

EIR Special Report

Romania's fight for development against Malthusians— East and West

by Webster G. Tarpley

Ask an American what he knows about Romania, and the answer will surely be the most abysmal ignorance made more grotesque by the most fantastic prejudice. The first association will almost always be Bela Lugosi as the vampire Count Dracula cavorting in a castle of the mountains of Transylvania. And from then on it will be Gothic horror all the way, with denied emigration visas, oppressed ethnic minorities, and one-man rule.

Romania, as we see, has had a bad press. Whatever else they may disagree about, the KGB gentlemen at Moscow's *New Times* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the Harrimanites at CBS News and at *The New York Times*, the Hapsburg-Mitteleuropa oligarchs at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and Vienna's *Die Presse* certainly see eye to eye on Romania. The same gentlemen who assure us that new Hitler Yuri Andropov is truly a man of peace display the most consuming hatred for Romanian President Ceausescu and his government. The intent to destabilize is so manifest that the more canny and experienced observer of international affairs is obliged to begin wondering what Romania is doing right.

It is a matter of *raison d'état* for Americans to know the truth about Romania, and to act on it. To correct the remarkably uniform media slanders against Romania, *EIR* offers the following correspondence, which is the only accurate first-hand account of this country and its policies to be published in the West in many, many years—starting with the fact that Bela Lugosi was a Hungarian.

"Romania is a developing country" is an observation that recurs most frequently in conversations with officials of this Balkan state. And in effect present-day Romanian society provides an example unique in Europe of a nation which, in the face of oil crises, high interest rates, and world depression has re-asserted its commitment to domestic and international economic development. That this will to develop has been maintained in the face of the violent opposition of the Malthusians of the West and the Malthusians of the East, of the IMF and the Club of Rome on the one hand and of the Comecon and the Moscow Third Rome cult on the other—this makes the Romanian example all the more impressive.

In spirited defiance of IMF neo-colonialists and of Comecon *Raskol'niki*,



Courtesy the Romanian News Agency

Excavating the Danube-Black Sea Canal with Romanian-built equipment.

Romania is today committed to the installation of fully 10,000 megawatts of nuclear power by the end of the century, to a policy of investing almost one-third of its aggregate national income, to domestic growth rates of over 10 percent, to full-capacity production by its shipping industry despite the worldwide collapse of this industry, to taking its post-war tractor production to one million and beyond this year, to a demographic growth of 19 births per thousand population, equivalent to a yearly population increase of some 200,000 and one of the highest in Europe, and to the speedy completion, primarily through its own resources alone, of the Danube-Black Sea Canal, an epic work of civil engineering that ranks with the greatest infrastructural projects our century has yet seen. Romania, the poorest country of Eastern Europe after World War II with the possible exception of Albania, has reduced the peasant portion of its population from three-quarters in 1950 to one-quarter today, with further reductions planned for the coming years.

Neither a total credit embargo by the Western banking system, with brutal IMF conditionalities pressure, nor chronic economic sabotage by the U.S.S.R. and the Comecon have proved sufficient to deflect the Romanians from the developmental thrust that has informed their entire post-war history, especially since the end of Soviet occupation in 1958.

