 18 October 1996, Duna TV satellite service, 16.00 GMT, 16 October 1996.

the Forum, which claims a distinct Sekler, as opposed to Hungarian, identity for the inhabitants of Harghita and Covasna, gained only 2,142 votes in the election for the Chamber of Deputies.[42] Within the ranks of the smaller Romanian political parties, coalition-building often seems to resemble a game of musical chairs so comparisons are difficult to make, but amongst the groups failing to renew their mandate in the new parliament were the Socialists, who had dealt a fatal self-inflicted blow to their electoral prospects by splitting into the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labour Party.[43] Given the ideological drift of the PDSR towards the centre, the absence of any of the socialist parties in the new parliament means that the left is effectively unrepresented. The PDAR, which had secured a foothold in both the parliaments of 1990 and 1992, also failed to renew its mandate when, alongside the MER and the New Romania Party, as part of the National Union of the Centre, it gained only 0.97 per cent of the vote.

The swing to the CDR from the PDSR was not even across all of Romania and, when the county results are compared, some interesting variations can be observed (see Table 9). The CDR recorded a gain of 15 per cent or more on its 1992 figure in thirteen constituencies, but the PDSR recorded an equivalent loss in only four constituencies. Whilst bearing in mind the aforementioned fluidity of Romanian voting patterns, this, nevertheless, suggests that the CDR gathered most of its extra support either from those voters who supported parties which had failed to cross the electoral threshold in 1992 or from first-time electors. Only in seven constituencies did the PDSR lose more votes than the CDR gained (see Table 10). In each of these the USD did better than its average vote, suggesting that it was the prime beneficiary of the PDSR's decline. It is also noticeable, however, that amongst these counties there are a number of those from northern Moldavia where the PRM achieved results better than its national average.

Of the fourteen constituencies in which the PDSR lost more than 10 per cent of its vote, all but four were in Moldavia (Bacău, Botoşani, Galaţi, Iaşi, Vaslui, Vrancea) or eastern Muntenia and the Dobrogea (Buzău, Brăila, Tulcea and Constanţa). The exceptions to this rule were Teleorman, Prahova, Giurgiu and Bucharest (presumably reflecting the loss of the working-class vote). In contrast, the PDSR managed to defend

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42 *BBC*, EE/2758, B/8, 1 November 1996, Hungarian Radio, 11.00 GMT, 30 October 1996.

43 They also faced competition from a new grouping, the Socialist Workers' Party. For the divisions within Romania's socialists, see Michael Shafir, 'A Split in the Socialist Camp', *Transition*, 12 May 1995, pp. 2–5.

Table 9. CDR and FDSN/PDSR vote in 1992 and 1996 for the Chamber of Deputies (by percentage)

County	1992 CDR	1996 CDR	+/– (%)	1992 FDSN	1996 PDSR	+/– (%)
Alba	25.43	**42.82**	**+17.39**	21.97	15.07	–6.90
Arad	36.87	**42.86**	+5.99	19.73	21.00	+1.27
Argeş	21.07	32.68	+11.61	**45.78**	38.95	–6.83
Bacău	17.81	36.30	**+18.49**	**50.12**	34.02	**–16.10**
Bihor	20.29	30.01	+9.72	16.65	14.75	–1.90
Bistriţa–Năsăud	23.18	38.09	+14.91	20.22	11.58	–8.64
Botoşani	12.33	23.86	+11.53	**67.17**	**46.69**	**–20.48**
Braşov	30.92	**41.93**	+11.01	19.32	15.61	–3.71
Brăila	18.54	36.32	**+17.78**	**52.30**	37.67	–14.63
Buzău	14.87	27.78	+12.91	**65.31**	**42.07**	**–23.34**
Caraş–Severin	**41.75**	**50.94**	+9.2	23.92	22.07	–1.85
Călăraşi	18.51	26.06	+7.58	**50.70**	**53.78**	+3.08
Cluj	21.87	32.99	+11.12	10.91	10.19	–0.72
Constanţa	31.75	**45.90**	+14.15	29.52	17.81	–11.71
Covasna	7.65	7.30	–0.35	5.00	7.22	+2.22
Dâmboviţa	25.40	35.90	+10.50	**45.64**	38.63	–7.01
Dolj	24.87	**45.37**	**+20.50**	38.53	31.48	–7.05
Galaţi	25.49	**41.92**	**+16.43**	**52.46**	37.74	–14.72
Giurgiu	22.89	32.88	+9.99	**56.02**	**43.93**	–12.09
Gorj	16.04	31.62	**+15.58**	**40.93**	39.57	–1.36
Harghita	5.70	2.80	–2.90	2.34	4.21	+1.87
Hunedoara	23.03	34.53	+11.50	27.27	27.38	+0.11
Ialomiţa	16.58	31.16	+14.58	**51.52**	**42.10**	–9.40
Iaşi	27.37	37.81	+10.44	**46.25**	34.80	–11.45
Maramureş	21.76	32.14	+10.38	22.61	19.61	–3.00
Mehedinţi	25.58	**44.70**	**+19.12**	**40.13**	34.52	–5.61
Mureş	8.16	15.44	+7.28	4.30	10.05	+5.75
Neamţ	20.84	27.60	+6.76	**42.44**	**45.03**	+2.59
Olt	15.94	29.98	+14.04	**50.28**	**44.70**	–5.58
Prahova	25.75	**45.55**	**+19.80**	36.65	23.35	–13.30
Satu Mare	23.39	36.28	+12.89	14.65	10.50	–4.15
Sălaj	14.44	26.48	+12.04	17.93	19.09	–1.16
Sibiu	38.90	**49.74**	+10.84	16.35	11.07	–5.28
Suceava	24.00	29.33	+5.33	**46.58**	38.84	–7.74
Teleorman	15.41	31.44	**+16.03**	**58.63**	**43.54**	**–15.09**
Timiş	**54.43**	**56.29**	+1.86	17.47	13.02	–4.45
Tulcea	23.28	39.30	**+16.02**	**49.59**	38.71	–10.88
Vaslui	14.43	32.09	**+17.66**	**60.35**	**45.37**	–14.98
Vâlcea	19.14	39.14	**+20.00**	36.61	33.03	–3.58
Vrancea	20.36	33.27	+12.91	**59.57**	**44.71**	–14.86
Bucureşti	**40.22**	**57.40**	**+17.81**	32.01	18.67	–13.34
S.A. Ilfov	38.56	**47.74**	+9.18	36.17	29.84	–6.33

Figures in bold indicate a swing of over 15 per cent and a total vote over 40 per cent

Table 10. Voting patterns in counties where PDSR losses were higher than CDR gains (by percentage)

County	CDR	PDSR	USD	PRM	PUNR
Botoşani	23.86	**46.69**	**17.87**	**8.72**	2.67
Buzău	27.78	**42.07**	**23.00**	**4.83**	2.13
Giurgiu	**32.88**	**43.93**	**16.01**	4.13	2.81
Iaşi	**37.81**	**34.80**	**16.43**	**8.57**	2.18
Suceava	29.33	**38.84**	**20.50**	**7.89**	3.28
Timiş	**56.29**	13.02	**16.52**	3.28	**4.42**
Vrancea	**33.27**	**44.71**	**15.70**	4.27	1.94

Figures in bold are above the national average for the respective parties

its political base in Oltenia and other parts of Muntenia, actually recording a 3 per cent gain on its 1992 vote in Călăraşi and suffering relatively few losses from a high base in Gorj, Vâlcea and Olt. Bucking the national trend, it also increased its vote in Neamţ, Hunedoara, Arad, Covasna, Harghita and Mureş. In the latter Transylvanian counties it was presumably the beneficiary of a decline in the PUNR vote. The aforementioned tendency for the vote to polarize between the main parties, however, meant that, despite the relatively good showing of the PDSR in Oltenia, the CDR did even better, gaining the greatest share of the vote for both houses of parliament in the counties of Vâlcea, Mehedinţi and Dolj as well as for the Senate in Argeş. Other areas where the CDR broke a previously impenetrable PDSR electoral stranglehold were Iaşi, Galaţi (where it gained the highest vote for both houses of parliament), Suceava (where it gained most votes for the Senate) and Tulcea and Băcau, where it gained the majority of the votes for the Chamber of Deputies.

