

Nationalism versus Internationalism: The Roles of Political and Cultural Elites in Interwar and Communist Romania*

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Introduction

This paper has two main goals. First, it illuminates continuities between the ideas of “true Romanian-ness” as held by both the Romanian cultural elite and the Romanian political regimes in the interwar and communist periods. A manufactured definition of a “true” Romanian—as a Romanian Orthodox Christian, natively Romanian-speaking, and ethnically Romanian—formed the core of Romanian nationalism, regardless of the ruling ideology. This definition did not include the Roman and Greek Catholics of Romanian ethnicity on the grounds that they were not Orthodox Christians. It goes without saying that these criteria also excluded Hungarians, Germans and other ethnic minorities on the basis of ethnicity, language and religion. Second, the paper demonstrates that the principal ideas of Romanian nationalism developed in overt contrast to the internationalist ideological movements of both periods. Both the liberals and the Marxists misunderstood nationalism, claimed Ernest Gellner in 1964: liberals assumed that nationalism was a doomed legacy of outmoded irrationalism, superstition and savagery, and Marxists considered it a necessary but temporary stage in the path to global socialism.¹ Gellner’s comments are evidently appropriate to Romania, where nationalist responses developed first to the Westernization of the interwar period and second to communist internationalism after 1948.

Remarkably, the definition of Romanian-ness changed little as it passed into the attention of successive political regimes—first the Romanian kingdom of the interwar period and later the communists, especially under Ceaușescu. This continuity has legitimized the religiously and ethnically based nationalist idea in Romania. *Being Romanian* became a rather exclusive claim during these periods of the country’s history. Political and cultural elites in both periods found that the nationalist idea was an effective response to the various forms of internationalism which they confronted: the definition of a “true Romanian” could be used to single out rivals both within and beyond Romanian borders. The elite strata have been instrumental in the political socialization of the Romanian people, taking their ideological campaigns to the same rural Romanian upon whom they had modelled their political theories. The political and cultural elite of Eastern Europe were well positioned to influence the development of nationalist ideology in their respective cultures.² In this context, Eisenstadt contests the assumption

that intellectual attitudes are necessarily opposed to tradition, and that intellectuals always seek to create a society in which traditions do not play an important part. This is particularly relevant for Eastern Europe, where, as in other developing or modernizing societies, the intelligentsia had played a crucial role in nation- and state-building well before communist regimes came to power. Indeed, the intelligentsia often assumed overlapping intellectual and political roles.³

The combination of a common ethnic identity and a national movement leads to the creation of a political state. And the development of a political state paves the way towards the solidification of a national culture and the consolidation of a new people. Nationalism, arguably, is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national units of the state should be identical. However, this apparently basic formula becomes more complex where the concept of nationalism is “elastic enough to accommodate both a state-generated or state-manipulated collective identity, and an identity that rises popularly from bottom up and is as likely to work against the established state as for it.”⁴ The intelligentsia, as well, has been particularly active in nationalist movements in Eastern Europe.

Across Eastern Europe, the desire of the monarchy to secure religious conformity, control the clergy and free the state from traditional ecclesiastical constraints paved the way for the growth of an intelligentsia. The nationalism of the intelligentsia prospered in the name of a putative folk culture. In the nineteenth century, nationalism was principally the concern of the intelligentsia: neither the aristocracy, nor the bourgeoisie, nor the workers or peasants showed as much interest in nationalist goals. Nationalism flourished among the socially modest but educated middle strata, which included those who had acquired lower–middle-class status through non-manual occupations that required schooling.

In its many forms, the healthy, uncorrupted life of the peasantry—of the *volk*, the *narod*—became the symbol of their national ideal. According to the sentiment of the time, “if nationalism prosper[ed] it [would] eliminate the alien high culture, but it [would] not then replace it with the old local low culture; it [would] revive, or invent, a local high culture of its own, though admittedly one which [would] have some links with earlier local folk styles and dialects.”⁵ As a result, the nation became a mass educational enterprise with the aim of cultural homogeneity. This goal demanded the socialization of men and women into a uniform set of habits and beliefs, different from the traditions of individuals beyond the national group for whom those national values and memories held no meaning.⁶ The intelligentsia, in this enterprise, owed its primary loyalty to the dynasty and the state, which helped to stabilize the confluence of state, territory and cultural community through the turbulence of social revolutions. Hence, nationalism also came to stand for a secularist form of state control over the Church, cultural convergence, and ethnic homogeneity.⁷

At this time, the literary and political currents in Romania were divided between the evolutionist proponents of the Europeanist “1848 credo,” and the traditionalists of the *Junimist* school. Despite their differences, traditionalists and evolutionists were united

in their hostility to the historical enemies of the Romanian unitary state, Russia and Hungary. It was against the background of this historical enmity that the idea of Romanian national identity, based on recently rediscovered Latin origins, had taken root. In its disavowal of all things Russian or Hungarian, Romanian nationalism, like all national identities, was established not only in affirmative terms—that which is uniquely Romanian—but also through dissociation from anything considered foreign or negative—that which is expressly not Romanian—especially if there is a risk that it would be confused with a neighbouring culture.⁸

Romanian Independence and Nationalism during the Interwar Period

Nationalism flourished from the 1870s to 1914. It was a function of contemporary social and political changes, not to mention an international situation that often promoted hostility to foreigners. In line with Hegel's claim that the history of a nation only begins when it acquires its own state,⁹ the success of numerous independence campaigns assisted the nationalist movements of this period. Likewise, the resistance of many traditionalist groups to the onrush of modernity encouraged nationalist sentiments.¹⁰ As in other East European societies, defining the Romanian national character became more urgent as Romania acquired its own state in 1878 and the territorial settlements at the end of the First World War. When Transylvania became part of Romania in 1919, Transylvanian Hungarians became the most populous non-Romanian national group in Romania, followed by Jews, Germans and Ukrainians.¹¹ Overnight, the proportion of minorities in the Romanian population increased from 8% to 30%.¹² This increase in the minority population created a major challenge for the advocates of Romanian nationalism. Therefore, defining a *true Romanian* became a crucial issue during the interwar years.

Sociologists, literary critics, theologians and poets consequently found themselves in the forefront of a great debate over the nature of Romanian ethnicity and culture.¹³ In order to close the traditional gap between the ruling class and the majority of the population—namely, the peasantry¹⁴—the cultural elite sought to create a more *organic* relationship between aristocrat and peasant.¹⁵ Their solution was to adopt the values of the Romanian peasantry as the heart of the newly defined Romanian-ness, rather than bourgeois values imported from the West. Hence, as early as 1932, according to Rouček, “the foundation of the Romanian nation [rested on] the peasant.”¹⁶ Indeed, during the interwar years the country was predominantly rural, and ethnic Romanians were still mostly serfs on lands owned by members of the numerous minorities. The populist writers of this period called for land-ownership for those who tilled it, and accused the Jews of exploiting the peasants with commercial and industrial monopolies. This rhetoric also implied a general scepticism of middle-class values.¹⁷

The *poporanist* movement (*popor* comes from *populus* in Latin and hence means large basic community), led by the writer and ideologue Constantin Stere

(1865–1936), emphasized the role of the peasantry in the Romanian national evolution. Stere was convinced that the inherent agrarian structure of the Romanian society would enable the country to avoid the phase of capitalist economic development which the West had to endure. The family-centered agricultural system, he contended, would resist the structures of capitalism and protect the country from the cultural imperialism of the West. Though his ideas were not necessarily xenophobic, Stere believed that the Romanian contribution to world culture could only come from the peasantry, since it was the only “positive class” of Romanian society and had preserved the Romanian soul in its purest form. Later, Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940), who was a philosopher of history, extended Stere’s ideas to a model of an idealized past that was agrarian, patriarchal and free of class conflict. In his model, he imagined the peasantry as the bulwark of the nation, and the village as the first line of defence against bourgeois forces. The stumbling point of his *model* was the lack of a national culture in Romania to support the foundation of a nation-state. In line, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru (1868–1957), a philosopher and a psychologist, argued that the Romanian rural world, at least in culture, remained untouched by the political and economic institutions imposed by Western politicians.¹⁸

Not all intellectuals of the era, however, were promoting a nation-wide return to peasant values. Like its Eastern European contemporaries, the Romanian intelligentsia included a group of “Europeanists,” who believed that Romania ought to model itself after the more advanced nations of Western Europe. The group, also called the “1848-ers or 48-ers,”¹⁹ sought to alter the foundations of a society which had legitimized inequality and privilege for centuries.²⁰ They were convinced of the European credentials of their country, and expected a development pattern similar to that of Europe from Romania.