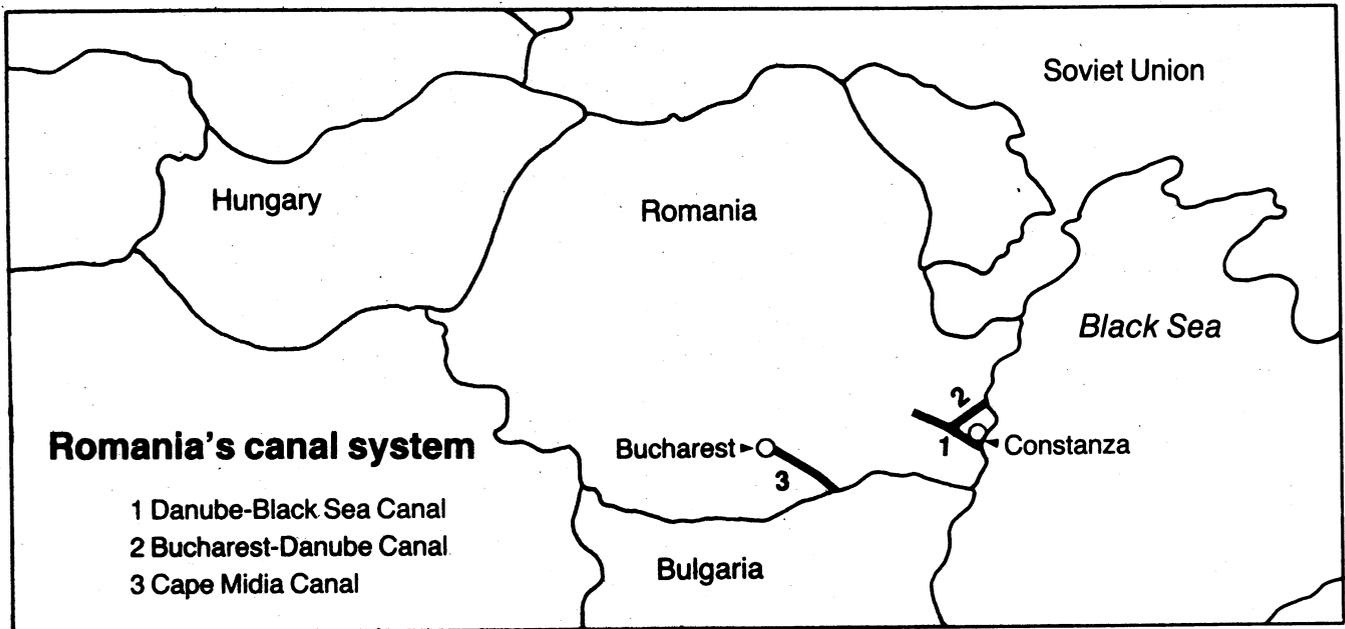
In coherence with these domestic policies, the government of President Nicolae Ceausescu is, in the words of one senior official, "committed to the struggle for the New World Economic and Political Order," whereby the "political" addition stands for the commitment to the sovereign nation-state. Romania has long emphasized its own active, world-

wide diplomatic role, among other things by the joining the Latin American grouping of the Group of 77 Developing Nations, and by assuming observer status in the Non-aligned movement—both despite Warsaw Pact membership. The country is actively campaigning for debt relief for the poor and developing nations, for international technology transfer at the highest level, for a drastic reduction in international interest rates. "Life cannot stop because of the international debt," commented one official, while at another ministry there was strong support for the emerging debtors' cartel of the Ibero-American nations, with whom the Romanians are in close contact. For the IMF, which they joined in 1972, the Romanians exhibit a scarcely veiled animosity.

A developing nation

Romania is thus indeed a developing nation in Europe, an anomaly that is underlined by the total disregard of the zero-growth doctrines of the Club of Rome on national policy. Romania's development program is exemplary for the entire developing sector, all the more so because it is proceeding against pressure from the East as well as the West. Western Europe and the United States have something else to learn from Romania, and that is the will to fight for national independence and a sovereign state against odds that Western Europeans and Americans can scarcely imagine.

In 1968, the Soviet imperialists who had just crushed Czechoslovakia without a struggle were tempted to repeat this operation against Romania, which lies directly on the U.S.S.R.'s southern border. On that day, a crowd gathered at the Romanian Communist Party Central Committee of-



fices. Ceausescu appeared, launched a scathing attack on the Soviet invasion, and announced the creation of the Patriotic Guards, an armed national militia, designed, as he said, to protect Romania from the "imperialism" which was threatening it. The signal to Moscow was clear: 22 million Romanians would fight if invaded, and would hold down one million Soviet and satellite troops for an undetermined period with guerrilla warfare in the Carpathian Mountains and the Transylvania Alps. Brezhnev and the other Soviet leaders were well advised to desist.