In these areas the Convention seems to have not only consolidated its vote in the main urban centres but also to have made important gains in the smaller towns and the countryside, although overall in rural areas the PDSR still remained dominant as it seems to have collected 53 per cent of the peasant vote (see Table 7). In the countryside the main issue remains the division of collectivized land, and party alignment often seems to be determined by the local prospects for a settlement of this contentious question. A slight tendency does seem to exist for wealthier villages to favour the Convention, but usually it seems to be the personality of the mayor that determines a smaller community's political orientation. In general, the Convention seems to have built on its successes in the local elections to form its own grass-roots patronage network and this process can be expected to increase now it has the power to appoint its own

prefects. In the long term it would seem that the best hope for the PDSR would be if it could rebuild its votes in the cities amongst the working-class voters.

Romania's 'Velvet Revolution'

The assertion that the elections of 1996 were the 'real' Romanian revolution — Romania's own equivalent of the 'Velvet Revolution' — was perhaps tinged more than a little by the euphoria of the supporters of the opposition in their hour of victory.[44] The very fact that many of the USD ministers in the new government, including Adrian Severin, Victor Babiuc and Bogdan Niculescu-Duvǎz, also held prominent posts in the National Salvation Front government of Petre Roman formed after the May 1990 elections, highlights the difficulty in sustaining this argument. Instead of being the 'real revolution', or indeed the end of the revolution, the elections of November 1996 can best be viewed as ushering in another stage in the revolutionary process. The eventual end of the revolution will only come with a process of accommodation when 'the main principles which the revolution has established cease to be a matter of contro-versy'.[45] Romania has not yet fully reached this point, although there are many signs that it might not be far away on the horizon. Until then, it is perhaps best to assess the elections as an important step forward on the road to political maturity but also to heed the wise words of Michael Shafir, who has pointed out that the real test for Romanian democracy will only come when it successfully completes a second such change-over of power.[46]

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44 The secretary-general of the PNŢ–CD, Radu Vasile, characterized the election as Romania's own 'Velvet Revolution': *BBC*, EE/2773, B/9, 19 November 1996, Rompres, 11.56 GMT, 18 November 1996.

45 Jaroslav Krejći, *Great Revolutions Compared: The Outlines of a Theory*, New York, 2nd edn, 1994, pp. 5–6.

46 Michael Shafir 'Romania Enters the "Age of Normalcy"', *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, vol. 1, no. 474, 18 November 1996, p. 2.

The Post-Communist Security Services in Romania

Dennis Deletant

Of all the secret police forces of the Communist states of Eastern Europe, the Romanian Securitate has achieved the greatest notoriety, Indeed, such was the Western media's obsession with it during the revolution of December 1989 that the acclimatization of the very word Securitate in the *Oxford English Dictionary* was ensured. That fixation was merely a reflection of the success of the Securitate — formerly the Department of State Security (DSS) — in instilling itself in the minds of Romanians as the ruthless instrument of repression. The Securitate's most potent weapon was fear, and the depth to which it inculcated fear into the Romanian population proved the principal reason for its success.

Although the Romanian Communist Party was declared dead in January 1990, no death certificate was produced. Members of the Party merely swapped their cards for those of the ruling National Salvation Front (NSF), and most of them carried on as if nothing had changed in Romanian political life. The NSF tried to blend into the present and bury the past. It successors, the Democratic National Salvation Front and the Romanian Party of Social Democracy (PDSR), showed a similar reluctance to question the past. Only some of those responsible for the bloodshed in December 1989 have been brought to trial. They include twenty-five members of the politburo and the Central Committee, and eleven generals in the Securitate and the militia. For the events in Timişoara, twenty-nine leading figures in the Communist Party, the Securitate and the militia have been convicted of 'incitement to murder'. Yet these convictions relate to the events between 16 and 22 December.

The 800 suspected 'terrorists' who were arrested by the army between 22 and 28 December were freed early in 1990. Many senior army, Securitate and militia officers whom their own subordinates have publicly identified as giving orders for demonstrators to be fired upon in Bucharest

and in Cluj on 21 December remain at liberty, and some of them have been promoted to even more senior positions within the army and police. Their names have been revealed in the Romanian press.[1]

One day after the execution of the Ceauşescus on Christmas Day, Ion Iliescu, at that time head of the Provisional Council of National Unity, signed a decree removing the Department of State Security from the control of the Ministry of the Interior and placing it under that of the Ministry of National Defence.[2] In effect, the Securitate was integrated into the system and legitimized, thus enabling its officers to organize the release of all their colleagues held on suspicion of firing on demonstrators during the revolution. It is true that on 30 December a further decree was issued, under which the Securitate was dismantled and its directorate chiefs placed under arrest or in the reserve, but this was merely window-dressing. By then most of the suspected 'terrorists' had been given their freedom. The unreliablity of witnesses, bureaucratic inertia, and the desire to protect vested interests involving, first, Iliescu's bodyguard (the SPP) which contained officers from the former Fifth Directorate of the Securitate (responsible for the protection of Ceauşescu) and, secondly, the anti-terrorist brigade of the SRI, whose numbers included men from the Securitate anti-terrorist unit (USLA), explain why the investigations into the deaths of the officially recognized thousand or so victims of the revolution were not completed and why relatively few charges were brought.

Any new security service in Romania faces an enormous task in gaining the respect of the population, given the legacy of fear generated by the Securitate. Without candour, consistency and transparency on the part of the security services, Romanians will harbour the suspicion that any successor to the Securitate will simply be a revamped version of it, employing the same people and the same methods. In fact, there is not just one successor to the Securitate but at least nine security services known to be operating at present. To many Romanians, this fragmentation of security and intelligence agencies was merely a public relations ploy of the authorities to convince foreigners that the Securitate had been dismantled and that the centralized control of internal security activity had been abolished. But it was precisely that lack of a centralized authority, based on constraints codified in law and effectively *implemented*, that lay behind public suspicion of the security services. Unease about the nature of their activities, the duplication of their functions, the apparent lack of statutory

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1   See, for example, *Evenimentul zilei*, 14 July 1993, p. 3; *România liberă*, 28 December 1993, p. 10.

2   *România liberă*, 27 December 1989, p. 1.

control over some of them, and the opaqueness surrounding them has fuelled public concern over the last seven years.