The principal spokesperson of the Europeanists was the sociologist and psychologist Mihai Ralea (1896–1964). He and his colleagues hoped to import the noblest achievements of liberal European political and social organization and Western technology. In this respect, Ralea considered the Romanian Orthodox Church an impediment to the definition of the Romanian national character and the evolution of its native spirituality because of its “obscurantism” and historically Byzantine-Slavic character. A literary critic, Pompiliu Constantinescu (1901–1946) went so far as to deny altogether the religiosity of the Romanian people, and called what Romanians believed as religion a diffusion of superstitions.²¹

Eugen Lovinescu (1881–1943), a historian and a literary critic, also attacked the traditionalist claim that the Orthodox religion embodied the Romanian national spirit:

orthodoxism [. . .] threw us in the danger of disappearing in the great mass of Slavs [. . .] behind the cross, Cervantes used to say, hides the Devil; behind the Byzantine cross hid the Russian. Binding us spiritually to an obscurantist religion, stiffened by typicality and formalism, orthodoxism imposed on us a liturgical language and a foreign alphabet (Latin thought expressed by embellished scribbling) without helping us create a national art and culture.²²

On the other hand, Lovinescu had a more utilitarian understanding of Westernization. He traced the origins of modern Romania to the first half of the nineteenth century, when the massive influx of Western influence had begun. He emphasized the decisive role of ideas in the process of nation-building, and suggested that the bridge between agricultural, patriarchal Romania and the urbanized West could be found in the theory of *Synchronism*. According to this theory, underdeveloped countries strove to emulate the most advanced states by borrowing what was best from them. This process seemed to Lovinescu to be a natural consequence of the enormous expansion of modern means of communication that was rapidly bringing all of Europe closer together and *internationalizing* its intellectual and cultural life. His only hope for the Romanian nation was emulation of the West: “in our century, and in this place, light comes from the West: *Ex Occidente Lux*.”²³ In this respect in order for Romania to avoid permanent inferiority, according to another “Europeanist” Ștefan Zeletin (1882–1934), a sociologist, the country should industrialize and continually adapt itself to the technological advances of the West.²⁴

The traditionalists, however, staunchly opposed the inorganic cultural and institutional imports from the West. Much as Tönnies extolled the virtues of the *gemeinschaft*, they exalted the community as the primary, most organic form of human social life. They criticized the society of the *gesellschaft* since it joined individuals only through external and mechanical relationships.²⁵ Romanian traditionalism had its modern beginnings with the *Junimist* movement, named after Junimea—a Romanian literary and political movement that dominated the local social and cultural life between 1880 and 1900. It succeeded and opposed the 48-ers. This movement warned against thoughtless tampering with the spirit of the nation, and claimed that only a slow, organic evolution in touch with the true character of the people could produce lasting benefits. According to the Junimists, the Romanian national character was rural rather than urban.²⁶

In later years, the *peasantist* and *autochthonist* movements took up these ideas, which subsequently passed into the philosophies of the extreme right. Peasantism took the individual peasant as its social prototype and proposed to model both society and state on the peasant’s conception of work. It blended its social and economic doctrines with a strong nationalistic concern for escape from foreign domination, claiming that the Romanian peasantry deserved the leadership of a representative political society. In the interwar period, the principal forum for discussion of peasantism, Romanian nationalism and Romania’s place in Europe was the literary review *Gândirea* (*Thought*). This journal was a proponent of a spiritualist style of Romanian traditionalism, with Orthodoxy as its foundation. It claimed that the rural world and its folklore were the sources of native spirituality in Romania. However, the basic Orthodox character of a true Romanian, as peasantist definitions put it,²⁷ brought peasantist ideologies closer to those of the nationalists.

The poet Nichifor Crainic (1889–1972) was a key ideologue of the *Gândirea* movement. He regarded the Romanian peasant masses as eminently religious, and went so

far as to claim that all Romanian historical culture had developed from the Church and the “creative force” of the Orthodox religion. He saw the East as a symbol of the many centuries of Romanian isolation from the bourgeois, urbanized West,²⁸ and argued that liberal Westernists diverted Romanians from their preordained course of development by replacing institutions which had evolved in response to specific Romanian conditions with ill-fitting imports from the West. Accordingly, the Western spirit of cosmopolitan, urban civilization undermined the organic spirit of the patriarchal village. Lastly, Crainic objected to Europeanists’ interference with the Orthodox Church, claiming that it had been reduced to such impotence that it abdicated its responsibility for spiritual and cultural guidance and ceased to challenge the authority of the state.²⁹ Crainic influenced later nationalist thought most significantly in the belief that Orthodoxy and Romanian nationality were synonymous. Tradition, he argued, differentiated peoples from one another, and saved the collective personality of a nation from the anonymity of civilization. Ignoring Romanian Orthodoxy would be tantamount to abandoning a higher sense of history, Crainic thought that the Romanian elite had alienated the masses, creating a superficial contemporary Romanian culture which lacked the “dough of religious thought” essential to connecting intellectual and spiritual ideas.³⁰

Another principal thinker of the *Gândirea* circle was the poet Lucian Blaga (1895–1961). He too was preoccupied with finding the sources of the Romanian national character. In his analyses of autochthonism and the Romanian village, he focused on the ethnic character of the Romanians. Blaga argued that “Romanians had more than the rationality and the balance of the Latins . . . they possessed a vital Slav/Thracian heritage upsetting the Latin sense of symmetry and harmony.”³¹ He contrasted the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant ideas of the nation, suggesting that only the Orthodox view was not antagonistic:

[T]oward the nation, Catholicism was almost disdainful since it pursued international goals; Protestantism considered membership in the nation the result of a deliberate choice by the individual, who was responding to a sense of duty; Orthodoxy saw the nation as a destiny which it enthusiastically embraced.³²

Blaga also associated Orthodoxy with peasantism, and argued that Catholicism and Protestantism fostered the growth of cities, while Orthodoxy was uniquely suited to the village. As such, the rural world preserved the best of Romanian spirituality.³³

Nae Ionescu (1890–1940), the leading theorist of *trăism* (from *trăire* [experience]), carried the connection between Romanian-ness and Orthodox Christianity furthest. He articulated the most overt association between Romanian nationalism and anti-Westernism, claiming that Romanian Catholics, Romanian Greek Catholics, and Protestant Hungarians and Germans belonged to a fundamentally different mode of existence. He also argued that democracy, foreign to Romanian character, had been promoted by the Protestants. Even the parliamentary system, in Ionescu’s view, was a product of this foreign Protestant mentality, with its individualistic and democratic

implications. He found parliamentarianism too far removed from the concrete realities of the village—that is, from the specifically Romanian spirit. He saw no significant differences between capitalism, socialism and communism, dismissing them all as emanations of the rationalism of the Renaissance and the French Revolution, which had unleashed the *laïcization* of European culture by replacing the City of God with the world city.³⁴

