Romanian Nationalism: An Ideology of Integration and Mobilization

by James P. Niessen

Document 1


There are many who call themselves nationalists without realizing that nationalism is a doctrine that, once understood, cannot be abandoned, for there are no arguments that can destroy it. There are many who do not imagine that nationalism is also a special way to understand and judge all current problems of our life—political, economic, and cultural—which, given our conditions at this moment—the need to transform all things on the basis

1 This study was written with support from the Europa Institute, Budapest, and an IREX travel grant. It benefited from the comments on an earlier draft by fellow scholars at the Europa Institute and by Stephen Fischer-Galati, and the comments on a later draft by Andrei Pippidi. In extending my grateful appreciation for their advice, I wish to stress that I am solely responsible for the views expressed. Limitations of space permit me to indicate only a few of the secondary works that proved valuable.

of a reality which must be our own and must reflect our own being—is therefore, at the same time, also a moral note.

This nationalism cannot be compared to those other political "nuances," that is, those market signs or old historical rubrics that one can still read where our people congregate, allegedly to make policy, but in fact to satisfy, to the greatest degree possible, their particular material interests...

True nationalists are a group of people with understanding, conscience, diligence, and character, who realize that a people is an organic being, a living fact of the world, which can be or not be, come into being or die, but cannot be remade into another organic creation. And, since it is so, it is called to nothing else than the perfection of its being in the interest of universal civilization, which spreads light and happiness. And those who, through happy circumstances, are in a position to conduct it, must be able to fulfill, through virtue and patriotism, the higher function of serving natural, national goals. Their power is not, and cannot be, something proceeding from political metaphysics, but, in agreement with a simple but powerful political physics, proceeds from the number and significance of roots planted in that national soil, that furrow of the people that alone can give the needed energy.

Formerly, the power of duty to the father earth, repeatedly confirmed in its fight with the enemy, was self-evident. But we will never abandon it, nor permit the dragon-like evil spirits to find accommodation in us. We are here; we think, speak, and work for the spirits that are here, which we know better, yet also study more insistently.

We advance in keeping with this faith, conquering a terrain that prepares our organic reality in its natural course, and we have, for our friends, only the passing smile of the soldier for his comrade as he goes on the attack; for the enemy, clean weapons; for false friends, disdain; and for the traitor who tosses his cap away and passes over to the other side, the most absolute indifference.

Document 2

from Nichifor Crainic, "Program of the Ethnocratic State" (1938).

Romania has been, and must be, the ethnic state of the Romanians.

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The state is the dynamic organization of the nation through the will and power of native Romanians. The people's will for life is expressed through the political organization of the ethnocratic state.

Our state is monarchical throughout its entire history. The monarchy is the principle of its continuity. The crown of the Romanian King symbolizes the glory of the people and the permanence of Romanian consciousness.

Created through our power and will, the state can only survive by our power and will. The sole guarantee of its durability is ethnocracy.

A nationalist state is an ethnocratic state, that is a state that exists through the will and power of our people.

The ethnocratic state differs profoundly from the democratic state. The democratic state is based on the number of population, without racial or religious distinction. The foundation of the ethnocratic state is the Romanian soil and people.

The democratic state is more of a registration office. The ethnocratic state is the will for power and the increase of the Romanian people. Its principal factors are: soil, blood, soul, and faith.

The soil of the Romanian people has today inhabitants of other races and faiths, as well. They came here through invasion (like the Hungarians), colonization (like the Germans), through crafty infiltration (like the Jews). Every one of them, fonder of its own people than ours, presents no guarantees of security for the official organism of the state.

The Jews are a permanent danger for every national state.

The experience of other states teaches us that any unassimilated member of a minority, active in the organism of the state, is an element of dissolution and ruin. It follows from these judgments that it is a vital necessity for Romania to be an exclusively ethnocratic state. Only native Romanians, who have created it through their sacrifice, guarantee the durability of the state...

Contemporary Romania has been unable to progress in culture and civilization due to the lack of a reliable orientation for the state, and due to the discontinuity of the matters begun.

This evil cannot be cured except through the creation of a great plan of construction, whose systematic execution must be supervised by the supreme authority of the state.

This plan of nationalizing natural wealth, of culturalizing the Romanian soul, and civilizing material life and the Romanian soil, containing work of vast proportions, long in term and epochal in significance, will be supported by a special state bank.

Popularized and accepted by the entire nation, executed by government teams selected from the elites of the professions and controlled by parliament, it will be supervised by His Majesty the King.
In the ethnocratic state, the King is the dynamic factor of the entire work of Romanian creation.

The corporatist regime culminates in royal authority.

The great plan of reconstruction of the ethnocratic state engages the entire nation, through the professions, in the work of creation, under the tutelage and authority of His Majesty the King.

Document 3

from a speech by Nicolae Ceaușescu (1974).

Dear Comrades,

I would like to start by conveying to you, the participants in this big rally, to all the working people in the Argeș and Sibiu counties, a warm salute on behalf of the Central Committee and of the government, and on my own behalf.

This gathering here, on this mountain top, is dedicated to the inauguration of the newly built national road across the Făgăraș Range—the “Transfăgărașan”—the highest in this country, built at more than 2,000 meters, linking Muntenia with Transylvania. The construction of this road is a brilliant feat of the working people in this country, showing the force and creative power of a free people, master of its destinies, a people that is building its future according to its wishes.

Thousands of people have worked at the construction of this national road. First, the soldiers of our army, the engineers’ corps, who have demonstrated their skill and working power, their firmness and resolution to overcome any difficulties. That is why I want to congratulate warmly all the military who have cooperated in building this road and wish them fresh success in their activity....

Crossing this road, beholding the high summits soaring on every side, we can better build up in our mind the image of the impact they always had on our people, acting from time immemorial and in the hardest circumstances, as a compelling force to keep alive the national feeling and defend this sacred soil by hard struggles. This is our fathers’ and forefathers’ earth, this is the home of the Romanians! The people living in these stretches have always sought liberty—like the deer on the crests and the birds in the sky—and have cherished the feeling of freedom to have their own country, and master their own destinies....

As I have already mentioned, the military made a decisive contribution to the building of the Transfăgărașan road. This allows us to entrust it with more tasks in the future. In this way, parallel with military and political training, with the raising of our defense capacity in order to be always ready to defend the revolutionary conquests and the country’s independence, the military will have a share in the actual building of the multilaterally developed socialist society, in the building of communism in Romania. After all, the real defensive capacity of any country resides in its economic and political force, in the unshakable unity of the entire people around the Party. And, there is no force in the world able to quell a people desiring to live freely, to build communism in their own country....

Document 4


Romania, less than two years after the events of December 1989, is experiencing a dramatic situation, a profound crisis on all levels: political, economic, social, and spiritual. In the general European context, contradictory, strained, accentuating disequilibrium, destroying the totalitarian Communist system,


5 “Platforma-Program a Partidului România Mare,” România Mare 2:54 (21 June 1991), 8 (introduction). Translated by James P. Niessen, and published with the consent of Corneliu Vadim Tudor.