A violent hostility to such "imperialism" is a recurring feature of Romanian history. Romanians speak a language based on the Old Italian spoken by the Roman Legions of the Emperor Trajan, who conquered the Geto-Dacians at the beginning of the second century A.D. The grammar and most of the vocabulary of Romanian are based on that Old Italian, but many words are of Slavic and Turkish derivation. The alphabet was Cyrillic until the 19th century, then Roman. Romania constitutes the point of intersection of the Slavic, Italic, and Moslem-Turkish worlds.

Romania has been historically hemmed in by empires, and its typical predicament has been the assertion of independence against such imperial neighbors. Herodotus records the struggle of the Geto-Dacians against the Persian Empire, in 514 B.C., and Trajan had to fight his way in six centuries later. From the early 1500s to the time of the Crimean War, the Romanian principalities were under the suzerainty of the Turks, although they were able to retain some autonomy. After the revolutions of 1821 and 1848, Romanian independence had to be asserted despite the joint desire of the Ottoman and Russian Empires to block it. Romanians have en-

joyed at least formal independence for just over 100 years, and then are determined to retain it.

'We know the Third Rome'

Above all, Romanians are on their guard against the recrudescence of the Third Rome cult in Moscow. A Romanian official commented on this point: "We know the Third Rome, and we have some experience in dealing with this type of problem. If you look at the map of the Balkans of just 70 years ago, you will see that we were wedged in by three empires." His reference was to the Russian Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. "Now," he went on, "two of those empires have become extinct, and only one is extant." The allusion could not have been clearer. The official went on: "Around 1500, our King Steven the Great went to Venice to get funds from the Venetians to be able to stop the Turks at the Danube. The funds were not forthcoming. As for the Turks, we had to fight them as long as they insisted on acting like an empire, but since they have reverted to the status of a national state, our relations with them have been most productive and cordial indeed."

Romania's position on one of the fault lines of historical seismics has given rise to some cataclysmic reverses for the country. Like Italy, Romania has changed sides in both world conflicts of this century. In World War I, the country at first hung in neutrality, with a pro-French population and a German Hohenzollern king, until it decided for the Allies in August 1916. In 1917, the Russian Revolution and Russian withdrawal from the war left Romania as the sole allied power fighting on the eastern front against the Central Empires, so the country was overrun by Germans, Austro-Hungarians,

Bulgarians, and Turks, and concluded a separate peace with the Central Empires in October 1917. Later, in November 1918, the Romanians denounced the separate peace and reentered the war against the Central Empires. At the Versailles conference Romania was successful in obtaining recognition for its full desired expanse of Wallachia, Moldavia, Transylvania, Dobruja, Bessarabia, and Bukovina.

Despite these gains, the interwar period was marked by a dictatorship by the Hohenzollern King Carol II, who ruled from 1930 to 1940. This was also the period of the pro-Nazi fascist anti-semitic and terrorist organization, the Iron Guards of Corneliu Codreanu, who was executed by King Carol in a power struggle in 1938. King Carol was brought down by a three-way partition of Romania during the period of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. In June 1940 the Soviet government took advantage of the fall of France, Romania's traditional great power protector, to issue a savage ultimatum demanding the cession of Bessarabia and other territories, to which the Romanians were obliged to comply. On Aug. 30, 1940 Hitler and Mussolini addressed their own ultimatum to Romania, the Vienna dictate directed that much of Transylvania be ceded to the fascist Hungary of Admiral Horthy, already an Axis partner. Again Romania was forced to comply. Then even the Bulgarians got into the act, slicing off a piece of Romanian Dobruja. The Soviet-Nazi treatment of Romania closely parallels the treatment accorded to Poland. The result of these losses was a coup d'état by General Antonescu with the support of the Iron Guard, who led Romania into the Axis. Later, on Aug. 23, 1944, after the destruction of the oil refining center of Ploesti by American bombers, and with the Red Army approaching the frontier, Antonescu was brought down by a coup and Romania switched to the side of the Allies. The Romanians then furnished the fourth largest allied army after the the United States, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom, and carried operations into Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria.

