

**Why did Romania condemn
the Warsaw Pact invasion of
Czechoslovakia in 1968
despite supporting the Soviet
invasion of Hungary in 1956?**

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History SL Internal Assessment

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May 2015

Word Count: 1956

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Section A: Plan of Investigation

This investigation compares and contrasts the factors behind Romania's support of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 and its condemnation of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. These factors include the global historical context, Romania's foreign policy, and its relationship with other countries, but not events after 1968.

This investigation presents evidence about these factors mainly from research papers but also from government documents, evaluates the utility of the paper "Continuity, Legitimacy and Identity" and the government document "Protocol No. 5", and concludes that support from outside powers played a role, but that Romanian nationalism characterized both responses.

Section B: Summary of Evidence

1956 Background Events

- Tito–Khrushchev rapprochement, recognized different paths to socialism¹
- February, Khrushchev denounced Stalin²
- June, Poznań protests, too much de-Stalinization³
- 21 October, Gomułka assured loyalty to Soviets, avoided invasion⁴

1956 Hungarian Uprising

- 23 October anti-communist rebellion⁵
- Nagy announced Hungary would leave Warsaw Pact⁶
- 4 November Soviet troops crushed uprising⁷
- almost two million Hungarians in Transylvania, many supportive demonstrations⁸

¹ Shephard B. Clough, et al., “Chapter 2 - The Soviet World Since Stalin,” in European History in a World Perspective, vol. 3 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Co., 1975), p. 1745. Josef Broz Tito was then the President and Prime Minister of Yugoslavia and had led Yugoslavia away from official Soviet ideology, leading to the Tito–Stalin split. It is interesting to note that after the Communist Information Bureau expelled Tito in 1948, it relocated its headquarters from Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, to Bucharest, the capital of Romania. Such was Romania’s reliability even before 1956. Vladimir Tismaneanu, “Understanding National Stalinism: Romanian Communism in a Historical-Comparative Perspective,” Global Europe Program (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1990), p. 14, accessed 1 March 2015, <<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/25-understanding-national-stalinism-comparative-approach-to-the-history-romanian>>.

² Clough, et al., “Chapter 2,” p. 1744. Nikita Khrushchev became the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after former leader Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953. Stalin’s repressive form of Communism was known as Stalinism, which “systematically opposed liberalization” in both its official and national forms. Tismaneanu, “Understanding,” p. 2.

³ Clough, p. 1745. Poznań was a city in Poland. De-Stalinization was the process of removing Stalinist influences.

⁴ Ibid. Władysław Gomułka was then the First Secretary of the Polish Workers’ Party.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1746.

⁶ Michael G. Roskin, The Rebirth of East Europe (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), p. 101. Imre Nagy was then the Chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers. The Warsaw Pact was a military alliance among the Soviet Union and the Eastern European communist states except Yugoslavia.

⁷ Clough, p. 1746.

⁸ Dennis J. Deletant, “New Evidence on Romania and the Warsaw Pact, 1955–1989,” Cold War International History Project e-Dossier No. 6 (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, April 2004), pars. 15–16, accessed 26 February 2015, <<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/new-evidence-romania-and-the-warsaw-pact-1955-1989>>.

- largest Transylvanian city, 22% Hungarian, mayor banned public Hungarian signs⁹
- “For fifteen years, Rumania had been controlled by a tightly totalitarian regime thoroughly subservient to Russia”¹⁰
- “Romania was the most active eastern ally in supporting Soviet policy and objectives at this moment”¹¹
- encouraged Soviets by widening roads, giving military bases¹²
- decided to organize meetings “to condemn the counterrevolutionary actions perpetrated by the reactionary and fascist forces in” Hungary¹³
- Soviets deported Nagy’s government to Bucharest¹⁴

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej

- only 1000 Romanian communists in August 1944¹⁵
- 1924, Fifth Comintern Congress purged the pre-Stalinists¹⁶

Transylvania was a region of Romania with a large Hungarian minority, which was returned to Romania by Hungary after World War II under Article 2 of the 1947 Allied Treaty of Peace with Romania. Charles I. Bevans, ed., “Treaty of Peace with Romania: February 10, 1947,” Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America 1776–1949, Vol. 4 Multilateral 1946–1949 (Washington: Department of State, 1970), part I, article 2, accessed 26 February 2015, the Avalon Project, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu011.asp>.

