

PREFACE

Rumania, which for nearly twenty years was cited as the most docile of Soviet satellites, as an example of Stalinism triumphant over nationalism, as a country that had lost its past and had no future, has been suddenly hailed as an example of resurgent nationalism, as a symbol of resistance to Kremlin dictates, as a barometer of the international pressures generated by the Sino-Soviet conflict.

The recent assertions of independence—emancipation from Russian tutelage, pursuit of autonomous policies frequently at variance with the rest of the East European states, gradual re-establishment of political, economic, and cultural relations with the West—may seem surprising; but they were not altogether unpredictable. The prevalent conviction, particularly after 1956, that nothing could destroy the monolithic nature of the Soviet bloc resulted in the dismissing as meaningless propaganda of all statements by the current Rumanian leadership. Set forth in the earliest programs of the Rumanian Communist Party were pleas for the attainment of the prescribed social, political, and economic goals; these were interpreted to be admissions of failure by the colorless stooges of Moscow. The purges of such prominent figures as Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, or Iosif Chişinevski were considered anti-Semitic or anti-Magyar manifestations by a bankrupt leadership seeking scapegoats. Few realized that at least as early as 1955 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and his associates were cautiously pursuing national policies first formulated in 1945 and envisaging a possible eventual assertion of independence from the Kremlin. This process of internal consolidation and exploitation of external opportunities was sufficiently advanced in April 1964 to allow issuance by the party's Central Committee of the now celebrated *Statement* proclaiming the attainment of the objective conditions for independent action within the framework of general international cooperation. In historic terms, the goals of the Rumanians—the full exploitation of the potential of the Rumanian people and of the country's vast natural resources for the purpose of establishing a respected and prosperous Rumanian state—had been

essentially realized. Complete attainment of the national goal would require further socioeconomic progress—toward the ideal Communist society—and, by inference, the recouping of the Rumanian-inhabited territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina from the Soviet Union. The present Rumanian regime thus regards itself as the heir to the historic tradition, as the Communist executor of the nationalist legacy of Greater Rumania.

Although elements of rationalization and propaganda are both evident here, these contentions are basically justified. Rumania in 1966 had indeed realized its “historic legacy” to a much greater extent than at any time in the past. It has solved, often radically, most of the outstanding socioeconomic and political problems that had hampered its development in the twentieth century. The vestiges of the aristocratic-feudal order have been eliminated. The thorny minority problems have been at least alleviated. The industrialization of society has gained momentum. The educational gap between the elite and the masses has been virtually closed. The country’s international standing has markedly improved. It is true that many of the solutions—particularly in agriculture—have been inadequate and that numerous problems are still awaiting answers. It may also be argued that the human suffering and sacrifices involved in the attainment of the national Communist goals are not justified in any terms, or that all this and more could have been achieved by means other than those used by the Communist dictatorship, that under the changing world conditions and rapid progress of the industrial revolution in our century the historic legacy would have been truly realized by the democratic forces of the old regime. These and a variety of other arguments, pro-Communist, anti-Communist, neutral, objective, peasantist, liberal, socialist, nationalist, unionist, monarchist, radical, fascist, intuitive, historical, and impressionistic, have glutted the media of public expression for nearly two decades. None, however, has come to grips with the essential question of why Gheorghiu-Dej was able to maintain himself in power for twenty years and preside over the construction of the “New Rumania,” despite Russian opposition to the attainment of his goals, and pass on the legacy of independence to his successor, Nicolae Ceaușescu, in 1965.

As the possibilities for investigation of the origins and development of the Rumanian independent course increased in recent years, it became desirable to take stock of all claims and counterclaims, to review and evaluate soberly the extent of Rumania’s transforma-

tion since 1944 in the light of the historic legacy inherited by the Communists at the end of World War II. This task was undertaken in 1964. It was greatly facilitated by the readiness of Rumanian officials to allow me to conduct research in their country and seek clarification of difficult questions in free discussions. I am profoundly grateful to them for having increased my comprehension of Rumanian problems, even if the views and interpretations contained in this volume are solely my own and, at least in certain instances, at variance with theirs. I am also indebted to American colleagues who provided assistance and advice, particularly to William Griffith, Andrew Gyorgy, John Michael Montias, and Robin Remington as well as to the Center for International Studies and the Ford Foundation for grants in support of the study and to Helen Leek, Mina Parks, Lila T. Rose, and my wife, Anne, for sympathetic encouragement and readying the manuscript for The M.I.T. Press.

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