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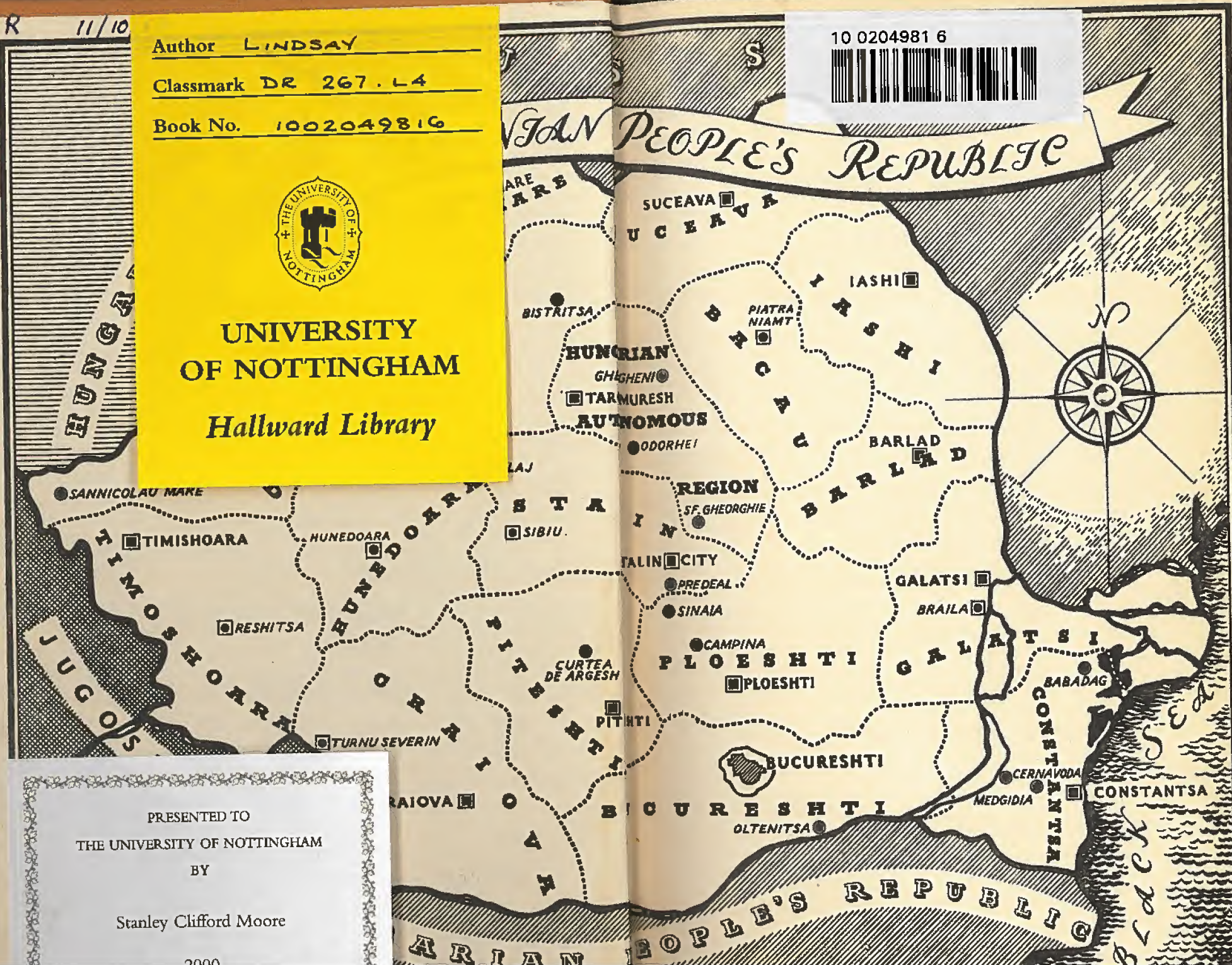
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Liberation Day in Bucharest.

# RUMANIAN SUMMER

*A View of the Rumanian People's Republic*

by

JACK LINDSAY

*with the collaboration of*  
MAURICE CORNFORTH



1953

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## FOREWORD

THIS book is the record of a visit to the Rumanian People's Republic in August-September, 1952. We were members of a cultural delegation invited by the Rumanian Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. It was our original intention that Jack Lindsay should record general impressions of what we saw in Rumania and deal specially with the problem of the national minorities there, and that Maurice Cornforth should write separately about the development of science in connection with the carrying out of the present Five-Year Plan. On comparing notes, however, we decided to combine our separate records in a single volume. The greater part of this book is written by Jack Lindsay; only the sections on political and economic development since 1946, and on science, are contributed by Maurice Cornforth.

We must express our deep gratitude to our Rumanian hosts for the facilities afforded us—there was no restriction whatever on what we were allowed to do and see—and for the photographs with which this book is illustrated. Jack Lindsay was given full permission by the authorities to visit any place in the border regions. Only pressure of time prevented him and his wife from visiting all sorts of out-of-the-way places, but, as the reader will see, he went well off the beaten track in his investigation of the situation of national minorities in Rumania.

JACK LINDSAY  
MAURICE CORNFORTH  
*November, 1952*



## BUCHAREST

IT has been a particularly drougthy summer, and we arrive in Bucharest in the violent heat of mid-August. This broad plain seems to store the heat, bank it up between the Balkans and the Carpathians. The first impression of the city is of space and an abundance of trees. But spring, that makes of Bucharest a city of roses, red and white along the avenues, has now gone; and the summer-sign is the scarlet canna, hard and brilliant over its dark blue-green leaves.

The great event of August in Rumania is the 23rd—Liberation Day.

Everything moves towards it, this day of national independence when in 1944 the Soviet advance made possible the uprising of the people and the revolt of 18 divisions, 385,000 men, who turned their arms on Hitler and fought beside the Soviet army in the Carpathians. Between August 23rd and September 1st those divisions took 51,000 prisoners; and 14 divisions went on fighting to help in freeing Transylvania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia. They freed 3,831 localities, including 53 towns, and lost 113,578 in killed, wounded and missing.

We must bear these details in mind to understand how the Day is both an expression of gratitude to the Soviet Union (with the memory of the war of 1877 behind it, when Russian soldiers fought beside Rumanians to bring the Rumanian State to birth) and at the same time an expression of national rebirth, of regained self-respect and freedom. On the night of August 23rd, 1944, partisan groups of workers overthrew the fascist government of Antonescu.

We came down from the mountains the day before; and a rainstorm swept up over us in the Valley of Prahova, moving on into the plain. Then that night, at a big meeting in Stalin



Park, after the speeches, the rain blew across Bucharest. The songs and dances were just beginning; and we stayed awhile with newspapers over our heads till we were driven to take shelter as an Oltenian dance burst into its flowers of rhythm.

What of the next day? Fears, however, were unfounded. There was just enough cloud to mitigate the intense sunlight, and we did not need the straw hats that had been prudently given us. Only for one moment did the wind leap up to wrench the big banners almost out of the hands of a line of athletes; but the standard-bearers fought on and mastered the wind, which died away in curls of dust. All was well.

We are seated in the stand, left of the main tribune, opposite the enormous band. After the cannonade had sent its punctual billows of smoke over the park, and the impressive and impeccable military parade, there came the partisan groups from the factories who rose in August 1944, men and women with rifles at the ready, in blue workclothes, great squares of marchers. Here at the outset of the day they proclaim where power lies in this new Rumania. A government which arms the workers in the factories is not a government with any fear of the people; it is a government which reposes with entire confidence on the people from which it comes, to which it answers, and to which it returns.

This effect is joyously and tumultuously underlined by all that comes after. Well over half a million people, old and young, men and women, Rumanians and the folk of the many national minorities, all emerging, converging, in three great columns, march into the vast square. They fill the square with a delight of songs and shouts that blend into a single note of rising acclamation.

First, the youth groups, in proudly careful march. Infinitely moving are the young pioneers, boys and girls with red scarves and white blouses, carrying all sorts of models made by themselves: groups which brandish aeroplanes, girls swaying flowers in time to the universal song, a happy band with a huge net and a great floppy fish in its middle, cornet-players and drummers briskly enjoying the Pioneers' Song, entomologists brandishing butterfly-nets, artists with rainbow palettes,

and geography-enthusiasts balancing a noble globe. Doves are let loose before the tribune. Balloons pause and bob in red and blue and white, then ascend like bubbles into the grey bright sky. And as moving as the pioneers are the groups of the youth leaguers: the girls with their fierce spring and swing of march, the passionate purity of the young exalted with the great tasks that confront them, who feel the responsibility of the future on their shoulders like the sky that Atlas bore, yet are the lighter for it, the more sharply-braced. A new world in their vigorous arms and legs, their lifted faces, their resolute spirits.

Then the masses come pouring, spaced in their districts, their work-groups, their clubs—coming after the neatness and order of the previous units like the great rowdy lovely force of life itself, which however, begins at once by its inner needs to assume an order, a characteristic organisation of its own, a new crystallisation out of the eddying and pouring release of its energies. Coming with endless banners, the small flags of children, long pennons on lofty poles, carefully decorated ensigns, squares that had their last hasty stitches put in at midnight last night. (People could be seen at work with last-minute preparations, often sitting in the street for coolness, listening and talking to friends or passers with the easy merriment of a Rumanian group, sewing, putting things together, fixing costumes.) Portraits and slogans, now a few scattered examples, then a bristling forest of them, some lovingly constructed with fine lettering and design, others consisting of the picture from the wall of the club or the living-room with flowers and ribbons round it—it is hard to say which kind more forcibly expresses the devotion of the bearers. Flowers, always flowers. New machines, models and constructions, charts and allegorical cars. And always the surge of exultant people: metallurgical workers in blue overalls, weavers in red kerchiefs and glistening white blouses, dancers in folk-costumes circling or leaping. (Even when they come to Bucharest the workers like to keep their village-finery; they get together with others from the same district and dance their *hora* on Sundays in the suburbs.)

At wide intervals stand soldiers trying to mark the divisions between the three columns, continually swamped and



disappearing. How they aren't carried away, it's hard to tell. Sometimes dancers pause and go round and round them, sometimes entangle them in a serpentine progression. The soldiers smile, but keep their place, are lost, then reappear out of the human flood where the waving arms break in a foam of flowers and red ribbons. A girl pulls the little red flag from a rifle, runs off, then returns the flag to the protesting soldier amid laughter, while schoolgirls flutter copies of the Constitution instead of handkerchiefs at Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. A scatter of doves goes up. Three doves come down to watch the procession and stroll round the box on which stand two film camera-men (those anarchists of public events, who incongruously block views and scamper about with no concern except for the angle of shots). A camera-man grabs at a dove, and fails. An officer adroitly stalks the bird and catches it, catches another, laughs and shows his bag to one of the privates, stroking its head; the dove blinks and regards the marchers.

Near us sits the Patriarch Justinian in his tall white hat, smiling gravely and benignly, more comely than the comeliest ikon. When the large estates were nationalised to provide land for the peasants, the church-estates were omitted. The Patriarch called his bishops, and after a solemn discussion they went to the Government with their title-deeds. Why had they been insulted by such discrimination? Were they not part of the people, anxious only to share their life and aspirations? They insisted on their lands being taken over, and Justinian commented, "We lost nothing and made no sacrifice. The result of our action was all gain." Now he watches with a grave and benign smile.

Bands and fanfares. A woman with two babies, one in each arm: as she nears the tribune, she lifts them both triumphantly up. Let the new life hail the new life! A big ship-model goes dipping by, and a pylon of electric construction. The shepherds of the Apuseni Mountains blow their horns that are longer than a man: like boughs curving, elephants trunks. The nurses pass in neat uniforms, and the tumultuous mass roars and waves its delight again: old men with faces as wrinkled as the skeleton of a beech-leaf and smiles of ancient wisdom, girls throwing flowers from the lap of plenty, more dancers setting the key of

the day, and gypsies, old women and young, still wondering happily if all the good fortunes they have told for silver have incredibly come true. And tumblers in white tight trousers somersaulting untrodden amid the legs.

Armenian girls in flowing velvety robes, with ridiculous and lovely little boxhats, moving in a dance that is simply the perfection of gentle undulant movement, a bland ripple without even the shadow of an angular flaw, their hands flowing in an incantation of all the pleasures of the world. Hungarian dancers as wild and variously energetic as the Armenian girls are magically suave, leaping for giant crops, with the small boys frantically trying to keep up the pace of the dance-march, with brave knees and caps falling over their faces. Greek dancers tall as mountain-firs with their white kilts swinging as they catch hands in a round-dance.

Some lads with a large display of new jams and tinned goods wheel in from the middle line, determined that Gheorghiu-Dej shall read the very labels on their products. But generally the columns keep their places, merging, separating, singing. Lovers go by half-embraced. A young girl lifts her arms to embrace heaven and earth.

The file of march is anything from thirty to fifty persons; and the files press in on one another, opening only to let through a carnival-car or a wreath of dancers. The songs intertwine, and more doves swerve softly into the sky of freedom.

The peasants of the Bucharest area come up gallantly on their wiry horses. Girls in waggon-gardens, girls with big baskets of bright fruit. Lorries on which the harvest is forever gathered by sturdy nymphs of the golden age. Sheaves and melons and cobs of maize: an irrigation-system spouts water under a fountain of flowers.

At last the hundreds of thousands are gaily gone: the last mother with uplifted babe, the last lovers with clasped hands, the last worker under an arch of red. But the Sports Groups remain. They come with quick precise swing and tall banners; clubs of districts or factories in different costumes, girls in shorts and girls in abbreviated skirts, blue and red and white. They pause to merge in sudden patterns of colour, to break into word-designs that always praise PEACE, under wands of red



blossom; or hurry past in acrobatic poses piled on cycles or motorcycles.

Then the last red flower is thrown, the last eager girl is gone. The enormous band, with drum-majors flou-ishing staffs in impossible majesty, executes some brief brilliant movements, sends out its trumpeters smartly from between the files and reabsorbs them, and then is also gone. The echo of the hours is a thunder of clamorous delighted voices, an eagle-cry of trumpets, a mountain-lowing of the long horns, a babel of criss-crossing rhythms: all making a single unmonotonous swell, an oceanic pulsation of power coming up from the stirred depths of Man.

No prose can do justice to the scene. Nothing less than the decisive verve and structure of a Beethoven Symphony could utter its dignity, its sweep as wide as north and south, east and west, its warm intimacy, its absolute truth. And it is relevant to remember that the new scope and resonance of Beethoven's symphonic works arose in the last resort from the demands made on music by the great open-air demonstrations of the French Revolution in the Champ de Mars, for which Méhul and Cherubini, Gossec and Lesueur composed. The new demands were the new possibilities. The art which in due time will fully develop out of the new demands, the new possibilities, of a society with such festivals as that of August 23rd will be the art that once more catches up (and outstrips) the noble art of Beethoven and his fellows. (The "due time" already includes the present for those who have unplugged ears to catch the new great harmonies of art and life liberated in the Soviet Union and now apparent in the People's Democracies.)

At almost every street-corner for miles around are stalls pleasantly decorated and laden with fruits, cakes, cheeses, sausages, beer, *sirup* and *limonade* (under which names go various fruit-flavoured drinks). The marchers, while waiting their turn, sang here, laughed and drank *sirup*, chaffed one another, played games. Babies were fed from open bosoms, and the children ran races or climbed the shady trees, while the older folk sat on walls or window-sills.

Now the marchers have broken up into sections. They march home for more rejoicings or go to one of the parks, break up

and form fresh groupings. The youngsters want to go on for ever. The city is a swarming carnival of odd costumes, athletes with scarcely anything on and dancers with rich embroidered dresses. The many restaurants with garlanded trees, with the shadows of broad-leaved vines, with the cool gleams of water, are thronged with families, lovers, lads with accordions. The dancing continues, here, there, and everywhere. In the Place of the Republic, opposite the Palace which is now the Art Gallery, a large wooden stage has been built, and on it singers and dancers in folk-finery are busy till late in the night, surrounded by a vast crowd.

Dusk gives a new start to the festivities. Suddenly out of a sidestreet come a hundred girls in short blue skirts, singing, and the fireworks begin scattering the sky with their sparks, their drops of burning red and gold. Into the square swings a long stream of young dancers, to whom are added mimes and comedians in fancy-dresses, acting political charades or merely bursting with high spirits. The night deepens. Looking down from high up in the Athenaeum Palace Hotel, where we were staying, you see the packed square opening to let the youngsters go through, the torches like orange-gold beads making lovely patterns of movement. Searchlights lift to the sky, picking out a banner amid the stars, a winking window, a balcony of laughing people. Then it swoops down, on to the crowd. Drums seem less loud than the beating hearts. A folksong shouts through the loudspeaker; a pair of lovers fade into the dark of trees; a large family passes with baskets, babies, and yellow melons.

A lavish arabesque of fire-drops is spirited over the sky. The man ahead gives the high choked cry of a child caught by surprise with a plethora of delight. A child leaning on the edge of fantasy, beholding a fantasy-world suddenly become real.

*Three Glimpses of Children.* A large housing estate on the city's outskirts: as we pause at the entry, children gather round, and three girls sing at our request. One is shy and now and then turns her face away, but the eldest is assured and looks straight ahead, into the world of her song. Passers stop for a moment, nod and go on. There's nothing unusual in a song in Bucharest, at any hour of the day.

The house-committee man comes up and tells us that the



flats are at the disposal of the trade-unions who allocate them to good workers who need better quarters. He takes us round, knocking at doors to find someone at home. At last a woman opens her door, and is slightly surprised, but not at all abashed or reluctant. As soon as she hears who we are, she wants to show us everything. A Stakhanovite's wife, she lives with her schoolboy son and her mother-in-law in three fair-sized rooms and a neat kitchen, paying 5 per cent of her income for rent, light, heat. (A young couple inhabit another room in the flat, with their own kitchen, but sharing the bath.) All the flats are centrally heated in winter from the estate-furnace. "You don't need to see that," says the committee-man, with unintended irony. "Of course you have such things everywhere in England."

So he takes us to another flat, where the wife welcomes us into her well-furnished rooms, while her mother controls the lusciously smelling borsch and her two children boisterously make friends with everyone. There are two good little tapestry-pictures and one garish sentimental painting—a typical example of the instability of peasant taste when village traditions are broken.

Now to the clubrooms, where chess, backgammon and table tennis are being played. The white reading-and meeting-rooms are draped with wreaths of red paper-stars, and show cartoons, wall-newspapers. And outside, between two blocks, is the children's playground, with slides, swings, and large swimming-pool constructed by voluntary work of the flat-dwellers. It swarms noisily with splashing boys and girls in swimming-suits, chemises, pants, any old thing, who flock before a camera and then tumble again into the water. Some swarthy gypsy-children roam aloof and yet part of it all; and a lad who has taken off his trousers trips himself up as he tries hastily to pull them on again.

What matters is not the statistics: it is the happiness, the pride. The beauty of the woman in the first flat, her olivine clear-cut face with its long dark steady eyes, her graceful dignity; the warm easy homeliness of the second woman—the sense that both convey of having come up out of the nether-depths to a sunny place where they are respected as persons, and the desire they feel to communicate their happiness.

Flowers are already coming up in the grounds from which the builders' materials are not yet all gone.



Liberation Day in Bucharest. *Above:* march past of factory workers who fought in the Liberation.

*Below:* women of the Armenian minority, in national costume.







Cotroceni Palace, now the Palace of Pioneers of Bucharest.



Kindergarten of the "Kirov" shoe factory.



The "Emilia Irsa" Children's Hospital.







Old and new. *Above*: old-style workers' dwellings. *Below*: the newly-built Ferentari flats in Bucharest. In the background is the central-heating plant for the whole neighbourhood.



The Emilia Irsa Hospital is called after a woman of the nearby tram depot, who was shot down by the police during a demonstration. It is one of the seven hospitals built since the war for children in Bucharest, and is run by the General Confederation of Labour. Its 210 beds are for non-contagious cases, and everything is beautifully built and devised, with much glass, and with easy ramps as well as stairs from the ground floor. The top-balcony gives a view over spacious suburban gardens, roofs tiled red against the light yellows of stucco walls, redbrick façades beside the green of poplars. Opposite is a lake and a park in process of construction: the playground has been finished with a fine tall slide, and a lad is laboriously climbing up its front—as a girl comes down the proper way he opens his legs and she slides unhindered between.

The hospital walls are of soft bright colours, the babies' wards are small, glass-enclosed, so that one nurse can attend the half-dozen or less children in it. For sun-ray treatment there is a room with a big square of sand on its floor for the children to play in. On visiting days, after the parents are gone, plays are given on the stage of the handsome hall of the ground floor, to distract and cheer the children from whimpering to go home.

The superintendent, Dr. Weintraub, looks very young for such a post of responsibility, and is thus typical of this land of youth. He tells us how the August heatwave brought an epidemic of gastro-enteritis, that enemy of babies in all hot countries, which is here the cause of most baby-deaths. The health authorities are fighting it by a large-scale attack on bad housing and sanitation, and by an educational drive among mothers. The mothers, who come daily to feed their babies at the hospital, are given a course (five hours a week) on mothercraft.

This splendid hospital should be seen in its historical perspective. Before the Liberation, a quarter of the babies born in Rumania died before the age of two. This terrible death-rate has now been reduced to 8 per cent, and is being steadily lowered. A few weeks ago a careful scrutiny of all the infant deaths in the city was made.

"We need only one thing to carry through our fight for Rumania's children with entire success," says the doctor. "Peace. Something we all have to work for."



He goes on to tell us of the ways in which his hospital is linked with the local polyclinics or health centres, of the whole complex network of health services, the widespread training in Red Cross work (all sorts of first-aid matters), the work-conditions of the nurses and their facilities for raising their qualifications. The details, impressive in themselves, gain in force and interest against the background of "colonial misery" which lies only a few years behind the new life defined by this magnificent hospital, with its young keen superintendent.

At Cotroceni, on a rising space in the 17th century, was a thick wood with a little hermitage dedicated to SS. Sergios and Bacchos. The Hospodar (prince) Serban Cantacuzino, to whom the region belonged, took refuge in the wood from the Tatars, and afterwards built a convent. The Turks blinded the eyes of the saints in the frescos, and various wars wrecked most of the place. Then the French architect Gottereau reared a new residence, destroying the old palace and the walls of brick fortifications, and leaving only the small church where Cantacuzene lies under a slab with entwining plant-motifs, amid the graves of royal children under the old silver of the altar-lamps.

Now the Cotroceni Palace belongs to the living children in a land where the people is king. Since 1950 it has been the Palace of Pioneers. As we drive up through the wooded drive and halt in the courtyard, a group of Pioneers run out to welcome us, led by thirteen-year-old Mioara Seteanu. She addresses us proudly, without self-consciousness. (She is typical of the youngsters of the People's Democracies or the Soviet Union, and is hard to describe for those who have never seen any of these countries. Such a young girl sounds priggish or precocious, but is in fact not so in the least: she is as genuinely of her years as the most wayward or wilful of our own children, yet owns a sense of responsibility that is something new—not a premature sense of responsibility for the adult world, but a sense that applies simply and wholly to her own age-level. And so there is a balance, a serenity, an ease; she speaks straight out, without any element of exhibitionism, but with a right pride.) When she ends with the Pioneer salute, boys and girls rush forward with armfuls of flowers, to make us honorary

Pioneers with badges and red scarves; they adorn us, shake hands, and stand back. And so we go into the hall and marble stairways, all brightly cared-for, and pass through halls and corridors, fine chambers and galleries, where a few years ago stood the flunkies of royalty and where on ball-nights the very gallant ladies of Bucharest flirted.

At times the vaulted ceilings come low, with heavy curved arches; and heraldic beasts medallion the heavy lines of the stonework of the balconies—an infiltration of elegance into Turko-Byzantine.

The children are making toys, embroidered dresses for dolls, a large globe of the world. This is the Skilled Hands Circle. Others are adding scales to the huge fish that we later see carried in the procession, or constructing boats. Mioara is keen to get us aloft to see her own group making aeroplanes for an all-Rumanian models competition to be held soon on Bucharest airfield; and then she insists on our going into the phone room where one can ring up all parts of the house.

All sorts of classes are going on. There are biology and chemistry labs., rooms for dancing, painting, sculpture, history, and geography rooms with electrically-lit maps that are flagged daily with news items. In the music room a few children sing to us, conducted by a young girl with a powerful voice. Scores rush in to swell the chorus, and we are huddled among children of all ages, while Mioara tries to write the words on a blackboard. Then we are in the literary room, where writers come to read their books and discuss things. From it leads the fairy-story room, strewn with tiger skins and carved romantically so that it seems a dim-lit cottage remote and once-upon-a-time in wild woods. Here the children sit on little stools, near what looks like a log-fire, and the tale-teller takes a throne-chair at one end.

In another room some 60 children were seriously discussing new books with a couple of representatives from the Children's Publishing House.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Two tales of writers and children. One writer described a steppe bird singing on a bough; the children, discussing his book with him, rated him soundly, pointing out that that bird did not sing and did not perch. Another writer promised a poem to a youth magazine, but forgot. A delegation called on him with a rebuke and a demand for the poem. He apologised and promised to write the poem. "When?" asked the children. "Fix a date." "Now, at once," they sternly replied.



Outside is the important-looking entry to the railtrack where the children man the station and run the train. Further down among the great trees is a large swimming-pool, an even larger gymnasium, running-tracks, sports ground, and a fine theatre where we see a play in rehearsal. The scene that we witness deals with the news of liberation arriving in a village, and the children play their parts very well—parts that need much movement and excitement, without confusion. Then past the playing-fields we see the gardens where they try out Michurin methods on vegetables. There are beans that have been elongated from two inches to two feet, and tomatoes change in quality and shape (from round to oval). Then we lie on the grass while several boys tell us about their past lives and their future intentions. Two mean to be artists, two engineers, a fifth wants to be a skilled electrician like his father, others have decided to be teachers. One freckled lad, who is going to be an artist, tells us how his family fled during the war into the Timishoara region, how they were bombarded and bombed, how they tried to get into some shelters owned by rich people and were driven away. "I was so afraid I got under the bed," he says with a wry smile, plucking a blade of grass; and the others give the sympathetic smiles of those who know how foolish it is to think a bed will save you from bombs, but who also know how terrible life can be with no better protection against the ravaging madness of war. "They drove us away," says the boy, quietly, without any touch of self pity, without stress of any kind; he simply wants us to understand what life has been like.