⁹ Roskin, Rebirth, p. 183. This was Gheorghe Funar, mayor of Cluj-Napoca in 1992. Granted, this is well after 1956.

¹⁰ Clough, p. 1758. ‘Rumania’ and ‘Roumania’ are variant spellings of ‘Romania’.

¹¹ Sergiu Verona, “The Withdrawal of Soviet Troops from Romania in 1958: An Analysis of the Decision” (final report to the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, Johns Hopkins University, December 1989), p. 27, accessed 1 March 2015, <<http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/nceeer/1989-803-01-Verona.pdf>>. The ‘Analysis’ in the title is a typo. Emphasis in original.

¹² Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 18.

¹³ Delia Razdolescu, trans., “Protocol No. 55 of the Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CC of the RWP, on the Situation in Hungary and Measures to be Taken in Romania,” Romanian National Central Historical Archives, Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Chancellery, 26 October 1956: File No. 170/1956, ff. 1–5, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed 3 March 2015, <<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110456>>.

¹⁴ Tismaneanu, p. 15.

¹⁵ Dragoş Petrescu, “Continuity, Legitimacy and Identity: Understanding the Romanian August of 1968,” Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea, 31 (2009): 71.

¹⁶ Tismaneanu, p. 10. The Comintern was an international communist organization.

- “no autonomist temptation [...] in the 1940s or 50s.”¹⁷
- “no independent source of legitimacy [...] completely derived from Soviet authority”¹⁸
- 1952 Gheorghiu-Dej purged Muscovite leaders, home communists gained power¹⁹
- 1956, “De-Stalinization appeared as an imminent and deadly threat”²⁰
- claimed Stalinists already purged in 1952, “blocked any attempt by Moscow”²¹
- “strategy of political survival”: economic development, traditional values,

distancing from Soviets, opening to West²²

- used Hungary as excuse for 1957 purges²³
- capital crime to try to make Romania neutral²⁴
- Romanianization, de-Russification to deflect criticism of economic policies²⁵
- 23 April 1964, rejected USSR supremacy, declared autonomy²⁶
- April Declaration “pre-empt[ed] any move by the Kremlin [and staked] a claim to

Western [...] support”²⁷

¹⁷ Tismaneanu, p. 14.

¹⁸ Stephen D. Roper, Romania: The Unfinished Revolution (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23. This was anomalous in Eastern Europe because it was normally the pro-Soviet Muscovite leaders that purged, with Soviet support, the unreliable pro-nationalist home communists. During the interwar years, most Romanian communists “were either imprisoned in Romania (home communists) or living in the Soviet Union (Muscovite communists).” *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁰ Petrescu, “Continuity,”: 72.

²¹ Roper, Romania, p. 33. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej became the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party in 1944.

²² Petrescu, “Continuity,”: 72.

²³ Roper, p. 34.

²⁴ Dennis J. Deletant, Ceaușescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 50. “Under a decree of 21 July 1958, new crimes attracting the death penalty were defined and extended to any Romanians contacting foreigners to perpetrate an act which could cause the Romanian state to become involved in a declaration of neutrality or in the declaration of war.”