Romania has thus learned the lesson that its neighbors have in the recent past sought its dismemberment, and may do so again in the future. With allies remote and unreliable, they have concluded that the highest possible degree of self-reliance and autarky is their best security.

The result of this recent history is, first of all, a deep resentment of Russian expansionism. Moscow treated Romania like a conquered enemy after the war, maintaining its grip on Bessarabia while deporting numerous Romanians into central Asia and Siberia, and keeping an occupation garrison in the country until 1958. Comecon policy has persistently attempted to force Romania back into the role of an underdeveloped colony, producing agricultural goods for export. Under Stalin and Khrushchev, plans for the partition of Romania and its cancellation from the map were repeatedly discussed, sometimes in public.

Thus, the Romanians distrust the Hungarians, whom they see as nostalgic for the Hapsburg dynasty and whose Irreden-

Who are the enemies of the Romanian nation?

At the Madrid CSCE conference in October 1981, representatives of the Socialist Federation of Hungarians from Romania asked for the creation of a Socialist Republic of Transylvania which would have the right to secede from Romania and join with Hungary. Neither is the issue new, nor are its initiators. The Socialist Federation, which was created between the two world wars, last time tried to realize its Greater Hungary aspirations with the help of Hitler and his Hungarian ally, Admiral Horthy. In the 1930s, the Hungarian Count István Bethlen called for the "autonomy" of Transylvania, Croatia, and Slovakia—all regions with a Hungarian minority. Hitler wholeheartedly supported the Greater Hungary irredentism. He once told his confidant Hermann Rauschning: "Hungary must be restored in the old [empire] borders." With the Vienna Dictate of August 30, 1940, the Nazis gave northern Transylvania to Hungary.

For approximately one year, coinciding with the rise of Andropov in the Soviet hierarchy, the question of the Hungarian minority (1.5 to 2 million people) inside Romania has been played up again by the Greater Hungary exile movement, certain media in the West, and factions in the government of Hungary.

The *Mittleuropa* crowd has its spokesmen in the Balkan Institutes of Munich and Vienna; the Eastern European department of Austrian radio and television (ORF) under the Hungarian-born Paul Lendvai is full of them. At a conference in Munich last April, Lendvai hailed the rise of Yuri Andropov in the Soviet Union as a major improvement in the state of humanity. Andropov is using the Hungarian minority issue as a trump card up his sleeve, to rein in Ceaucescu, to the way Hitler used the Romanian fascist movement Garda de Fier or Iron Guard to keep his nominal ally, the Romanian dictator Ion Antonescu, in check. Horia Sima, the current leader of the Iron Guard, now resides in Madrid. Other members of this organization are based in Munich, Cologne, Vienna, and Switzerland. The Romanian monarchist emigration is coalescing around the former king, Mihail, a foreign exchange dealer in Switzerland.

The Hungarian Irredentists, Romanian fascists, and monarchists were twice disappointed in this century: Hitler lost the war, then the Anglo-American side who helped prepare the Hungarian uprising of 1956, did not rally to its support. Now, they apparently perceive that *Mittleuropa* might be brought about on the wave of a revival of fundamentalism and nationalist tensions. There is every indication they will be disappointed for the third time.

tist claim on Transylvania is played upon by both Western secret services and the KGB. The Romanians also feel that the Bulgarians are totally subordinated to Soviet decrees. By contrast, there is increasing sympathy for Poland, an old ally, and for Yugoslavia, with whom the Romanians share the experience of facing down Soviet invasions threats.

The centralized state

Romania today is a strongly centralized state, in which all areas of national life are under the direct control of the party. The personality of President Ceausescu is ubiquitous. But Ceausescu's role is not merely a matter of propaganda policy. The president undoubtedly enjoys real popularity among Romanian patriots, based on his fighting response to the Czechoslovak crisis and his frequent gestures of defiance to Moscow, as well as on the manifest results of his economic development policies. Living as they do on the Soviet doorstep, Romanians are aware of the connection between the country's ability to pursue its national development plans and independent foreign policy, on the one hand, and a regime of rigorous internal controls on the other.