The Palace serves the Pioneers of the Bucharest region. The districts take turns, a couple of days a week; and some 8,000 children between nine and fourteen are here weekly.

*Parks and Leisure.* Bucharest has long been a city of trees, but the green belts have been much extended since Liberation. In outlying areas the wastelands are being turned into green spaces, and from the Emilia Irsa hospital we saw one of the new parks of the city-quarters nearing completion. In the heart of the city the shady park, with its flower-avenues and its huge terracotta vases, has an embowered open-air restaurant with the kiosk built as a giant tree-stump over which the ivy crawls

and the birds sing. But the finest green-place of the city is the Stalin Park that stretches round the lovely Herăstrău Lake. Every summer evening, and all day on Sunday, the people come here in trolleys and buses to walk its asphalted alleys of flowers and shrubs ambushed by statues and cooled by lofty fountains, its shades of chestnut and acacia. At the landing-stage are rowing boats, and round the banks go the walks with big weeping willows. On the seats people chat or read books by Balzac, Marx, Sadoveanu, Tolstoy.

Here is a festival hall for concerts or conferences, exhibition-rooms, an open-air theatre for orchestra or opera: we saw a delightful and gorgeous production of a fairy-play by Alexandri, with the best Witch I have ever encountered. ("It has a great vogue on account of the passion for anything based in folklore," a young Rumanian says, who himself thinks it too naive.)

In the dusk the white globes light up softly: the Rumanians do not believe in harsh illuminations at night. Across the lake come the cries and laughter of children, mellowed by the distance of water: in the funfair are toboggans and wheels, merry-go-rounds, sideshows, puppet theatres, stalls of toys in pavilions like mushrooms. The lights stretch reflected in the lake. Lovers stroll enlaced. The fountains patter softly or blow webs of coolness on the face. Couples are dancing to an accordion on the stoneflags. Under an historian's statue an argument goes on between five men on a seat, and on the grass a woman-gardener is watering with a hose—in the day, the sun drinks up any moisture too fast. Past us walks a big man in a white linen suit with laughing group of lads and girls: it is President Groza out for an evening breath of air.<sup>1</sup>

Twice we visit Snagov Lake; on Sundays. Before the Liberation this beautiful lake was the preserve of a very select company; only the rich with cars could get at it, and the banks were their property, strewn with charming villas or boating clubs amid the willows and lairs of luxurious green. Only fine ladies lay in its costly sunlight. After the war, to make it accessible, youth-brigades built a railway direct from the capital, and a ticket costs only a couple of lei. The easy side for access was across

<sup>1</sup>In winter there is football at the Republic or Dynamo Stadiums. Horse-races are run in the Hippodrome; opera is given in the open at the Liberty Amphitheatre; there are 34 cinemas. The tradition of the *grădină*, the open-air restaurant, is old, but has been given renewed life by the Republic.



from the bathing beach, and so ferries, often two boats lashed together and driven by a big outboard motor, fetch the people across from the station.

They sing on the cable-punt that crosses an inlet to the bathing beach. The notices say "Don't bathe from here," but the better swimmers turn their backs. A lad tries to walk on the cable and falls off. Nearby a man is swimming in his hat, and nobody even points him out. Why not swim in a hat if you want to? They sing waiting, and sing strolling, and come lithe and brown out of the bathing-boxes to lie in the sun along the edge or swim out towards the punt anchored in mid-lake. A slender and graceful people. A little way out you feel the waterplants trailing against your legs. A girl feels her ankle caught and screams; but half a dozen lads have carried her to the concrete brink before the life-saver has had time to plunge over from his dinghy. Five minutes later she is swimming with breast-strokes for mid-lake.

The rowers drape the big waterplant leaves on their heads, where they hang like elf-caps.

But it is under the trees that you feel the full jollity of the resort. Our second Sunday there were many peasants from the neighbourhood, men with small-brimmed black hats and black coats—some with the little Chaplin-moustache which comics in Soviet films at times wear, and which seems old and overdone unless you have seen the authentic thing on the long upperlip of tough peasants, like the chap over there under the oak. He sits smiling to himself all the while, making comments to his handsome son and nodding to himself, surprised and pleased in a world where sums need no usurious additions to make them come out right. His small wife sits kerchiefed at his side, looking round carefully like a demure bright-eyed bird, as if not yet quite able to believe all she sees, yet beginning to believe there is no catch after all. The son is leisurely at home in the laughter, going now and then with a long yellow whip to talk to other dark-coated peasants: and the clear-faced daughter with her redbrown hair in a snood, dressed in shop-clothes, takes the scene in with discreet intent eyes. Two wonderful old women rejoin the group, with fine wrinkled faces, gay as babies yet righteous as recording-angels. At the next table are their friends. The men all keep their black hats on, the little

brims turned up; they are relaxed but dignified, while their womenfolk are volubly hearty, bringing up new loaves from some inexhaustible bundle and cutting them up with a generous gusto. Two wear their own weaving, one has a red kerchief and an embroidered blouse, but her skirt is from a shop; and the youngest has a pretty and well-cut dress of red with white spots. As they stand up, the half-and-half-one proudly inspects her nylons and makes sure that her blue garters are secure. One of the men drains his beer, leans back and bangs the glass down on the table with a deliberate gesture of pleasure, of contented finality, like a man hitting the nail of a good life squarely on its head. That's that, and life is what we have made it, what we wanted and want. The young man flashes his fine teeth.

At another table, in beech-shadow, a young married couple have brought everything along with them, bread and even a tin of sturgeon. They buy only a bottle of beer, but own the shade and the song as much as those who have ordered all the available dishes. A man opens his mouth and presses in a whole bunch of white grapes, tilting his head back and slowly savouring the juices. A violinist wanders musingly about. A small girl in a bathing suit waits till the old woman has drained the bottle of water, then runs with it for the fountain, zigzagging round the tables. Two amiable fellows, aware that they have drunk too much beer, walk up and down by the fence, with their arms on each other's shoulders, talking all the while. A sober friend joins them, and he too is embraced. The man in the middle swings ecstatically.

A shy girl with a fringe, unnecessarily aware of her pleasantly large mouth, sits down with two lads in singlets. One tries to fill her glass with beer, but she claps her hand over it; then a wasp distracts her, and the glass is filled. She has all the manifold gestures of a shy peasant-girl—especially one who is in the town but not yet quite of it. Her hand moves in fan-patterns over her face, around her nose, her mouth; she leans towards the table, slips, and comes down with crossed arms, almost falling off her chair; she puts her head on one side, laughs, covers her mouth and twists her feet inside her sandals. And all the while she is charming.

In the woods that begin on the other side of the restaurant,



among beech, oak, fir, the lads kick a football that bounces from the tall trunks. It is warm here, in still resinous air. Melons are piled in wagons, girls in twos and threes go by, arm in arm, and sometimes the lads catch up with them. Babes are suckled and the sun sinks at last.

Out on the lake we row to the left, to the island on which stands Snagov Monastery, past the villas where once the big bourgeoisie lounged, past the reed-fringes where cautious fishers balance on logs. The gentle-eyed priest takes us in to see the oldest painting at the side of the altar, behind the iconostasis: an angel which he dates 1400, correctly, I think. The fortress is gone—there was a prison too, says the priest—but the church is a pleasant example of elegant sub-byzantine brickwork. Snagov: the island was called Snow Island because of the snow-falls that used to pile against the windows, says the priest. The few people on the island still use his church, though it is also a national monument.

As we row back, the dusk is coming; a thickening of warm ash-hues, blurring the poplars and the piers in a dimness of rose-and-blue. With gratitude we meditate on the day. Here are people who hold fast to the good earthiness of the peasant, but shed all the darkening and distorting fears, the constricting ways of the closed village. The new disciplines of socialism are fusing with a great hunger for life, a clear flame that burns away crudities but holds fast to the central earth-sense.

*The City.* It lies in a light hollow in the plain, cut by the slight river Dambovitza that flows into a tributary of the Danube. Low hills run to west and southwest, and the place is as hot in summer as it is cold in winter. Two traditions seek to explain its name. A shepherd Bucur has his name preserved in a church of the city; Bucharest—*Bucureshti*—is the City of Joy (*bucurie*, joy, pleasure) and is linked with the victory won by Mircea of Wallachia (c. 1383–1419) over the Turks. But perhaps the origin goes back to a Daco-Roman fort Thyanus that commanded the passes into Transylvania.

The Turks burned it in 1595; but in the 17th century it was the seat of a Metropolitan, and in 1698 the hospodar of Wallachia chose it as his home. Till the early 19th century many wars raged round it and in it, and the corrupt Phanariot

rule set up by the Turks had here its centre. (The Phanariots were the rich Greeks of Constantinople who bought the government.)<sup>1</sup>

In the 17th century the woods ran thickly to its gates, and the muddy streets had timber laid across. In summer the bogs were a cloud of dust. The houses of mud and timber faced in on balconied inner courts, with a vaulted room below upheld by a central pillar. Earthquakes shook the town down, plagues emptied it, great fires blackened it into ashes. The taciturn greedy boyars, the great landowners, built houses in it. Brick overlaid with white or tinted plaster, and decorated with figures or foliage in terracotta, supplanted the wooden structures, though the one-storey cottages survived in the poor quarters. The stinking river was enclosed in embankments. As the bourgeois Rumanian state unsteadily developed, with foreign capital flowing into the exploration of the oil-resources, the new City of Pleasure expanded—with its violent contrasts of extreme poverty and luxury, its famous nightclubs and confectionery shops, its bitter roadways of ragged workers and bony horses: Lipscani Street with its litter of merchandise, lacemaking, banks, and, past the planes of Sf. Gheorghe Square, wretched starveling workers with no work, lost Hungarian servant-girls, dwarf houses sunk under advertising signs, gypsies with lupus-eaten noses . . . while in Copsa's or Zamfiresco's *confiserie* actresses, police-spies, rich ladies amiably nibbled honeycakes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The 18th century portraits show bearded boyars in turbans and tall fur hats with red plumes, fur robes over magnificent brocades. Late as 1818 an English traveller tells of a prince carried into the room by servants with arms under his shoulders: he was too grand to walk. One is said to have entered the city in a sledge drawn by stags with gilt antlers. (There were three levels of boyars.)

<sup>2</sup>Sir R. K. Porter (*Travels*, 1822) found no manufactures at all "excepting the shops of a few German coachmakers" (no respectable people would walk in the streets) and the making of rosaries from the paste of rose-leaves. There were "a multitude of gypsies as domestic slaves." Later in the century many industries had arrived: by 1940 the capital made furniture and machinery, glucose and cement and other things.

Of the famous driving in the *Chausée Kisseleff* there remains only a liking for speed among car-drivers. (The cab-drivers of the Russian Castrated Sect, *Skoptzi*, with their long black caftans and peaked hats, their black Orloff horses—*nerc anu* in Galatsi—are finally gone.) The *Chausée* was an effort to imitate Paris, but Bucharest remains itself, unlike any other city.



There is no need to elaborate that picture of cosmopolitan rotteness, in which fabulous corruption was carried to the point of a fine art, a bad joke. But it must be born in mind when we look out on the new capital, the heart of the People's Republic of Rumania. The great wind of happiness that sang through these streets on August 23rd has blown the evil thing away. Only the gaiety and the wit remain, purified of the carrion-smell that haunted the night-clubs, the palaces, the banks, of Bucharest before 1944.

The change can, perhaps, be aptly illustrated by the Athenae Palace Hotel, the old cosmopolitan centre, that looks out on what was the Palace Square and is now the Place of the Republic. Built in 1910 after the style of such Paris Hotels as the Ritz, it was streamlined near the end of the 1930's, shorn of its caryatids and turrets, but left pseudo-Louis XV with blue brocades within, or red and gold in the restaurant after the manner of the French Second Empire. The rows of yellow pillars continued (and still continue) to cut the darkish lobby into three; the rust-hued marble walls are still inlaid with gold-framed mirrors. But the people who sit in the chairs are very different.

A witness who saw the Nazis here in 1940—I thus describes the scene:

They enjoyed the flavour of respectable sin which surrounded the demi-mondaines. They marvelled at the dignity which a long life of corruption had given the Rumanian older statesmen. They were deliciously disquieted by the liquid-eyed daughters of princely houses who made them go to bed with them before they had a chance to check up on their Aryan grandmothers. . . .

"According to the Old Excellencies practically everybody at the Athenae Palace was on Moruzov's (the head of the secret police) payroll: waiters, valets, porters, chambermaids, the fatherly spectacled porter and the swarthy little barman . . . the woman in black with a white apron in the lavatory off the lobby, the apple-cheeked page-boys . . . and, of course, the demi-mondaines who sat professionally in the lobby. Most of them were working, too, for the Gestapo or the British Intelligence as a sideline. (R. G. Waldeck)

Here too came the Iron Guard, the murderous young aristocrats:

a group of olive-skinned young men with smooth black hair and dark luminous eyes, who reminded me of South Americans. They were the young Brancovans, Katargis, Chykas, Soutzos, and other descendants of phanariots and hospodars, the noblest of Rumania. . . . Most of them had never done an honest day's work.

Now, while the hotel remains as splendid, the guests and diners are not like those who gleamed, scandalmongered, committed adultery, and spied here from 1910 to 1944—delegates of all countries (who range from factory workers to poets and philosophers, from housewives to women scientists), intellectuals and stakhanovites of Rumania itself, young couples out for a specially fine dinner. One night there is a big dinner celebrating some Hungarian journal's anniversary, the next day one sees a large group of Chinese youth. In what was the smart Cina restaurant, where once a worker would not even dare to peer through the glass, one now sees a Pioneer lad come in and say he wants to use the lavatory, or a peasant woman sit down for a *sirup*. Outside the red flowers burn in the gardens, but the bronze of Carol I is gone. The *Bonjouristes*, who did not deign to speak their native tongue, are gone. The wing of the Palace that Carol II kept on trying to do something about is still unfinished, for it does not represent an urgent job. But the Palace itself, without Carol's footmen in white escarpins and white stockings, is a fine art-gallery. Bucharest belongs to the people, and they love and enjoy it.



## THE BLACK SEA CANAL

**B**UT though there is a gay note running through Rumanian life in general, this note now derives from the consciousness of good work well done, and so, to understand its harmonious basis, we must look at the large-scale industrial development and at the collective farms, both of which have gathered a rapid momentum since 1950.

The token and expression of the New Rumania lies today in the canal being cut between the Danube and the Black Sea. Here is an epical work, a concentrated and powerful attack on a desperately desolate land, the Dobruja.

This area, between the Danube's last big bend and the sea is rich steppe, of good alluvial soil, fine grey earth over limestone, but almost wholly lacking in springs and wells. The yellow-grey plainland, with some low rocky hills, is icy in winter and sweltering-dry in summer. It lies barren with grey grass or a rolling tangle of tumbleweed, with a few stunted arbust trees. The rainless steppe cracks and crumbles in the heat, lashed by winds from the east and the northeast over the sea. Reddish dustclouds drift over the summer earth, chasing lorries for miles, eddying and running in the wind. Workers are grey-faced, with grey clothes—dust choking their throats and nostrils, gritting their teeth, smarting in their eyes.

This big semi-desert space is variegated only by cliffs of clay, the buried ruins of towns, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, the grey sunken stones of Moslem cemeteries, scattered mounds with straggling grasses under which lie Scythian kings interred with their wives, slaves, horses, gilded arms.

Only hawks hover over the arid plateaux, while a few shabby villages sprawl on the flattened ground, crushed by the implacable sun—Rumanians, Turks, Tatars shaken with

fever, illiterate, lacking any kind of sanitation or medical aid, and toiling for a few big landlords. That was the situation in the immediate post-war period. The Dobruja was a land in its death-throes, where even the thistles died in the furious heat, where only the sea-lavender in the parts near the sea brought a faint soft colour of mauve-violet, and only the marmots were undeterred by the sun.

Then in 1949 something new began. Men, not the wind, were raising the dust-storms, attacking the devastated land with pick and shovel. The first photos show the soil being carried by hand. But the work on the Canal had started: that was the main thing. The little stations saw trains packed with workers from all over the country, while thousands more were tramping the cracked roads in the same direction. At first there was scarcely any accommodation, only heaps of materials spreading as the lorries and carts came and went. The workers ate where they could, slept on the bare ground. But the ditches deepened, the rumbling trains carried away more and more loads of clay, the trails of smoke and dust multiplied. Then came Soviet aid in the shape of great excavators, dredges, monitors, cranes, pneumatic drills; and the whole enterprise moved on to a new level.

The young writer Petre Dumitriu was striding one cold November day in 1949 along the construction-roads of the future town of Poarta Alba. Work had scarcely begun, but he felt the great stirring forces and saw in the crude and confused moment already the rich pattern of what was to be. An old song sang in his mind: *Danube, Danube, you highway with no dust*. And the theme of his book, *Dustless Highway*, took body. "I was talking with the mason Dumitru," he says, "a shock-worker, in the shelter of house-walls under construction. He told me his life, his plans. The lashing steppe-wind stippled our faces with sharp sand-grains. One of my novel's characters was born."

Dumitriu recognised the essential characteristic of such great socialist works. They not only raise the standard of living and provide the material basis of a new society; in the process of so doing they create new men, they educate and form the spirit. The development of people is the exciting core of socialist construction. Here came thronging peasants, fishers,



shepherds, who could not read a word, who had lived crippling lives of unrewarded toil; and suddenly new horizons of hope and happiness opened up before them. They discovered what it meant to be part of a great constructive plan, to play their particular role in terms of a large-scale scheme that continually expanded and revealed new possibilities. Quickly they became qualified men, eager for yet more knowledge, moving ardently into posts of responsibility. Zia Omar, Hussein Ali Enver—Turkish and Tatar peasants who could hope at the best a decade ago not to die of starvation: now their names run through the national press as men setting new standards of work. A lad was selling newspapers in the streets in 1949 and tramped here barefoot; he went to school in his work-section and by 1951 was in charge of a reading circle.

The canal covers some 70 kilometres. It starts at Cernavoda on the Danube and its course is already all dug or marked. Cernavoda is a small riverport for barges and towboats, where a very long railway-bridge crosses the river and the low-lying land. The canal-bed can be seen from the train, and, by the old landing-stage, the first pier of the new port, which is already in use. Excavators are cleaning out the reservoir-to-be; and further along stands the first lock, where concrete will soon be pouring. The small town is in visible throes of change, heaped with building materials, thick with factory-roofs and chimneys.

Next comes Medgidia, where the facing of the canal is being finished. A network of irrigation canals on either side of the main channel will feed the gardens and orchards that are to transform the sterile plain. Tens of thousands of saplings have been planted here as shelter-belts in the last three years. Medgidia, which the canal will divide into two halves (each larger than the old town), has doubled its population and no longer looks out on a fever-area. Trucks and tractors course along the roads; and the new town on a neighbouring hill is already accumulating its traditions. As its citizens were celebrating the anniversary of the construction-work, news arrived that the mechanic Oprea Stoian had had a daughter born to him; and everyone rushed along to see the first native of the town. Fifteen more births took place that year, but dark-eyed little Mariana remains the pet and pride of the citizens.

Now the canal swings north away from the railway, bordered by new gardens, rice-plantations, green windbreaks. Roads, often asphalted, crisscross the plain, and new settlements arise on every hand. A few miles from Poarta Alba the terrain changes, and we come on the rocky Canara Hills, where the engineers must cut through solid stone some 84 metres deep—and sometimes 200 metres wide. The course runs across Lake Sid Ghiol to the new town of Navodari and the sector of hydraulic operations. Three years ago the soil was removed in carts; now Soviet monitors wash out the canal bed at a rattling speed.

At last comes the new port of Midia, the terminal.

In the folksongs the Danube is a great irresistible force.

On banks where Danube's waters flow  
The young men by the oxen go.  
The oxen plod, ahead  
With lovely flowers outspread  
The comeliest young men go.  
The Sun cries in the skies,  
"Go quicker, flowers, from the day,  
The great Danube comes this way!"

And the flowers answer in despair:

If we wait for the great waters  
We shall be carried away,  
For we have no brothers and no sisters  
To lament us if we stay.

Now it is man who cries to the Danube that he is coming, and the waters obey; and the people are brothers and sisters united, not to lament the lost beauty of the earth, but to claim it.

At a glance in Constantza you realise the manifold nationalities of the Dobruja—as if the sea-air had blown peoples from all points of the compass to its crowded streets with little overhanging balconies, while below in the port the great buildings stand like power-sentinels marking the hold that foreign capital had on Rumania before 1944. Minaret-towers rise slenderly to the dazzled sky, and Ovid the Roman poet, exiled here in 8 A.D., and who knew the port as Tomi in his



days of exile, presides over the motley scene with a definitely puzzled but friendly frown. We drive to a restaurant opposite a synagogue: a white courtyard half covered with vines that trail between the arches with heavy capitals. The street is cut off by a wall surmounted with short pillars and a roman roof of red tiles.

While we tackle a breakfast that would serve as a Savoy Banquet in Britain, the engineer tells us of the problems and triumphs of the canal. For instance, before 1944 the whole area had been in a bad way with malaria. Three experimental anti-malarial stations were started in 1938 by a scientist who had attended a conference on malaria in the Soviet Union in 1935; but the resources were too small to have any effect on the situation. Then after the Liberation, progress was fast. By 1948 there were twelve stations, by 1951 forty, where sufferers from the disease are treated, prophylactic methods are devised and put into action, and steps taken to kill off the anophyles mosquito. In 1950 they covered some 130,000,000 square metres with nitroxane, drained swamps or sprayed them with petrol. By 1951 there was 87 per cent less prevalence of the disease than in 1949.

We drive out over the steppe to the coast, and see the old crouched villages of whited earth with crumbling thatched roofs and the new health resorts glistening along the coast. Beyond shimmer the blue waters of the Black Sea, while now and then marmots, unbothered by our big car (a bus set at our disposal) pop out cheekily to forage in the withered grass and the grey spiky sea-holly. Through the dust we come to Midia, to one end of the new port's mole, and walk out along the rails, stepping on the sleepers amid the rubble of broken rocks. At the end we see how the two arms of the mole are nearing and watch huge blocks of white Canara stone being unloaded from the flatcars. A youth brigade is in charge, and they are proud that their crane is a Rumanian product, made at Medgidia, a portal crane with a capacity of 15 tons, electrically operated, with a crew of three lads. "And a larger type will soon be made." The rocks splash into the blue waters, and the young workers hurry to get on with their jobs. We ride back down the mole on the cars.

Countries like Britain or France may well be suspicious of



Construction work on the Danube-Black Sea Canal.

Mining machinery is introduced into Rumania's coalmines.







Rumania is developing her own heavy industry.

"economic aid" in such forms as Marshall Plans; but the aid of one socialist country to another is a very different thing. Soviet aid, with its loans of big machines, has not meant the flattening of Rumanian machine-industry; on the contrary it has played a key-part in stimulating heavy industry and the production of ever-bigger machinery. Works such as "August 23rd" in the capital and "Progresul" of Braila have made great strides in the last three years. One sector of the canal has graders of Rumanian make that level 3,000 cubic metres of earth in eight hours, making a road of some three metres and doing the work of 200 men. Also there are Rumanian bulldozers now in action, scrapers, electric and air compressors, stone-loading hoppers, dredge-equipment, barges and lighters. A typical story is that of Ion Vlad, a mechanic who rose to direction of a small plant; he decided to build a gantry crane, called on his workers to tackle the job, and has already sent his first gantry cranes to operate on the canal.

We pass a lagoon where lean dark peasants are bathing sheep. Young girls pull the baa-ing lambs in and tumble over in the water, while a man wades out in full clothes and old women beat the clothes they are washing. We turn off the road and drive on the flat deadened earth till we strike another road. The maize stands brown and blasted. Low telegraph poles seem like rakes or crosses stuck in the harsh earth under the grey burning sky. Crystalline rock emits sparks of silver fire.

It is easy to imagine Ovid shivering here in winter:

Rain cannot pit it, sunlight fails in burning  
This snow. One drift succeeds another here.  
The northwind hardens it, makes it eternal;  
It spreads in drifts through all the bitter year.

The levelling wind's so blustering and bold  
It snaps high towers, it carries roofs away.  
With skins and trousers men resist the cold,  
Only their faces dare affront the day.

Their stiff-stringed hair gives out a chinkling sound,  
Their twinkling beards with hoarfrost whitely shine.  
Still shaped like jars, the wine stands on the ground:  
You do not drink, you break off bits of wine.

(*Tristia* III, 10)



But in a few moments we pass from the exposed wilderness. We come again on the two power-stations. When the first was built, less than a quarter of its generated power was needed, but soon it proved inadequate. Nearby a second plant was reared by youth brigades, a thermo-electric plant, Ovidiu-2, much larger than the first. In the icy storms of winter the workers struggled on at an incredible speed, the engineer says. Now the plant supplies construction-sites and many towns and villages, accelerating the whole pace of the canal and its attendant works.

We drive up to see the excavators at work in the hills. In the huge terraced bed there are dozens at work, loading the railway cars and tip-up trucks. Cranes lift the big blocks that will go down to the Midia mole. Power-driven drills bite into the rocks and twice a day dynamite is exploded. Before the sound dies away, the excavators are at work again. Here is the decisive sector of the canal, and the workers know it. The crane-drivers strive continuously to reduce the time of their operations, to bring the length of a shovelful down from 45 seconds to 35, 30, and finally down to 25. The time thus saved every day, every week, is very large.<sup>1</sup>

We look down on Navodari, the power-plants, the restless shimmering sea. "The railway trucks that have carried earth and rock away from here would stretch twice round the equator." Such statistics give some slight idea of the energy with which the exploit of the canal has been carried out; but one needs to stand in the very scene of devastation and creation to realise in all the fibres of one's being what great powers the brotherly labour of socialism calls out of men—how fast, how deep and broad, can be the process of transformation when once those powers are liberated.