The words for “the people” merit a few observations. Neam, appearing in the first two documents, was common in the first half of the century. It roughly corresponds to the German Volk, with its racial or tribal connotation. Subsequently, writers such as the author of Document 3, preferred popor, a word of Latin origin that corresponds directly to the English term. Document 4 uses etnie, meaning ethnic group.
occult, extremist, antidemocratic forces exist in our land which, maintained and manipulated from abroad, provoke a state of chaos—the continual disorganization of the national economy, of education, science, and culture. Similarly, values of the national patrimony, of the land’s wealth in general, created through much work and sacrifice of the Romanian people, are worn down and alienated. We are witnessing an incredible diminution of the country’s capacity to defend itself due to an organized campaign by others to denigrate the wearers of military uniforms.

Deliberately, in a veiled fashion, or at times openly, conflicts are being provoked between ethnic and religious groups and between generations. Hostile ideas are raised with territorial pretensions, pursuing step by step, by an entire arsenal of means, the dismemberment of Romania.

Faced with this situation, the creation of the Greater Romania Party—the declared continuator of the traditions of struggle of the National Party in the last century—becomes an immediate necessity and represents the response and patriotic engagement of all those who consider themselves citizens in thought and deed, with love for the glorious historical past and the ancestral soil, for the progress of all of Romanian society, of all those who desire that Romanians should feel themselves rulers in their own home.

The Greater Romania Party, as a party of the center-left, assumes the task of national reconciliation, of the unification of all democratic and progressive forces of the land, for the realization of an open, pluralistic, and democratic political system, for the real separation of powers in a state of law. We advocate the respect of political, philosophical, and religious convictions and options guaranteed by law, the guarantee of a dignified, civilized life through the realization of an efficient system of social protection that is valid for all socio-professional categories in Romania. We will persistently pursue the application of moral and ethical norms in the promotion of the entire hierarchy of state and politics with respect to the freedom of organization and association.

The Greater Romania Party proposes, through its program and statute, the defense at any price of the integrity and sovereignty of the land, of the national and unitary character of the Romanian state, the restoration of the dignity of our people, one of the oldest and most noble peoples of Europe.

All these things will be realized through the revitalization of the entire Romanian people, springing from two overwhelming realities: first of all, through the Christian faith, which through the vale of tears of history has formed our people, and, second, through the unparalleled genius, energy, and resistance of our people, which has survived, by a miracle, all the hostilities of the ages. This is why our slogan is the famous adage of the Voivode Petru Rareș: “We will be again what we were, and even more!”

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Romanian Nationalism

**Introduction**

— In your opinion, do the Legionary Movement or the ideas promoted by this Movement have a future?

— There is no need for it, because it did not invent nationalism, and another form than [that of] Eminescu is impossible.

—[Petre Țuțea (1901–1991) in an interview (December 1990)]

It is possible to accept Țuțea’s hypothesis on three levels. Romania’s greatest poet, Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889) presented an idealized view of a Romania beset by enemies; Eminescu the journalist raised xenophobia to a philosophical principle; Eminescu the martyr inspired generations of disciples. The lives of Iorga, Crainic, Codreanu, and even Ceaușescu and Tudor reflect some of these themes. This study of Romanian nationalism examines the contributions of these nationalists to an ideology serving territorial and political consolidation in the twentieth century. Paradoxically, while territorial unification was largely achieved, political integration remains elusive. This accounts for the continuing appeal of national ideology.

**Nicolae Iorga and Populist Nationalism**

Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940) was the leader of a new generation of Romanians who advocated, during the first thirty years of this century, a more selfless and democratic style of politics. He was unrivaled for the sheer volume as well as the lasting influence of both his historical scholarship and his nationalist propaganda. The separation of these spheres is difficult: although he was a tireless investigator of sources, taught at the University of Bucharest from 1893, and was member of the Academy since 1910, he stood out even more for his ability to synthesize and his capacity, even compulsion, to popularize his views through brilliant prose and public activity. His journal, *Neamul românesc* (“The Romanian People”), published between 1906 and 1940, became the principal organ of this public activity, most of it written by Iorga.

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himself. The journal, and Iorga's Democratic Nationalist Party, which was formally constituted in 1910, propagated a more populist and aggressive brand of nationalism. Neamul românesc focused in particular on three themes of Iorga's "organic nationalism" that are observable in Document 1: the corrupt and self-serving comportment of Romanian politicians, the peasant question, and the life of Romanians living outside the Kingdom of Romania.

Iorga's attack on politicians reflected the traditional lack of sympathy between rulers and ruled in Romania. An influential contemporary book by Constantin Rădulescu-Motru condemned the country's politicians as a cynical and manipulative clique who were too eager to imitate Western culture. The notion that the country's rulers served foreign interests was deeply rooted. Voevodes of the Danubian Principalities, who fought Hungarian and Turkish domination, were succeeded by others who maintained direct control of the government at the expense of tribute payments recovered through the exploitation of their subjects. This form of indirect rule became more blatant between 1711 and 1821, when Greeks from the Phanar district of Constanti-nople controlled the Voevodal throne and dominated the boaiars and the Orthodox Church. Romanians secured the end of Phanariot rule, the unification of the Principalities, and the creation of the independent kingdom between 1821 and 1881 through a skillful exploitation of Russian and French support. Critics of political gamesmanship deplored the rulers' clever compromises with foreigners and saw foreign influence as the root of corruption.

Two targets of popular xenophobia were the Phanariot agents of the Turkish sultan and, increasingly, the Jews. Ballads recounted the struggle of peasant bands against Greeks and Turks; proverbs made hostile reference to Turks, Tatars, Russians, Hungarians, or foreigners in general who "always harm and torment you" and whose tracks "should be burned with nine cartfuls of wood." As Greeks (like Iorga's ancestors) assimilated, the Jews supplanted them as the ideal enemy. Eminescu's Moldavia was the site of the most dramatic growth in the Jewish population of Romania in the course of the nineteenth century. Three-fourths of Romania's 270,000 Jews lived there in 1900. Barred from ownership of land and marginalized by the animosity of the Orthodox Church, a portion of the Jews gained a dominant position, alongside foreign concerns, in the fitful beginnings of Romanian capitalism.

The Moldavian capital, Iași, and its university became the center of both the intellectual movement Junimea (Youth) and of Romanian anti-Semitism. Junimea began in 1868 as a conservative critique of Western cultural influences, denouncing the francophilia of the liberal patriots in Bucharest, from an organicist, not a strictly nationalist, perspective. Two graduates of the university in Iași, A. C. Cuza and Iorga, provided the synthesis of Eminescu's xenophobia and the nativism of Junimea. As professor of economics at the university, Cuza demanded "the creation...of a national middle class through the elimination of foreigners, who impede its formation, [and] the formation of a purely Romanian culture." For Cuza and many contemporaries, "foreign" meant Jewish, as is suggested by the somewhat exaggerated remark of the French ambassador in 1900: "Anti-semitism is more than just an idea, it is a passion common to politicians of all parties, the Orthodox church, and one could also add, to all the peasants, both Wallachian and Moldavian." Iorga not only applauded Cuza's treatise, but showed how to apply it. In 1906 he launched an attack on the ruling elite, and launched himself into national politics, by a dramatic condemnation of the exaggerated role of French culture in boiar circles. French had long been the language of polite society in Bucharest, indeed the vehicle of liberalism. But Iorga protested when a group of prominent public figures sponsored a series of charity performances in French. Following speeches by Iorga on "the rights of the national language in the modern state" and "the national danger that results from the alienation of the leading classes," students and others blocked the entrance of the theater; 102 were wounded when the police attacked. The students went on strike, closing the university. The success of this protest emboldened Iorga and Cuza to organize "The Brotherhood of Good Romanians" to support under all circumstances the language, literature, and