²⁵ Charles Sudetic, “Chapter 1 - Historical Setting,” in Romania: A Country Study, ed. Ronald D. Bachman (Washington: Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, 1989), Gheorghiu-Dej’s Defiance of Khrushchev, accessed 26 February 2015, Library of Congress, <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/roto.html>>. Romanianization included the removal of previously compulsory Russian-language instruction, the publication of nationalist Romanian histories condemning Russia’s claim to Bessarabia, and the cessation of political concessions for the substantial Hungarian minority.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Nicolae Ceaușescu

- did not change “the principal features of Romania’s Stalinist political culture”²⁸
- “took the nationalist card originally dealt him by Gheorghiu-Dej and raised it”²⁹
- identified with Romanian historical figures for image as Romanian nationalist³⁰

Comecon

- 1950s SovRoms and reparation payments “depleting the economy”³¹
- 1958–1961 Western trade increased 70%, Soviet trade 12%³²
- 1961 Comecon specialization, would make Romania raw material supplier³³
- “Dej’s commitment to the Leninist–Stalinist values of industrialization turned him into a ‘national Communist’.”³⁴
- thought industrialization would beget autonomy; deemphasized collectivization³⁵
- 1963, rejected integration³⁶

²⁷ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 21.

²⁸ Tismaneanu, p. 3.

²⁹ Gale Stokes, The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 55.

³⁰ Roper, p. 47.

³¹ Ibid., p. 28. From 1944 to 1948 Romanian goods and services delivered to the Soviet Union accounted for 86% of its gross national product, especially since “[i]n May 1945 the Sovroms (Soviet–Romanian joint-stock companies were created [and used to] exploit the vast resources of the country.” Under article 22 of the 1947 Allied Treaty of Peace with Romania, Romanian reparations to the Soviet Union totalled “\$300,000,000 payable over eight years”. Ibid., p. 18; Bevans, ed., “Treaty of Peace,” part V, article 22 point 1.

³² Roper, p. 35. In 1960, Gheorghiu-Dej started to build the Galați steel works, apparently after signing “an agreement with an Anglo-French consortium to develop a huge steel mill.” If this is true, then Romania’s economic relationship with the West must be somewhat deep. Stokes, Walls Came, p. 52.

³³ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 20. The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, also known as Comecon or the CMEA, was an economic organization of Soviet bloc states. Increased Comecon trade and specialization “ensure[d] that Eastern European states remained crucially dependent on the Soviet economy, particularly for energy supplies.” Mark Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine,” in 1968: The World Transformed, eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker, 1998, (Reprint, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 113.

³⁴ Michael Shafir, Romania: Politics, Economics and Society (London: Pinter, 1985), p. 48, quoted in Deletant, Ceaușescu, p. 52.

³⁵ Roper, p. 20.

Warsaw Pact

- May 1955, Warsaw Pact gave excuse to keep Soviet troops in Romania³⁷
- May 1958, Khrushchev withdrew troops³⁸
- safe because Romania reliable, surrounded by communist countries³⁹
- “pivotal act leading to the emergence of a [different] Romanian foreign policy”⁴⁰
- 1962, Gheorghiu-Dej forbid Warsaw Pact troop manoeuvres in Romania⁴¹
- 1964, Khrushchev removed so Gheorghiu-Dej had all KGB counsellors withdrawn⁴²
- 1968, refused to let Bulgarians through⁴³

Sino–Soviet Split

- June 1960 Mao and Khrushchev openly argued in Romania⁴⁴
- 1961 Hoxha openly aligned with China⁴⁵
- Soviets gave Albania much equipment⁴⁶

³⁶ Sudetic, “Chapter 1,” Gheorghiu-Dej’s Defiance of Khrushchev.

³⁷ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 14. Under Article 21 of the 1947 Allied Treaty of Peace with Romania, the Soviet Union has the right “to keep on Roumanian territory such armed forces as it may need for the maintenance of the lines of communication of the Soviet Army with the Soviet zone of occupation in Austria.” But in 1955 the Soviet Union withdrew its forces from neutral Austria and its right to keep troops in Romania under the 1947 Peace Treaty no longer applied. Bevans, part IV, article 21 point 1. Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 13.

³⁸ Verona, “Withdrawal,” p. i.

³⁹ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 20.

⁴⁰ Verona, p. 57.