At this point, it is worth noting that the Romanian Orthodox Church, like other Orthodox Churches, was well positioned to be part of the development of a Romanian national state. Unlike the predominantly international Catholic and Protestant traditions, Orthodox Churches tended to operate only within their respective territorial boundaries, serving the interests of the local *Caesar*. Indeed, they were often instrumental in the process of nation- and state-building, helping to bring about a sense of self-identity, the basis of which was national. It is true that the Romanian Orthodox Church had an enduring position in Romanian collective memory. Yet, it is also true that the Romanian state has generally dominated the Orthodox Church. The Romanian Orthodox Church, Rădulescu-Motru wrote, “let itself be dominated by the interests of the state. Her great glorious title has always been to have served the unification, *întregire*, of the Romanian nation.”³⁵

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Church and state relations experienced a sharp intensification in Romania when Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1820–1873), the united principalities’ first ruler, brought radical changes. Following a clear delimitation of the roles and responsibilities of both the Church and the state, and the creation of a national organizational structure, the Romanian Church eventually emerged as an autonomous, self-governing patriarchate in the Orthodox world. Cuza nationalized the land controlled by foreign monasteries and stopped the transfer of funds abroad, improved the educational standards of the clergy, made Romanian the liturgical language, and pledged state financial support for Church activities and clergy salaries. At the same time, he also brought the Orthodox Church under regular government control. The Orthodox Church effectively became a state institution.

When national consciousness emerged in Eastern Europe, the Church positioned itself as pivotal to Romanian self-definition. Presumably this definition would supersede and unite Moldovan, Walachian and Transylvanian regional allegiances.³⁶ Even the Latin ethnicity of the Romanian people could only be expressed with a proper emphasis on Orthodox Christianity. As the Church became pivotal for the definition of Romanian-ness, it

borrowed, and eventually monopolised the Transylvanian Greek Catholics’ nationalist discourse centred on the Latin character of the Romanian language and descent. This discourse appropriation gave the Orthodox Church growing moral and political legitimacy in the eyes of the Romanians, and more recognition from the state.³⁷

In the interwar period, these ideas affected the position and place of national minorities in Romania. Views expressed in *Gândirea* became major tools for the

extreme right in Romania, especially towards and during the Second World War. The journal turned into a propaganda organ supportive of fascist ideology and the wartime dictatorship of General Ion Antonescu.³⁸ It also influenced the ideological development of the Legion of Archangel Michael, a key group on the extreme right in Romania, with respect to Orthodox Christianity and its appeal to the peasants, who had been neglected by the government and political parties. Not surprisingly, this appeal to religious values, as a focus of nationalism, found some resonance with the people.³⁹

Anti-Westernism and peasantism in the interwar period also included anti-Semitism.⁴⁰ In particular, Corneliu Codreanu (1899–1938) led a highly original and virulently anti-Semitic form of rebirth nationalism. In 1927, in order to implement his nationalist aims, Codreanu formed a paramilitary terrorist organization, the Legion of Archangel Michael (or Iron Guard). Later, once General Antonescu assumed power as a result of the unpopularity of the King Carol, a National Legionary State was created with Iron Guardists appointed to important governmental posts.⁴¹ Codreanu's invectives against Romanian Jews were framed within contemporary nationalist sentiments:

The worst thing that Jews and politicians have done to us, the greatest danger that they have exposed our people to, is not the way they are seizing the riches and possessions of our country, destroying the Romanian middle class, the way they swamp our schools and liberal professions, or the pernicious influence they are having on our whole political life, although these already constitute mortal dangers for a people. The greatest danger they pose to the people is rather that they are undermining us racially, that they are destroying the racial, Romano-Dacian structure of our people and call into being a type of human being that is nothing but a racial wreck.

Codreanu accused Jews of corrupting the ethnic homogeneity of Romania, claiming, as earlier nationalist movements had, that the primary standard of authentic Romanian-ness was the “Romano-Dacian” lineage.

The Orthodox Church of Romania quickly took sides in this debate, which also took the form of excluding Romanians of other religions from this pre-defined Romanian nationality. Among the religious minorities, Greek Catholic Romanians have been the major rivals to the dominant Orthodox Church. Hostility between the two Churches began in Transylvania in the eighteenth century, when the Catholic Habsburgs set out to convert the predominantly Orthodox, ethnic Romanian serf population to the same denomination as the Hungarian and Saxon German gentry. The result was *Uniatism*, a combination of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy to produce a so-called Greek Catholic Church in which the liturgy and rituals would be those of Orthodoxy, but the doctrine would follow Roman Catholicism. Added to the religious incentives for conversion was the Habsburgs' promise that converted Orthodox clergy would gain the privileges of Catholic clergy. Thus, the Romanian-speaking population of Transylvania became religiously divided into Orthodox and Greek Catholic. This created a major conflict between the converted clergy and those who remained

Orthodox, in which Orthodox historiography accused the converts of betraying and sabotaging the Romanian national struggle.⁴²

After the end of Austro-Hungarian domination in Transylvania, the Orthodox Church steadily increased its strength against other Christian denominations. The interwar years, however, saw increasing challenges from Protestants and Roman Catholics. Many Protestants also belonged to national minorities. The state, which had preferred since Romania's independence to keep the Orthodox Church under its patronage and attention, was quite prepared to use the Church as an instrument of minority control.⁴³ Yet, when it came to declaring Orthodoxy the dominant religion—and granting it privileged status—the government was much less enthusiastic. Moreover, a Roman Catholic king initially proved to be a constant besetment to the Romanian Orthodox Church.⁴⁴ Therefore, despite representing the majority of the population and enjoying the support of the political and cultural elite, the Romanian Orthodox Church found itself mostly on the defensive until the end of the monarchy.

A notable challenge for the Orthodox Church, in this period, was how to combine traditional religious concern for society, morality and the family with the new realities of industrialization. The growing urban, industrial population had radical economic effects on an essentially rural, agrarian society. Yet the Orthodox Church was not alone in its concerns, and with the encouragement of peasantist and anti-Western intellectuals, it turned towards the peasant, rural Romanian.⁴⁵ Thus, the Orthodox Church readily assumed the role which the political and cultural elite ascribed to it, albeit a role that served an anti-Western and anti-minority nationalism.

From the late nineteenth century to the interwar period, then, the alignment of interests between traditionalist intellectuals and the Orthodox Church formed a single, continuous inclination towards a nationalist movement. Given the complicated mixture of population, religion, and urban and rural settlement, the political and cultural elite saw only the peasantry as a positive symbol of true Romanian values. Accordingly, Jews, Hungarians and Germans, with their cosmopolitan values, were threatening to that concept of Romanian-ness. It was in this fashion that the intelligentsia became involved in the nation-building process prior to the advent of Leninist dictatorship. Contrary to Cheng Chen's claim that "traditional Romanian nationalism is not necessarily incompatible with values such as democracy, diversity, and tolerance,"⁴⁶ Romanian nationalism was ideologically intolerant and opposed to Western values even before the onset of fascism and communism. This variety of nationalism continued into the communist regime: the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) appealed to Romanian nationalism in efforts that were not exclusively intended to expand its legitimacy. Furthermore, the nationalism of the Romanian communist regime was opposed to the internationalism of communist ideology. The communist leadership took up the very discourse of the nation so richly developed in the interwar years.⁴⁷ After all, as Katherine Verdery argues, "national discourse was so powerfully instituted in Romanian cultural and political life that it at length subverted the discourse of Marxism, on which party rule was based."⁴⁸ Immediately after consolidating

power in 1948, the new Romanian political elite set out to re-socialize the population, particularly the creative intelligentsia. The intelligentsia was to accept a value system which it had no part in creating. Individuals were expected to learn their new roles as defined by the regime, and to acquire new skills, including the new “language” of Marxist terminology.⁴⁹