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7 Cultura română si politanism ("Romanian Culture and Politicianism") (Bucharest, 1904).
11 On this and other episodes of Iorga's political career, see Petre Țurlea, Nicolae Iorga în viața politică a României (Bucharest: Editura enciclopedică, 1991). Iorga's brief notice on Cuza's work appeared in Sămănătorul (4 December 1905); see Nicolae Iorga, O luptă literară, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Minerva, 1979), 250.
highest interests of the Romanian people.” In May 1906 he used the proceeds of a lecture tour organized by the Brotherhood to found Neamul românesc. The public response to the journal encouraged Iorga also to run for parliament. Supported by Cuza’s circle in Iași, he was elected in 1907. Iorga owed his political notoriety in 1907 as much to his view on rural questions as to his views on the Jews and the national language. The peasant uprising of 1888 emphasized the failure of the parliament, elected by 20 percent of the adult population, to address the poverty, ignorance, and hopelessness of the peasantry. One new group, the pămiști (peasantists) concentrated on socioeconomic issues and collaborated with the Liberal Party, while another, the literary populists, viewed the problem more paternalistically. At the turn of the century, the literary populists’ journal Șămânătorul (“The Sower”) emerged as an influential forum for fiction and essays dealing with peasant life. Iorga became the editor of the journal in 1903, taking it in a more nationalistic direction and increasing its popularity. Iorga brought these concerns also into Neamul românesc, addressing rural questions so forcefully, and to such a large readership, that after the peasant revolt of 1907 he received threats from landowners who considered him to be a leading instigator of the revolt.

Radical activists and writers among the peasantists actually encouraged revolt, and the authorities involved with rural affairs sinned through omission and commission. They bear more responsibility than Iorga for the events, but Iorga’s linkage of exploitation with the Jews was explosive. He wrote in Șămânătorul, for instance, that “…however high the dirty wave of profit-seekers, the soil is ours. And one day the wind will blow away the scum it has brought, and we shall remain.”12 Jewish tenants of absentee landlords, Jewish moneylenders and innkeepers—these were standard figures in Neamul românesc and the targets of racially motivated peasant violence. The Orthodox clergy’s campaign against peasant alcoholism had targeted Jewish innkeepers, and priests participated in the revolt itself and were among the 10,000 killed in the subsequent crackdown. Neamul românesc could thus argue that the revolt was not merely a consequence of oppression and neglect by landlords and politicians, but an act of righteous retribution by the peasants against enemies of the people.

Rural issues formed the core of Iorga’s first legislative activity and also of the political program he and Cuza presented a year later. The “Democratic Nationalist Program”13 focused on three areas: peasant agriculture, public education, and administration. Many points favored the villagers, including the autonomous organization of the clergy; others demanded the exclusion of Jews and foreigners from industrial employment, land ownership, innkeeping, and military service. The program proposed a democratic system serving the interests of ethnic Romanians. The introduction of a professional civil service and universal suffrage, finally, was to make officials accountable to the people rather than to party bosses. Xenophobic and demagogic themes complemented others that were progressive and anti-elitist.

Iorga’s “What Is Nationalism?” (Document 1) illuminates the ideas behind the Democratic Nationalist Program. The organicism of the article, like that of literary populism, evokes the continuity and strength of peasant agriculturalists, who, for the good of the nation, ought to be educated and given rights, while alien interlopers should be removed like weeds. The references to merchants, evil spirits, and dragons are conventional metaphors for the Jews in contemporary religious language. Iorga was not particularly religious, but he concurred with Radulescu-Motru and others who saw the Orthodox Church as a central national institution.

Both the program and the article lack any reference to the one-third of Romanians who lived outside the kingdom. The call to work for the people here might even suggest a renunciation of irredentism. The image of the people as an organic being, of the cultivation of the furrow of the people, however, points to a biological definition of the people and the need to raise its consciousness. Romanians living abroad had a prominent place in Iorga’s activities outside parliament. Șămânătorul and Neamul românesc gave extensive treatment to the life of Romanians abroad. As director after 1908 of Liga culturală (an irredentist organization founded in 1890), Iorga intensified his propaganda and used it to question Romania’s alliance with Austria-Hungary. In 1908, too, Iorga initiated the summer school at Valeni de Munte, in the Carpathians close to the Transylvanian frontier. For the next six years, the courses on Romanian culture and history, taught also to students from neighboring countries, would prove to be a source of inspiration for selected Romanians of Hungary and of exasperation for Hungarian authorities who sought to prevent attendance by their subjects. Iorga dedicated many of his scholarly works in these years to Transylvania.14

Prince Carol, the future king, visited Valeni de Munte, an act that displeased King Carol and the Crown Prince Ferdinand because the king’s...
alliance with Austria-Hungary precluded official claims by Bucharest on Hungarian territory. Similarly, Transylvanian\textsuperscript{15} Romanian politicians avoided open demands for unification that could be construed as treason against the state where they lived. In the eighteenth century, a group of Uniate (Greek Catholic) clergy and scholars had formulated the theory of Daco-Romanian continuity to legitimize their church’s tie to Rome and to secure political rights (on grounds of historical priority) for all Romanians within Transylvania. The propagation of the theory through church schools created the first nationally conscious intelligentsia in the first half of the nineteenth century. An ideology originally designed for ethno-religious and provincial motives soon transcended confessional and territorial bounds.\textsuperscript{16} The political champion of this ideology in Transylvania, the Romanian National Party, never openly demanded unification. The party’s leaders, albeit militant nationalists, were too cautious to espouse a strategy that transcended Hungary.

The evolution of the “eastern question” favored the increasing influence of Iorga’s sympathizers in both Hungary and Romania. While the Liberal Party in Romania moved under the leadership of Ionel Brătianu toward serious political reform, Iorga’s platform of 1910 made foreign policy its first priority, insisting upon ethnic solidarity and unity. A young Transylvanian, Onisifor Ghibu, had the impression in 1910 that people in Romania were little interested in “the great national issues,” i.e., irredentism and unification. But King Carol warned the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in 1912 that a planned Hungarian measure affecting the Romanian minority would cause an increase in Romania of “religious and nationalist fanaticism, that He and His government would be powerless to oppose…placing a weapon in the hands of enemies of His foreign policy.”\textsuperscript{17} The radicals’ influence was growing. Ghibu was one of several Transylvanian admirers of Iorga who were becoming impatient with the moderation of the National Party’s leadership. He had been one of the student leaders in the demonstrations in 1906 in Bucharest. Two others in the group were the poet Octavian Goga and the historian Ioan Lupșa. These so-called youth of steel resembled Iorga’s Democratic Nationalists in their populism, Orthodox Christianity, anti-Semitism, and militancy, as expressed in two journals that were visibly modelled upon Șămânitorul and Neamul românesc.\textsuperscript{18}

After King Carol failed to gain the support of his Crown Council for war on the side of the Central Powers in 1914, Goga and Ghibu, now in Bucharest, and Iorga led the militants who rejected the alliance and applauded the decision to invade Transylvania in 1916. Facing a grim military prospect in the short term, Prime Minister Brătianu told King Ferdinand: “See today’s responsibilities in the perspective of this people’s destiny and its future, and advance decisively on the path which national consciousness indicates.”\textsuperscript{19}

The Interwar Period and World War II

Romania faced repeated defeat in World War I and suffered enemy occupation and a separate, punitive peace in 1918. Therefore, the rapid reversal of fortunes and the unification of Transylvania with Austria’s Bucovina and Russia’s Bessarabia struck many as a miracle. Lupșa’s popular history wrote of the Calvary of King Ferdinand and the nation in 1916–18 and their resurrection at the end of the war.\textsuperscript{20} As satisfying as the victory was and

\textsuperscript{15} The term “Transylvania” is used broadly here to refer to the regions in which Romanians predominated—Transylvania, Maramureș, Șișeșa, and Banat—and which passed from Hungarian to Romanian rule in 1918.