⁴¹ Karl W. Soper, “Chapter 5 - National Security,” in Romania: A Country Study, ed. Ronald D. Bachman (Washington: Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, 1989), The Warsaw Pact, accessed 26 February 2015, Library of Congress, <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/rotoc.html>>.

⁴² Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 21. The KGB was the Soviet Union’s secret police. KGB counsellors advised the security agencies of all the Warsaw Pact countries, including Romania’s Securitate. Leonid Brezhnev succeeded Khrushchev as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

⁴³ Soper, “Chapter 5,” The Warsaw Pact. Bulgaria was surrounded by Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey, the Black Sea, and Romania, and so Romania effectively blocked Bulgaria’s land route to Czechoslovakia, greatly annoying the Soviets.

⁴⁴ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 20.

⁴⁵ Kramer, “Czechoslovak,” p. 117. Enver Hoxha was then the First Secretary of the Party of Labour of Albania.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118. Albania was the Warsaw Pact’s only outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. “To ensure that Albania could serve as a full-fledged military base on the Mediterranean Sea for all the socialist countries, the Soviet Union had been providing extensive equipment and training to the Albanian army and navy.”

- no invasion: logistical problems and possible resistance⁴⁷
- 23 August 1968, Zhou Enlai at Romania's National Day reception: condemned

Soviets, supported Romania against any foreign aggression⁴⁸

- 1968 Yugoslavia condemned Soviets too⁴⁹

1968 Prague Spring

- March, Dubček reformed communism from inside⁵⁰
- Ulbricht, Gomulka, Shelest "feared the Prague Spring could spread"⁵¹
- "Stalin seized Ruthenia in order to have a border with Czechoslovakia. Geopolitics

rather than ideology provides a better explanation for the Brezhnev Doctrine."⁵²

- 20 August Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia⁵³
- 21 August Romania Communist Party officially condemned invasion, decided to

"immediately reorganiz[e]" the "armed patriotic guards"⁵⁴

- "Ceausescu's defiance was considered the ultimate expression of nationalism"⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Kramer, "Czechoslovak," p. 118.

⁴⁸ Edward H. Judge and John W. Langdon, "Chapter 47 - The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, August 1968," in *The Cold War: A History Through Documents* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), p. 147. "Rumania is now facing the danger of foreign intervention and aggression. The Rumanian Government is mobilizing the people to wage struggles in defence of their independence and sovereignty. The Chinese people [...] support you. It is our firm belief that so long as one truly relies on the masses and perseveres in protracted struggle, any foreign intervention and aggression can be and certainly will be defeated." Zhou Enlai was then the Premier of the People's Republic of China.

⁴⁹ Judge and Langdon, "Chapter 47," p. 144.

⁵⁰ Clough, p. 1759. Alexander Dubček became the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in January 1968.

⁵¹ Roskin, *Rebirth*, p. 119. Walter Ulbricht was then the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Pytor Shelest was then the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukraine.

⁵² Roskin, p. 120. The Brezhnev Doctrine was the Soviet policy of intervention after 1968.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Delia Razdolescu, trans., "Protocol No. 5 of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the CC of the RCP on the Situation in Czechoslovakia," Romanian National Central Historical Archives, Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Chancellery, 21 August 1968: File No. 133/1968, ff. 2-4, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed 26 February 2015, <<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110454>>.

⁵⁵ Roper, p. 49.

- “Popular acceptance of Ceaușescu’s regime peaked during his defiance”⁵⁶
- Romanian military intelligence: Warsaw Pact decided in July 1968 to invade

Czechoslovakia and Romania; averted by careful crisis management⁵⁷

- “Throughout the last weeks of August, they steadily curtailed their criticisms of the invasion, and [...] temporarily eschewed any further polemics over Bessarabia”⁵⁸
- Romanian archives unwilling to declassify 21–24 August 1968 military documents⁵⁹

United States

- 22 July 1968, Rusk seemed to give Soviets green light for Czechoslovakia⁶⁰
- Wheeler warned US could not respond militarily because of Tet⁶¹
- 30 August 1968, Johnson “clear warning to Moscow”: two invasions would be war⁶²
- Czechoslovakia supplied much North Vietnamese military goods, opposed US⁶³
- only Romania willing intermediary of Washington and Hanoi; more US support⁶⁴

⁵⁶ Sudetic, *The Ceaușescu Succession*. This was Ceaușescu’s speech of 21 August 1968.