That public concern was shared by foreign observers who saw the position of these services as symptomatic of the problems of democratic accountability and responsibility in Romania during the period of Ion Iliescu's presidency. Although the structures of democracy were put into place, they were not functioning adequately. To many Romanians the law in the West is designed, in broad terms, to protect the citizen against the government and fellow citizens, whereas in Romania the law, in past and present practice, is used by the government as an instrument to protect itself against the citizen. Deploying the law in this way, the government loses a moral basis for action, and that lack of morality destroys all values except that of making money by any means.

Romanians themselves talk less about 'the government' and more about 'the power' (*puterea*). This distinction is eloquent, for 'the power' referred until the recent elections to a clique composed of President Iliescu and his counsellors, among them the heads of the security services. The government headed by Nicolae Văcăroiu, it was argued, had responsibility but no authority. The authority rested with Iliescu and his entourage. But Iliescu and his group were not the only decision-makers. The key players in Romania are a small group of entrepreneurs, many of them employees of Securitate-controlled trade companies, who by taking advantage of the legal vacuum which followed the revolution, have set up new companies, re-invested their profits in them, in property and in the media, and who seek to gain control of the embryonic financial institutions. Their interest is in controlling change, and they co-opted the security services into helping them to do so.[3] The maintenance of stability is a pre-requisite for control and the targets of the security services for surveillance are, by and large, those who are deemed to threaten that stability in any way. Into this category would fall individuals with links to opponents of the regime, both in Romania and abroad (including those with overt sympathies for the exiled King Michael), and potential rivals for economic power.

Securitate control of foreign trade under Ceauşescu placed its officers in a position of privilege in post-revolutionary Romania. Securitate officers, with their specialist knowledge and their foreign contacts,

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3 For examples, see the anonymous article 'PSM-ul este condus din umbră de junta Generalului Pelle', *Academia caţavencu*, 23–9 May 1995, p. 3. The daily *Evenimentul zilei* (1 June 1995, p. 7) has alleged that millions of dollars have found their way into the pockets of five or six businessmen in Romania as the proceeds of sanctions-busting with Serbia. Officers in UM 0215 are said to have co-operated in these illegal activities by allowing petrol tankers to cross into Serbia from Romania without customs controls being carried out.

triggered the creation of a veritable economic mafia. Using their privileged commercial expertise, these officers set up private import-export businesses and by exploiting their positions within the Foreign Trade Ministry and other government agencies cornered a significant part of Romania's export activity. The depth of this penetration by former Securitate officers of the Romanian economy was signalled by the Romanian defector Liviu Turcu, and also by anonymous sources within the former Securitate.[4]

The nine Romanian security and intelligence services are:

1. Serviciul Român de Informaţii (SRI), the Romanian Security Service.

2. Serviciul de Pază şi Protecţie (SPP), the Presidential Protection and Guard Service.

3. Serviciul de Informaţii Externe (SIE), the Foreign Intelligence Service.

4. Direcţia Informaţiilor Militare (DIM), the Directorate of Military Intelligence, subordinated to the Ministry of Defence.

5. Direcţia de Contraspionaj a Ministerului Apărării Naţionale (DCS), the Directorate of Counter-Espionage of the Ministry of Defence.

6. Serviciul de Informaţii al Ministerului de Interne (UM 0125), the Intelligence and Security Service of the Ministry of the Interior.

7. Direcţia de Supraveghere Operativă şi Investigaţii a Inspectoratului General al Poliţiei (DSOI), the Directorate of Surveillance and Investigation of the Ministry of the Interior.[5]

8. Serviciul de Informaţii al Direcţiei Generale a Penitenciarelor (UM 0400), also known as Serviciul Operativ Independent (SOI), the Intelligence Service of the General Directorate of Prisons, subordinated to the Ministry of Justice.[6]

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4   Turcu has disclosed that Mişu Negriţoiu, one-time Minister for Economic Reform and Strategy in the government sworn in on 20 November 1992, and from September 1993 economic counsellor to President Iliescu, was sent as head of the Romanian Commercial Bureau in Los Angeles. This position, Turcu alleges, was a Romanian intelligence one.

5   The creation of this service was announced in the Romanian press in May 1994 (*Evenimentul zilei*, 12 May 1994, p. 8).

6   This service is mentioned in article 9, paragraph 1 of Law No. 51 of 1991 as a service specializing in the gathering of information within the prison system. Although some analysts have stated that it has taken over the tasks of the former Sixth Directorate of the DSS, responsible for penal investigation and interrogation of suspects, changes in procedures in penal investigation mean that there is no longer a statutory involvement of officers of UM 0400 in interrogation. The role of this service appears to be rather in gathering information from convicted prisoners in order to prevent breakouts or disturbances in jails.

9. Serviciul de Telecomunicații Speciale (STS), the Special Tele-communications Service.[7]

Since the revolution, the Romanian Security Service (SRI) has attracted the most attention in the Romanian press because it is the largest of the new security services. Set up under Decree No. 181 of 26 March 1990, it received a statutory foundation in Law No. 14 of 1992. The principal tasks of the SRI are to gather information to prevent and combat any threats to Romania's national security. Combating terrorism and undertaking anti-terrorist actions are duties that the SRI shares with the SPP. The SRI is believed to employ from 10,000 to 12,000 officers and troops, as well as an unknown number of civilian secretarial staff. Its head was, until April 1997, Virgil Măgureanu.

Among the internal civilian security services, the SRI, the Intelligence and Security Service of the Ministry of the Interior (UM 0215), and the SPP are the most significant. Public confidence in all three agencies has been wanting because the authorities have failed to investigate their roles in a number of acts of organized political violence.[8]

The most notorious involved the miners' invasion of Bucharest in June 1990. The failure of the police to disperse rioters who on 13 June attacked the police headquarters, the offices of Romanian television and the Foreign Ministry, prompted President Ion Iliescu to appeal to miners from the Jiu valley to defend the government. Special trains were laid on to bring some 10,000 miners to Bucharest at dawn on 14 June armed with wooden staves and iron bars. They were joined by vigilantes, some of whom were later identified as officers of the Securitate. For two days the miners terrorized the population of the capital, attacking anyone they suspected of opposition to the government. These events raised a number of questions to which a satisfactory answer has yet to be given, despite the government's presentation of the findings of a parliamentary enquiry. The

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7   This service was created by a resolution of the government (No. 229) in 1993. It is responsible for ensuring secret radio and telephone communications for the presidency and government. It is alleged to be involved in tapping for the security services, and if this is true its activity would overlap with that of the technical monitoring section of the SRI.

8   The activities of some of the security services have been discussed by V. G. Baleanu in *The Enemy Within: The Romanian Intelligence Service in Transition*, RMA Sandhurst: Conflict Studies Research Centre, 1995, 11 pp., and by C. Ivanciuc in a series of articles in the Bucharest weekly *22*, nos. 17–23 (May–June 1995). The brief of DSOI is the combatting of organized crime within Romania and cross-border crime such as drug- and arms-trafficking. Although its head claims independence from 0215, it receives technical support from SRI. Its director in 1996 was Col. Traian Dima. The number of personnel working in this agency is not in the public domain.

most pressing of these was the role played by several members of the Securitate who were identified on camera when beating students and by-standers, and who were widely suspected at the time of being members of the new security service, the SRI, although it is now alleged that they belonged to the agency UM 0215. Whatever their accreditation, no action has been taken against these officers.