\textsuperscript{17} Onisifor Ghibu, Oamenii între oameni (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1990), 252. Fürstenberg to Berchtold, Bucharest (26 February 1912), in Hungarian National Archives, Budapest, K26 (The Prime Minister’s Office), 1915-XXV-1042.

\textsuperscript{18} Țurlea, Nicolae Iorga în viața politică a României, 20–28; Ghibu, Oameni între oameni, 224–29. The journals were Luceafărul (“Morning Star,” after a poem by Eminescu) and Țara noastră (“Our Land”).

\textsuperscript{19} Quoted in Sterie Diamandi, Galeria oamenilor politici (Bucharest: Editura Gesa, 1991 [1935]), 76.

\textsuperscript{20} Lupșa, Istoria unirii românilor (Bucharest: Fundația culturală regală “Principele Carol,” 1937).
comforting as the impression of divine favor may have been, Romanians were unprepared for the sudden achievement of a united state. The radically altered context of their lives inspired anxious hypersensitivity to the superior economic status of Romania's largest minorities, the Hungarians, Germans, and Jews. Romanians were surrounded by other peoples, outside and inside the frontiers, who seemed poised to take the prize away. Hence the dominant preoccupations of interwar nationalists, illustrated by Crainic's program (Document 2): the need for the political unity of Greater Romania, Orthodox Christianity as a source of spiritual unity, and the advocacy of measures to redress the superior economic status of ethnic minorities.

Romania's territory and population more than doubled between 1912 and 1920, and ethnic minorities increased from 10 percent to 28 percent of the population. Bulgarian, Russian, and Hungarian blocs at the extremities of the state were unfriendly to the central authority, but so were the more numerous Romanians in these provinces who applauded unification but whose political traditions were different and often more democratic than those of the old kingdom. The granting of universal suffrage and a radical land reform accentuated these problems. The minorities gained a new grievance, the Conservative Party ceased to be a major force, and the Liberals were further isolated.

During the 1920s, politicians seeking to fashion a nationwide constituency devised two rival strategies, once centralist and the other populist. Liberals inherited the confidence of the dynasty and the kingdom's strongest political machine, and they sought to counteract what they saw as dangerous centrifugal tendencies by establishing direct administrative control over the new provinces. Their economic doctrine of prin noi in fine ("through ourselves" or "do it yourself") advocated trade protectionism and government investment in Romanian industries. The population was generally appalled by the Liberals' violation of democratic principles and their terrorization of the electorate, particularly in the Transylvanian and Bessarabian strongholds of the National and Peasant parties. These parties denounced the corruption and "colonialism" of the central government and in 1922 boycotted the coronation of King Ferdinand in the Transylvanian town of Alba Julia—an act celebrating the dynasty's achievement of Greater Romania. They fused in 1926 as the National Peasant Party and demanded decentralization, free trade, and a genuine democracy that would unite Romanians against foreign enemies. The

Liberals and National Peasants alternated in power for much of the interwar period and succeeded by the 1930s in creating nationwide constituencies.

The existential anxiety that underlay these rival strategies had a real basis in the territorial revisionism of neighboring Hungary and the Soviet Union and, for many, in resentment of the concession in 1923 of citizenship for Romania's Jews, made in response to pressure from the League of Nations. By the logic of this anxiety, Hungarians, Russians, Communists, and Jews were hostile to Greater Romania's survival. The two major parties' dedication to liberal democracy was sufficient to moderate this resentment. Iorga himself, though a member of neither party, abandoned anti-Semitic politics after 1920.

An observer calculated in the mid-1930s that 36 percent of the Liberals' and National Peasants' parliamentary deputies were former members of Iorga's Democratic Nationalists. For the younger generation of his disciples, Crainic would write: "Iorga could no longer give us direction...fulfilled prophecy consumed the prophet in him, leaving the historian and chief of a small political grouping." Another disciple was Octavian Goga, the poet turned politician and founder of the Agrarian Party. He became increasingly critical of democracy because it tolerated urban Jewish and Hungarian influences in the city that he felt corrupted traditional Romanian culture. The new generation's blend of resentment and fervent Orthodox Christianity lent the new nationalism, or nationalism, its characteristic note.

The new nationalism had ecclesiastic, intellectual, and populist components. The centrality of Orthodox Christianity was not strictly dependent upon religious faith, but became an axiom for the new nationalists. Traditional Orthodox hostility to other churches reinforced the rejection of the

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23 Turlea, Nicolae Iorga în viața politică a României, 36. Nichifor Crainic, Zile albe, zile negre, Memoriu, 1 (Bucharest: Casa Editorială „Gândirea,” 1991), 148. This is the first edition of the memoirs that Crainic wrote while a fugitive in 1944-47.

24 Octavian Goga, Mustul care furbe (Bucharest: Editura Scripta, 1992 [1927]). The term "neonationalism" is from Armin Heinen, De Legion „Erzangel Michael“ in Rumänien. Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986), which is a thorough and insightful account of this generation.
Romanian Nationalism

Ionescu's joining with the movement in 1933, inspired many intellectuals. The Orthodox evangelical movement "Lord's Army" supported by Staniloae and Metropolitan Balan also had contributed to the growth of the Legion. These, however, were not the movement's founders.

The Legion had its origin in the League of National Christian Defense (LNCD), founded by A. C. Cuza in 1923. His younger associates, Corneliu Zelia Codreanu and Ion Mota, moved in 1927 to form the Legion. Codreanu (1899–1938) was not content to campaign for electoral support on the basis of a platform: with the zeal of a missionary, he proclaimed, "Today the country is going to ruin not for lack of programs, but for lack of men... the Rumanian people need today a great teacher and leader, who will overcome the powers of darkness and destroy the brood of Hell." Unlike Cuza, Codreanu and Mota were truly religious and charismatic individuals. Codreanu had attended a military academy and sought to inculcate a spirit that was both ascetic and combative. Mota was the descendant of Orthodox priests from Transylvania. Adopting the practice of villagers in the restless mot region of Transylvania, he formed members into Brotherhoods of the Cross which were sealed in their own blood. The Legionary mystique evoked Christian themes but also the methods of the haiduke, touring villages to assist the poor against the rulers and exploiters and undertaking periodic violent assaults on officials and Jews.