⁵⁷ Deletant, *Ceaușescu*, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Mark Kramer, “Moldova, Romania, and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 12/13 (Fall/Winter 2001): 327.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: 331.

⁶⁰ Günter Bischof, “‘No Action’: The Johnson Administration and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968,” in *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968*, ed. Günter Bischof, et al. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 217. Dean Rusk was then the United States Secretary of State. He apparently told the Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin that “the United States has been against interference in the affairs of Czechoslovakia from the start” and that “[t]his is a matter for the Czechs first and foremost. Apart from that, it is a matter for Czechs and other nations of the Warsaw Pact.”

⁶¹ Bischof, “No Action,” p. 219. Earle G. Wheeler was then the Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1968, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese military launched the Tet Offensive, which tied up American troops in Vietnam and “shattered the illusion held by many in the United States that the [Vietnam] war could soon be won.” Vit Fojtek, “U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Czechoslovakia in 1968 in the Context of the Vietnam War,” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae - Studia Territoria* 8-12 (2008): 35.

⁶² Bischof, p. 222. Lyndon B. Johnson was then the President of the United States.

⁶³ Fojtek, “U.S. Foreign Policy,”: 55.

⁶⁴ Fojtek: 55.

Section C: Evaluation of Sources

“Continuity, Legitimacy and Identity: Understanding the Romanian August of 1968” is a research paper written by Dragoş Petrescu, a lecturer in the University of Bucharest Department of Political Science and a member of the Advisory Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania⁶⁵. The origin of the paper is from volume 31 of Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea, a journal of contemporary history, which published the paper in 2009⁶⁶. The purpose of the paper is “to explain why communist Romania did not take part to [sic] the crushing of the Prague Spring”⁶⁷. The value of the paper is that Petrescu is a recognized expert on the communist dictatorship in Romania. Also, Petrescu in 2009 had access to declassified documents and the benefit of hindsight after the 1989 Romanian Revolution.⁶⁸ The limitation of the paper is that it is only 20 pages long, yet covers events from 1944 to 1971, and so cannot go into depth about everything. However, the paper does focus on the events of one month. Also, Petrescu is a Romanian, whose writings about Romania may be limited to a Romanian perspective.

⁶⁵ Dragoş Petrescu, “Dragoş Petrescu,” curriculum vitae, n.d, accessed 3 March 2015, Cold War History Research Centre at Corvinus University of Budapest, <[http://www.coldwar.hu/html/en/researcher_database/Romania/CV%20Dragos%20Petrescu%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.coldwar.hu/html/en/researcher_database/Romania/CV%20Dragos%20Petrescu%20(English).pdf)>.

⁶⁶ Petrescu, “Continuity,”: 69.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ This contrasts with Sergiu Verona’s paper, which had in 1989 access only to the most recent “declassified archival material available in the United States and in the United Kingdom.” No amount of American spying can make up for the actual declassified documents! Verona, p. i.

“Protocol No. 5 of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party on the Situation in Czechoslovakia” is a summary of a decision of top Romanian officials. The origin of the summary is from a meeting on 21 August 1968.⁶⁹ The purpose of the summary is to summarize the Romanian leadership’s decision “to publically express its astonishment at the actions of the five Warsaw Pact member states participating in the invasion of Czechoslovakia”.⁷⁰ The value of the summary is that it clearly shows the Romanian leadership’s official decision. Also, it captures the spirit of the time in Romania, since it was written during the Prague Spring. The limitation of the summary is that government documents only show what the government wants to show. Also, this only shows the Romanian leadership’s decision, and shows not its rationale, its implementation, nor its effects, and so is of limited use to a historian analyzing the causes or consequences of their decision.