We move on to another sector, to brood on that naked scene of man mastering nature. Then we drive to the near camp of quickly reared sheds and temporary houses. A woman takes us in to show her place, two excellently-furnished rooms with

<sup>1</sup> As the development of machine-production since 1949 has been crucial, it is important to grasp that already all sorts of machines and equipment for oil and coal-mines have been produced, big turbines, all sorts of electro-technical equipment, complex and extensive machines for mechanising all sectors of agriculture, and so on.

kitchen (though there is also the canteen to eat at). Outside a child has made a little garden, with stones and nails for wall, labelled "Pioneers' Park"; and close by is a pool built for the children. A score or more are splashing in it. A fully-dressed girl of about fourteen is chasing a boy and falls in, while the boy, whose drawers keep threatening to fall off, whoops in triumph. Three workers stretch asleep, careless that the scraggy shadow of a newly-planted tree has moved away from them.

We go over to the buildings of rough timber where the lads sleep, where the girls sleep. Some of the girls are resting, and in their wash-house are several lads washing out socks and shirts. We try the canteen and find its meal of soup, stew, fruit (pears, grapes) plentiful and rich. Decorations show the table of honour where stakhanovites sit. Then in a bar we drink some beer amid busy conversation and games. As we go we notice that a lad at the end has been drawing the one of us with a pipe—the obvious Englishman. The drawing is signed, and everyone claps and cheers.

The Canal has its own newspaper, *Canalul*, libraries with some 140,000 books, eight cinemas and many travelling film-shows, 28 schools, many clinics, sanatoria, gardens, creches, clubs, football grounds, little theatres—with 15 bands, one fanfare, 15 dance-groups, 14 choirs. The workers put on their own plays and exhibitions of folk-dancing, exchange ideas, write stories and poems.

Wherever one turns, one hears stories of lads and men who in a few years have risen from stupefied darkness of toil into the light of technical knowledge and cultural enjoyment. There is Alexandru Keleman, who started as a navvy (he could plough and mend shoes a little), and is now in charge of a S.E.-3 excavator. Here are three friends who admirably show the way in which the Canal has united persons of the most diverse backgrounds and national origins: Petre Puscasu from the Cluj Region and Gheorghe Uzum of the Dobruja, each aged nineteen and the son of a poor peasant, and Filip Pronoza of the Bucharest region, aged 22, whose father had a farm of 2½ acres and five children to feed, and who worked as a hired farm-hand. They began as navvies, now they are highly



qualified workers who devise new methods of work in tearing at the Canara rocks. Uzum has overfulfilled his quota by 400 per cent. They are staunch friends, live in the same frame-building by the road, and play in the same soccer team.

Over there is Marin Iliescu, superintendent at Medgidia, who had been helping to rebuild Galatsi and who came as one of the first canal workers in 1949. In the winter the swamps froze; and one night of howling northeasterly winds he was roused from bed to find several tractors sinking into the bog. Half-dressed he ran out to crawl over the cracking ice and tie cables to the tractors. For hours he stood waist-deep in the icy water, but the tractors were saved. He trained his section to a very high level of skill and didn't want to lose his lads; but at last he had to take a holiday in Sinaia and returned to find his skilled workers dispersed all over the canal. He growled and grinned and set to work building new cadres, who have been of great value all up and down the line.

A school for people, a school in which they discover unsuspected powers and aptitudes, and move into a full life. Some more words of Dumitriu's will help to quicken our sense of the vast transformations precipitated by the Canal works. In April 1950, on a cold grey day of eternal wind, he stood in a bare field bordered by low hills and watched the Soviet machines come blessedly in.

"A foreman caught my eye, a spare lad with clear features, astonishingly calm and taciturn," he says. "Patrichi Nicolae secretary of the Party organisation, he and his comrades were going to cut a new section of the canal. Soon the steel hoppers were biting into the virgin clay. You can still see my friend Patrichi there, almost in the same place, which however looks very different. The field is now a huge ditch, with sides cut into terraces, with the earth being carried off in rail-wagons. Heavy electric cables drag on the soil and feed with energy the great excavators made in the Urals. In this landscape of the moon, fringed with villages of sheds, Patrichi keeps on working as calm and set, but he speaks more fluently when it's a matter of discussing the technical problems of excavation. He is proud of his machine with no less than fifteen electric motors—a sort of works all on its own. He has read my novel where he can recognise himself as one of its heroes, and has made very

judicious comments which I'll make good use of in a later edition."

In *Dustless Highway* one of the workers gives his life in the struggle to construct the mole that we have seen at Midia. This part of the novel, Dumitriu says, "was born one night when I was out on the mole. The crane was dropping the great white blocks into the sea, and everything was white in the blinding glare of the arc lights—everything but the warm heavy night and the motionless sea was blurred away into the thick gloom. Then it was the workers told me of their battle on a night of storm, when the waves threatened to carry the crane and the car-platforms off. They ignored the storm and worked on. It was dangerous but they worked on, tied the crane to the rails with ropes; and it was the storm that gave in."

Already, the engineer tells us, more than 86.8 per cent of the excavation is mechanised (in 1951 it was only 70 per cent), more than 95 per cent of the transport of earth. In three years some 8,265 workers have learned trades on the spot: in 1951 there were 274 per cent more qualified workers than in 1950, and 130 per cent more work was carried on.

Already concrete is being poured into some of the locks. New springs of drinkable water (as well as important archaeological materials) have been found in the cutting. Reservoir basins with a capacity of several millions of cubic metres of water are being built, with scores of pump-stations and a vast length of small irrigation-canals already in action. The millenary night of Dobruja yields to the myriads of electric lights, and the reign of wind-agitated chaos is at an end.

The canal will shorten the entry into the Danube by some hundreds of miles, so that the distance from Cernavoda to the sea will be only a fifth of what it was. The existing acute problems of sand bars and silt near the river's mouth will be wiped out. Many new towns and ports will arise—Midia for example will be bigger than Constantza, no small port. The factories and machines built for electrical supplies and to meet the requirements of the canal's construction will provide the basis for the industrialisation of the Dobruja, while some 45,000 acres of forest-belts will change the climate. The swamps will be



dried and some 250,000 acres of alluvial land will be well irrigated.

The workers see their work as a noble deed in the cause of peace. Thus Gheorghe Popishteanu, head of a Navodari mason-team, tells us, "Since I was elected to our section's peace committee I work more and with a better result. In five days my team has built the walls of two flat-buildings and two big chimneys. That's how I understand the struggle for peace."

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*Ovid at Constantza*

He stands through years of bronze in the city-square,  
Intently abstracted above the thronging place:  
A Mosque on his right and public buildings all round,  
The Canal Offices straight in his puzzled face.

So little is changed in the endless changing patterns  
Of spiralling windblown earth, the battered crust  
Of clay, the crackling drums of tautened heat,  
The sparse arbusts in the vast spaces of dust.

I saw the tanned lean peasants by the waters:  
Wet-shifted girls lugged in the lambs and sang,  
The mothers beat the linen with bats of wood.  
Still on the stones the sun's fierce hammers rang,

On thistles stricken dead in harshly opening  
Their desperate blossoms to the blast of day,  
The blue sea sliding under drifts of steam,  
The brown and sagging maize, the grass of grey:

A land of embittered exile, fanged with ice  
Or burst with grinding heat. Nothing to pity  
Or feed a Roman heart that dreamed of Man  
Making the earth his garden, his garden a city.

And yet look harder, Poet, at the dusts  
Now billowing wide beneath Dobruja skies.  
Here is no whim of wind with whips of fury  
Mocking at Man and blinding his pale eyes.

Man is the wind that raises this new tempest,  
Furrows the sand with green and bravely grapples  
With old malignancies, dries up the pools  
Of pestilence, and conjures dust to apples.

Man is the force that rides these elements,  
With songs to guide and plans to give release;  
He bridles the crazed devils of the whirlwinds  
And gains at last the prosperous earth of peace.

No wonder then the Roman Poet's puzzled.  
Two thousand years he's stood compelled to scan  
An earth that banished every worthiest hope  
(Man mating Nature, Nature blessing Man)

And now the hope comes home, in sudden ways.  
This freedom in his innermost being sings:  
No longer broken by mad contradictions,  
Man works secure at the very heart of things.

He ponders on his pedestal over the people.  
At any moment he'll drop his bronzen mask,  
Step down, cross to the Offices, and beg  
Modestly there for some construction-task.  
A job at Ovidiu Powerhouse he'll ask.



## THE CARPATHIANS

A FEW months ago the deep green of the maize alternated with the blaze of gilded oats; but the harvesting is over—though much of the maize is yet to be cut for cattle-fodder. Ducks float on reedy pools, and the blistering roads are lined with shady trees. Herds of cows browse in fat grass, and grasshoppers leap at the noise of a starting tractor. Lorries race on past the plodding open-cart, *carute*, with the peasant leant over the rump of his small horse. Occasionally a buffalo plods on, with half-closed eyes lifting his head till his horns lie flat along his neck, or—another anachronism—a dark-haired gypsy with slouch hat squats stubbornly and absently on the roots of a tree.

The interminable plain ends at last in the foothills of the Carpathians. Ploeshti, a dull dusty town that still bears the flattening marks of the days when it was the centre from which foreign capital tore the wealth out of Rumania. Still, the oil-derricks that look like skeletons of lighthouses dotted over the slopes are partly enclosed with greenery, and the scene begins to look less desolate.

Campina. We begin to climb. The slopes rise and grow craggy, open out into deep wooded valleys, sink and swell again. Sinaia on its base of grey rocks with the big building of the Confederation of Labour standing at 1,400 metres above sea-level, with ragged mountain crests to the north and a granite massif cut on the limpid sky. Busteni: here too you can get out and climb the wooded slopes to chalets with good supplies of food and drink—and if you like, go on mountain walks, to a lovely valley of grottos and cascades. Next comes Predeal in a great open valley-space, leading down into Transylvania, the ancient boundary with Hungary in imperial days.

People swarm into these mountains by excursion trains at the weekends or on holidays. The Confederation of Labour arranges cheap tickets and accommodation; and on the hot and crowded days you see young people littering the roofs of the carriages to catch the breeze and see the view. The Rumanians are keen hikers, and groups or couples stride in shorts along the mountain-tracks at weekends.<sup>1</sup>

We put up at Predeal, in a recently-built guesthouse where stakhanovites get free holidays. There is a magnificent panoramic view of valleys and mountains, and, on the left, the fine villas of the pre-war bourgeoisie that are now controlled by the organisations of workers or intellectuals. Not that large new buildings, like the place where we are staying, are absent; but the main impression is of the transfer of leisure from a small and parasitic minority to the masses of the people. And if anyone thinks that the working-class, when it enters on the heritage of culture and play, proceeds to disfigure or maltreat the fine places it takes over or constructs, let them look in at Predeal or Sinaia, or at the seaside resorts which were the sole property of the big bourgeoisie before 1944, and they will be more than surprised.

The workers at the guesthouse welcome us down to our first meal with a demonstration in the hall, and are keen to tell us of the new forms of work, the improvements in technique or in gadgets that have won them their free holidays. They come from all over the country. Two engineers are from Arad near the Hungarian frontier, a railway worker is from Ploeshti, girls have come from the textile mills of Timishoara, and there are brigade-leaders from the Canal. The textile-workers manage new Soviet looms which rapidly expand production; but the rationalising methods, they are careful to explain,

<sup>1</sup> There are hot and cold springs, sanatoria, pioneer camps, etc. in the belt of gentle valleys and the slopes. The Carpathians provide an inexhaustible field for holidays, with spas or high lakes such as Tushnad (in the crater of an extinct volcano). Then there is the sea coast with splendid villas now at the service of the workers' organisations. Not to mention trips down the Danube from Braila to the delta. (Pierre Gamarra, also on a visit, told us how his French group flew to Galatsi and voyaged down to fish in the delta with great bearded Lippovans, passing a Turkish village. Caviare, taken straight from sturgeon they caught, was much appreciated.) All workers of factory or office, technicians, etc. have the right to paid holidays of 12-30 days a year. There are 150 camps for school-children and pioneers; 120 places for yet younger children.



have nothing in common with what is known as speed-up in capitalist lands. The increase in wages and productivity is not gained at the cost of physical and nervous exhaustion; it comes from intelligent simplifications and modifications (in machine devices or methods of handling) which ease the strain of work. But such a development, necessitating the close co-operation of technical experts and the people on the job, is only possible in a socialist world where the worker has no fear of losing his job and knows that every advance in productivity directly raises his own standard of living, his *class's* standard, his people's.

Gheorghe Stanescu, chairman of the Railway Union at Ploeshti, tells of his three inventions and eight rationalisations of work. His wife used not to be interested in reading, but he started her off and she became a people's assessor (one of the ordinary citizens who sit on the bench with the magistrates). Absorbed more and more in her work, she has now gone to a three-year school at Bucharest, to study and become a full-time magistrate herself. Stanescu laughs ruefully to think how his zeal has ended in making himself a grass-widower for three years; but he wouldn't have it otherwise.

There are dances in the big dining-room after dinner, and soon everyone is dancing the *hora*, in a circle, with hands on one another's shoulders and with the shuffling side-steps that can become very complicated. One evening there are songs in the long reading-room. One girl has a fine strong village-voice, cool as springwater, with the slight note of harshness that gives a character like a sword-edge to the tone. A. L. Lloyd, one of our party, an expert on folk-songs, sings a West Indian calypso, which they call to hear in translation. And the evening ends with the game in which the girls sit round in chairs and the men behind them have to catch their girls if the man with the empty chair winks at them. A slight mouse-quiet girl who always wears peasant costume sends a message to Lloyd through a lad from her own factory that she'd like to sing to him; and the evening before he leaves, she sings to him for hours, while he jots down the melodies and her friend notes the words.

On Sunday the tracks are filled with groups or couples wandering up into the secluded nooks of the mountains. The

sunflowers have withered by the footpaths, but there are many wildflowers in the little nooks or coves of sunlight. People in bathing-clothes cluster round springs with bottles, and there is even a peasant family come up with a few sheep and a cow. A man is carving a wand of wood with fine designs for his girl, who lies sunbathing by a pine.

The township is full of life, with park of flowers. Peasants or gypsies sell wild raspberries in leaf-cones—the Carpathian raspberries for which the bears are said to be ready to risk their lives—walnuts, and brown hats made out of mushroom skins. In the open-air restaurant a lad plays the accordion to a table-full of railway-workers, and sings folk-ballads while the sun filters through acacia-leaves. The rushing waiters argue about our table, each considers it's in the territory of the other; but we do not really want a *siróp*, we want only to watch the people, the tanned girls, the officer smiling into his beer, the small boy doing gymnastics on the wine-stand.

We go looking for the writer Zaharia Stancu in Sinaia, but no one seems to know the road we want. We get contradictory counsels, and even a militia-man blushes and says he's a new-comer. At last, on the winding hillside, we ask a passer-by and find that he is Vasilescu, who works with Stancu in the National Theatre. He takes us along—and anyway we are only a few paces from the villa "Maxim Gorky", one of the Houses of Creation that belong to the Writers' Union. Stancu has part of the villa, and is working at a large wooden table in the balcony. We sit there and talk. He is finishing off the second part of his novel *Barefoot*, which he likes better than the first; in it the hero, Darie, after his long and painful wandering through village-life, reaches Bucharest and the clear space of struggle. Nasha Stancu, as kindly as she is charming, as lovely as she is kindly, joins us, and we are served with a luscious sweet immersed in a spoon in water, and coffee. Stancu, tall and darkly handsome, bubbles inwardly with laughter; he has so much work in hand, he has so many plans, he feels so happy. He shows us some of his manuscript in its tiny neat hand and remarks that a whole novel could be written on a piece of paper the size of the table-top; then he tells us about the Literary Fund, the many facilities it provides for the writer.



The writer gets medical service free for himself and his family, textiles and other goods at special terms, technical services free (e.g. as many carbon copies of any work as he needs to have circularised for discussion among his fellow-writers), a free work-place, such as this villa in the mountains or at the seaside, free travelling and all facilities for any work he wants to carry out or inquiries he wants to make, loans of money, all documentary materials he needs, and so on. A small percentage of his royalties goes to the Literary Fund, as well as a small percentage from reprints of the classics or performances of classic plays. Young writers are given special attention and aid, and the literary school run by the Union is now having its courses extended from six months to two years.

Vasilescu, who is working on the translation of Shakespeare (for which there is a separate Commission in the Writers' Union), keenly discusses in detail the differences between the Rumanian and English metrical systems, and the extent to which truth of poetic rendering involves literal fidelity. We stroll on the green hill-streets, and are joined by the young writer, M. Zinca, who has another part of the same villa with Stancu. Fair, freckled, and vigorous, he tells how he began in a barber's shop, drifted through all sorts of jobs, and has recently taken a course at the writers' school. He has just published a long story on the spy-system of the Americans in Rumania, and is working on a novel in which he wants to bring out thoroughly the entangled struggle in his society as the movement into socialism develops. He speaks firmly, merrily.

At the canteen-restaurant where writers, artists and musicians all foregather, we sit at a table with several more young writers—a Hungarian poet and his wife from Cluj who know a little English and recite Humpty Dumpty, Alexandru Sen, Dumitru Mircea, whose *White Bread* deals with the formation of a collective farm.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mircea's novel was so searching in its picture of mistakes and backward elements that some of the critics were afraid of it and declared that such frankness was not needed. The writers replied strongly on his behalf and won the day. Perventsev, the Soviet novelist, comments, "The critics tried to make the writer take the path of least resistance, and instead of praising him for his bold and honest presentation of life with all its contradictions, advised him to start touching up reality."

We walk back to Stancu's place with the young writers, joined by young Horia Stancu and his shy dark handsome wife—Horia is a doctor but he is now finishing off a novel; his wife has just completed her studies for the law. Mircea, quick and vigorous in personality, sings a folk-song of the area from which he comes, a song against the police—a song that needs a grinding of teeth and a knife driven into the table to express its anger. Then he sings the *doina* of an emigrant who has returned disappointed from the States. A. L. Lloyd redeems the honour of England as (once) a land of native song by a fierce murder-narrative from the Greenland fisheries and then by the Cutty Wren, while Mrs. Stancu brings two melons from the bath where they have been kept cool.

Sinaia is one of the places where one cannot but see the new Rumania against a background of the deplorable past. The origin of the township is the monastery with its name suggesting a fiery place of judgment; but its later use as a royal residence and a gambling-hell have relegated the monks to the shadowy past. Here was a site that the bored and chattering bourgeoisie made all their own.

The monastery was founded by one of the Phanariot Cantacuzenes after a visit to the Holy Land in the late 17th century. The old church still stands, though with reconstructed tower and upper walls, and round it still stands the infacing monastery of which the lower part is ancient. A faded painting, probably from the early days, still fills a part of the wall; and inside the church are stone pillars with oriental motives—Buddhas and lotuses—as well as Moses and David with turban, and two very athletic angels. Other pillars with animal capitals, a monk thought had been brought from Palestine. The cramped interior is dark and heavy with the smell of incense.

The later church has pseudo-Byzantine paintings—by a Dane, the monk said—and one of the few pictures worked in gold thread for the procession of Easter, that are found in the country. We asked if the spiral-labyrinthine pattern on the floor was based in any Rumanian tradition (labyrinths occur in French and English cathedrals), but the monk smiled and said the building was cosmopolitan. The spacious compound of the monastery in its final form, with cars parked under the tower



by the entry, made our young Rumanian companion ejaculate, "Well, this is a comfortable monastery if ever there was one!"

The mild-mannered monk had claimed that the monastery played a considerable cultural role in the area of Sinaia through the centuries; but no one could claim that the castle of Pelesh, reared on the slopes by Carol I, the first Hohenzollern king of Rumania, had any cultural significance of any kind or that it stands for anything except the stifling vulgarity of modern kingship. Carol it was who made Sinaia a fashionable summer-resort; and till the castle was ready, he lived with his wife in the monastery. (Monasteries and nunneries were much used as boarding-houses and summer resorts). The castle in its finished state shows a sort of German Gothic in its worst forms mixed up with debased sub-Byzantine and Renaissance oddments, with a couple of smaller castles in the park, where the king's El Grecos used to be hung. Carol II further vulgarised the place with the aid of the most feebly florid German artists and architects—400 of them imitating everything except Rumanian folk-art! The guide is suitably witty.

A painting by Aman shows Sinaia in its 19th century heyday, with the Casino white in the background and overdressed bourgeois families in the foreground wondering what to do next. The main building here, however, as in the modern quarters of Bucharest, came after the 1914-18 war, when the Rumanian bourgeoisie gained Transylvania and recklessly exploited its new chances.

The city of Stalin has had several names. Kronstadt, Brashov, and now Stalin. In 1211 Andrew II of Hungary gave a charter to the Teutonic Knights to settle in S.E. Transylvania—in the Burgenland, as the area round Kronstadt was called. The Knights were to bar the way to the Turks and Tatars; but their Grand Master Hermann tried to break away into independence, turning to the Pope, and so Andrew drove the Knights out in 1225. They went north and set up their Baltic State that became the germ of Prussia.

In 1224 Andrew gave other German immigrants a charter, with the title of guests, *hospites*, which gained the special significance of their freedoms and privileges. But gradually the name *Saxons* was applied to the German groups, who

possessed self-government under an elected count. They elected also their judges and clergy, and could alone own land in their area. Their merchants were free from tolls in all parts of the kingdom. Thus was created the privileged position of the Saxons who held together in corporate unity until 1868. Kronstadt and Hermannstadt (Sibiu) were their two important towns.

The so-called Saxons thus controlled the passes into Transylvania—passes of the utmost strategic and economic value in medieval East Europe. Kronstadt straddled the roads leading down into Bucharest, and to Sibiu, the more western entry to the plains, while Bistritsa commanded the passes into Moldavia.<sup>1</sup>

In the 16th century the Saxons were converted to Lutheranism; and though in the 18th century efforts were made to force them back to the Catholic Church, they refused to give in. Despite many vicissitudes they maintained their economically privileged position right up to 1944.

Both Sibiu and Brashov-Stalin are manifestly German towns, as German as Graz; and the Saxon villages in the plain have neat handsome German houses washed with light yellow and built endways to the road, with doors that open on to the side of the verandah. Often the name of the German farmer who built or rebuilt the house is given in large letters over the windows. When one stands in the big central square of Stalin City, and looks at the Rathaus in its middle, one is not surprised at the legend that the Pied Piper, after leading Hamelin's children underground, emerged into the light in this area. In the art-gallery hang the portraits of the portly German dignitaries who ruled the town for so many generations; and the Black Church (so-called from the smoke-marks left by a great fire) is manifestly a large Western church. Outside it stands the statue of Johannes Honterus, humanist, mathematician, poet, philosopher and printer, who brought Lutheranism and a press to the town in 1633.

<sup>1</sup> Early in the 11th century Stephen of Hungary reduced Transylvania and for two centuries it was common to nominate a prince of the ruling family as duke or governor. The last seems to have been in 1260: after which the military and administrative office of voivode grew up. In the 11-12th centuries the Hungarians strengthened their hold, built forts, and introduced monastic orders (e.g. Cistercians). The policy was to draw in immigrants from the west, to hold the nomads erupting from N. Moldavia and the steppes. (The "Saxons" were mainly from the Moselle area, Franconians.)



The Historical Museum succeeds in bringing the town's past clearly alive. It is housed in the most complete surviving section of the old walls, called the Bastion, where you see the corner-towers and the four wooden galleries of defence—the lower part very early, the two upper tiers of the 16th century. And the fine model of the place in the 17th century shows its thriving merchant-character and the effective way it lies across the valley with hills on either side. The many towers were manned each by a guild. The director tells proudly how he has located the thirteen Rumanian villages that belonged to the town. He is anxious to get out his history of Kronstadt-Brashov-Stalin before he dies, he says; he is an old man, and his first version of the region's story was about to appear before the war; now he has worked hard to fill it out further and enlarge its focus.

Following out the remains of the wall, we look into a garden where crowds of very young children are finishing a meal. Invited in, we find it is an orphanage, and are taken over it, impressed by its cleanliness and care, and above all by the remarkable spirit of happiness among the children, who are so friendly that they rush to shake hands and keep merrily about us, waving farewell hands from the windows as they romp to bed. And some way beyond the walls we come to an old Orthodox church, where the caretaker receives us with grave kindness and even takes us into the iconostasis to see the embroidered robes sent from Kiev. In the side-chapel there are old frescoes, but we cannot examine them as a service is going on in the informal intimate way of the Orthodox, with the priest reading and the people standing, sitting or leaning about, and every now and then bursting into song. (The position of the church, well outside the walls, shows that the German settlers had no liking for the native religion and its worshippers.)

All over Rumania there has been a vast extension of Middle Schools, technical and professional; and the same principle appears in the development of the apprenticeship system. After driving through a fine new quarter of workers' flats, we come to the City of the Apprentices on Stalin's outskirts. When it was begun in 1948, it looked as if it would need four or five years for its completion; but it was ready for pupils of the 1949-50



Contract ploughing in Arad Region. Machine and tractor station director discusses work with a woman collective farmer.





Winter sports at Predeal.



Pioneers on holiday help gather collective farm harvest.

Workers' Club at Sinaia.



Students of the Agricultural College at Târgu Muresh.







"When will you take me to Paris?"

A popular Rumanian cartoon.

year. Here come boys of 14 to 18 from all parts of the country, sons of workers and peasants. They get free tuition, board and lodging; and the tuition includes a general and scientific education as well as a technical one.