The Legion's fanatical anti-Semitism did not distinguish it from Cuza's LNCD, Goga's Agrarians, or Cuza's and Goga's National Christian Party (founded in 1935). Even Patriarch Christea made hostile remarks about the Jews and justified the Romanians' need to "defend themselves." It was the Legion's acts of violence that distinguished them from these others. The violence was condemned by the Orthodox hierarchy, but economic hardship lessened the public's abhorrence of them. Romanian students' resentment of Jews in their ranks and of the competition for scarce intellectual employment accounted for the strong appeal of anti-Semitic extremism among the students, a great many of whom were of rural origin. Intellectual unemployment, hence resentment of Jewish rivals, increased during the Depression. The Orthodox episcopate applauded the social welfare and church-building activities of the Legion. Its demand for Christianization of national politics and society, in two declarations written by Balan in 1937, revealed a totalitarian view of public morality.28

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27 Roberts, Rumania, 230. The citation is from Codreanu's Pentru legionari (1936).


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non-Orthodox ethnic minorities. Nationalists therefore applauded the decision to streamline the church and strengthen its ties to the state. The establishment of a uniform church statute and an Orthodox Patriarchate in 1925 coordinated the dioceses of the new provinces with those of the old kingdom. The Orthodox opposed the conclusion of a Concordat with the Holy See, which the government and Uniates desired in order to bring diocesan borders in line with those of the state. Opponents argued that it gave the Catholic minority a degree of freedom not enjoyed by the "national church" and that it facilitated Hungarian influence. Nicolae Bălan, Metropolitan of Transylvania, and Onisifor Ghibu, now a university professor, led the unsuccessful opposition. Ghibu's break in 1932 with his longtime friend Iorga, then prime minister, over this issue symbolizes the separation of the old and new nationalists.

The intellectual component of the new nationalism, as in the case of Iorga's earlier movement, was popularized at first by a single writer and his journal: the poet-philosopher Nichifor Crainic (1889–1972) and Gândirea, published between 1921 and 1944 and directed by Crainic from 1926. Crainic followed Russian theological writers in characterizing Orthodox peoples as more collectivist and unselfish than people in the West. For Romanians, as for Russians, all that was valuable in national culture had been created by divine intervention and through the church.25 Lucian Blaga and Nae Ionescu were other influential theorists of the new nationalism. For Blaga, the Romanian character was a synthesis of Orthodoxy with the ancestral religion of the Dacians and the migratory experience of mountain shepherds, while Ionescu asserted that Romanians' Orthodox was innate and independent of individual will. The Orthodox theologian Dumitru Stâniloae denounced Ionescu's denial of personal responsibility as amoral, but he, too, saw nationalism as divinely ordained.26

These ecclesiastic and intellectual tendencies became more significant with the rise of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, or Iron Guard. Crainic and Ionescu both were members of the National Peasant Party in the 1920s; later, their enthusiastic support for the Legion in their newspapers, along with...
After 1945, an ostensibly internationalist regime took power, executing, imprisonment, or exiling the neonationalists and outlawing their works. Nationalism therefore manifested itself in the impotent, often extremist voice of the emigration and in the gradual invention by the Communists of a new, ideologically acceptable variant. Nicolae Ceaușescu’s speech from 1974 (Document 3) represents an example of the three-part message of Romanian national communism: the priority of building a country that would be strong enough economically to ensure both well-being and independence, the achievement of integration and assimilation through growth, and, finally, the selective appeal to prewar nationalism to support these themes.

The unfolding of the national Communist strategy had to overcome the low patriotic standing of the Romanian Communist Party. The Comintern’s selective appeal to prewar nationalism to support these themes.

The careers of both Crainic and Ionescu benefited from their early support for the return of Carol II from exile in 1930. As one of the king’s closest advisers until 1934, Ionescu was “the philosopher of monarchic mysticism” and prophet of “inevitable political transformations” in which Carol would be the savior. The neonationalist right attained its greatest electoral success in 1937, officially gaining over a quarter of the vote. The short-lived National Christian government led by Goga and Cuza enacted anti-Semitic measures that survived its own brief tenure, but its incompetence proved a convenient pretext for Carol to establish a royal dictatorship with the Patriarch as titular prime minister. Carol created an umbrella party, the Party of National Rebirth, in 1938 (later renamed the Party of National Unity, then the Party of the Nation) and erected a corporative regime. He also decimated the Legion itself through arrests and executions, including of Codreanu. Crainic’s glorification of royal power had been timely.

The loss of Bessarabia and northern Bucovina to the Soviet Union and of northern Transylvania to Hungary in 1940, the latter known to Romanians as the Vienna Diktat, thoroughly discredited King Carol and helped bring the Legion and General Antonescu, a hero of World War I, to power in September 1940. During a four-month reign of terror, the Legion conducted a pogrom in Bucharest and a massacre of its critics, including Nicolae Iorga—an act of patricide against the father of modern nationalism. Romania’s intellectuals applauded Antonescu’s subsequent suppression of the Legion, as did the Orthodox Church, but they tolerated his continued persecution of the Jews and, at least in its initial phase, supported the crusade against the Soviet Union beginning in 1941. Crainic served the royal dictatorship, then Antonescu, as minister of propaganda. Roughly half of Romania’s Jews perished between 1940 and 1944, including most of those living under Hungarian rule in northern Transylvania and others in Moldavia, Bessarabia, and areas of the Soviet Union under Romanian military occupation after 1941.

**Postwar Communism**

**Romanian Nationalism**


30 These phrases are from another member of Carol’s inner circle, Grigore Gafencu, *Insemnări politice* 1929-1939, 1st ed. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991), 121, 172, 251-52.
Romanian. While Stalin ordained the return of northern Transylvania to Romania, he required special treatment for the Hungarians and retained Bessarabia. Party membership rose from less than 1,000 in mid-1944 to 717,480 two years later, and many of the new recruits were Hungarians and Romanians who desired immunity from prosecution for minor war crimes or right-wing extremism. Really prominent nationalities, several hundred thousand members of the political parties, religious leaders, and others were imprisoned.

The regime provided the Hungarian minority with a Stalinist education in its native language and a nominally autonomous Hungarian region. The Jews also received visible favors, associated in the mind of the public with the presence of a few Jews in the leadership, notably the powerful Ana Pauker. Iorga had accused a political adversary in 1908 of relying upon the money and connections of "Fischers and...Rappoports and...Honigmanns and a legion of insects called Wechsler, Kaufmann, and Pauker."32 Forty years later, Gheorghiu-Dej and Pauker led a takeover by Stalin's "insects" and facilitated large-scale emigration to the newly created state of Israel. Then, they combined to oust the "nationalist" Lucretiu Pătrășcanu, who had denounced chauvinism and anti-Semitism but had insisted upon communism's patriotic character: "We will tie the national idea to the idea of the masses, realizing the national idea in truth by raising the masses to a conscious life. Between our political faith as communists and the national idea thus understood there is no contradiction."

"The national idea thus understood" created its own contradictions and odd alliances. Only months after Pătrășcanu's ouster, the party's "Resolution on the National Question" launched a campaign against Zionism with anti-Semitic overtones. Like Stalin, the Communists also endorsed the neo-nationalists' abhorrence of the Catholic Church as a hostile foreign agency by abrogating the Concordat, strictly regulating foreign contacts by the churches, and reuniting the 1.5 million-strong Uniate Church with the Orthodox.