⁶⁹ Razdolescu, “Protocol No. 5.”

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Section D: Analysis

Khrushchev's de-Stalinization barely affected Romania, which Gheorghiu-Dej claimed had already been de-Stalinized⁷¹. However, under Stalin, Gheorghiu-Dej's "tightly totalitarian regime"⁷² had "no autonomist temptation", which suggests that the regime was quite Stalinist⁷³. Dragoş Petrescu argues that, since the regime had little popular support⁷⁴ and relied solely on Stalin's political legitimacy⁷⁵, after Khrushchev undermined that legitimacy, Gheorghiu-Dej made a "strategy of political survival"⁷⁶ by distancing himself from the Soviet bloc while outwardly displaying loyalty, as with Gomulka.⁷⁷ As long as Romania had "no independent source of legitimacy", anything less than complete loyalty to the Soviet Union would risk internal unrest as in Hungary and subsequent Soviet takeover.⁷⁸ Petrescu is a recognized expert on the Romanian communist dictatorship whose argument is based off recently declassified government documents, which gives it some validity.⁷⁹ This survival strategy would explain Romania's enthusiastic military support of the 1956 invasion,⁸⁰ as an opportunity to display loyalty and to consolidate power.⁸¹

⁷¹ Roper, p. 33. Gheorghiu-Dej "blocked any attempt by Moscow" to purge his party.

⁷² Clough, p. 1758

⁷³ Tismaneanu, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Petrescu, "Continuity," 71. There were only 1000 Romanian communists in August 1944.

⁷⁵ Tismaneanu, p. 10; Roper, p. 19. The 1924 Fifth Party Congress purged all the pre-Stalinists, which left behind only Stalinists, who had "no independent source of legitimacy", which was "completely derived from Soviet authority".

⁷⁶ Petrescu, "Continuity," 72.

⁷⁷ Clough, p. 1745. Gomulka avoided a Soviet invasion of Poland by convincing Khrushchev of his loyalty.

⁷⁸ Roper, p. 19. Deletant, "New Evidence," pars. 15–16. Two million Hungarians lived in Transylvania, which was part of Romania, and many demonstrations took place supporting Nagy, which threatened the regime.

⁷⁹ Petrescu, "Dragoş Petrescu."

⁸⁰ Deletant, "New Evidence," par. 18. Romania supported the Soviet invasion militarily by widening its roads, giving military bases, and allowing the Soviets to pass through Romania into Hungary.

⁸¹ Roper, p. 34. Gheorghiu-Dej used the Hungarian Uprising as an excuse to consolidate his rule with a 1957 purge.

Gheorghiu-Dej's legitimacy then relied on the Soviet Union, but his survival strategy gradually lessened this reliance in the following years without inciting Soviet alarm.⁸² By 1964, he could issue the April Declaration, which called for Romania's complete autonomy in foreign affairs.⁸³ Romania no longer relied on the Soviet Union, and the survival strategy was no longer needed, allowing Ceaușescu to oppose the 1968 invasion without risking the regime's domestic legitimacy.

But why would Romania want to oppose it? Strangely, Ceaușescu's legitimacy relied on anti-Soviet policies. This seems like a definite foreign policy reversal, yet Gheorghiu-Dej remained staunchly Stalinist⁸⁴ and Ceaușescu much the same.⁸⁵ Therefore, it must have been Khrushchev whose de-Stalinization changed Romania's attitude towards the Soviets.

More important than Stalinism was the desire for Romanian autonomy—nationalism—for both Ceaușescu's anti-Soviet policies and Gheorghiu-Dej's early pro-Soviet policies. In 1968, Ceaușescu obviously drew upon nationalism for popular support.⁸⁶ But nationalism, even excluding anti-Hungarian sentiment,⁸⁷ affected 1956 events too. Gheorghiu-Dej's 1952 purge of Muscovites let him begin to pursue autonomy from Soviet influence.⁸⁸ To gain military autonomy, Gheorghiu-Dej supported the 1956 invasion and so gained the trust that let Khrushchev withdraw Soviet troops from Romania two years later.⁸⁹

⁸² For example, Romanianization distanced Romania from the Soviets but anti-neutrality punishments reassured them again. Sudetic, *Gheorghiu-Dej's Defiance of Khrushchev*; Deletant, *Ceaușescu*, p. 50.