In a recent development, an article in the daily *România liberă* alleged that on the evening of 13 June 1990, two engineers, Cămărăşescu and Ilinescu, called on the miners' leader, Miron Cozma, at his headquarters in Petroşani, with instructions from the SRI that the miners should not to go home after completing their shift but should join the buses and lorries which had been provided to take them to the railway station where trains would ferry them to Bucharest that night. Cozma allegedly phoned President Iliescu to confirm the orders and was told by Iliescu to come to his aid in the capital.[9]

The miners' episode, and the serious damage which it did to Romania's image abroad, prompted members of parliament to raise the question of the SRI's accountability. Steps to make it accountable by codifying its powers were taken in the National Security Law passed on 26 July 1991. Authority for the SRI to break the law, necessary in the interests of national security, is given in article 13, and certification of this need is provided by warrants of six months' duration, issued by 'procurators especially designated by the procurator-general of Romania'. The law does not specify what standing these procurators should have and there is no credible mechanism for the investigation of complaints. A system of judicial supervision of the exercise of warrants is therefore lacking in the law.

If these safeguards are wanting, there is no lack of government bodies authorized to run security services. Articles 6, 8 and 9 stipulate that the SRI, the SIE, the SPP, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice are all empowered to carry out activity related to the defence of national security. There is, however, no single minister, as in the case of the United Kingdom, to whom bodies involved in national security, as opposed to foreign intelligence, are responsible. In the absence of such a minister security operations run the risk of being duplicated, confused and unaccountable. The only coordinating power rests with the Supreme Defence Council (Consiliul Suprem de Apărare a Ţării) , a collective body chaired by the President, which appeared to have no constitutional link with parliament.

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9 'Adevărul despre a III-a mineriadă, 13–15 iunie 1990', *România liberă*, 8 January 1997.

The pernicious effects of this lack of supervision of the SRI were demonstrated during a second wave of organized violence. This involved, yet again, a miners' invasion of Bucharest, this time in September 1991. From revelations made by Virgil Măgureanu, the SRI director, in answer to questions from members of parliament about the miners' actions, it was clear that he had advised President Iliescu to force Prime Minister Roman's resignation. The parliamentary clamour for control over Măgureanu's activity became irresistible and was instituted on 23 June 1993, when the Joint Standing Committee of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate for Parliamentary Oversight of the SRI was estabished by the Romanian Parliament.

Măgureanu endeavoured to remove the stigma from the SRI of being a resuscitated Securitate.[10] He did not succeed. His own Securitate past

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10 Măgureanu came from a humble background and details of his career, published in 1992, cast an interesting light on the workings of the Securitate. Born Virgil Asztalos in March 1941 in the county of Satu Mare at a time when it was under Hungarian rule (hence the Hungarian spelling of his father's name Astalîş), his secondary schooling was pursued in a textile apprentice school, where he was made Communist Youth secretary. In 1964, he enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy at Bucharest University. In his third year he was given a six-month bursary to study in Moscow where, some sources suggest, he was recruited by the KGB. At this time, it is alleged, he was already working for the Securitate in unit UM 0626 (Third Directorate responsible for internal counter-espionage) and his recruitment may have been prompted by the fact he had an uncle called Iloc who was a Securitate officer in the Bucharest directorate (*Academia caţavencu*, 5, 1995, 8, 28 February–6 March, p. 3). After graduating in 1969, he was appointed assistant lecturer in political science at the Party Academy 'Ştefan Gheorghiu' in Bucharest. At the same time, he adopted his mother's maiden name, Măgureanu, to avoid the suspicion that he might be of Hungarian background. In autumn 1969, after Colonel Gaddafi seized power in Libya, Măgureanu was sent to Libya where he worked with KGB officers, presumably to help with the reorganization of the security services. Măgureanu's close relations with the KGB officers were monitored by the counter-intelligence department of the Securitate and he was recalled to Romania. In summer 1971, he was transferred to the department of scientific socialism at the university and it was from here that on 1 September 1972 he was recruited to work under cover in the DIE with the rank of captain. He was given the conspiratorial name of Mihai Mihăilă and underwent three months of training before moving onto the documentation section. On 31 March 1973, he was placed on the reserve on the grounds of having been 'appointed to a civilian job'. He returned to the 'Ştefan Gheorghiu' Academy, presumably working under cover since he signed an official secrets document on 27 March 1973 pledging himself not to reveal anything about the DIE or his work there. This document provides the only clue that Măgureanu might have carried out missions abroad: 'I undertake to maintain total silence concerning the cover name of the office where I work and over the telephone numbers of UM 0626, as well as concerning the clinic which

proved a major obstacle. An opinion poll, conducted between 17 and 22 January 1997, showed that only 20 per cent of those questioned had faith in him, while 32 per cent regarded him as unreliable and 27 per cent as totally unreliable.[11] His efforts to improve the SRI's image were dogged by dissent, in-fighting, scandal and, on occasions, by his own actions. The continued presence of a number of Securitate officers in the ranks of the SRI was seen as an impediment to Măgureanu's attempts to establish the service as a responsible body acting, where relevant, within the law and accountable to parliament. By 1993, Măgureanu claimed to have dismissed 80 per cent of the old Securitate officers in the SRI and in a press conference on 29 March 1994 added that 'in recent months 25 per cent of the SRI's personnel had been replaced by young officers'.[12]

Dissatisfaction about the purges resurfaced in a letter addressed to parliament in April 1992 by a group of anonymous SRI officers demanding the removal of Măgureanu for what they alleged to be his interference in the country's politics. The letter claimed that the 'approximately 1,500 officers' dismissed during the purges of the previous summer had no connection with the Communist *nomenklatura*, whereas former party activists in the Securitate had been retained and held senior positions within the SRI. Măgureanu's angry response to these accusations, which he characterized as a 'demolition mania' with 'incalculable consequences' for the SRI, suggested that there was a ring of truth about the letter's claims.[13]

Nevertheless, Măgureanu's determination to imprint his leadership upon the SRI and to root out errant officers was undiminished. In January and February 1994 he visited several counties on inspection tours and replaced the SRI heads in Piatra Neamţ, Dolj, and Vâlcea. In Gorj county, however, his appearance alongside the miners' leader Miron Cozma and his exhortation to the miners at a rally there not to march on Bucharest, as they had done in June 1990 and September 1991, exposed him once again

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serves this unit, and not to discuss with anyone under any circumstances the fact that I carried out certain missions abroad or that I worked under cover abroad': 'Dosarul de securitate al domnului Măgureanu', *Tinerama*, no. 70, 27 March–2 April 1992, p. 7.

11 *România liberă*, 7 February 1997.

12 *România liberă*, 30 March 1994, p. 8. An example of a senior Securitate officer who simply donned the cap of an SRI chief is Col. F. Viziteu. He was alleged to have led the interrogation of the group of engineers at the machine tools factory in Iaşi who had planned an anti-Ceauşescu demonstration in the city centre on 14 December 1989, eight days before the dictator's overthrow. In 1990 he was made head of the SRI in Iaşi (*România liberă*, 18 January 1994, p. 8).