Orthodox bishops such as Metropolitan Balan assisted in the long-desired union, accepting the arrest of the recalcitrant bishops and thousands of priests—methods, Onisifor Ghibu wrote, "that not even the most persistent enemies of our nation would have dared apply."34 Stalinist rejection of Western democracy echoed that of the neo-nationalists, but with a very different emphasis. Some historical and linguistic works of the 1950s denied the Dacian and Roman origins of the Romanians and exaggerated their links to Slavic culture. Ana Pauker reportedly stated, "All that is known of the Romanian language is that it consists of a very large number of Slav elements."35

The strident anticomunism of Romanian culture in exile provided a strong motive for the Communists to isolate the country from the West. Romanian research institutes in Paris and Freiburg sponsored scholarly journals after their founding in 1949, while Italy and Spain were centers of both the Legionnaire and Greek Catholic emigration. The Legionaries and Catholics enjoyed disproportionate influence in emigre politics: the surviving leaders of the Legion had been interned in Germany since 1941 and hence escaped to the West more easily than moderate opponents of the Romanian Communists, while Catholics benefited from the support of the Holy See and its nonrecognition of their suppression in 1948. Among the Orthodox, the former youth leader of the Legion, Viorel Trifa, became bishop of coreligionists in the United States.

The Stalinist model of state-sponsored industrialization was an unlikely basis for the doctrine of state independence that evolved after Stalin's death, accompanied as it was by extreme Soviet exploitation. Large segments of the population were probably aware of this exploitation and resented it, hence the leadership could rely upon their support when it began to resist the Soviets.

De-Stalinization in the Soviet Union after 1956 and the first difficulties between the Soviet Union and China provided the opportunity. Gheorghiu-Dej, like Khrushchev's adversaries in Moscow, sought to preserve a high rate of industrial investment and opposed liberalization in the areas of culture and agriculture. He took advantage of the emerging Sino-Soviet conflict to increase Romanian independence by echoing Chinese slogans of autonomous development.


The more significant break with the Soviet Union occurred in 1963. Romanian determination to continue Stalinist industrialization policies conflicted with Khrushchev's proposal to assign Romania a primarily agricultural role within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (or CMEA), restricting large industrial projects. Gheorghiu-Dej rejected this plan and built a mammoth steel mill with Western support. The party's April Theses of 1964 asserted, "The planned management of the national economy is one of the fundamental, essential and inalienable attributes of sovereignty of the socialist state." Romania also rejected a plan for international cooperation put forward by the Soviet economist E. B. Valev which sketched an "interstate economic complex" on the lower Danube. According to the response of a Romanian economist, the project sought to "theorize about a process of dismemberment of the national economies and of the national territories of certain socialist states." Stalinist orthodoxy provided the ideological basis for the defense of territorial integrity.

Nicolae Ceaușescu (1918–1989) continued the policy of industrial independence of Gheorghiu-Dej after 1965. The new leader used nationalist themes even more, but like Gheorghiu-Dej he subordinated cultural policy and rural society to industrialization. Nonsocialist countries soon gained a large share of Romanian foreign trade, and their loans became a part of the Romanian investment strategy, without alteration of the centralized model of the economy. A logical extension of the independent industrial course was the blueprint for the "multilaterally developed socialist society" in the party program of 1974, which proposed maximal autarky with the simultaneous development of all branches of production in order to minimize dependence on imports. The program took the interwar principle of prin noi insine ("do it yourself") to the extreme, leading to disaster when oil for the Romanian petrochemical industry had to be imported at prohibitive prices.

The economic strategy inspired not only a policy of state independence, but also an aggressive attack on the problem of the economic inequality of Romania's ethnic groups through urbanization and administrative measures in Transylvania. During the interwar period, industrialization, the preferential placement of Romanians in the civil service, and their wider access to education began to offset the dominance of the minorities in the urban population. The Communists' construction of factories in towns traditionally dominated by minorities attracted Romanians in large numbers, while regulations concerning the settlement and employment of new graduates helped to break up concentrations of minorities. Between 1910 and 1977, the concentration of Hungarians in eight major Transylvanian towns declined from as high as 95 percent to an average of 40 percent. The recruitment of Romanian workers for Transylvania accelerated after 1975. The program of 1974 stated that "equal rights are first of all reflected in the growing degree of economic and social development of the whole country," which would be made possible by "locating most rationally the productive forces on the territory of the homeland." Similar arguments were used to justify the elimination of special minority status in the Hungarian Autonomous Region (dissolved in 1968) and educational institutions. Despite theoretical differences, this practice bears a resemblance to Crainic's ethnocratic state. Future historians may determine whether it was a coincidence that in 1970 Ceaușescu began his association with the ultranationalist Romanian-Italian millionaire Josif Constantin Drăgan, who had written his dissertation on corporatism in Rome in 1940.

In defense of the economic course, Gheorghiu-Dej loosened the reins on historians. Some interwar historians began to write again, Daco-Romanian continuity became a central theme in archaeology, and the first Romanian synthesis of Transylvanian history was published in 1960. The patriotic initiatives were received enthusiastically by intellectuals and students. Ceaușescu proved even more willing to raise historical themes. In 1966 he sought to demonstrate his succession within the national pantheon by staging events in which he was greeted by actors portraying his predecessors, Voevodes Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave. National unity was palpable in the genuine enthusiasm for Ceaușescu's public defiance of a threatened Soviet invasion of Romania in 1968. This response helped

36 Schöpflin, "Rumanian Nationalism," 79–81.
Ceaușescu to improve his position in the party and to become the sole arbiter, by 1974, of the national course.

In classical Stalinist style, Ceaușescu sought to motivate producers through ideology rather than material incentives. Party resolutions of 1971, instituting a “little cultural revolution” following Ceaușescu’s visit to China, and 1974, assigning special importance to historians and other cultural producers in the revolutionary transformation of society, signaled the end of the cultural thaw born of the power struggle. “Multilateral development” was easier to justify in terms of national ideology than economic rationality. Historical scholarship on continuity, independence, and unification received preferential support after the 1974 Party Congress. Many Romanian writings of the interwar period came back into currency, although not the overtly fascist ones.41

Historical anniversaries were a characteristic manifestation of the new directives. The customary national celebrations of independence and unification in 1918 no longer sufficed. The “2030th anniversary of the establishment of the first centralized unitary state on the territory of Romania” in 1980, in which Drăgan also participated, demonstrated the regime’s special fascination with myths about the origins of the people. Emil Cioran had written in 1935, referring to the “crimes” of the Jews: “The myths of a nation are its vital truths. They might not coincide with the truth; this is not of importance.” As recently noted in another context, a myth about origins may be a comforting “ego massage,” but its implicit racism makes it susceptible to divisive and illiberal ends.42