Nationalism vs. Communist Internationalism

According to Eric Hobsbawm, rejection of the new proletarian socialist movements was a principal characteristic of nationalism before 1914—not only because they were proletarian, but also because they were explicitly internationalist, or at the very least, non-nationalist. The canonical view among historians is that mass nationalism prevailed over other ideologies of the period (most notably, class-based socialism), as demonstrated by the outbreak of war in 1914, which revealed the hollowness of socialist internationalism. Likewise, the post-1918 peace settlements continued to demonstrate the overwhelming triumph of the principle of nationality.⁵⁰ However, approaching the Second World War, the composition of the Romanian Workers’ Party⁵¹ suggested that internationalism was advancing. Various minority groups filled the ranks of the Party. Classified Party statistics from 1933 indicate that some 26.5% of its members were of Hungarian origin. Romanians constituted 22.6% of Party membership, and Jews, at 18%, were the third largest ethnic group in the Party.⁵² Bulgarians also had a distinct presence. The Party leadership was predominantly urban, intellectual, and physically and psychologically removed from rural life. Needless to say, the Romanian masses distrusted Party members of non-Romanian ethnic origin.⁵³

Even more striking than the ethnic proportions of the Party membership was the unprecedented prominence of members of minorities in leadership positions. Therefore, an ethnic-rooted and motivational-related gap developed gradually within the small communist party. This gap generated a strong inter-ethnic division of political competence. The well-known result was the overwhelming distribution of Jews in the Party ideological apparatus during the 1940s and the 1950s.⁵⁴ Nina Cassian (1924–), a poet and prose writer exiled from Romania in 1985, describes this period as follows:

I joined the illegal communist youth movement in 1940, when I was sixteen. It was war time. Fascism was strong. But I must honestly say that my being a persecuted Jew, deprived of all rights, menaced by pogrom and deportation, was not the main reason for my choice. What appealed to me was the wide scope of the *Charter* of communism, which included the gradual abolition of all bloodshed and antagonisms in the world. Antagonism between the sexes and among races, peoples, nations, classes, etc. They were all sources of massacres, oppression, and inequality. I thought it possible that wars, states, money might disappear in a humane society. This would ensure the harmonious evolution of the individual: free from discrimination, ruled by fundamental moral and cultural values.⁵⁵

The significant minority presence in the Romanian Workers' Party affected the initial approach of the Party towards Romanian nationalism. Hence, early Romanian communism defined itself, above all, in opposition to fascism.⁵⁶ The Party supported the rights of national minorities to self-determination, including complete secession from the existing state. Therefore, from its inception the Party had a certain antipathy to the "Greater Romania" idea.⁵⁷

As a result, however, the Party elite had little understanding of the Romanian majority's national values and aspirations. Eventually, the Party championed ideas and slogans with little impact on the class it claimed to represent, and portrayed Romania as a *multinational imperialist country*. It even advocated the dismemberment of the Romanian nation-state as it had been formed after the Versailles and Trianon Treaties of 1919 and 1920, respectively. The RCP endorsed the Russian territorial claims on Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and condoned the most blatant Soviet economic exploitation, recruiting social outcasts to swell its ranks.⁵⁸ Hence, it failed to attract the country's urban proletariat and radical intelligentsia. Despite the RCP's pro-Soviet inclination, however, the Comintern held the Party in low regard since it lacked a mass basis and was under the domination of foreign cadres.⁵⁹ According to Chen,

The Romanian leadership lacked the historical experience, political confidence, and consequently the ideological sophistication that enabled [as an example] the Chinese Communist Party to approach the basic social force in a traditional society—the peasantry—in a flexible, rather than dogmatic, repressive fashion.⁶⁰

This extremely weak starting point made Leninist nation-building in Romania a particularly daunting project.⁶¹ During the outspoken Stalinism of Gheorghiu-Dej's leadership, the Party's documents were marked by a complete rejection of Romanian national values, a deep distrust of the intelligentsia, and even an ignorance of basic Romanian history. As Vladimir Tismaneanu argues, the RCP regarded traditional Romanian culture as something to be reformed, rather than consulted, by the political system.⁶² In the beginning the RCP borrowed policies from the Comintern and imposed them on the Romanian population. Considering the low domestic popularity of the RCP, it is not surprising that among Western historians there is consensus that no Marxist regime could have come into being in Romania without the threat of the Red Army.

The installation of communism in 1947 also brought an externally imposed Marxist language which legitimated a monolithic political system. At the same time, early Romanian communists opposed the pro-Hitler dictator Antonescu; as Cassian implies above, the RCP also used the fight against fascism to legitimate itself. The 1952 Romanian Constitution, according to which the Romanian People's Republic had come into being, praised the role of Soviet Union in Romania's liberation from German fascism.⁶³ Hence initially the RCP was internationalist. Despite the initial internationalism of the Romanian Workers' Party, the 1950s saw the purging of the

“muscovite” faction from its top leadership.⁶⁴ This faction primarily consisted of Hungarians and Jews led by Ana Pauker, a veteran communist educated in Moscow. Despite their apparent ideological content, these internal conflicts were mostly fights between emigré and domestic communists.⁶⁵ The Party’s latent anti-Semitism depended on signals sent by Moscow. These signals were of two kinds: some were rooted in the anti-Semitic waves periodically surging through the USSR; others heralded a change in the Kremlin’s attitude towards the Jewish leaders who, upon orders of the same Kremlin, had been installed to lead communist parties in neighbouring East European countries.⁶⁶ At the end of the purges, in Romania the predominantly ethnic Romanian group led by Gheorghiu-Dej prevailed in the early 1950s. Though having purged its most powerful Jewish and Hungarian rivals, the faction nonetheless still submitted to Stalin’s internationalism and suppression of national values.⁶⁷

Nationalizing the RCP beyond its leadership structure started with a rejection of specialization programmes of COMECON. Soviet planners advocated specialization in order to pave the way towards the division of labour within the COMECON bloc. Romania, according to the plan, would become a major supplier of agricultural products to the industrially advanced members of COMECON. The COMECON plan would have reversed two decades of RCP-led industrial development. The RCP responded with a public statement issued in April 1964, announcing Romania’s refusal to subordinate its national needs to a supranational planning body in which others would dictate its domestic economic policies.⁶⁸ As the conflict with the Soviet Union became public knowledge, the RCP leadership turned to Romanian society in search of domestic support.

However, the split between the Soviet Union and Romania under Gheorghiu-Dej’s successor, Ceaușescu, led to a nationalist excess unparalleled elsewhere in Eastern Europe, and to the practical integration of all things Romanian into the new version of Party history.⁶⁹ The ascendancy of national symbols required the replacement of the rhetoric of communist internationalism with that of national values. This reliance on symbolic control necessitated an intelligentsia that would reliably support the Party leadership’s aims and produce an ideological climate suited to its intentions.⁷⁰ This new initiative was similar to the roles of the interwar political and cultural elite in championing true Romanian values.

However, a number of dissidents within the intelligentsia promoted Western European values in Romanian society, in opposition to RCP rule and ideology. As it had been in the interwar period, the project to define Romanian nationalism as a counterbalance to internationalist tendencies was a divisive issue within the intelligentsia. Ironically, those sectors of the intelligentsia arguing for distinct Romanian nationalist values to oppose communist internationalism now found an ally in the Romanian communist state.