13 V. G. Baleanu, *The Enemy Within* (see note 8 above), pp. 3–4.

to charges of political interference. At the same time, damaging accusations appeared in the ultra-nationalist weekly *România mare*, which alleged that several Romanian intelligence officials were working for foreign agencies.[14]

Măgureanu used the allegations to settle more scores within the SRI. On 7 March 1994, he dismissed Maj.-Gen. Gheorghe Diaconescu, head of the SRI's Division A for counter-espionage.[15] The reported grounds for Diaconescu's dismissal were that he had failed to uncover a spy ring rumoured to include Lt.-Gen. Marin Pancea, the secretary of the Supreme Defence Council and an intelligence and security adviser to Iliescu, but the real reason was Diaconescu's unwise decision to keep a file on his boss and on first deputy director Maj.-Gen. Victor Marcu, and his lack of discretion when talking to his friends.[16] Măgureanu also punished those

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14 *România mare*, 21 January 1994, p. 8.

15 Diaconescu entered the Securitate in 1957 as an officer in the counter-espionage directorate. In 1985 he was made deputy head of the Third Directorate dealing with the United States (*Evenimentul zilei*, 12 March 1994, p. 3). Diaconescu was replaced by Col. Mihai Lupu. The latter had served from 1983 as deputy head of UM 0110 of the Securitate's Foreign Intelligence Directorate with responsibility for counter-espionage operations against Soviet and other Communist intelligence agencies and had been appointed in March 1990 as Diaconescu's deputy: *Evenimentul zilei*, 25 March 1994, p. 3.

16 Pancea was accused of being a spy for the French secret services in revelations made by the mass-circulation daily *Evenimentul zilei* in its issue of 14 March 1994. Pancea's activity in Romanian intelligence began in 1964, when he was transferred from the Third Army in Cluj to the General Staff of Romanian Military Intelligence (DIA, *Direcţia de Informaţii a Armatei*). He was posted as Romanian Military Attaché to Belgrade and then, in 1972, to Paris where, it was alleged, he recruited Tudor Anescu, a French citizen of Romanian origin, as an intermediary for contacts with French companies. *Evenimentul zilei* claimed that the DIE, the foreign intelligence department of the Securitate, had concluded that Anescu was a double agent, who also worked for the DST, the French security service. In 1986, Pancea became head of the Signals Training Command with the rank of Major-General, and two years later, after a brief interlude as a departmental head at the Military Academy in Bucharest, was sent to a command in Brăila. After Ceauşescu's overthrow, he was promoted to Lieutenant-General and for a brief period took over the command of DIA before being made secretary to the Supreme Defence Council in March 1990. In the same year, his Paris contact Anescu set up, first, an import-export company in Romania, and then, with the help of an associate, Lucian Cornescu, another Frenchman of Romanian origin, an investment company called Ring Oil Investment. The company's affairs were favoured by Pancea and by Major-General Dumitru Penciuc, state secretary in the Ministry of the Interior. Anescu arranged for the Ministry of the Interior to be supplied with Renault cars. President Mitterand's visit to Romania in 1993 led the Romanians to conclude that the French had privileged knowledge about their position on several matters and

held to be responsible for the leak to *România mare*, for whose director, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, and many of his associates the SRI director had little esteem. Col. Ioan Jugănaru and Col. Tudorache Maravela, officers in the records section of SRI, were dismissed.[17]

The upheavals in the SRI did not end there. In the same month, Maj.-Gen. Dumitru Cristea, a deputy director of the SRI and head of its training school, was asked to resign by Măgureanu after an alleged love affair with one of the female students. When he refused to do so, he was suspended. Cristea blamed senior members of the ruling PDSR party for the action against him, although their reasons for wanting him removed were never explained. Cristea was dismissed from his position at the end of March without ceremony. In April, other SRI chiefs were sacked. Col. Constantin Pista, head of Division C (responsible for economic counter-sabotage), was removed for incompetence, and Col. Traian Ciceu, head of Division A (counter-espionage) resigned after secret documents on Romania's political parties and extremist groups went missing.[18]

In July 1995, yet another scandal allowed Măgureanu to part company with his deputy, Lt.-Gen. Victor Marcu, a former Securitate officer in the First Directorate. On 21 June, two SRI officers called Ioan Tinca and Ionel Poporoagă were caught filming a group of people in a pavement cafe. In the group was a well-known investigative reporter from the daily *Ziua*, which a few weeks earlier had carried an interview with a Russian teacher who in the early 1950s had numbered Ion Iliescu amongst his students. The teacher claimed that Iliescu had been recruited by the KGB at this time as an informer. The daily contended that Iliescu was not merely an informer but an agent. As a result of the ensuing uproar Marcu was forced by Măgureanu to resign. News of the resignation was released to the media on 29 July.

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the SIE was charged with investigating whether there was a leak via Anescu. The SIE concluded that there was. The counter-intelligence division of the SRI then took over the investigation and in December 1993 its head, Major-General Gheorghe Diaconescu, reported that the SIE conclusions were unfounded. Subsequent press revelations about large dollar payments made to Pancea's son led to further investigations and the discovery of DIE reports about Anescu's role as a double agent. The French, the newspaper alleged, had been given access to the secrets of the Supreme Defence Council by Pancea. Pancea was paid by Radu Petre Popa, an associate of Anescu, who passed over money to the general's son, Dragoş Pancea. General Pancea was forced to resign his position and was replaced by Gen. Ion Magdalena.

17 Until the overthrow of Ceauşescu, Maravela worked in the Third Directorate (counter-espionage) of the Department of State Security (*Evenimentul zilei*, 4 March 1994, p. 3).

18 V. G. Baleanu, *The Enemy Within*, p. 5.

There seems, however, to have been more to this incident than met the eye. A good deal of *prima facie* evidence suggests that the whole affair was an attempt by enemies of Măgureanu to discredit him. His dismissal of Generals Diaconescu and Cristea and the removal or rotation of several SRI county chiefs has left a bitter taste among some former Securitate officers scattered among the various security agencies. With this in mind it is interesting to note that of the SRI divisions, that responsible for surveillance was the only one whose activity is believed to be directly coordinated by Măgureanu, all the other divisions being responsible to Lt.-Gen. Marcu. An internal enquiry conducted after the incident by Maj.-Gen. Atodoroaie revealed that several officers from the surveillance division had strong sympathies for 0215, which had led them in the past to pass on information to the counter-intelligence department of the Ministry of the Interior (code sign UM 0215). As a result, the entire senior staff of the division, headed by Colonel Toloş, was replaced.[19] The strength of the division's leanings towards 0215 was demonstrated by the fact that Colonel Lipan, one of Toloş's deputies, presented himself within forty-eight hours of his dismissal from the SRI with an authorization for transfer to 0215 and was immediately made head of the surveillance section of that service.