We arrive after the classes have ended, and find the boys at football and other games. Our only criticism of the excellent airy buildings is the number of beds in each dormitory; the need to get in as many pupils as possible still leads to some overcrowding. But everything else is on a very spacious scale—the enormous canteen which was both heated and lighted from its high ceiling; the kitchen fed by natural gas piped directly from its source in the earth; the gymnasium; the very pleasant grounds; the broad workrooms with their benches and equipment—one a filing room, another with an array of motors. A forge is being got ready for the next school-year. In a classroom an exhibition of tools made by the various classes is set out: mechanical keys, hammers, compasses, sawblades . . . all first-rate work. The place has its own cinema, and a few yards behind the living quarters rise the wooded slopes of the mountains. In the harvest season the boys do some work on their own farm; and on Sundays they stroll out in their school-uniform.

Next year there will be many girls as well.

Close by the City of the Apprentices is the big engineering works, Red Banner. Stalin generally has made big strides in heavy industry. Its tractors play an important part in the mechanisation of agriculture on the collective farms; its turbines are bringing electricity to many new parts of the land.<sup>1</sup> Railway-workers were the first to suggest the changing of the name from Brashov to Stalin, and the other workers took the idea up enthusiastically. Now the population is some 70 per cent Rumanian, with Germans and a few Hungarians making up the other 30 per cent.

<sup>1</sup> On August 10th a solemn festival was held at the thermo-power station of Doiceshti set up in less than two years after the adoption of the national electrification plan. It uses lignite deposits at the mine's mouth, and, with Soviet principles of energetics and Czech equipment, already saves some 300,000 tons a year. It is a school for cadres, having already qualified 1,300 electrical mechanics; and its power opens up new possibilities for industry in the regions of Stalin, Ploeshti, Bucharest. It will enable the oil industry to be fully electrified and the electrification of the Campina-Stalin line, etc.



Members of the People's Council chat with us about the developments in the health services, the extension of cultural facilities (the theatre, the philharmonic, the culture centres), education. The new Constitution has been widely discussed, the points most argued over being the formulations of women's position and the new Hungarian Autonomous Region. Requests for clarification have been sent in.

The streets are crowded as the shops reopen for the evening. (They close during the sultry afternoon.) Before the war the ladies holidaying at Sinaia used to come here to shop, saying the shops were better than in the capital. The flash Newmann's is gone, but goods of all sorts are plentiful in the windows; and we can see that things are fairly cheap on the whole. For people are buying them and (in the case of clothes) wearing them. Here too, the women are charmingly dressed.

The crowd has the main streets all to itself at these hours, for cars are still scarce; and this fact of the people possessing the roadway as well as the pavements gives a festival effect, to which the echoes of songs contribute. In a pub we pay at the desk and get tickets for the counter—a method that seems unconvivial but is omnipresent here wherever you buy anything, except at kiosks. Also unconvivial is the notice "No Singing" (which we found also in the beer-house by the Canal); but when we complain of this and say that similar notices did much to kill off popular song in Britain, the Rumanians grin and say that nothing whatever can kill off their songs. And they add that there are better places for singing. *Tsuica*, the national plum-brandy which is not so strong as it seems and which, like all the liquors, is good and pure, is being drunk out of the little tapering bottles; and there are shelves round the wall to lean on as well as several circular stands on the floor, with a double tier of shelves—you lean on one and put your glass on the other.

In the Council offices, where we find a girl to take us over the art gallery (for we have come at hours when it is shut), the two clerks are cutting out letters for the signs of Liberation Day; in a chemist's shop at Predeal the accountant was similarly making decorations between customers. Two examples of the devoted and voluntary way people prepare for their great festivals.

We drive out into the Transylvanian plain which is so much

cooler than the plain of South Rumania, along roads which show the mixture of the old and new—small individual farmers whose horses are still scraggy, with ribs showing, the men sometimes wearing the *cojoc* (the sheepskin coat that goes back to Dacian days) despite the summer, and the lorries and tractors of the new life. And so we come to the Saxon village of Hărman, with its collective farm Tudor Vladimirescu, where the harvest is being ended. Aged men in cotton trousers and straw hats, with faces that look as if stained with walnut juice, drive the lumbering waggons and carts with young girls bright in bathing-suits at their side. Again the old and the new. An old woman wanders by with distaff tucked under her arm, busily spinning—the lines of her tanned face as precisely defined as if she had stepped out of a Dürer woodcut.

The small brisk chairman with ruddy face hurries out to welcome us into the farm-offices, and puts the flowers on his table down on the floor so that he can see us all. The farm, he tells us, was the first collective in the Brashov area, founded in 1950. Into it came 44 families with 320 acres of land. There was no repair shop and things weren't easy at first. The kulaks fought hard to wreck the venture with threats and a whispering campaign meant to frighten the poor and middle peasants. But the 44 families stuck it out, and prospered; where individual farming had obtained some 800 to 1,200 kilos from a hectare, the collective gained 2,500. Other families were thus drawn in: there were 65 in 1951. And the farm was better organised. So now they have 208 families: four brigades, each divided into six groups.

Over 1,500 acres arable, near 150 pasture. An agro-technical study-group with 40 members. Crops now rotated (wheat this year, maize last year), with tractors, harvesters and other machines from the machine-centre of the area. The chairman rattles off figures, the total gains and various examples of the amounts earned by single farmers or family groups,<sup>1</sup> details

<sup>1</sup> Thus, Nicolae Filofia, single: 320 workdays, 1,600 kilos of wheat, 900 of barley, 3,200 of potatoes, 4,500 of hay, with 1,100 lei and lots of vegetables, etc. Silvestru Munteanu, with his family: 500 workdays, 3,000 kilos of wheat, 5,000 of potatoes, 1,800 of barley, with lots of hay, vegetables, etc., and 2,250 lei. The farmer can consume his grains or sell to co-ops or on the free market; he also has his own allotment.

A large number of the Harman farmers are members of Groza's mass organisation, the Ploughmen's Front.



about the forge, the vet and other experts. But what is most interesting is his statement of the national groups that make up the 208 families: there are 130 Rumanian families, 83 German 3 Hungarian—with 8 families who work out in factories or the railway. The three nationalities live and work here in amity—in the area where the Germans (Saxons) were for so many centuries the highly privileged section of the community.

We visit the well-whited stables, the cultural centre with its various rooms and its radio-network from which broadcasts can be made, the nursery, a co-op bar. In a pleasant building with garden we watch a co-operative of women at work making very pretty sandals of canvas, wood, plaited straw. They are mostly war-widows, and from their looks seem predominantly German: those to whom we speak are certainly German. Some are working out in the open, as the day is so fine.

This village again shows a strongly German basis. The church is large, one of the walled and fortified churches of Saxon Transylvania. Inside, the walls have two-storeyed storerooms with a wooden gallery round: each of the parishioners owned a storeroom and kept his valuables, his crops here, so that any sudden inroads of an enemy (a foreign army or maybe a local jacquerie of the poor peasants) would not catch him unprepared and ruin him. Inside, the church seems 15th century, with benches made of solid logs split in half—the flat part uppermost—with no backs, so that the embroidered dresses would not rub or tear.

We visit a house where a Rumanian shock-worker and his wife have the largest room (with chests, religious and secular paintings-on-glass, embroideries, hangings, fine ceramics and a bed piled with blankets), while the former owner, a German, has the less attractive half of the house. It is hard to believe that such arrangements have not left animosities among the once-lordly and well-to-do Saxons; but we saw no signs of it. The German woman was wreathed in manifold smiles, and seemed to accept the division of the house as the natural thing. But whatever strains and stresses continue, it is clear that the prospering life of the collective is steadily breaking them down—and that nothing else could have done so in a rural area like this of Harman.

The kulaks, as everywhere in Rumania, used two main

propagandist themes against the collectives. On the one hand they tried to fan afresh the ancient racial antagonisms and to convince the poorer German peasants that they were too good to associate with the Rumanians, who would refuse to work hard and who would thus parasitise on the thrifty Germans. And they tried to work up war-scares, saying that soon the Americans would be invading the country and the peasants who formed collectives would come in for a bad time—also why take the trouble, when the Americans would soon break all collectives and co-operatives up once more?

That they have substantially failed there can be no doubt. The success of the farm and the way in which it has sharply raised the income and living-standards of the poor and middle peasants has proved a stronger argument than the appeals to prejudice and fear. The kulaks have fallen back on further whispering campaigns to deter those of the middle peasantry who have kept aloof, and on sabotage of production by incomplete or inefficient use of their own fields. Such methods cannot but recoil on their own heads in the long run; but we feel the urgency of the problem when, as we say goodbye near the half-completed new stables, looking out over the harvested fields, the chairman cries to us passionately, "We thank you for your visit and for the conviction it has given us that the British people too want peace. It will fire us with renewed strength and hope in our struggle with the kulaks!"

One last story before we leave the Carpathians. We have gone up to one of the lesser hilltops of Predeal, and a furious rainstorm bursts over the cabin. Among other things, we talk of President Groza, his splendid integrity of character and his many striking acts. For instance, he, a rich proprietor in both land and factories, found that one of his works had been omitted from nationalisation, though it came within the terms of the law. He promptly rang up the appropriate department and demanded that the law be put into operation, asking shrewdly how far the authorities had been diddled over other properties of the same size.

The storm subsides, and we go out. The others are talking with two fine-looking men. We shake hands, but as usual J.L. does not catch the name.



"Who are these?" he whispers, as we turn back.

"Why, it's President Groza, of course, and his brother."

For well over an hour the President keeps us in smiles and laughter with his stories—his visit as a young man to London when he ran into a series of mishaps through trusting Baedeker too literally; his passion for sport, especially tennis; and then, in an amusing satire on his own conversational powers, his exploits in talking others out. His eyes twinkle all the while with a tremendous gusto, an enjoyment of life in all its shapes and forms, a keen sense of people, a kind of rich peasant-wisdom lifted on to a high level of political responsibility. "Why work with the Communists? . . . Because they seek always to achieve on earth the Christian ideal of society, and because they alone have found out how to realise socialism scientifically—the good life. . . ."

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*To Zaharia Stancu*

(i)

The rain came hissing from the heights,  
clumped on our roofs, and looped with rushing mist  
the enormous scene. And waved its changing lights  
from crag to crag: till earth was lost.

And then the storm went hoarsely by,  
with rags of rain, in straggling smoky lines:  
a rainbow gathered in the battered sky,  
balanced upon the nearest pines.

The foundered sun broke through at last  
and spread a silk of greening light below,  
between us and the pines; and stained the west  
with a goldmilky glow.

We saw the Rumanian earth  
claspt in the flash of pure transfiguration—  
the storm of man, the earth of the free nation,  
in pangs and raptures of rebirth.

(ii)

Here, Zaharia, by the track  
the sunflowers shrivel and turn black;  
with cudgels of thick heat, the Sun  
stands in unshadowed ways, to stun. . . .

But every lair of pinewood covers  
chattering families, silent lovers,  
and peasants bringing sheep or cows  
to share the holiday and browse.

In dark tresses sunlight curls,  
gay the dresses of the girls,  
here from the highest nook of song  
to Bucureshti's busy throng:

the notes entwine, disperse, entwine  
in fuller clarity of design,  
hammer with furnace-force and thud  
with turbine-energies in the blood,  
to where great excavators free  
the waters for the open sea.

By oil-derrick and mountain-wood  
give thanks to life that life is good.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

**E**VEN the brief survey so far made has shown how impossible it is to understand the Rumanian scene today without some knowledge of its historical background. In particular the problem of the minorities cannot make sense unless we know something of the process that has made the Rumanian nation. Lying at the western end of the Black Sea, Rumania is the area through which the many nomad peoples came across the steppes of South Russia into Europe. Its tale is thus extremely chequered.

Here were many prehistoric cultures of farming folk, but it is with the Scyths, Cimmerians, Getae, that the area comes into the light of written history. Under Trajan, the Romans organised it as a province, Dacia, early in the 2nd century A.D., and a wall was built from the Carpathians to the mouth of the Dneister. But the pressure of the Goths was soon acute, and in 271 the decision was taken to evacuate. Then came another long series of invasions from the 3rd to 10th century as Huns, Slavs, Magyars, Pechenegs, Cumans, Turks broke in—generally to drive further westward. In the 8th–9th centuries the Bulgarians dominated much of the area, and till mid-17th century Bulgarian ritual ruled in the churches; till the 14th century the churches were indeed directly under the Bulgarian patriarchate and not until as late as the mid-19th century did the liturgy books cease to be printed in Slavonic characters.

Around the 13th century the Vlach people—the Rumanian-speaking peasantry—come into the written records. There is no need here to discuss the vexed question of their descent through the obscured centuries.<sup>1</sup> What matters is the struggle

<sup>1</sup> The intense historical study now going on in Rumania, both of documents and in archaeology, will soon shed much more light on this matter. So far theories have

that henceforth goes on to build up the Vlach nation. The steps taken by the Hungarian kingship to settle Germans in South Transylvania as a bulwark against the Turks has already been noticed. But around 1241 the Tatar Invasions under Genghis Khan swept over the Carpathians and removed the Hungarian pressure. The Wallachian State began to consolidate itself, aided by its growing trade with Poland and N. Europe. Moldavia, more exposed to inroads by the steppe-nomads, grew more slowly. Then in the later 14th century the Turks decisively defeated the Serbs and Bulgarians, and Hungarian power had a severe check at Nicopolis in the crusading battle of 1396. Mongol attacks on the Turks from the east, however, slowed up the Turkish advance.

Wallachia fell into feudal anarchy and its prince acknowledged the suzerainty of the Turkish Porte, paying a regular tribute. The Hungarians continued the struggle, but from 1504 to 1714 the Rumanian area was under Turkish vassalage. Its people were largely pastoral, with clay-and-wattle cottages, ruled by oppressive boyars. But they did not submit tamely, and there were many periods of violent conflict with the Turks. Thus when a voivode, who came to power in 1591 by buying the post, intensified oppression by introducing a janissary guard and farming out his possessions to his Turkish supporters, there was a powerful movement of resistance led by Mihai the Brave, of whom the songs still sing:

Mihai the Brave is the man,  
on to seven horses he leaps,  
and *woe* the Sultan weeps. . . .

But the Turks kept the upper-hand, though in the end their fear of rebellion under native princes led them to appoint as

shown strong traces of class-outlook. The Rumanian bourgeoisie wanted direct descent from the Romans, so insisted that the Daco-Romans survived undiluted in the Carpathians; Germans wanted to prove the priority of German settlers in Transylvania pan-Slavists wanted to stress the Bulgarian character of the Bulgaro-Vlachs of the 13th century.

It is reasonably safe to call the Vlachs Romanised Dacians who took in a very strong Slav element—and to a lesser degree a Tatar element, etc. Most of the words for pastoral pursuits are Latin (which argues for continuity) while the Slav contribution appears in the large proportion of place-names and rivers in Wallachia that are Slav. (There are large numbers of Vlachs still in Greece, Macedonia, and Yugoslavia.)



rulers the rich Phanariot Greeks of Constantinople who bid for the throne at auctions. The Phanariot rule (1714-1821) was the logical result of the penetration of the country by the money-exploitations of the Greek merchants; and now the crushing taxes were heavily increased.

The Greek influences, however, drove out Slavonic from the church services—with the result that not Greek but Rumanian pushed into the breach. The first printed books were Slavonic, but in 1640 came a Rumanian work, a small code of ecclesiastical laws.

Meanwhile the struggles between the Holy Roman Empire centred in Vienna, the Poles, the Turks, and Tsarist Russia were going on all round, or in, the Rumanian area. (In Transylvania the Magyars, Szeklers, and Saxons remained the ruling groups, despite the steadily compacted basis in Rumanian peasantry. In 1437 there was a great uprising of the peasants in which Magyars and Rumanians made common cause. In reply the lords of the three powers united in a Brotherly Union against the Most Wicked Peasants as well as against the Turks. The mass of the people, ignored by the oligarchs, were merely the Tolerated Nation with no citizen rights.)

So rapacious were the Phanariots and their agents that often the peasants had to burn down their houses to escape the chimney tax or kill their cattle to escape the cow-tax. But the decline of Turkish power in the 18th century led to a revival of the national spirit, and at the end of the Russo-Turk war in 1714 the terms exacted by Russia made things much lighter for the Rumanians. The boyars, however, were fiercely hostile to national aspirations and called on the pashas for aid against rebel peasants.

A Greek revolt against the Turks in 1821 had the effect of raising the Rumanian peasants under Tudor Vladimirescu against the Phanariots. The people seized Bucharest, but Tudor was murdered and the Turks occupied the country. Still, many reforms were gained as a result of the uprising. The boyars tried to maintain their control within the country; but the popular pressures were growing, and the people responded to the general revolutionary situation in Europe in 1848 with a movement that shook the old régime—though Tsar and Sultan agreed in breaking down much of the gain, and though the Austrian

Government succeeded in diverting the struggle to a considerable extent into a conflict between Hungarian and Rumanian national aspirations. Balcesco, who had fought on the barricades in Paris in February, made an urgent plea for agreement against the common enemy: "We see clearly that the same tyranny overwhelms us all, Rumanians and Hungarians together."

Steadily now the new State emerged. After the Crimean War the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were "united" by the Convention of Paris, though with separate princes and legislative assemblies. But the assemblies made the union real by voting for a single ruler, Prince Cuza. He attempted some reforms—the confiscation of monastic estates and the ending of forced labour; and so was forced to abdicate. Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a German prince, took his place. A new Constitution (which gave the prince absolute powers of veto) was set up, and strong anti-semitic measures were enacted.

In 1870-1 during the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune there were revolutionary outbreaks at Ploeshti, and the Germans were attacked in Bucharest. Then the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-8, in which Rumanians fought beside Russians and stormed Plevna together with them, ended in the defeat of Turkey and the full national independence of Rumania. (The name *Rumania* was a product of the movement towards national unity and independence, and was at first much disapproved of by the Turkish and Austrian Governments. *Romania* or *Tsara Romaneasca* had been in use for Wallachia. *Romania*, it must be remembered, was, in the medieval period, the name by which the Crusaders knew the Byzantine world). After the 1914-18 war Rumania gained Transylvania.

From the days of Prince Cuza on till 1944 there were many attempts at reform, economic and legislative, but they remained very largely on paper. The "Inner Plevna", as the embattled rule of oppression was called, was never stormed. The Constitution had been based on that of Belgium in 1831, which was claimed as the most liberal of any then in existence; but even bourgeois politicians like Dr. Mitrany admitted:

The constitutional guarantees for personal liberty and for the sanctity of domicile could be set aside for 95 per cent of the population at the whim and will of a village mayor, and this



not in exceptional circumstances, but in everyday life, in matters arising out of daily work—the only means of subsistence—of the people.

Peasant unrest continually showed itself, and in 1907 there was a desperate uprising, which spread all over Moldavia and up into the mountains. It was quenched in blood, torture, jailing; some 11,000 peasants were slaughtered; but the discontent smouldered on.

The impotence of the Rumanian middle-class, its almost total inability to clean up its system and beget a competent bourgeois State which would have served the interests of national industry and trade, is to be traced to a considerable extent to the semi-colonial conditions imposed on the new State by the capital flowing in from Britain, France and the U.S.A. It is therefore necessary to have some idea of the ways in which foreign capital, concerned mainly with the extensive oil-resources of Rumania, operated before 1944.

British capitalists lost no time in penetrating the young nation, and at first had things all their own way. The new Phanariots of the 1860's, they took control of the customs (i.e. of foreign trade) as a guarantee of payment for their "debts", and they exacted usurious profits. Thus in 1863 the Bothers Bank of London lent £916,000 (in fact £679,244 in cash) and received back £948,161. When the agency of Galatsi moved to Bucharest it owned even the right to coin money.

As the importance of the oil-deposits grew clearer, U.S.A. capital moved in to collaborate and compete with British. Standard Oil as well as Royal Dutch had its network of affiliated and controlled companies. By 1914 there were 96 oil-companies, of which there were in Rumanian hands 3·8 per cent concerned with production, 8·9 per cent concerned with refining. The Danube Convention, which excluded the Soviet Union, gave the capitalist countries of the West a complete mastery over the Danube in the collection of taxes and dues; but no Rumanian was admitted into the personnel of the direction. Profits were used up in the very high salaries of the foreign employees, and not even one investment of lasting value to Danubian navigation was made between 1923 and 1942.

During the 1914-18 war, at the instructions of the Allies and

under the supervision of two British colonels, the oil-installations and depots were destroyed. The whole oil area was left a sea of flames: at Ploeshti some 60,000 petrol wagons were burnt. Then, after the war, Royal Dutch claimed damages; and after some wriggling the Rumanian Government succumbed to British pressure and paid!

Vickers had a big finger in the metallurgical industry, and the I.C.I. in explosives. With the rise of Hitler, German capital intensified its thrust, and British and American capital respectfully submitted or aided. Thus, at the conference of Sinaia in 1938 and the Accord of Bucharest the representatives of the West turned the Danube in effect into a German river in the hope of diverting Hitler into a war against the Soviet Union. The I.C.I. sold out to the German branch of the Dynamit Nobel Trust; *Româna Americană* (the main oil-subsidiary of Standard Oil) worked with Hitler's officials; but the chief surrender and complicity appeared in the link-up between Standard Oil and I. G. Farben Industrie. The latter attended to the interests of the former in Rumania, while Vacuum Oil was directly looked after by Nazis like O. Kohler and C. Patzelt.

No serious attempt was made to destroy the oil-wells and refineries till April 1944—when the Soviet armies were drawing near. And then many British and Americans lost their lives in the extensive bombing of Ploeshti (which left marks that can still be seen). While the Nazis were drawing on Rumanian oil for their war against the Soviet Union, the concern of the British and American oil-companies was only to get a share in the profits; and that share they managed to get. In 1941 a memorandum signed by G. Matingly for *Româna Americană* and by representatives of British and French capital (*Astra Româna*, *Steaua Româna*, *Unirea*) demanded that the government allow an "intensification of the despatch of petrol products to the German group"—100,000 tons a month—with a reduction of ten per cent in price. All through the war-years the British and American oil-capitalists drew huge profits through Switzerland and other neutral countries—thus in 1943 *Româna Americană* set aside a reserve of 65 milliards of lei, almost equal to its invested capital and its yearly net-gains rose to 726 milliards of lei.



In 1946 they claimed damages for the bombing of 1944, but this time they did not have so pliant a government to deal with. They did not get their damages and fresh installations.

The oppressive weight of British, French and American capital on the national economy explains why the native bourgeoisie remained so corrupt and sycophantic to foreign forces, why they could not effectively break down the heavy obstructions of feudal practice on the land. "The chemical industry was almost entirely German owned. In 1937 four-fifths of the National Debt of £257 million was held abroad. Interest was a heavy burden on the Budget, accounting for one quarter of the revenue. . . . Rumania's foreign trade followed the usual 'colonial' pattern. In 1938, 55 per cent of her imports were manufactured goods, and her exports were almost exclusively raw materials. Rumania's postwar policy has reversed this tendency." (E. V. Tempest, *The New Life in Rumania*, 1951). Foreign controls ruthlessly restricted industrial development; and Hitler's barter-system forced unwanted goods on the country in exchange for valuable materials.

It is very instructive to consider briefly the powerful resistance set up by foreign capitalists and their agents in Rumania to the development of independence and democracy after 1944.

In 1941 the Liberal Bratianu and Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Peasant Party, had upheld the dictatorship of General Antonescu which had followed on the collapse of the royal dictatorship set up by Carol II in 1938 and the open murder-rule of the Iron Guard. They supported the war against the Soviet Union. But after the uprising of August 1944 they sought to come out as anti-fascists and aided the setting-up of a government under the puppet General Sănătescu, which had as its aim the obstruction of the mass-demand for land-reform, full democracy, the ending of all fascist and racialist measures, and the punishment of war-criminals. This government and its administration was packed with fascists and corrupt politicians, including many of the surviving Iron Guard. It attempted to divert the mass-demands by a programme of extreme chauvinism and by a violent campaign against the Hungarians. While the Soviet Army and the revolted Rumanian divisions were fighting against the Nazis

in the Carpathians, Maniu organised the bands that began massacring villages of Hungarian peasants in Transylvania.

Sănătescu resigned before a wave of popular indignation, but his place was taken by another puppet, Gen. Rădescu. Rădescu had gained a medal in 1904 for his "skill" in defeating a peasant revolt at Vaslui; he then worked in the inspectorate of the Royal Police, which had as its aim the breaking of peasant resistance to the landlords; later he was aide-de-camp to Queen Marie and military attaché in London. Now he acted together with Berry and other such Anglo-U.S. agents (Melbourne, Porter, Le Rougetel), and waited for the word from Washington to carry out a coup by force "to restore order". His bands attacked local leaders of the democratic movement, while the journals *Dreptatea* and *Liberalul* carried on chauvinist agitation against the Hungarians and the Soviet Union, called on landlords to sabotage land-reform and industrialists to sabotage production, and clamoured for terrorism against the Communists. At the same time groups of Iron Guard legionaries set up depots of arms in the mountains. Some of these groups were named *Decebal*, *Haiducii lui Avram Iancu*, *Sarmisegetuza*.

The records of the Council of Ministers for February 16th, 1945 show Rădescu declaring that in some areas the peasants were taking land. "If it is necessary to resort to civil war, I'll do it, sirs, whatever the consequences." And when the workers of the liberal paper *Vittorul* came to protest against fascist propaganda, he cried, "I'll send the army out into the streets, I'll shoot you all down, I'll do here the same as in Greece."

But Rumania was not to be rent by civil war like Greece at the word of Rădescu's masters. The people came out into the streets, not the soldiers. Half a million demonstrated in the centre of Bucharest on February 4th, 1945. Machine guns opened fire from government buildings, and killed or wounded many people. But the people were not to be cowed. Rădescu gave in; and on March 6th a government with a majority of democrats was formed under Petru Groza, leader of the mass peasant organisation, the Ploughmen's Front. Rădescu fled to the British Embassy and was flown off to Washington. The new government passed the laws for land-reform at last, and some 1,111,000 hectares (over 2,500,000 acres) were shared out among the peasants.