In a 1966 *Contemporanul* article, an RCP official named Constantin Vlad compares the socialist nation to that of the bourgeois period. Concluding that the socialist nation

is superior to the bourgeois, Vlad cites the virtues of its community of economic interests, homogeneity of society, common national culture and unified spiritual community. These examples reflect a significant departure from the internationalist, multicultural direction of the early RCP to a stance which is very much in line with the peasantism of the interwar period. Vlad also downplays contradictions between nationalism and internationalism, and argues that the consolidation of each communist state contributes to the strengthening of the world communist movement.⁷¹

In an interesting turn of reason, Vlad argues that the nation is in fact beneficial to the development of the communist state. The common territory, language and psychological features which bind a nation, he explains, are prerequisites of the socialist economic community: “The new type of economy, the social structure characteristic of socialism, and the new cultural content raises the nation to a higher stage in its capacity as a form of human community, giving birth to the socialist nation.”⁷² Far from abolishing the nation, socialism encourages the national character of the people to assert itself. In this respect, the role of the nation in socialism is to create a discrete economic community. In return, Vlad continues, the socialist economic model eliminates divisive capitalist productive relations based on the principal of privately owned property:

[o]ur society, where the exploiting classes have been completely and forever abolished, consists only of friendly social forces—the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia and other categories of working people—united through common interests and aspirations. The alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the cohesion of the entire people around the Party form a stable foundation for the continuous development of the nation in socialism.⁷³

Vlad’s comments illustrate the RCP’s ideological shift to absorb the values of Romanian nationalism following Ceaușescu’s ascent to Party leadership. The conflict between the RCP’s new stance and the original internationalism and anti-fascism of its early communist rhetoric was alarming to the remaining old-guard Romanian communists. In acclaimed poet and author Maria Banuș’s (1914–) words,

they say that there were no honest adherents to the socialist doctrine, the communist movement in Romania [...] we were not many indeed. But we existed. We must not forget that during the years before the 2nd World War, as well as during the war itself, the opposition to chauvinistic and criminal fascism was closely connected to the communist movement.⁷⁴

Never before had the Romanian intelligentsia been so useful in the eyes of the Party.⁷⁵ The response of the intellectual community to the RCP’s rhetorical shift was largely enthusiastic. For the first time since its establishment in 1921, the RCP shared many values with Romanian intellectuals. The so-called liberalization of the mid-1960s gave vent to previously suppressed nationalistic feelings aimed not only at Romania’s “traditional enemy,” the Soviet Union, but also at Hungary, thereby redirecting the energy of internal discord towards external targets.⁷⁶ The number of

artists, poets and writers in the Party's Central Committee rose substantially after 1965. In turn, the scope of "guided liberalization" widened between 1965 and 1968, implying that nationalist exaltation would continue and perhaps even intensify.⁷⁷

Contesting the idea that the RCP undertook this nationalist ideological shift entirely under its own initiative, Katherine Verdery has suggested that pressure from the intelligentsia pushed the Party onto the terrain of national values, and that the RCP could not fully engage the intelligentsia in any other manner. Romanian intellectuals used the nation "as a *master symbol*, one having the capacity to dominate the field of symbols and discourses in which it was employed, pressing the meanings of other terms and symbols in its own direction."⁷⁸ The Party, in its turn, created a cultural intelligentsia following its own image of the society and provided conditions it thought propitious for creative work. In this manner a new canon was created and a lively discussion emerged as to what prior cultural products were to be accepted into the new canon.⁷⁹ However, this venture opened a Pandora's Box, and by the end of 1968, the Party decided to make clearer the limits of "socialist humanism."⁸⁰ Subsequently, the ideological guidelines announced at the 1969 Party Congress were followed in 1971 by the "July Theses," which amounted to the commencement of an offensive against the autonomization of culture, stressing the necessary socio-political role of intellectual activity. Over the next few years there was a series of assaults on the independence of such intellectual institutions as the Writers' Union and the Romanian Academy.⁸¹ Hence, Romanian nationalism was to be redefined under the communist regime.

As Romania distanced itself from communist internationalism and the Soviet Union, the *conducător* Ceaușescu reasoned that the Romanian "state could adequately construct itself only in terms of what it had first denied: a teleology of national continuity and an ideology of national values, premised on internal uniformity."⁸² Ceaușescu imagined a double uniformity: the first would be continued collective ownership of the means of production, via the Party's economic monopoly; the second a homogeneous ethnic community.⁸³ Ceaușescu's chauvinistic, anti-Hungarian emphasis on homogeneity clearly resembled interwar discussion of Romanian-ness. The RCP, under Ceaușescu's leadership, affirmed the continuing existence of nations under socialism. As Verdery indicated:

Ceaușescu repeated his view that only under socialism can the Nation come to full flower, stating that unlike capitalist nations, the Nation under socialism constitutes a progressive force, and averring that the nation will continue to be for a long time to come the basis for the development of our society.⁸⁴

This was a major break with socialist internationalism. The Romanian regime no longer maintained itself with the support of Moscow, but with the support of its own people against Moscow.⁸⁵ Moving away from the RCP's exclusive affiliation with the proletariat, Ceaușescu realigned the Party with the nation as a whole. This paved the way for opening the nationalist past to the socialist present.

In this new realm, however, the national discourse subdued the Marxist. Party leaders, along with the political and cultural elite, began to promote *protochronism*,⁸⁶ a movement to demonstrate that the innovations of Western society had been previously achieved or anticipated by Romanians. This movement was widely supported by the Romanian Communist Party as a buffer to pro-Western or pro-Soviet arguments that Romania needed to import political, social and economic ideas from abroad.⁸⁷ Protochronism was well suited to the traditionally anti-Western and anti-internationalist tones of Romanian nationalism.

Ceaușescu's appeal to "true" Romanian values, in this sense, was reminiscent of the peasantism of the 1930s. Rural and traditional values became the standards for defining that which was native. The Romanian peasant was once again the social model: friendly, responsible to the community, and committed to collective values and norms.⁸⁸ In Ceaușescu's words:

the peasantry has for a long time been the class which engaged in the battles for the protection and defence of the existence of our people, for the development of our nation, for liberty, independence and a better life, for the revolutionary transformation of society. It has been the peasantry which assured the integrity and liberty of our country over the centuries. It was the peasantry which wrote a real epic with their blood during the war of independence in 1877. Once again, it was the peasantry who played an eminent role during the struggles for democratic reforms in the 19th Century. Today, alongside the working class, they have become the leading class of society and the intelligentsia. The peasantry constituted a new class of the base of our nation, an important factor in the material and spiritual progress of our country.⁸⁹

At the same time, the regime stirred nationalist feelings by producing films such as *Tudor*, the story of Tudor Vladimirescu (1780–1821), a national figure of the early nineteenth century who fought Phanariot domination of the country.⁹⁰

The RCP's pro-Romanian stance had pejorative connotations for ethnic and religious minorities of Romania. In Ceaușescu's speeches, Daco-Roman civilization was portrayed as superior to those of the nomadic Magyars and Slavs.⁹¹ Ceaușescu's behaviour was chauvinist and hostile to other ethnic groups. His language became more reminiscent of the fascist rhetoric of the Antonescu dictatorship as his cultural policies became increasingly nationalistic and hostile to minority cultures.⁹² In this new protochronist attitude, cultural policy was marked by a mixture of Stalinist rigidity and militancy and strong nationalism. It claimed independence from established models and it has anti-Soviet, anti-Hungarian and anti-Western overtones.⁹³

Once again, the interwar formula for the "true" Romanian—Romanian Orthodoxy, ethnicity and language—appeared in the speech of the political elite and the co-opted cultural elite. Likewise, as Anneli Ute Gabanyi observes, Ceaușescu took up the theme of Romano-Dacian cultural descent:

Ceaușescu has increasingly switched the Roman historical mythology toward the Dacian element in Romanian ethnogeny and he did so for ideological and propagandistic . . . reasons . . . [O]fficial Romanian political mythology stresses that the Romanian

people have never been aggressive but instead were frequently victims of aggression from outside their borders. Secondly, the Dacian myth offered the opportunity to stretch both the area of Romanian ethnogeny beyond the boundaries of the Romanian lines and also to extend the period of Romanian continuity on its present soil.⁹⁴

In this context, as Gabanyi wrote, the periodicals *Flacăra* and *Săptămîna* called for a similar thematic emphasis in the RCP's educational policies:

to promote the teaching of the Dacian language (which, according to specialist I.I. Rusu, comprises about 170 words) at Romanian universities, since the Dacians represented the main element and the fundamental ethnogenic factor in the homogenous development of Romanian spirituality. Indirectly, the *Flacăra* author pleaded for the supplanting of old Church Slavonic lessons with lessons in the Dacian language: "We do not say that the university should renounce the three semesters of Latin or of Old Church Slavonic. No. We ask for a place for the Dacian language in the Romanian university. Side by side with Latin and before any other language is the place for the Dacian language."⁹⁵

Here the quoted *Flacăra* author draws an implicit link between the Dacian and Latin antecedents of modern Romanian culture, simultaneously elevating the Dacian language to the prestige of Latin and creating an additional degree of separation from the non-Latin ethno-cultural histories of neighbouring Hungarians, Germans and Slavs.

In this respect, beginning in the 1970s, conditions worsened for all minority groups. The policies of re-Romanization were in actual practice directed against the national minorities. Hungarians, Germans, Jews and Roma were the principal victims of this nationalist attitude. Ethnic Romanians were promoted to key political and bureaucratic positions at the expense of minorities.⁹⁶ The regime accused anyone who raised the issue of minority rights as a secessionist promoting xenophobia among the majority.⁹⁷

Ceaușescu actively promoted a negative image of the Soviet Union, and was also wary of a Soviet attempt to restore Hungarian rule in the region as a reward for Hungarian loyalty since 1956. Needless to say, this period saw freezing relations with Hungary. At the same time, the situation of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania seriously deteriorated. Education in the Hungarian language was restricted, while the Hungarian Bolyai University (where the language of education had been Hungarian) was forcefully merged with Babes University, which taught in Romanian. By the mid-1960s there were unofficial reports that separate Hungarian schools no longer existed.⁹⁸ The regime settled ethnic Romanians in Transylvanian provinces, while upon graduation young Hungarians were sent to predominantly Romanian provinces to work.

Jews and Germans also received hostile treatment under these anti-minority policies. The ethnically and religiously distinct Jewish minority was literally *sold* to Israel in an arrangement whereby Israel would pay the Romanian state for a passport which would allow the emigrating individual to leave Romania. The long historical and linguistic roots of Jews in Romania did not change their situation. Germans were likewise sold to Germany, though a greater number of them left after the 1989

revolution. By contrast, Roma were never even officially considered a national or ethnic minority. From the early 1970s, the official policy was simply to ignore their existence.⁹⁹ Coupled with racist disdain for the Romani people and other minorities, the national policy of the Ceaușescu regime quickly degenerated into chauvinism.¹⁰⁰

The regime did not treat religious minorities any better. The RCP generally regarded religion as a capitalist remnant, and expected it to wither away as its social basis disappeared. Nevertheless, it still recognized that a church respected by the bulk of the population could be useful for furthering the Party's socioeconomic and political goals. Hence, the Party praised the Orthodox Church as the official Church of Romania and presented it as the faith which had enabled Romanians to maintain national unity over centuries of foreign rule. In its turn, the Orthodox Church established a *modus vivendi* with the state, enlisting as an unconditional supporter of communist policies in exchange for limited state tolerance of its ecclesiastical activities.¹⁰¹ The minority churches fared worst under this policy. The regime reduced their freedom of action by decreasing their autonomy. Moreover, the Party also favoured Romanian Orthodox members when distributing authority.¹⁰² As a tool of RCP propaganda campaigns, the Orthodox Church stigmatized other faiths as non-Romanian.¹⁰³

The Church's collaboration with the communist authorities also included efforts by certain prominent clergy to reconcile Orthodox theology with the country's dominant ideology. In *Apostolat Social*, a collection of essays and speeches spanning most of his reign, Patriarch Justinian¹⁰⁴ promoted the concept of the "social apostolate," which blended Marxist–Leninist social analysis and Orthodox Christian theology. Owing to Justinian's political skill, from 1965 to 1977 the state ceased closing monasteries, agreed to rehabilitate some formerly imprisoned clergy, and financed the restoration of historically significant churches. In May 1974, Justinian positioned the Church as a visible member of "Socialist Unity and Democracy," a national advisory organization controlled by the RCP. With the exception of some discord in the aftermath of 1979, the Orthodox Church avoided dissent against the RCP until the Party's demise.

Orthodox theologians justified collaboration with the state through the Byzantine concept of *symphonia*, or equal cooperation between Church and state in the fulfilment of their respective goals. The concept binds state and Church so closely that the latter becomes a state church, while other denominations and religions are considerably restricted. Compared to other religious denominations, the Romanian Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged position, but it continued to be only a privileged servant of the state. Nevertheless, the Church not only avoided the fate of the local Roman and Greek Catholic Churches, which were subjected to vicious persecution and suppression, but by 1985 had managed to become very vigorous.¹⁰⁵ In time, the Orthodox Church managed to supplant the other churches, though always at the cost of conciliation with the RCP.¹⁰⁶

The suppression of the Greek Catholic Church was the most severe. In 1948, the RCP banned the Greek Catholic Church, confiscated its property, and forcibly merged its

followers with the Romanian Orthodox Church. Many Greek Catholics became either Roman Catholic or Orthodox; others took Greek Catholic religious observance underground.¹⁰⁷ The Orthodox Church presented Greek Catholics as agents of the West, who would undermine true Romanian values. It also propagated the myth that Greek Catholics were actually Hungarians (or at least Hungarian allies) working to separate Transylvania from Romania.¹⁰⁸ This turn towards religious homogeneity was an intensification of the RCP's nationalist programme. Until its demise, the nationalist policies of the Party were directed against other ethnic groups, such as Hungarians, Jews and Roma. In the case of Romanian Catholics, however, the state adopted a definition of Romanian-ness which specifically excluded many ethnic Romanians.

Dissident Perspectives and Post-Communist European Influences

Insofar as Ceaușescu and the RCP were concerned, the new, Party-controlled definition of Romanian nationhood was an important step towards dominating national political discourse. Ceaușescu's strategy was to transform the Party line from ideology to orthodoxy—from a theoretical framework to an enforced uniformity of thought:

There [are] not . . . several philosophical concepts in Romania, but only one single one: dialectical and historical materialism. This is, in fact, to put it this way, the sole censorship. We do not need any other. It must safeguard the elimination of all that does not correspond to our Weltanschauung. We cannot make any sort of concession in our philosophy.¹⁰⁹

Very few individuals broke away from—or perhaps were even conscious of—this rhetorical encirclement. Among that minority was the literary critic and cultural historian Matei Călinescu (1934–), who recognized the RCP's project to co-opt Romanian intellectuals, ideological differences notwithstanding:

We must distinguish between what you feel, your own image of yourself, and the way the others perceive you. Those who are very close to you, have one image, totally different from those who are relatively farther away, and a third image belongs to those who knew very little about you, vaguely and from very far away. In a subjective way, I have always felt very remote from “those.” I place “those” in inverted commas, because I have a whole theory of communism as historical stage, during which the power belongs to “those,” meaning the people who are essentially hostile and unfamiliar. Although I had never adhered to their faith, their system of values, their aspirations and wishes, I had however, objectively, come close to them, by means of my social position and especially the way “those” people viewed me.¹¹⁰

To the acclaimed playwright Eugène Ionesco (1912–1994), who fought vociferously for human rights in Romania, the RCP's ideological monopoly only gave new focus to the *pogrom* mentality which had continued from the pre-communist period:

I mistrust the intellectuals who for thirty-odd years have done nothing but propagate different forms of *rhinoceritis* and who merely provide a philosophical justification

for those waves of collective hysteria that periodically sweep over whole nations [...] There was once a time when, if someone uttered the words “Jew” or “Bolshevik,” people would lower their horns and charge off to kill a Jew or a Bolshevik [...] Nowadays, if someone utters the word “bourgeois” or [...] “capitalist imperialist,” everyone charges off just as stupidly, just as blindly, to kill the bourgeois or the capitalist.¹¹¹

For Ionesco, then, there was little material difference between the public political environments of the communist and interwar periods. However, Ionesco is principally disappointed with members of the intelligentsia who have not only accepted the regime’s domination, but have justified its divisive social ambitions.