⁸³ Sudetic, *Gheorghiu-Dej's Defiance of Khrushchev*. The April Declaration also drew the support of the West, which Gheorghiu-Dej hoped would aid Romania's economic independence. Deletant, "New Evidence," par. 21.

⁸⁴ Petrescu, "Continuity," 72. Since de-Stalinization threatened him, Gheorghiu-Dej must have been a Stalinist

⁸⁵ Tismaneanu, p. 3. Ceaușescu did not alter "the principal features of Romania's Stalinist political culture".

⁸⁶ Roper, p. 49; Razdolescu, "Protocol No. 5." The "armed patriotic guards" are a clear example of pure nationalism.

⁸⁷ Roskin, p. 183. Anti-Hungarian policies have been associated with Romanian nationalists.

⁸⁸ Roper, p. 23.

⁸⁹ Verona, p. i. It is interesting to note the change in Soviet trust of Romania. In 1955, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact in part as an excuse to keep troops in Romania. Just one year later, it deported Nagy's government not to, say, Sofia, but to Bucharest. Deletant, "New Evidence," par. 14; Tismaneanu, p. 15.

Sergiu Verona argued instead that a different Romanian foreign policy emerged from the 1958 withdrawal that gave Gheorghiu-Dej the confidence to follow his own path.⁹⁰ But following his own nationalist path without relying on the Soviet Union was of course the basis of his survival strategy, and if Petrescu's thesis holds, there was a continuity in Romanian foreign policy ever since Khrushchev's speech. By 1964, Gheorghiu-Dej's nationalist survival strategy had moved Romania far enough from the Soviets to ensure its complete military and police autonomy.⁹¹

Romania's economic policies then reveal how Romanian nationalist sentiment became anti-Soviet sentiment. In 1961, Comecon suggested Romania specialize in raw materials, which would have ended its industrialization program and relegated it to the economic periphery.⁹² In order to avoid economic servility as during the SovRom years, Gheorghiu-Dej had increased trade links with the West.⁹³ Perhaps these actions do not show nationalism, merely a "commitment to the Leninist–Stalinist values of industrialization"⁹⁴. However, Steven Roper asserts that even in Stalin's years, Gheorghiu-Dej pursued industrialization instead of collectivization to gain the economic independence to pursue political autonomy.⁹⁵ Soviet domination of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon thus implied that any Romanian autonomy must involve anti-Soviet policies. By 1963, Romania publically refused to follow Comecon policies.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Verona, p. 57.

⁹¹ Soper, *The Warsaw Pact*; Deletant, "New Evidence," par. 21. In 1962 Gheorghiu-Dej forbid Warsaw Pact troop manoeuvres in Romania and in 1964 he had all KGB counsellors withdrawn.

⁹² Deletant, "New Evidence," par. 20.

⁹³ Roper, pp. 28, 35. From 1958 to 1961 Romania's trade with the West increased by 70% while trade with the Soviet Union only increased by 12%.

⁹⁴ Shafir, *Romania*, p. 48. But Shafir writes that Gheorghiu-Dej's Stalinism "turned him into a 'national Communist'". Deletant did not give any further context to this quotation, so it is unclear what the quotation marks mean.

⁹⁵ Roper, p. 20.

⁹⁶ Sudetic, *Gheorghiu-Dej's Defiance of Khrushchev*.