Terrorist activities continued on November 8th, 1945 in Bucharest and other towns. Under the leadership of Maniu and Bratianu attacks were made on offices of the General Confederation of Labour, the ministries, etc., and many people were killed or wounded. The terrorist bands were named *Sumanele Negre*, *Graiul Sângelui*, *M.N.R.*, and worked under the direction of Gen. Aldea, previously Minister of the Interior. Meetings were held with Lieut. James Hamilton of the U.S.A. spy-service and the Maniu-group of the Peasant Party on May 1st, 1946 at Vatra Dornei, at the house of a lawyer vice-president of that party; and later in September, after two secret meetings (at 52 Sofia Street and 107 Victory Street, Bucharest), an agreement was drawn up and signed. This document, typed out by the daughter of the big industrialist Bujoiu, was intercepted by the Rumanians and made public, to the dismay of the U.S.A. government. Its authenticity could not be denied; and *Colliers* in October, 1948, published an article severely rating the U.S.A. secret service for its post-war setbacks, and citing its disaster in Rumania as the outstanding example.

In autumn, 1946, the first truly democratic elections were held in Rumania.<sup>1</sup> Before, workers had been eliminated from the electoral lists by the simple process of erasure: and villages known to be disaffected were often cordoned round by police on voting day and certified as suffering from an infectious disease. Women and soldiers now got the vote, and the premium system, by which a party with 40 per cent of the votes was given a further 50 per cent of all seats, was ended. The lists were raised to the figure, huge in comparison with former lists, of nearly eight millions, and 88.99 per cent voted. The result was 348 for the democratic bloc, and only 35 for Maniu. The

<sup>1</sup> The electoral law of 1926 was based on Mussolini's fascist law of 1923. "I have never known free elections in Rumania," stated C. Argetoianu in 1934. In 1932, when five deputies were elected of the Workers and Peasant Bloc (left-wing socialist), they were at once disqualified on the pretext that one of them was not a Rumanian, though he had been born in Bucharest, worked there all his life, and served in the army. "This kind of political democracy is what Bratianu and Maniu described as 'democracy of the Western type,'" (E. V. Tempest, *The New Life in Rumania*). The first free election in 1946, with universal suffrage, was described by the British and American press as totalitarian, while the discredited Maniu was built up as the true Democrat.



Railway workers' flats in Bucharest.



Nicolae Bălcescu Square, Bucharest.





The campaign against illiteracy—a class at Orlea village, Corabia Region.

parties of Maniu and Bratianu had set up candidates throughout the country, and all their protests against the annulling of certain lists of candidates were accepted. The resounding success of the democratic bloc showed beyond all doubt where the support of the masses lay. And it was achieved despite many terroristic acts on voting-day by the Maniu bands, who in some places attempted to destroy the ballot-boxes and shot at the presidents of electoral sections, killing six people and wounding many others.

The new Rumania had yet to meet many plots, and the terrorist bands did not give up easily. Take the case of Horatiu Comaniciu, who had played a part in the 1941 exploits of the Iron Guard and who later entered the National Peasant Party. He worked in the *Sumanele Negre* of the area of Sibiu and Brashov-Stalin, till, feeling himself cornered, he slipped out and took refuge with the Americans. Others of Maniu's followers similarly got away, and now work for *The Voice of America*, over which they lament the lack of respect for the individual in the Rumanian People's Republic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Let the incredulous recall that the Mutual Security Act, 1951, passed by the U.S.A. Congress allotted \$100,000,000 to finance the acts of "selected persons who are residing in or escapees" from the Soviet Union or its allies. ("We are training men to be spies, saboteurs, specialists in the tougher forms of psychological warfare," A. H. Leviero, in *The Nation's Business*, April 1952, organ of the U.S.A. Chamber of Commerce.)



## PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

WE have already described how, after the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship of Antonescu and his Iron Guard on August 23rd, 1944, the Rumanian forces, which had been conscripts of Hitler Germany, joined the Allies against Germany and fought side by side with the Soviet Army in its victorious advance. The new democratic government under Petru Groza was formed on March 6th, 1945, and its most important act was the Land Reform, passed on March 22nd, 1945. There followed the overwhelming victory of the democratic bloc in the general election at the end of 1946.

The democratic bloc which constituted the Groza Government after 1946 had as its chief components the Communist Party, Groza's organisation, the Ploughmen's Front, the National People's Party, and the Social Democratic Party. But it was a broad coalition, including some Liberals and a group of representatives of the landowners under Tatarescu.

Already before the general election the Land Reform had met the most pressing demands of the peasants and had struck a severe blow at the power of the landlords. In all, about two and a half million acres of landlords' land was confiscated, and divided up among poor or landless peasants. But this did not yet mean the ending of landlordism. Landowners were permitted to retain up to 50 hectares (about 125 acres) each, and a number of bigger estates, which their owners had been running as model farms, were left intact. Moreover, the chief of the landlords, King Michael, retained both his estates and his crown.

The economic situation which faced the new democratic government was one of severe difficulty. Industrial output had

fallen to less than half the pre-war level. The national income was not quite 65 per cent of the 1938 figure. And drought caused exceptionally bad harvests in 1945 and in 1946. In this situation, the immediate practical help given to the Rumanian people by the Soviet Union was of tremendous benefit. In 1945-6 the Soviet Union sent Rumania 375,000 tons of grain, 120,000 tons of coke, 120,000 tons of coal and 74,000 tons of steel. Joint Rumanian-Soviet companies—known as Sovroms—were set up to assist industrial development. The Sovroms are owned jointly, on a basis of equality, by the Soviet and Rumanian Governments, and the profits are shared equally.

The responsible post of Minister of National Economy was taken over in 1946 by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the general secretary of the Communist Party (who took over the premiership in 1952, when Groza became President of the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly). One of the first measures initiated was the currency reform, which stabilised the lei in August, 1947. This reform cancelled the old currency, which was exchanged for the new at the rate of one new lei for two thousand old lei. New wage scales were established, and—a very important measure—maximum figures for the amount of currency allowed to be exchanged by any individual person were fixed by law. Within a year the former budget deficit was turned into a surplus, while wage levels were maintained and prices reduced. All foreign exchange and foreign assets, including those held by foreign companies operating in Rumania, were frozen.

The currency reform was clearly a measure of decisive economic significance. It greatly benefited the working people—the workers and working peasants—while at the same time striking a heavy blow at individual Rumanian and foreign capital, and wiping out currency speculators and black marketeers. There was a second currency reform at the beginning of 1952, when the lei was still further strengthened. After the 1947 reform the lei stood at 600 to the £; at the beginning of 1952 this figure was approximately 400; and after the new reform, i.e. at the present time, 31·67.

The success of the currency reform was followed by sweeping political changes in the latter part of 1947 and beginning of



1948. In November, 1947, Tatarescu's landowners' group left the government, and on December 30th King Michael abdicated and the Rumanian People's Republic was proclaimed.

The setting up of the Republic marked a political turning point. It meant the completion of the democratic tasks of the revolution which had commenced in Rumania with the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. The revolution now entered upon its socialist stage, with the perspectives of laying the foundations of socialism and of a great upsurge of the whole national economy.

This new stage was marked by the closer coming together of the two parties of the Rumanian working class, the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party, and by their union into a single Rumanian Workers' Party in February, 1948. Shortly afterwards the draft of a new Constitution was prepared and submitted for nation-wide discussion, and a new general election was held—in March, 1948. In the new election the Rumanian Workers' Party combined with three other parties (the Ploughmen's Front, the National People's Party and the Hungarian Popular Union) in the "Front of Popular Democracy", which put forward a single joint list of candidates. They won an overwhelming victory. Out of a total electorate of over eight million, 92.3 per cent voted, and 90.8 per cent voted for the Popular Front candidates.

This was a clear mandate. And the Government proceeded to prepare and to carry out a series of new measures. In June, 1948, all the main industrial, mining, transport and engineering concerns were nationalised, together with the banks and insurance companies. Shortly afterwards the medical services were nationalised, and then the film industry. Former owners and stockholders were compensated through a "Nationalised Industry Fund" by the issue of securities based on the net profits of the nationalised industries. Distribution, small enterprises, and general commerce were not affected by the nationalisation laws. There began, however, a rapid expansion of state trading and of the consumers' co-operatives, which together are ousting "private enterprise" from the sphere of distribution. Today in the streets of Bucharest or other Rumanian towns one sees few private shops but many state and

co-operative ones, though in the street and covered markets individual peasants are freely selling their produce.

With industry and finance thus socialised, planned socialist production was launched. It began with the formulation and fulfilment of a One-Year Plan for 1949, followed by a second One-Year Plan for 1950. The pre-war production level was already achieved in 1948. The 1949 target was to surpass this level by 40 per cent; and the 1950 plan aimed at and achieved—in fact, a little more than achieved—a further rise of 37 per cent. With these successes as the foundation, Rumania embarked upon her first Five-Year Plan for the years 1951–55.

In March, 1949, a new and final blow was struck against the landlords. The whole of their remaining land was confiscated. So from that time onwards the curse of landlordism was lifted from Rumania. The new universal principle of landownership was expressed in the article of the Constitution which states: "The land belongs to those who till it."<sup>1</sup> Land in Rumania is not nationalised. Whoever tills the land has the rights of ownership of the land he tills. But land can neither be bought nor sold nor let out at a rent.

While in the 1945 land reform the confiscated estates were divided amongst the poor and landless peasants, the land confiscated in 1949 was mainly used for the establishment of model state farms. In all, state farms were set up over an area of about one and three-quarter million acres—which amounts to seven per cent of the total cultivated land in Rumania (25 million acres)—and by 1952 all work on them was 70 per cent mechanised. These state farms serve not only as most valuable suppliers of food for the people. They act as suppliers of high-grade seeds and stock to the surrounding peasant farmers, and as centres of agricultural education, demonstrating to the peasants scientific methods of agriculture, and providing convincing proof of the gains to be achieved by large-scale, mechanised farming.

The agrarian question has for long been the central question in Rumania. In the old Rumania the big landlords dominated the scene. So long as they remained, there was no future for the working peasant but poverty and exploitation. With the

<sup>1</sup> Article 9 of the 1948 Constitution. It reappears as Article 8 of the new 1952 Constitution.



confiscation of the landlords' estates, the peasants were masters of the land. What they needed then was the means to raise the standards of cultivation—tractors, seed-drills, farm machinery of all kinds—and the organisation to enable them to co-operate to turn the Rumanian countryside into a prosperous land of large-scale scientific farming. The production of Rumania's new nationalised industries is already providing the tractors and machinery in increasing quantities, supplemented by machines obtained through Rumania's trade agreements with the Soviet Union. And the organisation is being created through the growth of peasants' co-operatives and collective farms.

The principal means adopted for the supply of tractors and machinery are the machine and tractor stations. These are state organisations for hiring out machinery for use on the farms. Thus the state acts as what in Britain we would call an agricultural contractor. The first machine and tractor stations were already established in 1947–8. There were already 80 in full operation by the end of 1948, 186 in 1951 and over 200 by the summer of 1952. Since 1948 they have increased the tractor-power supplied to the farms by 700 per cent.

Up to the formation of the Republic and the final confiscation of the landlords' land, the great struggles of the Rumanian peasants had been directed against the big landlords. Now the struggle took new forms, entered upon a new stage. For when the landlords had been thrown off the backs of the peasants, there still remained the *Kulaks*. The word "kulak" is a Russian word, which has come to have universal use in Eastern Europe. It means literally "fist". The kulak is the close-fisted man of the village, who has enough property to set himself up as a village capitalist. What, then, was to happen? Were the kulaks (who at present farm rather more than a million acres) to flourish and prosper and climb up on the backs of their poorer neighbours? Or was their private profit-making activity and power to exploit their neighbours to be restricted, leaving the working peasants free to choose the path of co-operation as the way to build up a prosperous countryside? The second alternative is the one adopted by the Rumanian people.

In practice two forms of peasant co-operation have been started in Rumania, of which the first can be regarded as a

transition to the second. Both are built up strictly on a voluntary basis, and both receive every assistance and encouragement from the People's Government. The first consists of agricultural co-operative associations ("Joint Associations for Tilling the Soil"), in which the individual peasants do not pool their holdings but co-operate in working them. There are at the present time (1952) 1,700 such associations. The second consists of collective farms, which are built on the Soviet model, with the members of the collective pooling their land and principal instruments of production, and working the farm as a common co-operative enterprise. There are at present some 1,500 collective farms, to which more than 120,000 households of working peasants belong, farming about a million acres of land, or four per cent of the total cultivated acreage.<sup>1</sup>

By 1952 the changes brought about within the People's Republic since its first Constitution was adopted early in 1948 were already so great, that the question was raised in the Grand National Assembly of framing a new Constitution, which would conform with the new social structure that had come into being. A Constitution Commission was set up in March, which presented a draft for nation-wide discussion during the summer. This discussion was in full swing when our delegation was touring Rumania. The draft, together with the results of the discussion, were presented to the Assembly in October, when the Constitution was adopted. In his speech to the Assembly, prime minister Gheorghiu-Dej could report: "In trade union groups, in circles of the People's Democratic Front, at agitation centres, over ten million citizens participated in the meetings devoted to the discussion of the draft of the Constitution; 18,836 proposals and amendments to the draft have been submitted." The prime minister carefully analysed these

<sup>1</sup> According to the Statutes of the collective farms, the land, buildings, implements and stock are the common property of the members of the collective. Any poor or medium peasant, but no kulak, is free to join a collective farm. The farm is managed by a Management Committee elected at a meeting of all members. The profits and surplus produce of the collective enterprise are distributed among the members on the basis of the quantity and quality of the work which each has contributed: work done is reckoned in "work-day units", so that each receives his share in cash and kind corresponding to the number of "work-days" to his credit. All members of the collective also have as their personal property their house, plot of household land, livestock, poultry and minor agricultural implements.



proposals and amendments—not one by one, of course, but classifying them into groups or categories. Many of them were accepted as improvements of the draft, and embodied in the Constitution. Others were rejected—for example, proposals which some citizens had made for the immediate abolition by law of all private capitalist enterprise, or for the limitation of the rights of religious bodies. Gheorghiu-Dej could rightly describe the discussion as “a genuine popular referendum”. Indeed, practically the entire adult population, and the youth as well, had taken part in the meetings.

In his report, Gheorghiu-Dej summed up the great changes which had taken place in four years since 1948. Then, the greater part of industry was still in the hands of private capital; there were no collective farms and but few state machine and tractor stations; private capital dominated in trade. Today, all the main industries were nationalised, and the output of socialist industry accounted for 96.5 per cent of the entire industrial output; in four years, socialist industry had nearly trebled its production, and, in particular, the key branches of heavy industry had expanded until the output of industry producing means of production accounted for 54.4 per cent of the total value of industrial output. The socialist sector of trade had likewise grown, and today accounted for 76 per cent of total trade. In agriculture the state farms and collective farms were firmly established, and the movement for collectivisation was growing.

“We are still confronted with a serious arrear of agriculture as compared with industry,” the prime minister added. “This is because our agriculture is dominated by the small peasant holding which yields a small quantity of marketable produce. The only way for the working peasantry to escape exploitation and want is the joining of the small peasant holdings into collective farms. But the only method for drawing the small and medium peasant holdings onto the path of socialism is that of persuasion. We condemn any attempt at violence in regard to the small-scale production of commodities.” The task was to *convince* the working peasantry of the superiority of socialist agriculture.

There were in existence, Gheorghiu-Dej pointed out, three “social-economic sectors” in Rumania, and the existence of these three sectors was recognised in the Constitution. First,

there was the socialist sector, the sector of nationalised industries and collective farms—state property and co-operative property. This sector was “the main lever on which the people’s democratic state relies in directing the entire economy towards socialism.” Second, there was the sector of small-scale commodity production, consisting of handicrafts and millions of small and medium individual peasant holdings. Here, “the state supports the peasants with small and medium holdings, with the aim of protecting them against capitalist exploitation, increasing their production and raising their well-being.” Third, there was the private capitalist sector, consisting of small, non-nationalised industrial enterprises, and of the kulak farms. “The transition from several social-economic sectors to the complete sway of the socialist sector is taking place in conditions of fierce resistance by the exploiting elements,” said Gheorghiu-Dej. “At the present stage, the state policy regarding the capitalist elements is a policy of restriction and dislodgment.”

What are the principal provisions of the new Constitution?

The Rumanian People’s Republic is defined as “a state of working people of town and country”, in which “the foundation of people’s power is the alliance of the working class with the working peasantry, an alliance in which the leading role is held by the working class.” The three principal social-economic sectors and the policy which the state pursues in regard to them are defined. Mineral wealth, factories, plants and mines, forests, waters, sources of natural energy, communications . . . are state property and belong to the whole people. The land belongs to those who till it. Personal property, including the right to inherit personal property, is protected by law. Foreign trade is a state monopoly. Work is the duty of every able-bodied citizen.

The Constitution lays down and guarantees the fundamental rights of citizens—the right to work, to rest and leisure, to maintenance in old age, sickness and disability, to education. Citizens enjoy full equality of rights, irrespective of nationality, race or sex. The rights of national minorities are guaranteed. Freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of street processions and demonstrations is guaranteed by law. The working people have the right to unite in their organisations,



amongst which the leading force, and likewise the leading force of the state organs and institutions, is the Rumanian Workers' Party. Any association of a fascist or anti-democratic character is prohibited.

As regards religion, "All citizens of the Rumanian People's Republic are guaranteed freedom of conscience. Religious cults are free to organise themselves and may function freely. All citizens are guaranteed freedom of religious worship. The school is separated from the church. No religious creed, congregation or community may open or maintain institutions of general education, but only special schools for training the personnel of the cult. The manner of organisation and functioning of religious cults is regulated by law."

The highest organ of state power is the Grand National Assembly, which is elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Deputies must report regularly to their electors, and may be recalled at any time. The highest executive and administrative organ is the Council of Ministers. The local organs of state power consist of the People's Councils. A special place in the Constitution is granted to the newly formed Hungarian Autonomous Region (See chapter 7, below).

Of this Constitution, Gheorghiu-Dej could declare: "Our Constitution expresses the will of the Rumanian people for peace, their desire to devote all their strength to peaceful construction. Our new Constitution is, in its very essence, a Constitution of peace. At the same time the Rumanian people are fully determined not to allow any imperialist interference in their country and to preserve the inviolability of their national independence and sovereignty. The new Constitution will strengthen our people's democratic system and become a mighty weapon for building socialism in our country. It mirrors the great victories of the Rumanian people, emancipated from every yoke, free and masters of their destiny".

We have been able to give here only the slightest sketch of these years in which the new Republic threw off the old bonds of national hatreds and class oppression that had made the old Rumania a by-word of tyranny, corruption and seemingly-hopeless national animosities. But what has been given is

enough to set the background for the picture of Rumania today. The scenes we witnessed in Rumania in 1952 must be realised against that background. And it must be recalled how few years ago it was that the dark shadows fell across the landscape of happiness and peace, of constructive work and brotherly kindness.



## PLANNING AND SCIENCE

**T**HE few short years of people's democracy, short in time but immense in achievement, have brought about a transformation in the entire economic basis of society in Rumania. And this transformation still continues. Its full scope and consequences have still to be realised. It is of such a nature, that the work which has now been done can never be undone; people who have not only seen the gleam of socialism, but have actually begun to build it and to realise its consequences in their daily lives, can be neither induced nor forced to accept their old masters back again. The very basis of society has changed and is changing—the fundamental social relationships within which people produce and distribute their means of life, the economic structure, the forms of property and class relations. It is this which constitutes the solid material foundation of the new society and of the new ways of life, of the enthusiasm, happiness, kindliness and radiant optimism, which we saw in Rumania.

The old ruling class in Rumania has been destroyed—not physically annihilated, but annihilated as a class. The former landlords and big capitalists are landlords and capitalists no longer. Some of them have gone abroad—ex-King Michael, for example, is living quite comfortably on an estate near London. Others are working for their living in Rumania. We met one of them, quite a cheerful fellow employed as a chauffeur by the People's Council in Târgu Muresh. But as a class, they no longer exist. Their palaces and villas have been taken over by the working people. The land belongs to those who till it—to the working peasants, to the collective farms, and, where state farms have been established, to the State. The main industries, banks, insurance companies and their assets belong

to the People's State. So far as the dispossession of the old ruling class is concerned, the revolution is complete.

And it is the working people who are in command. They are the rulers of the country now, through their elected representatives in the Assembly, their People's Councils, their Workers' Party and Popular Democratic Front organisations, their factory trade union committees and organisations of working peasants. Only the blind could fail to see that this is the actual situation in Rumania. We saw it when we watched the armed factory guards march proudly past in the great liberation-day demonstration in Bucharest, when we studied the new Constitution, when we spoke with members of the People's Councils in towns we visited and heard of their work and their plans. Those great political changes which were described in the last chapter were brought about because the workers and peasants demanded them, forged their own Party to carry them through, and swept aside all obstacles. From the time when the people overthrew the Antonescu dictatorship, and then came out on the streets of Bucharest to force the resignation of General Rădescu, it has been the growing, conscious unity of the working people, rallying behind their tried leaders, the Workers' Party, that has brought about the transformation.

The same events may be interpreted very differently according to the source of one's information. To read most of the press organs of this country, one would suppose that King Michael abdicated, that the landlords were dispossessed and the industries nationalised—because such were the orders of the Kremlin. They ask us to believe that there was a sufficiently strong Soviet-inspired "dictatorship" in Rumania to force a people who loved their capitalists and landlords (not to mention the foreign investors who had plundered their country) unwillingly to allow these gentry to be dislodged from off their backs. The real explanation of these events is far simpler. They took place because the workers and peasants decided it was time to have done with capitalists and landlords.

With the change in ownership, in property, in class relations, came a transformation of economic life. Planned production was initiated—economic activity directed by a central State Plan, whose aim was not the profit of investors but the welfare of the people.



Since, as the new Constitution says, "all the mineral wealth, factories, plants and mines, forests, waters, sources of natural energy, communications of every kind . . . , state farms, machine and tractor stations, communal enterprises and the nationalised part of the fund of dwelling houses in towns, are state property", the state is able to direct the utilisation of all these resources according to a single plan. The plan is not, of course, complete and all-embracing. For there remains outside the scope of the state plan the large sector of individual peasant holdings and the much smaller sector of remaining small capitalist enterprise. Nevertheless, the state plan directly influences these sectors too. By developing the country's natural resources and sources of energy, improving transport and communications, increasing the availability of farm machinery, fertilisers, etc., and encouraging the types of agricultural production most needed by the people, the state plays a regulating and guiding role in relation to the small peasant holdings. It aims, as Gheorghiu-Dej put it, at "blending the interests of the state with those of the small and medium peasants". The unfolding of the state plan also influences the capitalist sector. It has the effect of restricting the scope of private capitalist enterprise. Capitalist enterprise has no chance of expanding in competition with the state plan, but plays a subsidiary role, limited and circumscribed by the provisions of the plan.

At the end of 1950 there was launched a great ten-year plan—the Electrification Plan of the Rumanian People's Republic. Before its final adoption, the plan was enthusiastically discussed by working people in town and countryside, and was the subject of a five days session of the Rumanian Academy of Sciences. The Plan means a technological revolution in Rumania. As is well known, the standards of life of a people correlate with the energy production per head, and in this respect the old Rumania was utterly backward. The plan aimed at the production of electric power to serve industry; electrical energy was to be transformed by industry into mechanical energy, heat and chemical energy, to help produce an abundance of goods to raise the standards of the people and to lighten their labour. The plan likewise aimed at the electrification of the country-side.

Here are some figures illustrating the scale of the electrification plan.

In 1950 the total capacity of electric power stations in Rumania was 740,000 kilowatts, of which, however, only 600,000 could in practice be used. This capacity was divided between 603 power stations, whose average capacity was thus no more than 1,230 kilowatts. There was only a poorly developed grid system, and the total length of high-tension cables was only 2,500 kilometres.

The plan aims at raising the total capacity to 1,700,000 kilowatts by 1955, and to 2,600,000 kilowatts by 1960, and to develop the grid system to cover the entire country. This will mean increasing the amount of power per head of population from 37.5W. in 1950, to 105 in 1955, and to 150 in 1960.

The biggest single project within the plan is the construction of a large-scale hydro-electric station (known as the Stejar Station) on the River Bistritza, of a capacity of 210,000 kilowatts. It will produce annually 430 million kilowatt-hours of electric energy, to power not only existing industries but new textile mills, iron and steel works, chemical works. The dam and reservoir associated with this power station will also serve to irrigate about 300,000 square hectares of land.

A feature of the plan is that it aims to make a more rational and economic use than at present of available sources of electric power, and, in particular, to develop the use of water power, in which Rumania is rich. At present, 92 per cent of the electric power available is produced by thermal-electric stations, and as much as 40 per cent is produced by burning natural gas. While the plan aims at raising the utilisable capacity of thermal-electric stations in ten years from 550,000 kilowatts to 1,665,000 kilowatts, it aims at raising the capacity of hydro-electric stations from a mere 50,000 kilowatts to 835,000 kilowatts. Thus hydro-electric stations will account for one-third of the total power production. And the national significance of the hydro-electric projects goes far beyond the provision of electricity. Associated with them are great projects of irrigation which, with tree planting and scientific methods of agriculture, will make fertile and raise the productivity of large tracts of poor or arid land.