Circles outside the party and academic establishment provided the framework for the most nationalistic writing. Books produced by the military and ecclesiastic presses glorified national tradition, even as the Romanian demands for the deportation of Bishop Viorel Trifa from the United States as a war criminal were crowned with success. The rallies of poet-journalist Adrian Paunescu gained a large following, combining music and the personality cult with fervent patriotism. Overtly anti-Semitic and anti-Hungarian voices were heard beginning in 1980 through the poems and articles of Corneliu Vadim Tudor and in Ion Lâncrâncian’s A Word on Transylvania, a poetic invocation of Transylvania that branded rival Hungarian views as revisionist and fascist.43

In the years of “high Ceaușescuism,” the appeal to patriotism and resistance to foreign enemies successfully mobilized people for economic growth and for huge projects like the Transfăgărășan Highway and the Danube–Black Sea Canal. Ceaușescu revived construction of the canal, finally completing it in 1984. Both projects displayed Stalinist gigantomania, the conquest of nature at great human cost, and the deployment of military engineers to defeat a putative external threat: the loss of Transylvania, or the closing of the mouth of the Danube by the Soviet Union. Ceaușescu’s imagery of the Carpathians is oddly reminiscent of its symbolic role in the interwar works of the recently rehabilitated Lucian Blaga. (By an ironic coincidence, the Transfăgărășan Highway passed not far from the mountain village of Făgăraș; in 1974 Blaga’s contemporary, the philosopher Constantin Noica (1909–1987), editor of the chief Legionary newspaper in 1940, took up his residence there and became an admired figure of the anticommunist intelligentsia during the 1980s.)

After the Fall of Communism

Economic hardship and political disarray since 1989 have fostered the revival of open ethnic conflict and nationalist extremism. The revival is accentuated by the collapse of federal states to the southwest and north, events that have fascinated Romanian patriots who are fearful of the Hungarian threat, but eager to reunite with Romania the lands lost to the Soviet Union since 1940. Ceaușescu’s cultivation of Romanian anxieties concerning the Hungarians guaranteed the continuing popularity of this theme and encouraged his successors to exploit it.

As in earlier periods, the government and nationalist opposition have frequently seen eye to eye on the Hungarian question, and religious and military themes have regained their traditional prominence. The opportunism of the chauvinist press and the official sponsorship it sometimes enjoyed contributed to the success of former national Communists in the new era. The

41 My argument on the link between economic policy and nationalist propaganda follows that of Verdery, National Ideology under Socialism.

42 The citation from Cioran is in Volovici, Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism, 187; see also Molly Myerowin Levine, “The Use and Abuse of Black Athena,” American Historical Review 97:2 (April 1992), 450–53.

43 Antonie Plămădeală (Metropolitan of Transulvania), The Role of the Orthodox Clergy: The Founders of the Romanian Language and Culture (Bucharest, 1977); Ion Lâncrâncian, Cuvint despre Transilvania (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1982); and Ilie Ceaușescu, Transilvania: An Ancient Romanian Land (Bucharest: Military Publishing House, 1984).
The effusive religiosity of the nationalist press strikes a pose that was employed by these authors under Ceaușescu, but it is truly responsive to popular sentiment. While the NSF never promised salvation in the religious sense (salvare literally means rescue), it associated the new leaders Ion Iliescu and Petre Roman with the Orthodox liturgy and hierarchy and with the complex claims to historical legitimacy this entailed. These actions and the religious quotations, themes, and metaphors employed in statements and publications of the NSF were a response to the deliverance from a traumatic period in the history of the nation that struck many people as genuine and timely. The canonization by the Orthodox Church in July 1992 of Stephen the Great, a sixteenth-century voevode known primarily for his victories over the Turks, drew an overwhelmingly positive response from Romanians.

The Orthodox bishops’ quest for nationalist legitimacy is hampered by their record of collaboration with the Communists and their contest for souls with the long-persecuted Uniates. Following their legalization (in a declaration on 8 January 1990), the Uniate bishops emphasized that their church was a “national institution” speaking with “a European and universal spirit.” Orthodox leaders have responded to the violent dispute over repossession of the Greek Catholics’ former churches by criticizing this “universal spirit.” Greek Catholic Metropolitan Alexandru Todea and several colleagues had shared prison cells with Hungarian bishops and had collaborated with the Hungarian bishops in the first unified Catholic episcopate in Romanian history. The Orthodox accuse them of excessive friendliness with the Hungarians.

The divisive potential of Orthodox xenophobia is suggested by reports that Orthodox clergy incited the attack on Hungarians in Tîrgu Mureș by Romanian villagers in March 1990. Undeniably, this clash was essentially ethnic rather than religious and was fought over secular political issues. At the core of these was the reemergence of Hungarian ethnic politics and the anxiety it inspired among some Transylvanian Romanians. The Orthodoxy was a problem for the nationalists. The resistance of Romanians as well as Hungarians to pastor László Tököli’s transfer was crucial in the events of 17 December 1991 in Timișoara. Ceaușescu’s frenzied denunciation on 21–22 December of “chauvinist-irredentist” demonstrations “reminiscent of the dark days that preceded the Vienna Dictat” failed to impress crowds in either Bucharest or the towns of Transylvania. Citizens of all ethnic groups rejoiced when the violent crackdown failed and the Ceaușescus were executed on Christmas Day.

The leadership of the National Salvation Front (NSF) has used its substantial influence over the media to manipulate nationalist symbols. Yet nationalist revival also builds on widely held traditional attitudes and an intolerance inculcated by the fallen regime. Even the relatively liberal minister of culture, Andrei Pleșu, a former dissident, presented the varied but often chauvinistic intellectual life of the interwar period as a model to be emulated. The dramatic increase in publishing activity included reprints and memoirs of many of the prominent neonationalists discussed in this study. Alongside the moderate and oppositional press, many nationalist papers appeared with possible official sponsorship. Two of the most popular were scandal sheets edited by the former “court poets” of national communism: România Mare (“Greater Romania”) of Corneliu Vadim Tudor, and Tăutăi iubirea (“Love Nonetheless”) of Adrian Paunescu.

45 Andrei Pleșu is paraphrased in an interview with Petre Țuțea in January 1990 in Țuțea, Intre Dumnezeu și neamul meu, 294.
of Romania (HDFR) mobilized the support of most Hungarians in local politics, posing a threat to the authorities. To counter this threat, Romanians in Tîrgu Mureş and other Transylvanian towns organized an ostensibly cultural organization, the Romanian Hearth (or Cradle) Federation (RHF), Uniunea Vatra Românească. The confrontation of these political forces fuelled the violent events in Tîrgu Mureş.

The RHF describes itself as “an organization of Romanian spirituality in Transylvania,” rejecting “all territorial and administrative separatism and the creation of cultural enclaves,” and demanding that Romanian be the only official language on Romanian territory. The abhorrence of separatism has historical, psychological, and international roots. The loss of northern Transylvania in 1940 and the special status of the Hungarian districts in the 1950s strengthened the insistence upon Romania’s unitary and centralized character. Due to the popularity of federalism among Hungarians, according to one writer, Romanians are “haunted by the ghost of federalism.” The allusion to the Communist Manifesto ridicules both the international appeal of the idea and the psychology of the Romanian response. The dissolution of Yugoslavia prompts many to wonder whether Romania might be next.

*România Mare* asserted that there is a Hungarian strategy for territorial revision in the region, and dubbed 1991 “the international year of struggle against Hungarian imperialism.”