In both 1956 and 1968, Romania had a communist regime surrounded by communist countries and was no threat to the Soviet Union.⁹⁷ Other East European leaders had no fear of any Romanian sentiment spilling across their borders, either.⁹⁸ However, a key difference in 1968 was the support of outside powers: the 1960 Sino–Soviet split gave Ceaușescu the opportunity to gain Chinese and Yugoslav support with anti-Soviet rhetoric,⁹⁹ and the 1968 Tet Offensive gave Ceaușescu the opportunity to gain American support by mediating between Hanoi and Washington.¹⁰⁰ Gheorghiu-Dej had no such anti-Soviet support, when Soviet relations with China were yet friendly and Khrushchev was eager to reconcile with Tito.¹⁰¹ By 1968, Romania had the Chinese¹⁰² and American¹⁰³ backing to assert its nationalist autonomy. Perhaps Gheorghiu-Dej would have acted differently had he a stable regime, economic and military autonomy, and world power support. In any case, Ceaușescu “took the nationalist card originally dealt him by Gheorghiu-Dej and raised it”.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 20. In contrast, according to Roskin, Czechoslovakia was geopolitically important: “Stalin seized Ruthenia in order to have a border with Czechoslovakia.” But Yugoslavia and Romania together cut Bulgaria entirely off the rest of the Warsaw Pact, and even if Czechoslovakia left, Hungary would still be connected via Ukraine! According to Deletant and Kramer, Romanian military intelligence revealed that the Warsaw Pact decided in July 1968 to invade both Czechoslovakia and Romania, which Ceaușescu only avoided with delicate crisis management. This apparently did affect Romania’s criticism of the invasion, which was “steadily curtailed”. However, the Romanian archives did not declassify their military documents of 21–24 August 1968, and so the reliability of this information is suspect. Nevertheless, Ceaușescu did feel threatened enough to mobilize Romania’s “armed patriotic guards” in “Protocol No. 5” to deter the Soviets from invading. Roskin, p. 120; Deletant, Ceaușescu, 84; Kramer, “Moldova,”: 327, 331; Razdolescu, “Protocol No. 5”.

⁹⁸ Roskin, p. 119. This contrasted with Gheorghiu-Dej’s worry of spreading the Hungarian Uprising and Ulbricht, Gomulka, and Shelest’s worry of spreading the Prague Spring.

⁹⁹ Deletant, “New Evidence,” par. 20; Judge and Langdon, p. 144. It is interesting to note that the Sino–Soviet split began during the 1960 Romanian Communist Party Congress.

¹⁰⁰ Fojtek: 55.

¹⁰¹ Clough, p. 1745.

¹⁰² Judge and Langdon, p. 147. At Romania’s National Day reception on 23 August 1968, Zhou Enlai condemned the Soviet Union and asserted Chinese support of Romania against any foreign aggression.

¹⁰³ Bischof, p. 222. On 30 August 1968, Johnson gave a “clear warning to Moscow” that a Soviet invasion of another country after Czechoslovakia would lead to general war. In contrast, Czechoslovakia was one of the largest supplier of military goods to North Vietnam, making it difficult for the United States to support it, and Rusk seemed to have given the Soviets a free hand in Czechoslovakia. Fojtek: 55; Bischof, p. 217.

¹⁰⁴ Stokes, p. 55.

Section E: Conclusion

Both Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu were Romanians, nationalists, and Stalinists. Yet, Romania's reaction to the 1968 invasion was the opposite of its reaction in 1956. Petrescu's survival strategy thesis explained that by gradually distancing Romania away from the Soviet bloc, Gheorghiu-Dej set the foundation for Ceaușescu's autonomous foreign policy. During the 1956 invasion, Romanian autonomy called for pro-Soviet actions to consolidate the regime and gain military autonomy by encouraging withdrawal. During the 1968 invasion, Romanian autonomy called for anti-Soviet actions to increase the regime's popularity and gain economic autonomy by ignoring Comecon.

Support from China and the United States may have given Ceaușescu the confidence to condemn the 1968 invasion, but despite outward differences, Ceaușescu's clear assertion of Romanian nationalist autonomy merely extended Gheorghiu-Dej's survival strategy.

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