In the year 1960 the plan aims to supply mines and factories



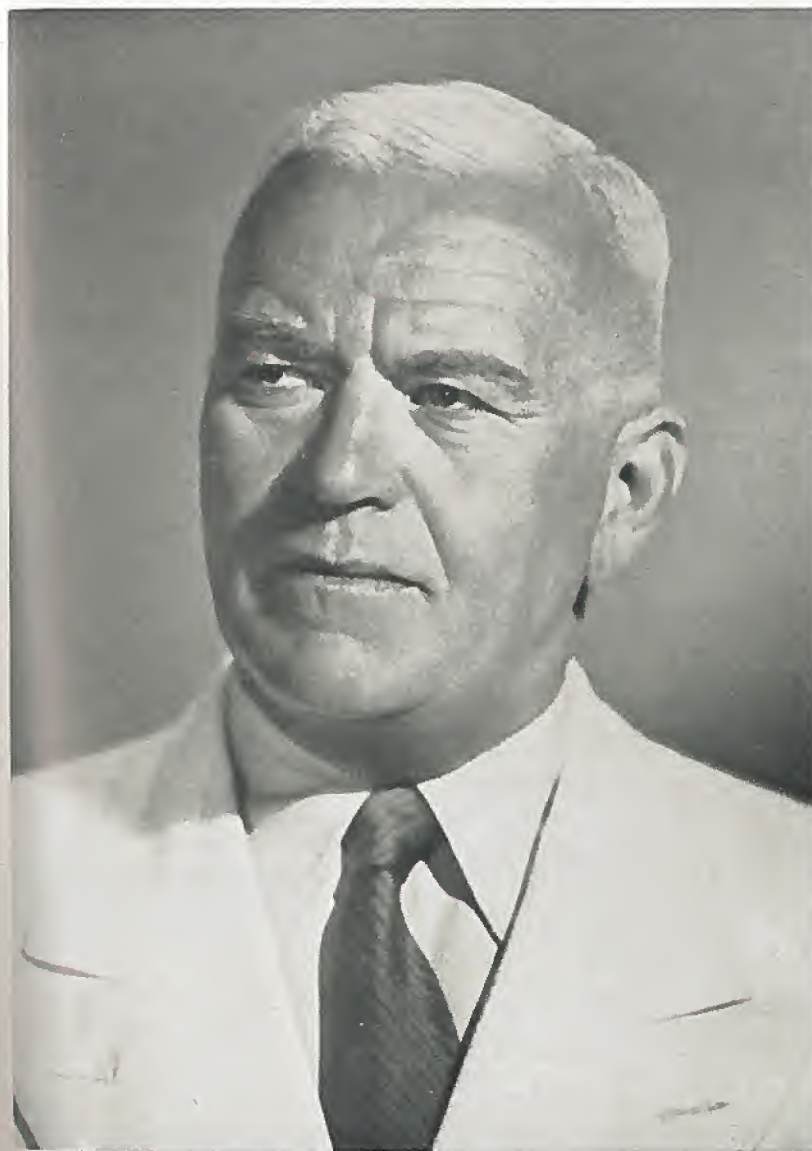
with 4,330 million kilowatt-hours of electric power; electric traction with 300 million; domestic users, shops and offices in the towns with 750 million; and the villages with 230 million. In the first five years, the plan aims to supply 2,000 villages with electricity.

To comprehend these figures rightly, one must use imagination. True, even in ten years the production of electric power per head of population in Rumania will be less than in our own country, and much less than in the United States. But even two years ago, the production was negligible. And electric power means production of goods, lightening of labour, greater domestic comfort, the easing of everyday life. Every kilowatt added to the capacity of electric power stations means an addition to the power to produce plenty and to live well. It means an end to the harsh, miserable conditions of the old Rumania.

And miserable they were. Amongst other things, electrification means electric light—and this is how Petrescu Camil, a member of the Academy of Sciences, was moved to write about the electrification plan:

"It will mean the emergence of the Rumanian people from a dense darkness which lasted almost one thousand years. Two thousand villages will be endowed with electric light. At the same time, illiteracy will be abolished. . . . Culture without light is impossible. I grew up in a workers' family on the outskirts of the Bucharest of fifty years ago, which means practically in the country, and I remember very clearly how the fathers would shout if the children tried to read in the evenings, 'Put out that light! We've no money to waste on oil.' But what other time had peasants got to read in? About seven in the evening, most Rumanian villages were buried in a grave-like darkness. Sometimes only the village inn possessed a smoky oil-lamp. For one must remember that even matches and paraffin were luxuries in our villages. . . . Without light, without a minimum of comfort, the word culture is devoid of meaning."

The electrification plan itself is a component part, and at the same time an extension of Rumania's first Five-Year Plan of



Dr. Petru Groza, Chairman of the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly of the Rumanian People's Republic.





Painting by Gavril Miklossy of troops shooting down workers during the Bucharest railway strike, 1933. Communist leader Gheorghiu-Dej was arrested in this strike, and held captive until 1944.



Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, General Secretary of the Rumanian Workers' Party, Prime Minister of the Rumanian People's Republic. *Below:* Gheorghiu-Dej among the workers.







One of Rumania's former rulers. A boyar of the mid-nineteenth century.

development of the whole national economy in 1951-5. As we have already said, state planning began in Rumania in 1949, following the rise of the working class to power and the nationalisation of industry, transport and the banks. For 1949 and again for 1950, one-year plans were formulated, in the course of which industrial output was doubled, and the first state and collective farms were established. The task set in those two years was to restore the national economy, still suffering the effects of the war years, and then to develop it in the direction of socialism. The Five-Year Plan for 1951-5 sets a bolder aim, which is thus formulated in the law of the plan adopted by the Grand National Assembly:

"The fundamental task of the five-year plan, 1951-5, is the establishment of the economic foundations of socialism in the Rumanian People's Republic, the gradual elimination of the capitalist elements in all branches of national economy, so that by the last year of the plan they will have completely disappeared in the industrial sector and will retain only a minor place in trade and agriculture."

The economic foundations of socialism lie in socialist industry, and so the central aim of the plan is to step up industrial production, and particularly the production of means of production. Of key importance in the plan is therefore the development of iron and steel production, of the oil industry, of the machine-building industry, and of power production. The total state investment in the plan is to amount to 1,330,000 million lei. (This is calculated on the basis of 1950 prices, and, at the 1950 exchange rate, comes to a little more than £3,000 million.) Of this investment, just over half is to go to the building of industry, and 42 per cent to the building of industry producing means of production; 10 per cent goes to agriculture and forestry, 16 per cent to transport and communications and 13 per cent to social services and cultural development.

Detailed targets are set for the output of various industrial products in 1955. Here are some of them. Electric energy, 4,700 million kilowatt-hours; coal, 8,533,000 tons; raw petroleum, 10,000,000 tons; steel, 1,252,000 tons; tractors, 5,000. Total industrial production is to be raised 244 per cent above 1950. At the same time, by rationalisation measures and raising



the productivity of labour, production costs are to be reduced by at least 23 per cent.

The total number employed in state enterprises is to be increased by 38 per cent, to a total of about three million. Over a million workers are to receive special training to enable them to raise their qualifications, 500,000 at their places of work and 585,000 in special technical schools. The average wage is to be raised 24 per cent, and the progressive piece work system extended to cover 72 per cent of all industrial work.

By the end of the five years the Danube—Black Sea Canal, with its new towns, great new port on the Black Sea and irrigation works, will be completed; and the plans will be finalised for the Bucharest-Danube Canal, which will turn Bucharest into a river port and involve the construction of a new port on the Danube. Many new factories and power stations will be built. About two-hundred miles of new railway lines will be laid, and the line from Campina to Stalin (the main line which crosses the Transylvanian Alps, over which we saw heavy goods trains being pulled by two engines with a third pushing at the back) will be electrified.

In agriculture, the plan aims to realise a considerable increase in total production and yields of grain and industrial crops. Some 290 new machine and tractor stations are to be equipped, raising the total number to 428, which will be provided during the five years with 18,400 tractors. The total number of tractors available in 1955 will be 25,000. Credits of 30,000 million lei are to be provided for the development of collective farms. "We will assist the working peasants to adopt socialist forms of organisation of agriculture," says the law of the plan, "and ensure the strengthening of the economy and many-sided development of the work of the collective farms."

Special attention is to be given to the development of the livestock industry—to increasing and improving stock and increasing production of fodder. This is of particular importance in a country which has been predominantly a land of poor peasant farming. At the end of the five years the aim is to possess 4,700,000 head of cattle, 4,500,000 pigs, 1,200,000 horses, and 12,500,000 head of poultry.

At the same time there are to be trained in scientific methods of agriculture 60,000 tractor drivers, 8,500 agronomists and

livestock specialists ("zoo-technicians"), and 1,000 veterinary surgeons; while 20,000 cadres are to receive general training in agriculture and livestock raising.

The plan deals not only with economic questions in the narrow sense. The great aim of the whole economic development is to provide the basis of a prosperous and happy life for the people. And this is envisaged in the plan.

"In the course of the five-year plan," says the law, "thanks to continual increase of production and of the circulation of goods, thanks to lowering of prices and the development of social and cultural activity, there will be assured the continual raising of the standard of life of the working people, so that by 1955 it will be 80 per cent higher than in 1950."

A total of 74,000 million lei out of the planned investment will be devoted to educational and cultural work. In the course of the plan illiteracy will be completely abolished (there are still nearly a million illiterates today).

There is a seven-year system of elementary schooling in Rumania, i.e. from 7 years to 14. All children without exception will receive at least four years schooling. (This may sound rather a modest aim to us, unless we remember the appalling conditions from which the Rumanian people have only just emerged.) The number receiving the whole seven years will be raised from 404,000 in 1950 to 560,000 in 1955. For these purposes, 2,000 new classrooms will be built.

After the age of 14, children go to the middle schools, and the number attending these schools is to be raised to 383,000 by 1955, an increase of 28 per cent over 1950. The number attending higher schools will be increased by 40 per cent, to 78,000. The building of a new university will be begun at Bucharest. The total number of pupils and students in 1955 will be 2,133,000. At the same time, there will be a big development of evening classes and correspondence courses for the benefit of all working people.

Some 34,000 million lei will be invested in general cultural activity. Major projects here are the great Scânteia House publishing centre, the film centre, Radio House, and the national theatre and opera at Bucharest. The total print of newspapers and journals is to be doubled, and the number of



books issued increased by 163 per cent to 93,600,000 in 1955. A sufficient number of these will be issued in the various national languages. There are to be 13,500 cultural centres in the villages, as compared with 11,500 in 1950.

For public health, 25,000 million lei are to be invested. The total number of hospital beds is to be increased from 75,000 to 94,500; 2,000 new clinics and 50 new health centres ("poly-clinics") are to be provided, and 200 new rural clinics. To combat epidemic diseases, 120 regional anti-epidemic stations will be organised, and two centres for the production of serums and vaccines. In 1955, 300,000 workers will enjoy holidays in rest homes in the mountains or on the sea, and 170,000 children will be accommodated in children's holiday homes.

In the towns, 2,800,000 square metres of new living floor-space is to be provided (this is calculated on the basis of living rooms and bedrooms: space occupied by halls, kitchens, bathrooms and lavatories is not counted). Moreover, all the principal towns have their own town-planning schemes.

Summing up the plan, the law concludes that its realisation will mean the transformation of Rumania into a country of socialist industry and socialist, mechanised agriculture. It will mean the winning of the peasants for socialism through the creation of collective farms, and the development and strengthening of socialist trade through state trading organisations and the co-operatives. It will mean the raising of labour productivity and of the people's standards of life. It will mean the development of regions now arid, and the rational utilisation of the country's rich natural resources. Lastly, it will create the technical and economic conditions to strengthen the country's defence.

The Rumanian people are working enthusiastically to carry out the plan. One cannot meet Rumanian workers without sensing how it has fired their imagination. And, indeed, they are creating a new life for themselves by the labour of their own hands. But such a plan involves far more than agreeing on targets and then working with a will to achieve them. New techniques have to be created and mastered. Major problems of technology and science are encountered and have to be solved in every step taken towards the realisation of the plan.

And this in a country which in the past had practically no scientific and technological institutions of any kind. The turn towards building up industry and mechanised agriculture, the turn towards socialist planning, entailed, therefore, the creation of organised Rumanian science, the organisation of scientific research on an intensive scale over a wide field. In a later chapter we shall speak of some of the broader cultural aspects of science in Rumania. Here we shall speak of the basic fact of the rise of flourishing scientific institutions in Rumania, called into being by the People's Republic and directing their activity to the goal of achieving the people's plan.

When the working people were in power, and when they turned their faces to the goal of building the new life of socialism and transforming the whole face of their country, then of necessity one of their first concerns was for fostering the growth of science, without which socialist planning can never be realised.

The Rumanian Academy of Sciences was founded in October, 1948, and entrusted with the task of organising the country's scientific research. "We must never forget," said Gheorghiu-Dej at the inaugural session of the Academy, "that it is the mission of science to satisfy the people's requirements; that is why, in all their achievements, scientists must see to it that the results obtained in their theoretical research find a practical application as speedily as possible." The Academy is a learned society, but it is a learned society of a very practical kind. It strives to direct scientific research to the most pressing problems of building the national economy, to solve profound questions of theory which arise from the practice of seeking to raise human well-being, and to find the way of applying the results of all its researches for the raising of the material and cultural standards of the people.

In a short time the Academy has grown into a large organisation, controlling twenty-two scientific institutes, with many branches in different parts of the country. Each year a working plan of research is drawn up, based on the state plan and the electrification plan. The Academy and its sections and institutes have worked from the beginning in close co-operation with the ministries and the big enterprises. Representatives of ministries concerned take an active part in meetings of the scientific



Boards of the institutes, and in the meetings of the Presidium, or governing body, of the Academy, at which the working plans of the institutes are discussed. The result of this close collaboration is the framing and carrying out of realistic working plans corresponding in minute detail to the requirements of the state plan and the electrification plan.

The four buildings of the Rumanian Institute of Physics, in Bucharest, were constructed in the latter part of 1950. The Institute succeeded in directing and successfully establishing in Rumania the manufacture of all kinds of physical apparatus, none of which was ever made in Rumania before, such as highly sensitive galvanometers, Wilson chambers, vacuum tubes, vacuum pumps, X-ray spectrographs, etc., etc. Judging from reports on the work of the Physics Institute, the Mathematics Institute, the Metallurgical Institute and the Institute of Energetics, they are pursuing researches very closely connected with the demands of new Rumanian industry and producing results which are immediately applied in production technique. Thus, much of the effort is applied in industrial laboratories directly attached to factories—in the laboratories of the iron and steel works, for example, or in the laboratory of the new "People's Radio" factory. The range of problems concerning which planned research is conducted corresponds to the whole range of modern industrial technique, and it would be tedious to try to list special problems studied and results achieved.<sup>1</sup>

Considerable work is being undertaken by the Institute of Chemistry in connection with the development of the oil industry and of chemical industries. In particular, in view of the rich deposits of oil and of methane gas in Rumania, work is being done to develop and improve the use of both petroleum and methane as raw materials of the chemical industry. And besides problems connected with immediate industrial needs, the Institute is carrying out theoretical studies of long-term application, such as work on new methods of analysing minerals and alloys.

Geologists are working intensively on prospecting for mineral wealth, and on preparing the geological map of Rumania.

The Institutes of medical science are working, in close concert with the Ministry of Health, on a big range of pressing

<sup>1</sup> These are generally dealt with in the annual reports of the Academy.

problems, from combatting such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis, infantile paralysis and goitre, to the improvement of drinking water and the air-conditioning of factories.

Many scientists—engineers, geologists, hydrologists, agronomists—are working on the great Danube-Black Sea Canal construction project, which has been described elsewhere in this book. A whole series of problems, such as had not been tackled before, arose and are arising in the construction of the canal, both in the technique of actually constructing the canal bed and in the transformation of the surrounding arid area. One of the biggest successes already scored here has been the planting with vegetables of a big area of formerly quite unfertile land near Constanta, which is now able to supply the city of Constanta and the whole of the Canal workings. Previously the people of this area had to get their vegetables from a hundred miles away.

Big strides forward are being made by the agricultural sciences. Of first importance here is the work being conducted, following closely the lead of Soviet experience, on the combination of agro-technical methods, crop rotations, tree planting and draining and irrigation, in order to raise the fertility of soils and increase crop yields. At experimental stations and state farms, remarkable results have been obtained, including crop yields as much as four times greater than the low average yields prevailing on surrounding poor peasant holdings. Problems of soil erosion, and of the irrigation of desolate areas are being intensively studied, and among the major immediate objectives is to succeed in greatly increasing the cultivation of cotton. Michurinist methods of improving crops are being studied and applied: in orchards and vineyards, a method described as grafting with paraffin has been perfected. The development of agricultural science has the grand aim in view of securing the application of scientific methods of farming and livestock-raising over the entire countryside, through the building of collective farms.

Science, which is thus being carried forward in Rumania to serve extremely practical objectives of building socialist economy and raising the living standards of the people, is not only closely connected in its organisation with the state plan, with the ministries and the management councils of the big



enterprises; it develops in close, living connection with the working people, the builders of socialism. The efforts of scientists and of workers merge in the continual endeavour to find the ways of raising the productivity of labour, developing new techniques and turning out more goods which the people need. In the factories, there are a growing number of workers at the bench who are trying out their own ideas and conducting their own experiments; and while the managements give them every facility and material assistance, scientists and technicians, too, help them in their creative endeavour—and often learn from them. Members of the Academy and of the various Institutes do not shut themselves away in their laboratories and pursue their researches in dignified isolation, but go out onto the job and discuss things with the workers. Scientific knowledge is not hidden away as the preserve of a few thousand scientists, but is made available to the workers, who are eagerly studying and imbibing it, in reading rooms, classes and discussion circles. Through the State Committee of Techniques workers' achievements and inventions are made known and exchanged, and the state allocates generous funds from which to pay awards to worker-innovators.

How is the operation of the plan reflected in the people's standards of life? We did not have the time, nor had we the qualifications, to make a systematic survey of wages and prices such as would be necessary in order to present a scientific picture of the material level of the people. But some things can be quite definitely stated. There is no unemployment. There are very few beggars, or signs of extreme poverty. There is still plenty of bad housing, but new housing is being built. There is no shortage of necessities, though luxury articles are still scarce and expensive. One does not see queues outside the shops. A rationing system is still in force, though the same goods can be bought off-the-ration at higher prices (not a "black market": a double price system is in force for rationed goods). Most of the people one sees passing in the streets are well dressed, and, indeed, most of the young women rather smarter than is the case at present in Paris. Taking the lei as worth about 7½d., which is the current exchange rate and a fair indication of its real value, then normal wages vary from about £4 a week to

about £7, while Stakhanovites may earn as much as £13 or £14 a week. (Pay day comes monthly, however, not weekly.) On the same reckoning, prices of necessities are roughly comparable to those obtaining in this country—but rent, which is here usually a big item in the household budget, is very considerably less. Nor are there deductions for social insurances.

But to reach a sound judgment about the standard of living in Rumanian People's Democracy it is necessary to compare it, not with this country (though Rumanian workers' standards do not come out so badly in the comparison), but with Rumania in the past, and also to ask—in what direction is the standard of living moving, up or down? When this comparison with the past is made, then the transformation is amazing. And with the growth and extension of planned production, things are improving every year. The aim of the five-year plan, to raise the standard of living by 80 per cent in 1955 as compared with 1950, is no idle boast. What are relative shortages now, will disappear; goods which are expensive luxuries now, will come within the reach of all. Under People's Democracy, the Rumanian people have much to look forward to. And they know that their goals will be achieved, because the achievement lies entirely in their own hands. They are the master. They are planning and building their own future.



## THE HUNGARIAN AUTONOMOUS REGION

**I**F in the old days things were hard for the Rumanian peasant and worker, the national minorities had for the most part the extra difficulties caused by racial discrimination. Between 1866 and 1944 some 400 laws and decrees set disabilities on the non-Rumanians. The school, press, administration, law, church and army were used to keep race-hatred alive; and every now and then agitation raged against the Hungarians, Jews, Slavs. State-policy distinguished a Majority section and a Minority in laws on the Protection of National Labour, the Rumanisation of the Professions; and certificates of national origin were demanded in matters touching on citizenship and the apparatus of government. Even work was often denied the minorities: for instance, we find illiterate non-Rumanian tobacco-workers examined in Rumanian although they were doing unskilled jobs. Notices of *Don't apply* turned away non-Rumanians; antisemitic pogroms occurred from time to time; and in 1940 when the law forbade meetings or demonstrations of all kinds, a double penalty was enacted for non-Rumanians who disobeyed.

The whole administrative apparatus from prefect to gendarme had power to pillage and maltreat non-Rumanian workers. The latter paid larger taxes; they were liable to be pronounced guilty offhand before tribunals; they were beaten and insulted in the army. Their language was generally ignored in the schools and lawcourts; notices in post offices were in Rumanian and officials would reply in no other language. Their cultures were stifled, and the spirit of the young was poisoned from the school-bench onward. Yet for the most part the capitalists and landlords of the different nationalities found no difficulty in agreeing and acting together.

Before 1918 the Rumanians themselves were penalised and oppressed in Transylvania, where consistent efforts were made to Magyarise the population. The kindergarten law of 1891 tried to force non-Magyars to speak Hungarian from the cradle up, and was frustrated only by inefficiency and corruption. Rumanian was officially not tolerated. Public notices—even danger warnings on the railways—were in Hungarian alone. Lads who dared to speak a word in Rumanian were expelled from schools or seminaries; they were forbidden to speak their own tongue “ostentatiously” in the streets. There was no sanction for Rumanian societies of any kind: thus, at Arad a literary society was continually thwarted. At the funeral of the poet Muresianu a tricolour wreath sent from the Bucharest society of journalists was torn from the coffin by the police, and years later 17 schoolboys of Brashov were arrested for putting flowers on his grave. At Brad a girl of six was arrested for having Rumanian colours in her hair; her father, mother and nurse were jailed for some days; and her father was suspended from his post as secretary of the commune.

“Though we were twice as many as the Magyars, we had no rights at all.”

“I thought there was a Law of Nationalities which let you elect your own officials,” I said.

He laughed. “That was just a bad joke. It didn’t mean a thing. The elections were all cooked. Why, if we sent our kids to school, they learned only Hungarian and were taught everything in Hungarian. Result was they didn’t learn anything. . . . In the end they did close it (the school) and we had no school at all. Anyone answering back was jailed. . . . We were watched all the time; one sign of life and we were crushed.” (D. J. Hall, *Rumanian Furrow*, 1933)

No wonder that the *doinas* of the Rumanian peasants expressed a feeling of homelessness in their native land:

O poor strange land  
how long have you kept watch on your hillocks.  
I have had too much of strangers  
as the grass has of old bullocks.



I am preyed on by enemies  
as the grass where fresh cattle browse.  
O I am tired of cruelty  
as the grass is tired of milch-cows.

Worrying wears me out  
as hungry sheep wear the grasses.  
I have wandered all over the country  
that goodluck always passes.  
Wherever my feet may carry me,  
no quiet on my soul is shed.  
No matter how far I may wander,  
there's no peace to rest my head.

After 1918 the tables were turned, but tolerance was as far as ever. Now it was the Hungarians who suffered. Then Horthy got most of the area back through Hitler, and the Rumanians were persecuted. Then in 1945 the Maniu bands began murdering the Hungarians. No wonder the three nationalities and four religions used to be called the Seven Deadly Sins of Transylvania. If ever there was an area torn by racial divisions, here it was.

What then is it like in 1952?

The new Constitution of the Rumanian People's Republic includes among its provisions the creation of a Hungarian Autonomous Region in Transylvania. The Autonomous Region, while obeying the general laws of the Republic, will have its own special statute drawn up by its deputies after wide public discussion—a statute that will embody all the particular needs and traditions of the region, economic, social, cultural.

The Szeklers (akin to the Magyars but not identical) are settled compactly well inside Transylvania or they would naturally become part of the Hungarian State. Their region's capital is Târgu-Muresh—a pleasant rambling town dominated by the long white building on the slopes, the Military Academy which is now a Medical Faculty. "A stupid militarist town, that's what the place used to be," said Dr. Mira; but all that is wholly of the past. Târgu-Muresh is now a cultural and educational centre, with growing industry. In its streets a long flower-border runs between road and pavement, in which the

main feature, at least in August, is a shrubby many-coloured flower called Little Esther in Hungarian. And this flower-border seems to set the key for the town's busy and yet glowingly amiable way of life.

The lengthy town square, however, gives at once a reminder of the old days of chauvinist rivalries. At the side, one end, there stands the large Town Hall and Cultural Palace, washed creamily white, with gaudy mosaics of gold and glistening tiles of green and red—while at the further end rises the huge Orthodox Rumanian church, built in the 1930's. The Hall-and-Palace is a grandiose version of Hungarian style, mixing folk-motives lavishly with the forms that stood for art-splendour in central Europe at the time of its building (1912), and was intended by the Austrian Empire as a manifesto of Magyarisation in Transylvania; while the Orthodox cathedral in sub-Byzantine style is the riposte by the Rumanian authorities after 1918, shouldering aside as it does the more modest baroque church of the Hungarian Catholics that faces it from the side. (The size of the Rumanian congregation could certainly not have warranted such a building).

But in this new Rumania the opposition loses all its flavour of national antagonisms; and the two grandiosities are linked by the flowerbeds of friendly intercourse.

The Hall-and-Palace deserves a few more words, however. Inside it is as many-splendoured as without, with a fine concert-hall (being carpentered into a theatre as we looked in to hear the organ), the hall-of-mirrors with its lotus-chairs where marriages were celebrated, the art gallery, the museum with roman antiquities and folk-art from the neighbourhood, the library (which began in 1913 with 13,000 volumes and now has over 100,000: gaining in the last eight years more than in the whole 1923-44 period). A charming old liberal, a professor of oriental languages, showed us over.

Dr. Andrei Mira told us, "Before the war as a student I came here with my friend Stephan Izsak and asked if there was anything by Marx on the shelves. Within a few hours the police were visiting our parents and warning them." He smiles sternly and tranquilly. He spent the first years of the war in jail, the later years digging roads in a penal battalion. Now he is an assistant at the Medical Faculty.



In the depths of the library we find a frail gnome of a man, with big yellow spectacled head, who is hard at work binding up books. He has saved twenty thousand lei yearly by his work, and he proudly shows us a system of mottling that he has himself invented. For a moment he hesitates about the material he is using; then, while everyone else laughs and he remains as grave as ever, he turns the sheets over—they are photos of the Royal Family once turned out on excellent thick paper in myriads. Why waste them?