Two controversies in the fall of 1991 demonstrated the powerful fear of separatism: a Polish plan for regional cooperation, and a proposal for a referendum on Hungarian autonomy. Because the Polish plan included Transylvania but not the rest of Romania, President Iliescu accused Poland of interfering in Romania’s internal affairs. He drew a parallel to the Valev plan of 1964: “This plan is conceived with the logic of the CMEA. It ignores state structures... Transylvania must not be separated from the ethnicity of the Romanian national state.” The HDFR quickly denounced the proposal for a referendum, but parliament dedicated two full days to the reading of reports about the alleged terrorization by the Hungarians of Romanians living in the Székely region. The event revealed the unwillingness of most politicians to resist the wild assertions of the chauvinists.

The government appears to appreciate and support the resistance of the RHF and its political wing, the Party of Romanian National Unity (PRNU) to the HDFR and the democratic opposition in Transylvania. In July 1990, the official press agency praised the efforts of the RHF “to educate and develop civic consciousness, to surmount some negative phenomena connected to the complex conditions of the democratization and national rebirth process, to protect and promote national interests.” Because the HDFR and Romanian opposition have allied in many electoral districts in 1990 and 1992, the PRNU denounced “the ever more obvious general process of so-called civic and antitotalitarian forums and alliances, the activity of which proves to be antidemocratic, antistatal, and antinational.”

In addition to territorial unity, military traditions have been an important theme. Drăgan and the historian Mircea Muşat have worked hard to rehabilitate Antonescu, with the support of war veterans and the Ministry of National Defense. There is much popular interest in Antonescu because his recovery of Bessarabia from the Soviet Union, his attempts to extricate Romania from the war without a Soviet alliance, and his execution in 1946 were proscribed topics under the Communists. The nationalists’ attacks on the Jews derive only partly from this historical association. They blame Jews for foreign trade dependency and Communist oppression in the past, use innuendo to imply a Judeo-Hungarian conspiracy, and remind readers of the Jewish origins of Prime Minister Roman before his fall in 1991. The diatribes of Tudor in *România Mare* and the serial republication of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion have gained international attention. But only 15,000 Jews,
mostly elderly, remain in the country, and the popular appeal of anti-Semitism appears to be limited, perhaps because it is harmful to Romanian prestige and the negative image of the still-illegal Legion.

Interest in World War II naturally relates to the Romanian lands of the former Soviet Union. The nationalists' demand for the return of occupied territories is shared by all major Romanian parties. Of the 3.5 million Romanians recorded in the last Soviet census, nearly 3 million live in Moldova, and more than half of the remainder live within the present borders of Ukraine. Romanian papers of every orientation have applauded the national revival in Moldova. In both Romania and Moldova, the voices favoring reunification have been strongest outside the government. Cooler heads in both the NSF and the opposition have pointed out that Romania is far less prepared than Germany to restore the economy of an impoverished branch of the nation. The military conflict in the Transnistrian region of Moldova has aroused massive Romanian sympathy for Moldova, but the danger of war with Russia causes even the nationalists to address the issue more circumspectly.

In May 1991, România Mare announced the organization of the Greater Romania Party (GRP). The forty-point program gives heavy attention to economic planning and social safety nets, clearly appealing for support from officials and ex-Communists and demanding the elimination of dangers to "the Independence, Sovereignty, and Integrity of the Romanian state." The economic program hedges the demand for a free market in many key areas. The Orthodox Church is identified as "an historical factor of unity, culture, and stability," and the army praised as a "factor of stability, social equilibrium, and guarantor of territorial integrity" whose political role should be strengthened.

While the RHF and PRNU arose as movements of Transylvanian Romanians in response to local conditions, the GRP had a nucleus of individuals who became known for their militant nationalism already before 1989, then gained more notoriety through their new weekly in 1990. The comprised Tudor, Eugen Barbu, Mușat, Radu Theodoru, and Theodor Paraschiv—two writers, a historian, and two retired military officers. The call for a militarization of politics was a response to recurrent social disorders that threatened the government and its reputation. Four times in 1990 and 1991, miners descended upon the capital to wreak havoc upon the opponents of the NSF and the army did nothing. Officers resentful of the armed forces' abuse by Ceaușescu have proven unreliable as the nomenclatura fought for power, but the GRP sees an ally in the reformist officers' hardline opponents.

Similarly, the commander of the army in Transylvania is sympathetic to the PRNU and RHF and has welcomed their activity in his ranks.

Romanian nationalism has proved to be an ally of those elements in the NSF, Orthodox Church, and army that seek to preserve a centralized, authoritarian state. The results of the elections of 1992 appear to confirm this. While the opposition made gains in local and national elections, it was defeated in many localities by a de facto or open coalition of the NSF, PRNU, GRP, and the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), a reconstituted Communist Party. Gheorghe Funar of the PRNU became mayor of Cluj, Transylvania's largest city, with the support of workers settled by Ceaușescu in its newer districts, and enacted various measures unfavorable to the Hungarian minority. In the weeks before the general election in September, the NSF and state television repeatedly called attention to the opposition's electoral alliance with the HDFR. The PRNU, GRP, and SLP, all advocates of conservative economic policies, together gained 16 percent of parliamentary seats, and the GRP and SLP announced the formation of a National Bloc (Partida Națională) in the senate led by Adrian Păunescu. Following the election, the U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to continue to deny Most-Favored-Nation status to Romania. Representative Tom Lantos asserted on the floor of the House, with some hyperbole, that "both the previous Communist power structure and the newly emerging Fascist power structure are likely to take over that country." Romania has continuously made progress toward a freer society, but the weakened position of the NSF, now enjoying a mere plurality, makes it likely it will rely more on the ultranationalists.

National Communists have taken advantage of the country's worsening economic and diplomatic position "between the two wars" in Yugoslavia and Moldova. As nostalgia for Ceaușescu increases, the low-key SLP has become more viable, and efforts to present Ceaușescu as the latest martyr in the political weakness of the emerging Legionary movement. The politically inchoate Gypsies may be Romania's largest minority. Popular dislike for them is very widespread, yet despite verbal violence in the nationalist press and sporadic assaults on Gypsy villages, the major parties seem content to ignore them. Neonationalist writers are

55 "Platforma-program a Partidului România Mare," România Mare 2:54 (21 June 1991), 9–11.

popular, but a party openly modeled on the Legion emerged only at the end of 1991. Marian Munteanu's Movement for Romania, like the Legion in its early years, as yet enjoys significant influence only among the students. The combination of fervent nationalism and anticommunism appears, at the end of 1992, to have only limited popular appeal.

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The Yugoslav Peoples

by Dennison Rusinow

Document 1


Sir,

For several weeks and indeed even months the political situation has been changing with such kaleidoscopic rapidity that I have more than once hesitated to send Your Royal Highness any kind of report or memorandum; for I always feared that such a report might lose its actuality or even give a false impression before it could reach Niš. It seemed to me more useful to concentrate all my efforts here in London to act upon those who have the power to take decisions on the subject of the Yugoslav problem.

We have at last arrived at the decisive stage in the negotiations, and I feel it my duty—without inflicting on Your Royal Highness long descriptions concerning tendencies and development that must already be well known—to summarize as briefly as possible the dangers of the situation as friends of Serbia in London believe they understand them.

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