The needs of national survival have also led Ceausescu to wheel and deal with various European politicians of the Socialist International, with the People's Republic of China, with Libya, and with other unsavory elements. Such Romanian *Realpolitik* was generally conducted in an effort to procure precisely those forms of international aid and support that would have readily been offered by the United States if our foreign policy had not been in the hands of Kissingerian and Harrimanite friends of the KGB.

With the unchallenged and militant ascendancy of the Third Rome in Moscow, and with the fetid vapors of Pan-Germanist *Mittleuropa* rising over central Europe, the pressure on Romania is becoming intense. A strong Romanian state, despite its compact dimensions, is a stumbling block for Swiss bankers, Danube feudal aristocrats, and the Andropov gang in the Kremlin. Projecting present trends, Romania will be more than a match for such entities as Austria, where a Hapsburg restoration is looming, and which has already signed its own industrial death warrant with a referendum against building any nuclear plants in the future. Romania wants to build 10 such reactors. Then there is Hungary, where Hapsburg networks are pervasive, but where goulash communism has reduced the country to negative economic growth and to negative population growth. In other words, if the Danube Valley and the Balkans are to be reduced to a de-industrialized, de-urbanized bucolic feudalism, then the oligarchs must find a way to interrupt the course of Romanian industrialization and nation-building.

Romanian optimism extends into the cultural realm. Pornography and violence are not in evidence in the mass media. Instead there is a significant offering of the classics. At the beginning of July, there were two plays by Shakespeare, *Richard III* and *Pericles* being performed in the legitimate theatre in Bucharest. On television, there was the second and

concluding part of a production of *All's Well that Ends Well*. At the Opera Româna, offerings included *Fidelio*, *Rigoletto*, and Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*. The quality of this house is excellent, testifying to a *bel canto* tradition that is very much alive and flourishing.

Support for Reagan's 'Zero Option'

With the coming of the Euromissiles crisis, Romania has taken positions which diverge profoundly from those of the Soviet-coordinated Warsaw Pact lockstep, and which indicate a conciliatory attitude towards the United States. Ceausescu has endorsed the Reagan Zero Option, calling for the total scrapping of the Soviet SS-20s in exchange for the non-deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles. Romanian diplomats also signified their support of an interim solution, again closely paralleling U.S. ideas.

Romania has traditionally stressed disarmament, and much propaganda activity is directed at halting the arms race and transferring these proceeds to development. One vital question for Romania in the months ahead will be the ability of the Ceausescu leadership to appreciate the value of directed energy beams and especially lasers for the future economic and military independence of the country. Up to now that leadership has not been aware of the sweeping implications of lasers for the increase of economic productivity, permitting the leapfrogging of entire stages of technology. Laser defenses would provide Romania with a means of securing that which she most of all desires—the ability to develop undisturbed, within secure borders, without submitting to the dictates of the colossus to the north.

Romanians are perceptive critics of the self-destructive aspects of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. For all their support of disarmament, they note bitterly that the United States conferred superpower status upon the Soviets with the SALT treaties and the Vladivostok Declaration of 1975. They point out that the Jackson-Vanik amendment effectively wiped out chances for world pacification through economic exchanges, and that détente based on arms talks alone was a step in the wrong direction. They object most strenuously to the Sonnenfeldt doctrine, the Kissinger-inspired madness that all socialist countries are subjected to limited sovereignty on the part of the U.S.S.R.—the degrading acceptance by the United States of the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty, proclaimed after Prague and directed against Romania in a special way. Romania has suffered most directly from the self-destruction of U.S. military and economic power over the past 20 years, while a strong United States would have permitted Bucharest to breathe easier.

Thus, Romania wishes to cultivate mutually productive, close relations with the United States. Apart from the intrinsic merits of the Romanian case, which are substantial, it ought to be clear to anyone capable of seeing beyond the end of his nose in strategic matters that the independence and territorial integrity of Romania is a matter of the most objectively vital national interest to the United States.