Another detail which leads in the same direction of a conspiracy to ensnare Măgureanu is the information, released by the SRI, that the daily *Ziua* was tipped off about the filming by an anonymous phone call. None of this information is conclusive but it does offer weight to the arguments of those who claimed that disaffected officers who had been transferred to 0215 were seeking to bring the SRI director down.[20]

These changes in the upper echelons of the SRI indicated that Măgureanu was conducting a general purge of those senior officers whom he regarded as a threat to his leadership. None the less, the senior positions of the SRI were still occupied by former Securitate officers; and opposition to the reform was voiced in the weekly *România mare*, where it was driven by Securitate officers with an allegiance to Ceauşescu and ultra-nationalist views. These same sources highlighted Măgureanu's alleged close links with the KGB and his involvement in a Soviet-backed plot against Ceauşescu. Such opponents of Măgureanu were joined by those who regarded him as anti-Western. There was certainly little evidence available to support an argument that the SRI director was a convinced democrat and, indeed, many of his statements pointed in the other direction, but that did not mean that he was unwilling to accept

19 These included Toloş's four deputies: Coifescu, Chira, Cârlănescu and Lipan.
20 'Scandalul "Terasa Anda"', *Evenimentul zilei*, 5 July 1995, p. 3.

political control of the SRI. The question was: whose political control? He remained the only leading figure of the December 1989 revolution to have retained his leading position after the November 1996 elections. Since the position of head of the SRI is in the gift of the president, President Constantinescu's relationship with Măgureanu was for many of the President's supporters the acid test of his ability to make a decisive break with the past.

It is at this point that the activity of the two other security services merits discussion.

UM 0215

The counter-intelligence department of the Ministry of the Interior (code sign UM 0215) was set up in the middle of January 1990 in the following circumstances.[21] On 26 December 1989, Ion Iliescu, president of the National Salvation Front Council, placed the Department of State Security (DSS) under the authority of the Ministry of National Defence. On 30 December, Ion Iliescu signed a decree dismantling the DSS and at the same time gave Gelu Voican Voiculescu, at that time deputy prime minister in the provisional government, responsibility for assembling a new security structure. On that same evening, Voiculescu convened an extraordinary meeting of all the heads of Securitate units who had not been arrested and gave them an assurance that the new government would dismember the old Communist police structures but would not take action against individual Securitate officers.

At the beginning of January 1990, General Nicolae Militaru, Minister of Defence, gave orders that the entire DSS Directorate for Bucharest (566 officers) and the majority of men in the Fourth Directorate (responsible for

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21 0215 set up many front companies behind which it exploited its intelligence capability to profit from the breaking of the UN embargo on Serbia. Its head is Lt.-Gen. Gheorghe Dan, a former officer in USLA. Dan began his career in the Second Directorate of the DSS, then moved to the Bucharest DSS, and was later transferred to USLA. He was made head of the SRI anti-terrorist brigade in March 1990, head of counter-espionage in SIE (November 1992–February 1993), and moved to 0215 in February 1993. He was promoted to Maj.-Gen. in May 1993. Below is an outline of UM 0215's structure:

Counter-espionage division
Head: Col. Gheorghe Stan
Intelligence division
Head: Col. Ion Condoiu
Subdivided into three sections or services
1. Section for combatting hooliganism (Head: Col. Dumitru Ionea); 2. Section for combatting delinquency (Head: Col. Dumitru Constantin); 3. Section for economic intelligence (Head: Col. Ion Mândrilă).

counter-espionage in the army) be placed on the reserve. Voiculescu took this opportunity to obtain Iliescu's agreement to recruit these officers for a new security and intelligence organization. It was set up on 1 February, given the title UM 0215, and placed under the nominal control of the Ministry of the Interior. Its first director was Vice-Admiral Cico Dumitrescu, but real control remained in the hands of Voiculescu.[22]

After the departure of Admiral Dumitrescu in March 1990, Voiculescu installed two associates to the top positions in 0215: Col. Florin Calapod (alias Cristescu), an intelligence officer, and Col. Harasa, a former editor at the Meridiane Publishing House. In these initial months, officers of 0215 were given several identities and acted largely at their own discretion. On 18 February 1990, they were believed to be responsible for the forced entry into the government building in an attempt to compromise the opposition parties. At the same time, officers from 0215 were involved in the printing of anti-Semitic leaflets in Bacău and Bucharest. After the establishment of the SRI in March 1990, its new director Virgil Măgureanu sought to bring 0215 under his control. During the premiership of Petre Roman (May 1990–September 1991), with whom Voiculescu was on close terms but whom Măgureanu heartily disliked, 0215 was allowed

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22 Dan Ionescu, 'UM 0215: A Controversial Intelligence Service in Romania', *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 3, no. 30, 29 July 1994, p. 28. Voiculescu's advisor during this period was Gen. Nicolae Doicaru, a former head of foreign intelligence under Ceauşescu. Voiculescu also sought the help of Col. Viorel Tache, another former intelligence officer who, after the defection of Pacepa, was transferred to the DSS Bucharest directorate. Tache is currently director of the company Georgiana SRL. Voiculescu is alleged to have gathered the Securitate dossiers on the major players in the revolution, including that of Măgureanu. He was unable, however, to locate that of Ion Iliescu (*Ziua*, 24 June 1995, p. 5). Vice-Admiral Emil 'Cico' Dumitrescu studied at the Military Lycée at Galaţi (1950–54), the Higher Military School at Constanţa (1954–58) and then in Leningrad (1958–60), where he studied chemistry. Upon his return he was posted to the Chemical Troops Command of the army with the rank of Lieutenant-Major and then to the Military Institute of Chemical Research. His last post before the revolution was military supply officer at the Ministry of Petroleum (*România liberă*, 29 June 1995, p. 9). In 1995, he was head of the procurement department of the Ministry of the Interior (RAMI: Regia Autonomă a Ministerului de Interne) which incorporated the former foreign trade company of the Securitate called Dunărea, as well as the Securitate's synthetic diamonds factory. One of the DSS officers allegedly transferred to 0215 was Col. Ilie Merce, a deputy head of the First Directorate responsible for domestic intelligence. Merce is a close friend of the Ceauşescu sycophant Corneliu Vadim Tudor. After the revolution, Merce is said to have fed Vadim Tudor, President of the Greater Romania Party, with compromising material about his political opponents (*Ziua*, 31 July 1995, p. 8). Merce has denied ever being a member of 0215 (*Evenimentul zilei*, 8 August 1995, p. 4).

to double its strength to around 1,000 officers. Măgureanu saw this development as a threat to his own service and warned President Iliescu of 0215's potential use as a personal intelligence service by Roman. It was not long before the Roman–Voiculescu group clashed with Măgureanu and in December 1990, acting with Iliescu's approval, Măgureanu forced Voiculescu from his position with 0215.

Immediately after he took over the post of Minister of the Interior in June 1990, Doru Viorel Ursu decided to put 0215 on a legal basis. Its use of false identity papers was, at least officially, abandoned and its heads were changed. Col. Jenică Iosif was appointed director and Col. Ion Condoiu, formerly of the SRI, his deputy. In the spring of 1991, Col. Stoian Rusu took over as head of 0215 but in February 1993 the Minister of the Interior, General Ioan Dănescu, replaced him with Col. Dan Gheorghe, who had been sacked from his post as head of the SRI anti-terrorist brigade by Măgureanu.[23]

Judging from the details in operational manuals of 0215 which found their way to the offices of a Bucharest daily in March 1994, 0215 had resumed certain practices of the former Securitate. These included the gathering of information about Romanians living, working, or studying abroad, about employees of foreign firms in Romania, and about foreign residents. They also showed that 0215 was monitoring the movements of political personalities, journalists and trade unionists; 0215 was required to enter all sensitive information into the SRI's computer system.[24]

The resulting disquiet led Petre Roman, head of the Commission for Defence, Public Order and National Security of the Chamber of Deputies, to summon Interior Minister Doru Ioan Tărăcilă and 0215 head Dan Gheorghe to explain themselves. Both denied that 0215 sought to influence political developments. They did accept that some officers might have exceeded their brief but argued that 0215 was operating in accordance with the National Security Law and that those under surveillance were suspected of terrorist or criminal links.[25] These arguments were accepted without demur by Roman, to the surprise of many who remembered his previous criticism of the SRI and its alleged part in facilitating the miners' entry into Bucharest in September 1991 (which prompted Roman's resignation as Prime Minister). Strong doubts remain about the

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23 *Zig-Zag*, 18–24 February 1993, p. 4. Some analysts believe that General Gheorge Dan was the controller of Sorin Roşca-Stănescu when he worked as an informer for USLA, the counter-terrorist unit of the Securitate in the 1980s, and that Gheorge feeds information to Stănescu for publication in *Ziua*.