Like earlier Romanian governments which claimed to be constantly besieged by expanding empires at its borders, the RCP relied greatly on the fear of foreign aggressors—in particular, the Soviet Union—to legitimize its actions. Yet it was apparent to some that these fears were exaggerated, and had led to an artificial culture of occupation. In response, the dissident writer Dumitru Țepeneag (1937–) declared in 1968 that “we have become so preoccupied by the danger of Soviet occupation that, for all practical purposes, we have pre-occupied ourselves.” Likewise, the poet Mircea Dinesu (1950–) recognized the threat of imminent Soviet invasion as a tactic for both rationalizing increasingly authoritarian policies and suppressing the subsequent public backlash:

For many years, we are told, out loud or indirectly, that the Romanian system could become more liberal if it were not for the “Eastern Bear.” And the people even believed it. Soviet troops trained on the Romanian border. This was the statement which the officials drummed into our heads where we tried to rebel.¹¹²

Among the dissident community, the hollowness of the inflated foreign threat was clear, and arguments based on consolidating Romanian strength against those threats were understood as fear-mongering. Moreover, many dissidents who had settled in Western Europe regarded the communist regime as the real occupying force. Paul Goma (1935–), in a letter of support addressed to the signatories to Charter 77, made this argument:

You, as Poles, Hungarians and Bulgarians, live under Russian occupation. We Romanians live under Romanian occupation—ultimately more painful, more efficient than a foreign occupation. We all live under the same heel, the same privation of essential rights, the same contempt for men, the same lies. Everywhere there is poverty, economic chaos, demagoguery, lack of security, terror . . . If an ideology which purports to serve humanity is executing the same people, then this ideology has no connection to any idea or humanity.¹¹³

Their response to Romania’s self-withdrawal was to advocate a renewed internationalist movement, to open Romania to the developments which had left it behind when the RCP abandoned its own internationalist platform. These dissidents had seen how the standard of living in Romania had fallen behind that of the world it had rejected.

However, the apparent internationalist spirit of these dissidents was, more accurately, a pro-European spirit. Many intellectuals and dissidents who seemed to promote the opening of Romania had no interest in the world beyond Western Europe, and often reflected the ethnocentric attitudes of earlier Romanian nationalists and Europeanists alike. In Călinescu's view, the real motivator of the Romanian nationalist withdrawal was an infiltration of ideas from the East:

They wanted to take our country out of Europe, of European tradition, and to make it plunge again into the fatality that had always ambushed it, and menaced it now more than ever—the return to Asia.¹¹⁴

Thus, it would seem that Călinescu's concept of "those," the "hostile and unfamiliar" forces which brought communism, was not based exclusively on ideological differences. To Călinescu, the RCP regime was not supported by the constant myth of foreign aggression: it was the foreign aggressor.

In light of Călinescu's comments it is not difficult to find parallels between the communist–dissident struggles of the post-war regime and the nationalist–Europeanist conflicts of the interwar and earlier periods. Călinescu's own recent call for tolerance is strikingly reminiscent of the nineteenth century Europeanist perspective:

During these years, when all the games of history are made all over again, Romania risks an easy departure from Europe. The frontiers of our continent have not been settled forever. The powers emerging now that the Soviet Empire collapsed, Turkey's revival, especially, and the revival of all Turkish peoples, can push these frontiers way up towards the West. Romania can easily fall into this trap. What can deliver our country from this trap of history? First of all, the respect for the great values of Europe, above all for the democratic institutions. . . . Joining Europe requires great tolerance for neighbouring peoples, or the peoples whom we must deal with. I say tolerance, because I know that certain antagonisms are inevitable. We must tolerate one another, and pave the way for syntheses that history will provide us with, anyway. Today's Romanian ideology resurrects nationalistic and simplistic theories, pushed to the extreme sometimes. This mistake must strongly be indicted. The reason is that such theories tend to widen the feeling of isolation and awkwardness, which the Romanians have experienced fervently for a long while. Things may have to be discussed *sub specie veritatis*, too. Why should the image of a peasant, pastoral Romania be the true one, necessarily? Our history, our civilisation is one of the half breeds and contacts. All civilisations are the same. I can't see any reason why, precisely now, we should favour an ideology that preaches isolation, the artificial creation of a state of siege.¹¹⁵

As if he were an interwar Europeanist, Călinescu expresses the same rejection of the rural Romanian national ideal, the same call for greater ethno-national tolerance, and yet the same underlying aversion to non-European cultural influences.

Of course, the dissident intelligentsia was not unanimous in this Euro-centric vision of an international reopening, and democratic changes since the end of the Ceaușescu regime hold promise for a more balanced variety of national tolerance. However, it is significant that traditional Romanian nationalism not only continued, relatively

unaltered, into the communist period, but in fact survived the communist regime as an ideology against which Romanians of the post-communist period attempt to define their future.

NOTES

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1. Brendan O’Leary, “On the Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Ernest Gellner’s Writings on Nationalism,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1997, p. 192.
 2. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), p. 1.
 3. Shafir, “Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania,” Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Soviet and East European Research Centre Research Paper No. 30, p. 3.
 4. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 1.
 5. Eric J. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 116–117.
 6. Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 136–137.
 7. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 39; Smith, *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, pp. 133–134.
 8. Shafir, “Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania,” p. 13.
 9. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Cambridge: 1975), p. 134 in Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 48.
 10. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, p. 109.
 11. It is difficult to give an exact number of Roma people, as most of the Roma people did not vocalize their identity. See e.g. F. L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 181.
 12. István Horváth and Alexandra Scacco, “From the Unitary to the Pluralistic: Fine-Tuning Minority Policy in Romania,” in Annamariá Bíró and Petra Kovács, eds, *Diversity in Action. Local Public Management of Multi-Ethnic Communities in Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute, 2001).
 13. Keith Hitchens, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness* (Pelham, Montreal, Paris, Lugoj and Roma: Nagard Publisher, 1983), p. 231.
 14. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.
 15. Trond Gilberg, “Romanians and Democratic Values: Socialization After Communism,” in Daniel Nelson, ed., *Romania After Tyranny* (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1992).
 16. Joseph S. Rouček, *Contemporary Roumania and Her Problems* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), p. 61.

17. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*; Gilberg, "Romanians and Democratic Values: Socialization After Communism."
18. Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, p. 234.
19. I refer to both in the text depending on the reference used.
20. Andreia Roman, *Le Populisme Quarante-Huitard* (Bucharest: Les Editions de la Fondation Culturelle Roumaine, 1999).
21. Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, pp. 233–250.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Shafir, "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania," p. 15.
24. Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, p. 232.
25. *Ibid.*; Sorin Antohi, *Imaginaire culturel et réalité politique dans la Roumanie moderne. Le stigmate et l'utopie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999).
26. Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, p. 233.
27. Ghita Ionescu, "Eastern Europe," in Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, eds, *Populism. Its Meanings and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970).
28. Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, p. 240.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 248–249.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 241–242.
35. Shafir, "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania," p. 24
36. Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, "The Romanian Orthodox Church and Post-Communist Democratisation," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 8, 2000, p. 1468.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, pp. 236–237.
39. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*; Gilberg, "Romanians and Democratic Values: Socialization After Communism," p. 182.
40. Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 219.
41. The Legion continued to operate as if they were the true masters of Romania, and in January 1941 Antonescu took Hitler's advice to crush it. After two days of fighting in which the Nazi-backed government forces suppressed a Legionary revolt, Romania became a national and social state, in other words, a puppet state of the Third Reich (see Griffin, *Fascism*).
42. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
43. The state utilized Church as a tool for its social activities. Therefore, Church was allocated a role to increase number of married couples. This was assumed to maintain the basic unit of national life, i.e. family. Along with that, the Orthodox Church carried out health services against alcoholism. The Romanian Orthodox Church was also ready to provide these services in attempt to illustrate a clear evidence of its special relationship with the state. See e.g. George R. Ursul, "From Political Freedom to Religious Independence: The Romanian Orthodox Church, 1877–1925," in Stephen Fischer-Galati, Radu R. Florescu and George Ursul, eds, *Romania Between East and West. Historical Essays in Memory of Constantin C. Giurescu* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1982).

44. That is why Article 82 of the new Romanian Constitution said that His Majesty Carol I's sons would be raised in the Eastern Orthodox Religion. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_I_of_Romania>.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Cheng Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2003, p. 197.
47. Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 101.
48. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 99.
49. Shafir, "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania," pp. 6–8.
50. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, p. 123.
51. Immediately after Ceaușescu came to power, he asserted Romania's equality with the Soviet Union by renaming the Romanian Workers' Party the Romanian Communist Party and the People's Republic of Romania the Romanian Socialist Republic (see Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," p. 190). That is why throughout the paper I use Romanian Workers' Party and the Romanian Communist Party interchangeably.
52. Michael Shafir, *Romania Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Stimulated Change* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1985).
53. Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," pp. 175–176.
54. Shafir, *Romania Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Stimulated Change*.
55. Lidia Vianu, *Censorship in Romania* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1998), pp. 39–40.
56. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 145.
57. Shafir, *Romania Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Stimulated Change*.
58. Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," p. 176.
59. Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Understanding National Socialism," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1999, p. 160.
60. Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," p. 176.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
62. Tismaneanu, "Understanding National Socialism," p. 161.
63. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*.
64. The "muscovites" were those who passed the years of illegality in Moscow. There was a friction between them those who passed the years of illegality in Romanian jails. See Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 104.
65. The future of Transylvania emerged to be a point of controversy between the Hungarian and Romanian communist leaders at the end of the World War II. However, conceding to the loss of Bessarabia after so many years made it possible for the Romanians to

- strengthen their claims over Transylvania. See Chen, “The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy,” p. 178.
66. One can mention Mátyás Rákosi in Hungary, Ana Pauker in Romania and Rudolf Šlansky in Czechoslovakia.
 67. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 104.
 68. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
 69. The invasion of Hungary by the Soviet troops in 1956 worked for the benefit of Romania. Khrushchev, in an effort to present that the Soviet Union was not only able to send its troops into certain countries, but also withdraw them from others, indeed withdrew troops from Romania in 1958. Therefore, Romania became the only signatory of the Warsaw Pact to be relieved of Soviet military occupation. See e.g. Pavel Campeanu and Ronald Radzai, “National Fervor in Eastern Europe: The Case of Romania,” *Social Research*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 1991, pp. 805–829.
 70. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 103.
 71. Romanian Press Survey, *Radio Free Europe Research* 650 (1966).
 72. Constantin Vlad, “The Evolution of the Nation in Socialism,” *Contemporanul*, Vol. 31, 1966, pp. 3–4 in Romanian Press Survey, *Radio Free Europe Research* 650 (1966).
 73. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
 74. Vianu, *Censorship in Romania*, p. 7.
 75. Shafir, “Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania,” p. 29.
 76. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
 77. *Ibid.* pp. 33–35.
 78. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 122.
 79. To give a quick example: the literary critic Eugen Lovinescu was one of the first interwar figures to be restored to the patrimony of authors acceptable to a leftist regime, owing to his spirited opposition to interwar fascism and his adherence to liberal-democratic principles, yet in the 1980s these commendable items in his resume were overlooked in order to revile his welcome of “alien” Western standards (see *ibid.*, p. 110).
 80. Shafir, “Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania,” p. 40.
 81. Irina Culic, “The Strategies of Intellectuals: Romania under Communist Rule in Comparative Perspective,” in András Bozóki, ed., *Intellectuals and Politics in Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University, 1999), pp. 52–56.
 82. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 131.
 83. Tismaneanu, “Understanding National Socialism,” p. 159.
 84. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, p. 118.
 85. Campeanu and Radzai, “National Fervor in Eastern Europe: The Case of Romania.”
 86. From the Classical Greek *proto + kronos* [“first in time”]
 87. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, pp. 174–188.
 88. Gilberg, “Romanians and Democratic Values: Socialization After Communism,” p. 182.
 89. Open Society Archives FF039 (1977) (translated from French).
 90. Background Report Romania Unit, *Radio Free Europe*, 30 December 1963.

91. Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *The Ceaușescu Cult* (Bucharest: The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, 2000), p. 157.
92. Helsinki Watch Report, *Destroying Ethnic Identity. The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania* (New York: Helsinki Watch, 1991).
93. Gabanyi, *The Ceaușescu Cult*.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 164–165.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
96. Ceaușescu promoted Romanian speakers belonging to different Christian denominations than Orthodox Christianity in minority churches in attempt to change the language of the Church. This is an interesting example of utilizing ethnically Romanian religious minorities for the regime's nationalist purposes. Rudolf Joó and Andrew Ludanyi, *The Hungarian Minority's Situation in Ceaușescu's Romania* (New York: Columbia University Press East European Monographs, No. CCCLXXIII, 1994).
97. Horváth and Scacco, "From the Unitary to the Pluralistic: Fine-Tuning Minority Policy in Romania."
98. Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," p. 183.
99. Helsinki Watch Report, *Destroying Ethnic Identity. The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania*.
100. Campeanu and Radzai, "National Fervor in Eastern Europe: The Case of Romania."
101. Stan and Turcescu, "The Romanian Orthodox Church and Post-Communist Democratisation," p. 1468.
102. Joó and Ludanyi, *The Hungarian Minority's Situation in Ceaușescu's Romania*.
103. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
104. The Romanian Communist Party appointed Justinian Marina, a former parish priest with socialist political views and a personal friend of the Romanian Communist Party first secretary, Gheorghiu-Dej, as patriarch. See Stan and Turcescu, "The Romanian Orthodox Church and Post-Communist Democratisation," p. 1468.
105. Stan and Turcescu, "The Romanian Orthodox Church and Post-Communist Democratisation," pp. 1470–1471.
106. Chen, "The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy," p. 182.
107. Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*.
108. Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, p. 74.
109. Open Society Archives F-527 (1977).
110. Vianu, *Censorship in Romania*, p. 70.
111. Eugène Ionesco, *Notes and Counter Notes*, trans. Donald Watson (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 210; in Matei Călinescu, "The 1927 Generation in Romania: Friendships and Ideological Choices (Mihail Sebastian, Mircea Eliade, Nae Ionescu, Eugène Ionesco, E. M. Cioran)," *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2002, p. 661.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
113. Giovanni Bensi, *Il Tempo* (14 August 1977) (translated from Italian).
114. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
115. Vianu, *Censorship in Romania*, p. 81.