In the garden beside the Catholic church we see the priest (a monsignor) eating a frugal meal with a younger priest in a little loggia. With dignified and gentle courtesy he comes to us, answers questions about the organisation of his church in the area, and points lovingly at a flowering tropical tree. Not far away, on rising ground, stands a very large and older church, Catholic turned Lutheran, which has the remnants of extensive fortifications.

The Medical and Pharmaceutical Institute stands in a fine park on the hillside, with newly built clinics close at hand. While responsible for the health centre, the hospitals and clinics of the town, it is also training specialists for the whole country—not only for the Autonomous Region, where more than a 100 village-hospitals and maternity-homes have been opened since the Liberation. Before the war only a minute quota of Hungarian students could enter Rumania's scanty medical schools. Now the Institute is devotedly at work, turning out hundreds of doctors and specialists every year. Its professors have been studying the recent Soviet developments of Pavlovian theory, and in the psychiatric wards they are using the new techniques of curative sleep.

Exploring the town we find one of the hospitals—a first-rate little place, once an expensive private nursing home, now a free maternity hospital. And further down the same side-street of large mansions is a fine house taken over as a secondary school. (Before Liberation there was no free secondary education here). Children tend to specialise early in this land with its urgent need of technicians, and this school is turning out statisticians, experts who can work on socialist economic planning. At the agricultural college on the outskirts advanced farming techniques are taught to children, many of whom have parents in

the villages who cannot read. Not far off, turning a corner, we hear a sound of singing, and find that community singing is being taught at an Agitation Point—one of the many offices scattered in all Rumanian towns, which we would call Citizens' Information Bureaux. A pianist is playing, and people who have been drawn in are taking part picking up line after line.

Here in the town is a State Theatre, set up in 1946. Before, there was no permanent theatre: only wandering troops with operettes or dubious confessions for the rich landowners; now they play Molière, Gorky, Shakespeare, Chekov, Caragiale, as well as Hungarian classics and new plays. And they organise festivals in the timberworks around, in collective farms, in factories.

The most important factory is Simo Geza, which makes furniture. There used to be a few wretched shops, but after the war the workers built a large-scale new works on a bombed site. In this spacious and well-lit edifice all the processes are carried out under the best of conditions, with a magnificent recreation hall and bathrooms with lockers. More than a thousand work in its departments—which are brightly decorated with original kinds of production charts (e.g. in the form of a clock). Already its production plan is over-fulfilled.

In the hall are wall-newspapers with satire, verse, records of innovations. A well-composed poem, contrasting past and present, was the work of a quiet keen woman whom we met later in the finishing section, who spoke of poetry without stopping her work. She has worked hard at her writing and now corresponds for various newspapers. Cartoons by workers are on the walls. Also the announcement of a variety-show that the workers are staging, which is called *Voice of America* and in which a character named Lord Scoundrel takes part.

In the dispatch department the manager with his bushy black moustache tells how he learned to read and write after the Liberation, when he was forty. "When I first learned to read," he tells us, "I felt like one who was born blind but has learned at last to see." The factory holds regular classes after work for illiterates. (The area had 180,000 in 1944—a figure now reduced to 16,000). The dispatch manager was feeling very good, as he had just introduced a new improved packing method—by the simple trick of putting the rest of the bedroom



suite inside the wardrobe. He deftly demonstrated how it is done.

Near the exit ration cards are being stamped and distributed. Places of work are thus used, to save the workers time and trouble. By using the place of work, the distributors also can ensure that everyone gets his particular ration-category. Those doing heavy work get more meat, for example. And we find that the director gets smaller rations than many of his workers.

In a smaller set of shops luxury furniture, mainly for offices, is being made. The profit from this enables the ordinary furniture to be sold much more cheaply than it could otherwise be.

By the factory runs a tributary of the Muresh, with little summerhouses and boating clubs where the workers spend week-ends, or where (if they are devotees, like the slight yellow-haired girl who works for one of the papers and who looks charming in her well-cut green dress) they can come to scull every evening.

To appreciate the thriving new life of Târgu-Muresh we must grasp how backward was the area before 1944, producing only timber and some crops or raw materials; its folk used to go roaming round for work and poverty was widespread. Now the demand for workers far exceeds the supply. New coal deposits have been found (the town is piped with natural gas), and a thorough inquiry is being made into the area's mineral wealth. Timber, previously cut most wastefully is now carefully conserved. Electricity supplies many villages and spreads monthly. And a new railway to Odorhei-Ciceu is in hand.

The jolly and vigorous council-secretary is a good companion. (A man tells us how he marched by her in the last Mayday procession and she was being stopped all the way by people thanking her or making suggestions.) She and others from the People's Council accompany us to the restaurant where we feed on Hungarian-type plenty. Each Hungarian has his own favourite folksong that he wants the band to play; and when one of them calls for the Lark, the violinist declares that he can't play it well enough for us. So at once the town's best musician is hunted for, and, when found, is rushed along

to give us a proper version of the song, which he does most brilliantly. Stephan Izsak, editor of a local paper, whose health has been wrecked by his experiences in Auschwitz concentration-camp, tells us how he had been sentenced for listening to the B.B.C.—and now, he adds sadly, he cannot bear to listen to the B.B.C.'s European broadcasts as they are so vilely agitational for war and discord among nations.

As we rise to catch the plane back to Bucharest, three girls are climbing a tall plum-tree in the back garden, and one of them, a corngold-blond with long plaits, brings plums to us on a platter. And as we shake hands in goodbye, the girl who works in charge of culture on the Regional Committee, tells us: "We're not yet a land of plenty, but we know we shall be. We're not an 'advanced' country yet, but we're going to be. We are planning prosperity and fulfilling our plan, and all we need is peace."<sup>1</sup>

Once again look back a few years at the events in these happy and peaceful areas. Augustin Popa, professor of theology at Blaj, both from his chair and in the paper *Unirea* that he directed, advocated extreme racial hatreds; during the war he gave Maniu a plan for the extermination of the Transylvanian Hungarians; and in 1945 he took part in the formation of the Maniu bands, directing the National Peasant Party paper *Curierul*. In 1945 he fled to Rome where he collaborated with Nazis in an information bureau and benevolent society that sent spies and agents into Rumania; in 1949 he went to the U.S.A.<sup>2</sup>

The Maniu bands carried out Popa's policy. Under Gavrilă

<sup>1</sup> There are 35 schools in the town with some 10,000 pupils, Hungarian and Rumanian; in the region 318 elementary schools and many middle ones—Hungarian speaking. Hungarian workers in the Region or out of it have in many cases given stakhanovite leads to the whole country, e.g. textile workers of Arad, miners of the valley of Jiu.

There are some 3,000 Germans in the Region. The present council has Hungarians, Rumanians, Germans, Jews and Gypsies on it.

<sup>2</sup> Another Maniu "patriot" was Emil Ghilezan who agitated chauvinistically against the Hungarians, yet was friendly with the Horthy circle; he worked with Maniu from 1937, controlled the Banca Ardealenă (at Antonescu's instructions) of Hungarian capital; arranged the sales of loot from the Soviet Union, and had a post in the Rădescu government. He was given 450 millions of lei by an English colonel to aid Maniu's party; finally fled to Paris where he worked for *Free Europe* of the U.S.A.



Olteanu they attacked Hungarian villages at night. With rifles they forced out the old men, women and children to watch the "trials" they held before the church or school. The men they sentenced for any old grudge, or merely as examples to terrify the Hungarian population, were executed in true Nazi fashion on a block with an axe. Thus in the village Aita Seaca of the department of Trei Scaune they drove out all the inhabitants between the age of 17 and 60 and compelled them with machine guns to watch the executions. Their victims were first flogged with knotted cords. The first man brought to the block was a peasant Alexandru Nagy, whose head was struck off with a single blow. The rest were treated with less "compassion", their heads were stuck up on the block and then hacked off with deliberate slowness, to prolong their agony.

The wife of the peasant Fabian Sandor was forced to come without being allowed to swaddle her baby. After being whipped till she bled she dragged herself home to find the baby frozen to death.

Set beside this village is Ip-Sabaj, where Horthy's fascists a couple of years earlier had massacred some 150 peasants.

And now we find at a meeting of cultural centres the ensemble of dancers from Ip-Sabaj has its girls in Rumanian costume, its lads in Hungarian. At the cultural centre of Aita Seaca Rumanians and Hungarians teach one another their songs.

The contrast with the past is so extreme as to leave one breathless. But one must remember that the peasants had a long tradition of common action in resistance and revolt; and on neither side were they drawn into the fascist persecutions. On the contrary, they were often ready to hide and aid the persecuted. The Madosz, Hungarian revolutionary movement of workers and peasants, played its part in maintaining this fraternal spirit.

Listen to the workers themselves. At Odorhei in the Autonomous Region there were big ironworks, iron-mines run by Rumanian capitalists who paid bad wages for fourteen hours work a day under foul conditions. The population here is compactly Hungarian, and yet before the Liberation in the 120 schools only Rumanian was taught, with some 300 teachers who couldn't speak the language of their pupils. The Hungarian dictator Horthy took the area during the war; but all

that happened was an increased exploitation of poor and middle peasants. On the estate of Daniel Lajos all the poor peasants of Tarceshti were forced to work, and those of Bertsid were brought along as well. When they protested, the landlord brought in the police. "The sons of the land-owner Szakacs Zoltan of Feliceni were uncrowned kings," says a worker. "They took the daughters of the poor peasants and nobody could do anything against them in the lawcourts. The chairman was Veszka Istvan, one of Hitler's men, and he didn't punish the ravishers. No, he praised them. The mayor of Odorhei was a lickspittle of the Hungarian kulaks and landlords, a lawyer he was, Filo Ferenc. Everything was corrupt. We'd wait hours to see him. All day. But he was too busy—yes, drinking with the Pater Pacific (of the local Catholic monks). We saw the truth. We saw the Hungarian landlords and the Rumanian capitalists were brothers. All their talk of sticking together as Hungarians or Rumanians was a lie."

The lawyer and the other Hungarian reactionaries tried to work up an anti-Rumanian hysteria by organising an attack on the memorial crypt to Rumanian soldiers who fell in the 1914-18 war, on Kuvar Hill. They smashed it up and threw the bones out. Then they began an antisemitic campaign, with support for the war against the Soviet Union. And all the while the Hungarian and Rumanian directors sat in complete amity on the boards of the local factories. No political changes made any difference. Szakacs Zoltan had an agreement with the Rumanian officials and the prefect Constantinescu; he got as many privates from the army to work on his land as he wanted, and didn't pay them any wages. "Today all that's ended."

Now a bricklayer is chairman of the District Council, a locksmith is chairman of the Town Council, a house-painter directs the big timberworks, a poor peasant's son directs the spirits factory, and a servant has risen to control of the Jozsef Attila works. The workers have wholly rebuilt the timberworks and constructed a textile factory that is now one of the best in the land for quality, increasing its production 7½ times last year. In one year after the Liberation they rebuilt 75 bridges that the fascists had blown up, laid down 37 kilometres of roadway. With a new railway that is to be built, the



timberworks and a centre for bottling mineral water will expand. Already there are eleven schools in Hungarian for 13,000 pupils, with nine middle schools and 28 intermediates, with 4,000 pupils, 45 kindergartens, 26 seasonal gardens (where women leave children at harvest time and the like); 106 culture centres drawing some ten thousand workers into cultural activities; libraries with 66,000 books, seven cinemas, two museums. Of the 15,000 illiterates most can now read; by 1954 there will be none who cannot. . . . Statistics are dull things, yet in such contexts they kindle with warm life.

Or turn to Gheorgieni, also in the new Region. Here there used to be no Hungarian schools and only a few Rumanian, to which the only Hungarians who could go were the sons of the rich. "Before Horthy came, the rich men of the village used to say to me: 'You're a dirty Hungarian,' " says a peasant. "When Horthy came, they said: 'You're an uneducated lout.' " Now his daughter goes to school, and no one asks if he is a Hungarian or a Rumanian.

And here the workers have ended the capitalist devastation of the forests. This year they planted 3,650,000 saplings, 100,000 trees.

Istvan Asztalos was born in 1909 in a Transylvanian village, son of a railworker. He tried all sorts of jobs—day-labourer, miner, bricklayer. When 1944 came he edited a weekly, *Villagers*, in Hungarian. His early novels treat the village as a closed space into which the larger movements of the world cannot enter: but he changed his method as he saw the immemorably-stagnant areas ferment with change. In his novel *The Way the Wind Blows*, set in the autumn of 1947, he depicts a Transylvanian village where there are two co-operative stores—one run by the Hungarian kulaks, the other by the Rumanian. The Party organisation in the village decides to end this division and build a single co-operative serving the interests of all the poor and middle peasants. The Hungarian and Rumanian kulaks conspire together to demoralise and divide the peasants by twisting everyday incidents into the appearance of national rivalries and hatreds; but they are caught out, and the single co-operative is set up.

Such a novel, closely read by the peasants of the areas described and sharply criticised by them for any divergences from the truth of their own experience, can be taken as a plain record of the last convulsions of the ancient evil. The co-operative that unites has triumphed all over Transylvania, and the advent of the Autonomous Region is the splendid testimony of the Republic's success in striking the source of national discords at the root.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gheorgeni has 71 elementary schools, five kindergartens, six nurseries, two lycées, two professional schools, two polyclinics, two dispensaries, a state-hospital, 11 birth clinics, etc.

See appendix for some details on Cluj and Arad.



## GERMANS AND SERBS

WE have seen how the Germans were working amicably with the Rumanians in the Brashov-Stalin area; and in Stalin itself many were playing an important part in heavy-industry. In the Sibiu region since 1948 there have been in action some 100 German schools with a four-year course, 58 with a seven-year course, eight middle schools; many young writers have come forward; the culture-centres have 75 drama groups. More than 400 German deputies have been elected to the People's Councils of town, district, village, where some have executive posts.

Yet the German question is certainly the most touchy among all the national problems. The so-called Saxons, coming in fact from Hamburg, Alsace Lorraine, etc., kept to themselves for hundreds of years, with their own elective systems long intact; though from 1867 losing their political privileges under the Hungarians, they held their economic ground. Their politics tended to be based in a conformity with whatever system was in power, plus a tenacious effort to preserve local supremacies. Economically they looked east, to Moldavia and the Black Sea.

The so-called Swabians of the Banat in the west of Rumania were a very different group, put in by the Austrian government to fill the area depopulated by the Turks. They came soon to hold more than land, and their capitalists brought in miners from Bohemia, wood-cutters from the Tyrol. More class differentiation developed than among the Saxons, as the industrialisation grew. They looked, not eastwards, but to Austria and Germany, concerned with German imperial ambitions, and their economic link was with Budapest. They had many landless

men, and their rich were far richer than the big farmers of the Saxon settlements. They were Catholics, while the Saxons were Lutheran; and the Catholic Church worked for Magyarisation.

After 1918 there was thus a cleavage between the policies of the Germans of the Banat and those of Transylvania. The Rumanian government tried to better the relations between the two groups, hoping that the Saxons would help to Rumanianise the Swabians. In the Banat also was a working-class, while the Saxons had no such problem.

With the rise of Hitler came a new nationalist propaganda among the Germans, which intensified after 1933. The sons of the German bourgeois and kulaks turned to Hitler; German capital flowed into industry and food-exports; and a strong effort was made to win over German-Rumanian intellectuals, especially in Transylvania where many of the schoolmasters had been trained in Germany. In the Banat the accord between Hitler and the Vatican turned the Catholic Church into a Nazi propagandist. The bourgeoisie was at first passive in its response; and the older members tried to hold back the younger. Then as Nazi economic pressures grew, the older members too turned strongly to fascism.

The Banat working-class movement was anti-fascist, but with all the weaknesses of German Social-Democracy. In 1940, however, the Rumanian Government handed over its German minority to Nazi control; the minority became a *Volksdeutsche* under the swastika flag with a fully worked out fascist race-system. Germans might not marry Rumanians, and must pay contributions to the Nazi organisations. All cultural and educational organs came under Nazi command, and the Catholic Church fully acquiesced.

The confused position of the Germans is well exemplified by the following account of events in the Brashov area in 1940 when Hitler by the Vienna Diktat awarded most of Transylvania to Horthy.

More terrified of Hungarian domination than the Rumanians themselves were the Transylvanian Germans, who all wore black tight-fitting gaberdine suits with high boots. . . . "We'll fight to the knife for our *Volkstum*." The young Germans said they wished nothing better than to fight the Hungarians.



Asked what they would do if Hitler handed them over, they said that he wouldn't—but if he did, they would submit, "though it would be the worst that can happen to us." Then in Brashov:

Gauleiter Henlein, who had come from Berlin for the auto races that day, had the swastika flag torn from his car and trampled under the feet of an angry mob. (R. G. Waldeck, *Athenee Palace*, 1943).

The crowd must have been mainly Rumanian workers, yet such an event in Brashov, the heart of the Saxon area, shows the complexity of the situation.

The anti-fascist groups, led by the German Communists, were not eliminated, especially in the Banat, despite the efforts to track them down, kill or jail them. Filip Gelz, now secretary of the German anti-fascist committee, a quiet resolute man, answered our question as to what he was doing at the time, "I was in jail. In the prison there were eight of us. The Gestapo tortured us and tried to break us down, but not one of us gave in." The government handed 40,000 men over to the Wehrmacht. Many refused and tried to hide. If caught, they were jailed or transported to Germany.

The tried anti-fascists provided the stable core of the post-war effort to re-educate the Germans. The present German anti-fascist movement was set up in 1949, and works through the trade unions and mass-organisations, trying to draw the German groups into the national life. It has central, regional and district committees, holds meetings in German, works in the culture-centres of the German areas, and publishes a paper, *Neuer Weg*.

It is strongest in the Banat; but Germans are moving into industry also in the Stalin region—where there were 150 or 200 in the Stalin factories, there are now 8,000—and such a movement helps to break down the old racial exclusiveness. The kulaks fight hard to stop the fissures in the old closed groupings. In the Stalin region they are often the heads of local sects and use this position to frighten or persuade the peasants from the collective farms and the factories, falling back at times on prophecies of the End of the World.

As the German peasants and workers find things going well

and their standards of living rising, the resistances slacken. Their passivity begins to break down and they take an active interest in politics, especially in the matter of peace. The division of Germany and the rearmament of West Germany with its revival of the Nazis come home to them with something of urgency. Many have relations in West Germany, who fled or were sent there to work during the war; they want these people back and recognise that only the peaceful unification of Germany will make their return possible. Many of the Banat Germans have connections with Austria.

"Last month," says Gelz, "there were fourteen meetings among Rumanian-Germans at which the speakers denounced the S.S. who have taken refuge in Austria and make propaganda against our country. The women are strongly for the peace-movement." In June, 1951, a large meeting of German intellectuals in Bucharest decided to send an appeal to the professors of the University of Bonn to fight against the division of Germany, against the plans to use Germans again as cannon-fodder. And many Swabians and the Saxons have for some time been individually writing letters to West Germans asking for German unity.

There is much re-education yet to be done, Gelz agrees. The effects of centuries of separatism and national exclusiveness cannot be overcome in a few months; there is still much passivity, which turns to mysticism and obscurantism to escape the conflicts of the present. But, he insists, there is now a solid basis of loyalty to the People's Republic, and this basis steadily widens.

The Banat, however, has another important minority—the Serbs. From the late 14th century onwards Turkish pressure sent groups of Serbs across the Danube. In 1718 the Banat became part of the Austrian Empire. Badly ravaged, it was repopulated by Serbs, Germans, Hungarians as well as Rumanians. The 1948 census showed 44,833 Serbs and Croats in Timishoara, Severin and Arad (0.3 per cent of the total population of Rumania) of whom nine in ten were Serbs. Over 88 per cent of them live rurally, and those in the towns are workers with a sprinkling of small artisans. In 1940 Slobodan Costici, the protopop of Timishoara, published a book in



which he estimated that at least 77·8 per cent of the families had no land at all—and since he compiled his figures from incomplete statistics, the proportion must have been in fact even higher. Such Serb middle class as there was consisted of tradesmen and shopkeepers.

In 1945, 3,689 families claimed and gained their shares of five hectares (about 13 acres) of land each. By June, 1951, there were 32 collective farms. Only three villages had none, and there were topographical reasons for their failure. In some villages practically the whole Serb population has entered the collective. In all, some 1,850 families of poor and middle peasants belong to the farms, working with Rumanians and Hungarians; 26 farms have Serbs as chairmen, while 29 village co-operatives are presided over by Serbs. (Before they had no part whatever in the State system; there were no Serb officials in the local government.)<sup>1</sup>

They are proud of their record during the war, when many of the young men fought in partisan groups and the Nazis rated them all as of the fourth or fifth category—that is, not to be drafted into the army but to be used for land-work and so on. Now the Serb workers in town or country are organised in the Union of Slav Democratic Associations centred on Timishoara with local groups in 48 villages.

Timishoara is a large and handsome city, which bears plainly in its architecture the marks of its period of Austrian domination. Coming from the airport, we passed a gypsy-quarter (Vatrachi is the term for settled gypsies) and came by maize-fields and children's playing grounds to the town-centre where a huge Rumanian Orthodox Church with brilliant tiles and an oversized main tower faces the State Theatre with its rectangular plain façade oddly cut-into with an ornate doorway. (The Church was started shortly before the war and only finished afterwards: its inception must have derived from the

<sup>1</sup> In the elections of December 1950 from the Serbs and Croats came 435 deputies (20 of regions, 60 of districts, 13 of towns, 342 of communes). Also 41 chairmen and vice-chairmen, and 15 secretaries of the People's Councils. Serbs are directors of works, hold government posts, etc.

There are 56 culture-centres in the villages (18 wholly Serb) with 24 choirs (with folk-song repertory) 27 bands, 9 dance groups, 34 reading circles (by early 1951), 11 village cinemas. The Timishoara radio gives 2 daily broadcasts in Serbian.

same policy as that of the Târgu-Muresh Orthodox Church, though here there is a better excuse for it.) Not far from the church-end of the flowering centre is a fine new garden with a magnificent open-air theatre nearing completion; and a large square not far from the other end owns a free-market where bright vegetables are heaped every morning. In the central place stands the well-stocked Serb bookshop where you can look through the recent publications by the Serb writers of Timishoara.

In the streets you hear four languages spoken; and most people can talk in all four (though a more assorted set than Serb, German, Hungarian and Rumanian it would be hard to find). But whatever they converse in, they are proud of the Timishoara football team.

Boris Popovici, a greying eagle-faced man, is chairman of the Union of Slav Associations and director of the Institute of Minerology of Timishoara.

"As a member of the Serb minority," he says, "I learned from childhood the hard life led by the poor and middle Serb peasants, the thousands of farm servants, the Croats tearing a difficult livelihood from the arid hills round Rezitsa." They bore a double yoke, that of workers and that of Serbs. "But now at Variash, at Cenad, at Denta, at Sanmartin, and many other villages, where the Serb workers had no right of public meeting, where the kulaks were protected by the police in their control of things, you can see the folk gathering happily in the new culture-centres or in one another's houses to spend enjoyable evenings in the traditional Serb way. And you hear from afar the Serb Tambura bands—there are nearly thirty of them now." He adds that to grasp the complete reversal of the old ways of oppression one needs to visit the Serb communes. "There you'll meet men like Luca Seminorici, chairman at Belobreshca, a Serb who couldn't read a few years ago. Or Milan Iovanovici at Moldava. . . . At Variash the chairman of the People's Council is a Serb, though the Serbs make up only about a third of the population."

The friendly relations between the national groups may be exemplified from Belobreshca and Sokol, who sent aid to the Rumanians of Juapa who were behind with their harvest through weather-conditions; scores of Serbs went along, though



in the midst of their own harvest. At Denta the choir has five nationalities in it.

Every year a great harvest festival is held in the main park at Timishoara, attended by tens of thousands of workers and peasants. It is called the Harvest of Peace. Last year Bunaciu, deputy to the National Assembly, declared at the celebration, "The fraternal bonds that unite the workers of all the nationalities strengthen our country and constitute the source of its power."

The letters that the farmers write to Gheorghiu-Dej in their eagerness to announce their advances have a deeply stirring note. Thus they exulted at Belobreshca:

We want you to know the joy that fills us all. We remember the past, the time when we were under the domination of the capitalists, the great landed proprietors and the kulaks, and we appreciate all the better our present liberty, the fact that we are now the masters of our own destinies. In the People's Council of the commune the district and the region, sit the men we have elected as deputies, we the Rumanian and Serb working peasants.

In our village now we have a 7-year school where the teaching is in Serbian. Our children are given free all the necessary school equipment and books in their mother-tongue. They have further won 20 study-scholarships. Many of our children go to the Serbian Lycée at Timishoara, the Teachers' Training College, the Agro-technical School, where again they learn in their mother-tongue.

Never have we known such freedom in all that concerns the growth of our cultural life, in the exercise of our religious beliefs and our traditional customs. We own a culture-centre, art groups, choir, band, a Serbian dance-group, a library of books in many tongues. We receive papers printed in Serbian. We have our own cinema.

Variash, which includes Rumanians, Hungarians, Germans and Gypsies as well as Serbs, writes:

We are proud of the abundant crop we have gained, nearly twice the size of last year. We could not have done it without the tractors and harvesters, the fraternal aid of the town-workers. We don't know how to express our gratitude

to the Party, to the Government, for all the help we've had—not only for the harvest but in every circumstance.

They have hostels, kindergartens, bands, cinema and culture-centre, but

our greatest joy, Comrade Gheorghiu Dej, is that since the spring electricity has been installed in our village. When we look back into the sombre years of hardship, we appreciate all the more fully our prosperous life of today, and that is why we cherish peace and are resolved to defend it at all costs. . . .

The peasants, aided by the tractor-station workers, have begun ploughing up the stubble fields for the next crop.