24 *România liberă*, 25 April 1994, p. 16.

25 *România liberă*, 24 May 1994, p. 3.

effectiveness of political accountability of 0215, whose members are drawn largely from the ranks of the Bucharest DSS. It is widely suspected of trying to take over some of the intelligence-gathering activities of the SRI and Măgureanu complained of interference by 0215 in a letter to the Defence Committee of the Senate in December 1995.[26]

SPP

Similar doubts about accountability concerned the SPP, the service responsible for the protection of the President, Romanian party leaders and foreign diplomats. It developed from the *Unitatea Specială de Pază şi Control*, set up to protect the president of the provisional government on 7 May 1990 under Decree No. 204 of the Provisional Council of National Unity. On 15 November 1991 the USPC became the SPP under Law No. 51.[27] The SPP has, according to details given by its head, Maj.-Gen. Dumitru Iliescu, during its first-ever press conference on 4 April 1995, some 1,500 personnel, most of whom were recruited from the army. It is divided into three sections, which deal with security of buildings, VIPs and intelligence. Its intelligence and surveillance role came to light in March 1995 over the case of Horia-Roman Patapievici. Patapievici, a thirty-eight-year-old physicist, had been amongst the anti-Ceauşescu protesters arrested in Bucharest on 21 December 1989. He made a name for himself after the revolution as a political analyst for the weekly *22*, the publication of the independent Group for Social Dialogue, where he subjected what he called the 'Iliescu regime' to a scathing critique. It was this anti-Iliescu stance which drew him to the attention of the SPP. While Patapievici was in Germany in February 1995, his wife was told by a neighbour that a man, claiming to be a police officer, had been making enquiries about Patapievici's political beliefs. The officer had allegedly identified himself as Captain Soare and said that he was investigating money-laundering operations. A GDS press conference exposed these investigations and the case was quickly taken up by opposition newspapers.

They initially faced a problem in identifying 'Captain Soare'. The SRI issued a statement disclaiming any interest in Patapievici's activity as a journalist or in his political ideas and argued that the interest of the media

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26 *Ziua*, 9 December 1995, p. 1.
27 The heads of the SPP in 1996 were: Director: Lt.-Gen. Dumitru Iliescu (since December 1996, Nicolae Anghel); First Deputy Director and Chief of Staff: Lt.-Gen. Gheorghe Arădăvoaice; Deputy Directors: Maj.-Gen. Nicolae Bănuţă and Maj.-Gen. Constantin Tucan. According to General Iliescu, the SPP is an autonomous service 'controlled by parliament and coordinated by the Supreme Defence Council' (Press conference, 4 April 1995).

was to 'stir unrest by hounding Romania's main intelligence service'.[28] Questioned by journalists about the activities of 'Soare', the Minister of the Interior, Doru Ioan Tărăcilă, declared that 'the type of officer like "Soare" disappeared with the revolution. It is amazing that someone can believe that political police methods are still being practised.'[29] Tărăcilă's reply revealed just the kind of obtuseness which characterizes many who are responsible for security matters in Romania. The mystery deepened when the head of UM 0215, Lt.-Gen. Dan Gheorghe, denied before the Senate's Commission for Defence, Public Order and National Security, that his service was involved in the affair. After the hearing, the commission's chairman, Radu Timofte, made the startling suggestion that 'Soare' might belong to 'an illegal intelligence structure', thereby giving credence to SRI Director Virgil Măgureanu's complaints of interference from rival intelligence and security bodies in Romania.

Just a few days after Justice Minister Iosif Chiuzbaian declared that his own ministry's intelligence unit, the SIO (Independent Operational Service), which was charged with gathering information about organized crime within the prison service, had no connection with the Patapievici case,[30] 'Soare's' identity was revealed. He was a Captain Marius Lucian of the SPP.

It was revealed only days after another case of harrassment, this time perpetrated by an SRI officer, came to light. Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, a young history lecturer at the University of Iaşi, complained in March 1995 that his correspondence had been tampered with and that his friends were questioned by a certain Major Ioan Chirilă, an officer attached to section four of the SRI. In this instance, and in contrast to the Minister of the Interior, the SRI reacted rapidly by announcing that Chirilă had been dismissed in the same month.[31]

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28 *Curierul naţional*, 10 March 1995, p. 2.

29 *România liberă*, 16 March 1995, p. 16.

30 *România liberă*, 13 March 1995, p. 3.

31 Among those who advised Ungureanu on what course of action to take against Chirilă were Liviu Antonesei, Nicolae Manolescu, Ştefan Augustin Doinaş, Andrei Pleşu and Gabriel Liiceanu (*Monitorul*, 16 March 1995, p. 1 and *România liberă*, 16 March 1995, p. 16). Ungureanu's first meeting with Chirilă was on 5 September 1994. Chirilă summoned him on the pretext that Ungureanu's name had been found in the papers of a foreigner in Bucharest who was suspected of being a spy. Chirilă used this allegation to bring up the subject of 'traitors' and advised Ungureanu to stop writing about minority issues in Romania. In an interview given to a Iaşi newspaper, Ungureanu surmised that he had probably become a target of the SRI because of his actions during the revolution. On 19 December 1989, he left Iaşi for Cluj and on the morning of 21 December was given shelter in the flat of Professor

Such cases did little to encourage decision-makers in the major Western countries, and in pan-European bodies such as the Council of Europe, over the threat posed by discretionary actions of the Romanian security services to the exercise of democracy in Romania. When Romania was accepted into the Council of Europe in October 1993, there were several conditions attached to membership, one of which was that COE rapporteurs would visit Romania every six months to assess the observance of human rights. When the rapporteurs published their first assessment in March 1994, the Romanian government responded in a detailed memorandum that the report was inaccurate, and asked to be released from the rapporteur mechanism. Some of the refutations in the memorandum were themselves questionable. The Council of Europe refused. The vigilante behaviour of part of the security apparatus in Romania served only to confirm the Council of Europe's reservations. The harrassment of American and British diplomats since 1993, involving entry into flats and surveillance in unmarked vehicles, and attempts to intimidate locally employed embassy staff, were ascribed by the SRI as the work of maverick elements within the various security services whose aim was to sour relations between Romania and the West. Damaging these relations, it is argued, is on the agenda of those who wish to detach Romania from the West. In this respect, there might be seen to be a convergence of interest on the part of those who are nostalgic for a Ceauşescu-like autonomy, and of those who seek to further a Russian interest.

President Constantinescu has grasped the nettle of accountability of the security services. He was helped in the case of the SPP by Gen. Dumitru Iliescu's behaviour during the election campaign. Dumitru Iliescu had accused Constantinescu of lying during the election campaign about the strength of the SPP, which he alleged that Constantinescu had grossly exaggerated. Dumitru Iliescu resigned after Ion Iliescu's defeat. The appointment by presidential decree of Nicolae Anghel as head of the SPP was announced on 19 December 1996.[32] Anghel announced that he would conduct a review of the service's structure before deciding upon any changes, including a possible reduction in the number of personnel. The Supreme Defence Council, meeting for the first time on 18 December with

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David Prodan. He was wounded in the street protests and taken to hospital. After the revolution, his telephone was tapped and his mail intercepted ('Îngerii Securităţii: De la Soare la Chirilă', *Gaudeamus*, 27 March–8 April 1995, p. 4).

32 Nicolae Anghel was born on 7 November 1952. He graduated from the Military Academy and rose to become a battalion commander. He went into the reserve in 1986 with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He completed studies at the National Defence College in 1995 (*România liberă*, 20 December 1996, p. 3).

its new membership since the election of Emil Constantinescu, changed the statutes of the SPP to allow a non-serving officer to head the SPP.

In a further demonstration of Constantinescu's commitment to the Romanian electorate and to the West about making the security services more accountable, it was reported on 13 January 1997 that both the SIE and UM 0215 would come under parliamentary control. The commission of the Senate and Chamber for public order would investigate claims that the telephones of public figures and journalists had been tapped by UM 0215. The move to place SIE under parliamentary control was driven by accusations from SRI that SIE officers were encroaching upon their territory.[33]

The presidential broom extended to the army. Constantinescu announced to NATO ambassadors on 23 January 1997 that General Dumitru Cioflină had been removed on the previous day as Chief of the General Staff and replaced by Major-General Constantin Degeratu, who was an alumnus of the Royal College of Defence Studies. Cioflină was regarded with suspicion by many senior figures in the Democratic Convention for his alleged part in the cover-up of the army's involvement in the Romanian revolution. A series of extracts from a senior officer's diary, published in the daily *România liberă* on the anniversary of the revolution in December 1996, proved what many Romanians already suspected, namely that the army, far from being the defender of the people, as it had portrayed itself at the time, had fired on the population in the streets of Bucharest during the evening of 21 December, causing many deaths.

Pressure mounted in the independent press for Măgureanu's dismissal. In an incisive piece in the influential weekly *22*, Şerban Orescu accused the new government of 'cohabitation' with the SRI director for failing to dismiss him: 'If the new administration wants to wipe the slate clean of the SRI's director's loaded past, there are doubts among those who elected it, and in foreign governments, that it is willing to do so. The manner in which the post of SRI director is filled has major importance in establishing the internal and international credibility of the new regime.'[34]

Măgureanu considered the article significant enough to warrant a reply. Amongst his rejoinders he argued: 'It seems to me equally important that I should remind you that the public declarations which I made in the days immediately following the election regarding my willingness to leave my job are (additional) proof of the fact that I know how to obey the law. It is

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33 *România liberă*, 13 January 1997, p. 24.
34 Şerban Orescu, 'Noul regim şi d-l Măgureanu', *22*, no. 50, 11–17 December 1996, p. 3.

the legal right of those in positions of power in the *Romanian* state to retain me as director of the SRI or not. The reference, in this context, to unnamed international bodies and the association of the measure of the country's credibility with my remaining in my job is pernicious.'[35]

Yet the improvement of Romania's image in the West was seen by Constantinescu and his advisors as paramount in their campaign to achieve closer integration with the West: the continued presence of Măgureanu as head of the SRI compromised the success of that campaign. Against this consideration, the President had to calculate the impact of Măgureanu's departure upon the SRI itself. Economic crime and corruption posed major threats to Romania's security; the country was also expected to play its part in the international fight against drug-smuggling and terrorism. In order to be effective, the SRI had to be cohesive, efficient, disciplined and to have a high morale. The role of the SRI head was to instil these qualities. Măgureanu had weeded out many of the reprobates of the past from the organization and had gone some way in leading it, albeit (one suspects) reluctantly, into an era of public accountability. His successor would have to continue that work.

An obvious choice for the succession did not present itself. Constantin Neculae Ionescu-Galbeni (PNȚCD), chairman of the Commission for Control and Supervision of the SRI (Comisia de Control și Supraveghere a SRI), announced on 10 January 1997 that Măgureanu would complete his term of office as SRI head in September,[36] and a week later Ion Diaconescu, chairman of the ruling Democratic Convention, confirmed that Măgureanu would not be dismissed.[37] Calls for Măgureanu to be removed before September came from the leaders of the Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR) and the Greater Romania Party (PRM). In separate meetings with President Constantinescu on 28 January 1997, both Gheorghe Funar and Corneliu Vadim Tudor demanded that Măgureanu be dismissed. Vadim Tudor called Măgureanu 'the most diabolical personality and biggest gangster in Romanian history'.[38]

Constantinescu refused to act hastily. The first indication that significant change in the leadership of the SRI was on the way was the announcement, on 14 March, that Mircea Gheordănescu, a former member of the National Peasant Christian Democratic Party and since January head of the National Agency for the Control of Strategic Exports and for the Banning of Chemical Weapons, had been appointed First Deputy Director

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35 Virgil Măgureanu, *22*, no. 51, 17–23 December 1996, p. 3.

36 *România liberă*, 13 January 1997, p. 1.

37 Dan Ionescu, *OMRI Daily Digest*, 29 January 1997.

38 Ibid.

of the SRI. Shortly afterwards, Măgureanu signalled his own departure by telling Constantinescu that he did not regard his occupancy of the position of SRI director as 'eternal'. On 25 April, he tendered his resignation to the President and it was immediately accepted. Măgureanu declared his interest in pursuing a political career. His abilities as a skilled tactician, deployed hitherto behind the scenes, mark him out as a figure to watch in Romanian politics. As SRI director his merit, and a not inconsiderable one in view of the service which he inherited, was that he prevented the SRI from being worse than it could have been.

President Constantinescu nominated Costin Georgescu, a deputy in the National Liberal Party, as Măgureanu's successor. Georgescu's appointment was approved in a joint session of the two chambers of parliament on 26 May.

The Romanian government's announcement on 15 February 1997 that it was to introduce a law allowing every citizen access to his or her own Securitate file, thereby emulating the example of the German authorities in respect of the Stasi files, and that it would publish the files of those in public positions, was an astute move. It was, on the face of it, a bold attempt to confront the country's difficult past. It was also a further demonstration of its commitment to transparency, coming hard on the heels of Prime Minister Ciorbea's televised press conference on 31 January 1997, in which he took the population into his confidence by revealing the state of the economy, the problems facing the government, and pulled no punches about the severity of the measures which he planned to take.

The opening of the Securitate files will provide another gulp of oxygen for a population whose cries for honesty, openness and truth had largely gone unheeded since 1990. If the period from 1990 to 1996 will go down in Romanian history as the period of lost opportunities, marked by the failure to complete the revolution of December 1989, then the months since the elections of November 1996 have borne witness to a determined effort on the part of the new president and government to complete the revolution. Those with the mentality of the past have no place in posts of responsibility in a truly democratic Romania. Nowhere is this more true than in the security services. The new Romanian leadership has already demonstrated that it understands this. It will require determination and cohesion amongst its supporters for it to succeed in making up for lost time.