They have electrified the threshing-system. Solomosan Radvan, Serb, comments on the way that the sharing out of the land, with gifts of tools from the State, made life much happier. But "things were not always easy on our little strips," and so he welcomed the advent of the collective which enriches and provides leisure. Marianna Luchin adds, "By working all together, Rumanians and Serbs and Hungarians, we make our collective a weapon for the defence of peace."

The Serbs share all the benefits of the general health-scheme. At Timishoara is one of the country's four leading medical institutes, and 15 Serb villages have big health centres with hospitals, dispensaries, pharmacies, dentistry, maternity-homes, ambulances, etc. Their extensive school-system we shall treat later.<sup>1</sup> First, however, it is highly instructive to compare the conditions in Timishoara Region, not only with the pre-1944 period there, but also with the contemporary position across the border in Tito's Yugoslavia. This matter is further relevant to our inquiry because Titoist agents have

<sup>1</sup> The Serb Orthodox church has a Vicariate in Timishoara (58 parishes, 57 churches, one chapel, 3 monasteries) with a cathedral in the city of T. that has a parishioner choir. Services are in Serbian; State-aids and subventions are given. The vicar Stefan Tomice stated to all his churches in 1950, "We live in peace and good understanding with the fraternal Rumanian people, and are devoted to the Rumanian People's Republic. In this land we see there exists no difference of race or nationality. The Constitution of our country confirms religious freedom for all religious groups. We are thankful to the Rumanian government and the country's leadership for the support they give us."



repeatedly tried to disturb the harmony prevailing between the nationalities in Timishoara; the relations of the Serb communes to the Yugoslavia only a few kilometres away cannot be ignored.

Look across the border then, where there is a large Rumanian minority. In the whole Region of Timoc there is not one Rumanian school for the many thousand Rumanians; in the commune Voivodintsi is one Rumanian schoolmistress, but there is a lack of any Rumanian schoolbooks and all cultural activities in Rumanian are forbidden.

From 1950 the Voivodina Region has been full of troops terrorising the Rumanians and other minorities. From September, 1950, hundreds of Rumanian families have been deported to concentration camps in Istria and Croatia. Five orders from the U.D.B. (Tito's secret police) thus instructed the commanders of the troops: (1) "With the aid of the stocks commission you are empowered to possess yourself of all and any products of the members of the co-existing nationalities, Hungarian, Czechs, Rumanians and others." (2) "It is necessary to exercise control of all movements among the co-existing nationalities. All travellers without our services' authorisation are to be arrested." (3) "All members of the co-existing nationalities must present themselves regularly before the nearest State offices—once a month for the districts, and daily at 6 o'clock for the village. Only persons under 17 are exempt." (4) "Remove from all suspects among the co-existing nationalities all wireless apparatus, since such persons constitute a menace to the order of the State." (5) "Prohibit all cultural activities among the co-existing nationalities since they are politically dangerous."

Two deputies were arrested in 1949, tried and heavily sentenced. Scores of Rumanians suspected as democrats have been arrested and beaten up. Many spies have been sent over the border. Milos Toforov, tried in May, 1950, said that the Congress of the anti-fascist Slav Front called at Timishoara in April, 1945, was meant to cover up agitation for the union of the Banat with Yugoslavia. S. Radosavlievitch, delegate from Clisura at the Congress, confirmed this statement and added that the Congress itself had been suggested by the O.Z.N. (predecessor of the U.D.B.). "Following orders from

the O.Z.N., Prof. N. Gavrilovitch organised a brigade of armed men at Moldava Veche to attack the Rumanian authorities."

Popovici comments, "I remember how in 1946, when I was secretary of the mass-organisation of the Serb population, which is now called the Union, Titoist agents were sent into the Banat under the pretence of cultural relations and made use of our hospitality to plot against our country."

They made use of the more corrupted section of the Banat workers and of the young men who had fought with the Serb partisans and who were often susceptible to nationalist propaganda. That was in the days before the reactionary character of the Titoist regime was so easy to disclose.

Now the Serbs of the Banat know how badly things have gone with the poor peasants of Yugoslavia, and contrast their own freedom with the repressions of national minorities that they know are going on in Yugoslavia. They know, for instance, how in the regions of Kosovo and Metokhio, and the district of Tetovo, where the main part of the population is Albanian, thousands have been sent to forced work in mines for non-ferrous metals wanted by the U.S.A., and their lands, cattle, etc., taken by the kulaks. The remaining Albanians there have to give free services, with horses and asses, on the farms of the kulaks, so that they have scarcely enough time for their own fields. The Albanian schools in Tetovo have been closed and changed into barracks for the police who perambulate the villages after suspects to maltreat. The journal *Brotherly Flame* of the Albanian minority has been suspended and its editor, M. Lezi put under arrest.

On the other hand Tito, under American pressure, has abandoned his claims to Slovenian Carinthia in favour of Austria.

And as a contrast to the relations between Tito's Yugoslavia and the Rumanian People's Republic we may consider the latter's recent economic accord with Hungary, with the new society for mutual aid, Romagochim, which will exploit natural gas in Rumania, piping the gas to a chemical plant in Hungary and at the same time supplying Rumanian villages.

It is no answer to say that if Tito has arrested various Rumanians and Albanians, the Rumanians have had to arrest Titoist agents. The valid contrast lies between the complete freedom of the Serb groups in the Banat to develop in their own



way and the complete lack of any such freedom for the Rumanian groups in Yugoslavia. The only honest conclusion is that where a national culture is suppressed, as it is in Yugoslavia, the authorities know that they dare not give the minority free expression, and that where it is not suppressed but is actively encouraged, as in Rumania, the authorities have faith in their own way of life as truly democratic.

The Serb kulaks in the Banat did their best to foment national differences, and from 1948 they were much aided by Titoist agents, who sought to work up a war-atmosphere. The kulaks threw in their full weight, arguing that any opposition to Tito was an attack on the Serbian people, and for a while such talk had effect on the youth who had fought in the partisan units. But the anti-fascist and anti-kulak elements, already well-developed before the war, were strong; and the rapid prosperity of the collective farms, plus a growing awareness of how things were really going in Yugoslavia, soon offset the nationalist propaganda. Border-folk have ways of learning what goes on on the other side; and the Serbs of the Banat know how hard things have proved for the poor peasants in Yugoslavia. For instance they get letters from relations when a death occurs or some other important family event. Popovici told me that he saw such a letter recently, which ended, "But we don't know whom to lament the more, the dead or the living."

The working peasants, Serbs, have been the main force exposing the tricks of the kulaks and the agents of Tito. Their strong sentiment for the Soviet Union and the Rumanian workers has deepened as a result of their experiences in the last few years.

Popovici mentioned an argument he had at Varash where some kulaks were declaring the Rumanians to be lazy and dishonest, no fit companions for Serbs in a collective farm; he remarked that he had mislaid his suitcase and just had it found for him by the Rumanian driver of his car. The others cheered and laughed, and the kulaks retired in chagrin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The traditional abuse was to call the Serbs dull, unable to tell "a boot from a pipe"; the Germans, drunkards ("to take the German's pipe" was to be drunk) and smug—i.e. the German shoemaker who complained that he'd lived 50 years among Rumanians and they still hadn't learned German so as to talk with him; the Hungarians, braggarts; the Turks greedy for money, etc. The stories making such points are endless. And yet the basic peasant attitude was in the rhyme: "Do lifelong good to everyone, even to foreigners let good be done."



Jack and Ann Lindsay at Timishoara.

Rumanian, Bulgarian and Czechoslovak Pioneers at a children's international peace camp on the Black Sea coast.







A Rumanian cartoon—"What supports Tito, and what he supports."

The Serb Lycée and Teachers' Training College in Timișoara are housed in a handsome building that was a school for nuns before the educational reform of 1948. The co-educational Lycée has 150 pupils, the college 110. The Rumanian language is taught, but all subjects are in Serbian. (Rumanian is a secondary language in all the national-minority schools.) The college had just sent out its first batch of young teachers. Before it was set up, teachers for the Serb schools were drawn from Yugoslavia, but it was found that these used their posts to sow nationalist discord. From the lycée the pupils can proceed to the faculties, medical, mathematics, physics, at Timișoara, or history, at Cluj. Only about five per cent of the pupils come from Timișoara; the rest are from the villages, where they stay till they complete the 8th class and then come to live in hostels in the city—one was just across from the school. Mostly the classes and the hostels are free, but where the parents are well-off (as already in some collectives) they may contribute in money or (more likely) in food-stuffs. The school also has its own farm to provide for the hostels.

Till 1945 only the rich Serbs could get their children educated, and even then the education was of a very low standard. The villages were in an even worse condition. Teachers were unpaid and books were lacking. "Only maybe an ancient Bible that belonged to granddad," says the young headmaster, Dusan Sablici. "I remember in 1945 the teacher at Tolvadea—an old monk with seven classes, and even the seventh could hardly read and write." And Popovici tells what a sharp struggle he had to enter and remain in the Mining Institute he now directs.

The children write many poems, and draw cartoons. They collaborate with Rumanian schools (and Hungarian), exchange information, hold common festivals in song and poetry in four languages. The youth organisations hold meetings and conferences together that end in dancing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By May 1951, 157 Serb books (343,650 copies) had been published. There are over 24 schoolbooks in Serbian, 5 in Croat. Wherever there is even a small national group, a school is set up. By 1951 there were 69 Serb schools (3,376 pupils), 9 Croat (372 pupils), kindergartens, etc.; 12 large villages have hostels.

There is a group of 30 young poets (Anthology of Serb poets in Rumania has been recently published). Of papers there is *Pravda* (twice weekly) and *Cultural Adviser* (monthly) printed in Bucharest for technical convenience (presses) but mainly edited in Timișoara. (Before there was one subservient petty-bourgeois journal without character.)





Harvest festival on a collective farm.

Training at the place of work. The "Filatura Romana" Mills in Bucharest.



At an elementary school in Bucharest.



The German school is in the same grounds. There was previously a lycée and (after 1926) confessional schools; but there were no technical or professional institutions. Only the rich could afford to send their children and classes were crowded (some 60 to one teacher, now the average is about 20). Now besides the kindergarten, elementary school and teachers' college are housed together, there are at Timishoara, German schools for textiles, hydraulics, electrical matters, etc., with horticultural and agricultural schools elsewhere in the region. Timishoara has eight seven-year schools, and the large villages have hostels to which the German children from the small neighbouring villages can come.

The school we are visiting was opened in 1948 with ten classes; it now has 24. It trains teaching-cadres for the villages, sending out more than 200 last year; it supplies not only this region but the whole country (Stalin, Sibiu). Last year it was ranked high as a "shockschool," and won various prizes, for instance in a literary competition arranged by *Arlus*, the Rumanian-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society. The headmaster, Mihai Bockel (who came from the same village, Sănpetru Mare, as the Serb headmaster) reels off the names of leading pupils and special holidays that they have won.

There is a Pioneer choir, an accordion band, groups for dance and drama: this year they have produced many classics, works by Gogol, Caragiale and the like, while the Lycée gave plays by Schiller, Goethe, Kleist, Lessing. The school keeps close contact with the other nationalities. Thus, it shares its large gymnasium, and when in need borrows laboratory equipment from the Serbs. When Germans come up from the villages for exams, some are put into Serb hostels.

One of the teachers, Hubner, a small keen-faced man, tells how he wanted to study music in his village, but couldn't. Then the Liberation gave him his chance. Now he composes and has had many works published and played on the radio. He details the many improvements in the position of teachers since August, 1951.

In some sections the frontier-line touches the last house of a village; in one place it cuts a village in two. We go out north towards the frontier, to Becicherecul Mic (*Mic* means "little":

Becicherecul Mare ("great") lies in Yugoslavia). We pass over the plain of stripped maize, cleared fields of good black earth, wagons of maize-fodder. In one wagon a farmer lies rolled up in mats from the rain, still driving. Then about 20 kilometres from both Yugoslavia and Hungary we see one of the Banat oases of greenery dominated by tall poplars, a village. Passing a state-farm that is trying out a cotton crop, we enter the street of warm-washed one-storey German houses, watched by geese and children prancing on sticks.

Four Pioneers welcome us. A Serb girl, a Rumanian boy, a German girl make speeches and present flowers. We go into the offices, look at the well-stocked multilingual library, chat with the three accountants (German, Serb, Rumanian), and inspect the club-rooms. A plump woman stands proudly by the excellent wireless set which she has turned on. The large meeting-room has placards that show its recent discussions on the new draft constitution—the Autonomous Region aroused most interest, they mention. We sit down with the chairman, Hleba Gheorghe, a Ukrainian, and the secretary, Milin Svetozar, a Serb; but a score and more of the farmers press in too. They want to hear what is said of their farm, correct or add things if they feel like it.

The Collective Farm of the New Way began in 1950 with 48 families—Serb, Rumanian, German, Ukrainian. By the next spring it had 80 families who came in with or without land and tools. Soon the number rose to 100, and now they have 180, including two Hungarian and six gypsy families. The chairman of the People's Council is a slight light Hungarian, the secretary a German.

Once again we hear figures that tell how rapid is the technical and productive advance of these collectives. The yield of oats rose from 400 kilos per hectare to 970, wheat from 150-200 to 700, maize is expected to show a yield this year of 1,200 from 340. Half the village is in the farm, which holds some 686 hectares (27 for hay).

The kulaks as usual used war-talk to depress people from joining or carrying on. Don't sow, what's the use? Don't harvest, what's the use? And Rumanians anyhow are loafers. Let the kulaks build up a really Serb collective. Some kulaks crept into the farm, but they tried to slow things down and were



expelled. (The kulaks are Serb, Rumanian, German.) More serious was the matter of the late chairman, a Serb partisan, a shrewd fellow better educated than most, who turned out to be a Titoist. He had smuggled in two other Titoists, men from other areas. The farmers were sorry, but not at all surprised. The episode has merely made them more vigilant; for (it cannot be overemphasised) the defenders of the Republic are the working peasants and proletarians. They it is who detect most of the traitors and Titoist agents.

Previously, the secretary says, the poor peasants, whether Serb or Rumanian, had no rights. The kulaks were all brothers together, and the rest had misery to feed on. There were Serb confessional and German state-schools, but not for the poor. "Our children had to go out and work as shepherds. They couldn't put their noses in the school door."

We walk over the ground where the sheds and stables lie. Amid songs and laughter, girls and boys are dealing with the sunflower-harvest: a boy turns a burred wheel that knocks out the seeds (for oil) and leaves the empty head to be tossed aside. In the near forge a Rumanian and a German are hammering red-hot iron. A new forge is being built. The Serb in charge of the piggery turns out his pink-snowy pigs to be fed.

We go out into the street, past the large board of red and black (red for the names of the shockworkers, black for the laggards) and down the poplared walks. A town-crier, beating his drum, is making announcements at the corners about the autumn-sowing. The light-yellow houses have stencilled flower-designs inside and on outer walls that are sheltered from rain.

We visit the house of a buxom Rumanian woman. Here, as in the other houses, an apartment consists of two long airy rooms with a smaller but still fair-sized room between for cooking, etc. The verandahs however are used for many purposes, at least in the summer. The furniture is solid, of peasant make, with religious paintings and statuettes (generally tawdry).

The second apartment we try belongs to a Serb, who has a strange grey heavy clay-statue of the Virgin set in the centre of his bed. He is a lean burnt-up man, aged 38, Milin Miloyan. He looks as if desperate toil has permanently reduced him to a fierce wisp of bone and muscle; and he speaks with a hard

vehemence, in snatches, as if no words could do justice to the rage and suffering that he remembers. "I was nothing. I was nothing. I was as the dog of the kulak. I was nothing. I slept in stables. I had no life. I was nothing. Now I am free. Now I am a man." He stands in the dimmed room like a gnarled burnt tree. "Now I am free. When it is my wish, I go to the People's Council and I say what I want to say. Now I have no fear. Now I am a man."

We ask him what he thinks of the world today. He answers with the same hard quiet vehemence. "We don't want war. We are fighting for peace. Now we own our own lives. We want to build up our collective farm. We don't want war."

He takes us out to see his two pigs, and holds down his dog that is as fierce as himself. We walk over the decaying heads of seeded sunflowers, and the two fat pigs grunt calmly at us. He shakes hands, and his eyes are friendly, but he does not smile. With his single labour he earned a thousand kilos of wheat last year, and many other things. He is a man and is sure of himself at last, but he has been the dog of Serb and Rumanian kulaks.

We call next on a German, Joseph Buch, who with his son and daughter-in-law earned over two thousand kilos of wheat last year. His plump wife is sitting cleaning vegetables behind a trellis in the verandah. "I was the servant of German kulaks," he tells us in his rough German dialect, less fierce than Milin, but as serious. "I was wounded in the war." He lifts his damaged arm. "Enough of it. I don't want it." he says: "*Enough of it!*" again and again, without raising his voice, but with the tone of a man whose decision is absolute. "I could not go to the officials. I could not use my own language. I had to beg for crusts of bread. Enough of it. Now I am myself a deputy. Now I have what I want." His son who worked in a barber's shop now works in a co-operative, and his daughter is a teacher. "I've had enough. I want life. I want to see life growing. Life is better. I am not troubled as I was troubled. I have the same rights as every other man. We are all the same, Serbs, Rumanians, Germans. Now I am not troubled." We ask him what he thinks of the situation of Germany, and he answers patiently and firmly, "I want Germany to be united. I do not want war. I do not want a Germany of war. I want a united Germany of peace."



We return to the offices, and again some twenty or thirty men and women crush in to hear and speak. A clear-voiced Rumanian woman tells of the part that women play in the farm, their work for peace, their equality, their discussions. Last Saturday they held a festival to raise funds for the suffering Korean people. She tells how the kulaks tried to work on the women and servants, to play on their weaknesses, but failed. Anna Todeanu, she is a deputy in the People's Council.

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Watching a peasant woman who hoses by night, recalls a poem by Veronica Porumbacu, the very slightly-built poetess who welcomed us at the airport when we first arrived in Rumania. It pleasantly distils the feeling of this night-work:

The moon now casts an azure depth of shadow,  
goes up as she has gone from ancient days:  
but I'd not change the echo of our labour  
to keep the peace that dusks the village-ways.

The tired-out brigadiers are sleeping fast,  
though lads yet sing a snatch or two that lingers.  
The hands, burnt stubborn all midsummer, at last  
rest on the pillow now, with loosened fingers.

Maybe our studious secretary sprawls  
reading a book by gaslight for a time.  
In the new house, whitewashed today, the walls  
crack in the darkness with the drying lime.

We only of the halted village-round  
now turn to work until the dawnlights glow:  
we four to the hot meadow-breadths are bound—  
beside the tractor, to the pool, I go.

Out of the valley, water still I bring  
in urgent gutters to the gardens: there  
with broken breath I toil at watering  
the roots that withering day refused to spare.

On every side a soaking stream I send  
through our collective farm, the garden-space,  
the pool that's gaping where the houses end:  
I pour down water, with unslackening pace.

Soon, plunging deep your arm, you'll fail to pluck  
a cabbage from its greenly crowded lair:  
"That's irrigation-work indeed, good luck!"  
I hear the chairman smilingly declare.

The moon now casts an azure depth of shadow,  
goes up as she has gone from ancient days.  
But I'd not change the echo of our labour  
for all the peace that dusks the village-ways.

The feeling of the changed countryside is quietly there.

\*   \*   \*   \*

A sudden rainstorm blows up. We start late in Skoda and Gaz cars—calculated to overcome any emergency of mud, especially the high-set Gaz. Now we go south, past cropped fields under a grey glowing sky, endless stripped maize, black earth, train lines beside the road, then low woods running up on either side, and again the Banat plain flat and black forever. The yellow houses of a neat German township, Peciul Mic, arrest us a moment, and we promise to halt on our return. We leave the main road and find ourselves in slithery morasses. The Gaz skids, turns right round, dives once right into the ditch, but climbs out again, while the Skoda gallantly follows, splashing through great pools. Fields of beet, a well-arm like the backbone of some prehistoric beast against the luminous washed-out sky (to borrow a phrase of Dumitriu's), a church-spire that never seems to come any nearer, and then, with a final skid, the Serbian village a few kilometres from the frontier, commodiously set out with its bright houses of white, light yellow, rose, all looking as if painted last night.

The chairman and others shake hands and clap us on the back, then hurry us to the offices of the collective farm, "The New Life." Once again we hear the tale of struggles and quick



successes, told this time by small wiry Milin Putnik who sits holding his energies in like leashed hounds. The farm began in June, 1950, with 68 families, all Serbs, and 700 acres. Now there are 296 families and 3,500 acres, mostly arable, but with sections for lucerne and grapes. A few kulaks sneaked in, but were soon detected and thrown out. (It would not be a pleasant thing, one feels, to be a kulak detected by Milin Putnik.) Once the village had 50 kulaks, but 30 fled to Tito and so there are now only 20. So much for the kulaks. 90 per cent of the peasants are in the farm, and the last harvest was so big that more are clamouring to get in.

They often help other farms. For example, the Hungarians in Sânmartin Collective. And they gave tobacco seeds to a Rumanian village.

The headmistress of the school, a young handsome girl with a broad Slav face, has eight teachers under her and 140 pupils. To get the teachers has been a problem, as the available ones from Yugoslavia turned out spies. She herself was not trained at the Serb College in Timishoara, which hadn't at that time got under way; she learned things at a Rumanian College and then applied them in Serbian. The village is a bit isolated, she admits, and transport is difficult, but she loves and enjoys her work in it. "We are given everything we want. Everything," she repeats.

A tranquil-faced Serb remarks that he used to be a mere servant of the kulaks of the neighbouring villages. Then after the country was liberated by the Soviet Army, he got land in 1945, but lacked tools and other resources. The state gave him money and other aid. He still could not do the work on his own. The State provided tractors. That was better, but still he had no escape from heavy work. So as soon as the collective was suggested, he was all for it. Now he has a good life, he and his wife and three little kids, not to mention his mother-in-law. He reels off his last year's earnings, 1,400 kilos of wheat, 400 of barley, 2,200 of maize, 450 of potatoes. . . . He goes on, ticking off the onions, sugar, hay, lucerne, money, etc. down to 5 kilos 50 grammes of cheese. (The Serb for onion baffled us, so a girl ran out and brought back a huge onion, amid cheers.) "War brings misery and peace brings a good life where we can live and work as men." To be good fighters for peace, the

people here must fight for the plan of the farm. "They must respect the plan. There's no other way to socialism. There was misery enough before August 23rd. Now I see the road clear. I see happiness for my kids. My three kids will never sweat their lives away as the servants of kulaks in other villages. They'll grow up and go to school and get all the benefits of socialism, all the things I wanted and couldn't get. I was five when my mother died. I was eleven when my father died. I had five brothers, and none of us could go to school. But after the Liberation I learned to read and write."

He speaks amiably, simply, as if speaking of someone else; and the others nod. The chairman adds that in the old regime he knew nothing himself. He was a servant with no place in the world. Now he goes to congresses, he speaks over the wireless to his whole people. He tells us about such things simply and calmly, concerned with the rise of his class, his people, not citing his own achievements out of any self-conceit.

But the whole village is waiting for us down the tree-shaded road, at the culture centre. We rise and hurry along. A Pioneer welcomes us, and flowers bloom in our arms. We go into the hall, into which a packed mass of people, young and old, are waiting in patient excitement. Two lads pull the red curtains back on the stage, and wind themselves up in them at the end, but the tremendous gusto of the performance makes up for any technical hitches. The young people sing, they dance, they sing, they play music on Serbian stringed instruments and accordions, they sing—with passion and with clear hard peasant voices that come out of the very heart of song in a way that concert-trained voices never do. The schoolmaster who acts as choir-master stands perilously on the edge of the stage with his back to the audience, sets the key with a chirp, and off they go: Love of the Collective Farm or the Song of the Yugoslav Exiles. When he turns to the applause, no maestro at Covent Garden was ever so delighted—or so sincerely happy in the happiness of his performers. Stern young Pioneer girls recite poems that wither Tito with their pure ecstatic scorn. Little boys peep under the curtain. The lad in the green shirt dances in the *hora* with a mad agility that is explained by the fact that he is the leading footballer of the village. The schoolmistress and another girl sing a duet.



At last it ends, and the entangled audience begins to unpack itself. We go back to the farm-offices and find the band there before us, playing folk-songs in the corridor. Tables are put together in a long line, and a girl in a quilted blue coat brings *tsuica* in—the *tsuica* of the farm, a little stronger than the shop-stuff. The plum-brandy toasts begin. Putnik's son-in-law, red and furious with joy, shouts, "We had a hard life in the past but now we are free and we welcome you here to taste the fruits of our labour." Putnik pours out, and says to some demurrer, "I'm master in my own house."

A man leans over and says, "He was always a fighter for the workers—long before the war. A good man."

Putnik claps his hands in excess of happiness. He gives the toasts, "A good life for all men!"

A marriage is being celebrated in the village. The father-in-law comes in in his shirt-sleeves and cropped head. He embraces his first son-in-law, a young fair-haired Serb who has come with us from Timishoara, and invites us to the rejoicings.

We go along the pavements lined on each side with a double row of trees. A small Serb tries to tell in soft urgent tones of his past sufferings and of the new life. What words can utter such a liberation? "My children will be happy, my children will be happy. . . . They will grow up in an innocent world. So we must have peace. I had no chance to learn, but my children will learn, they will know everything, they will possess the earth. We must have peace, peace. This year the electricity has come. With peace everything else will come."

There is a small crowd, largely made up of dancing couples, at the wedding reception. We go down the passage into the hot thickly-packed room where the merrily-rounded mother of the bride somehow clears the space by the big stove to get us before the warm-faced decorated couple. The wife of our friend from Timishoara is there too, a lovely dark-eyed girl. But now everyone is singing, shouting. The older farmers tilt bottles of rum to their mouths. "Who are you?" a farmer asks. "English,"—and at once he wants to pour out gallons of rum for us. He doesn't ask how and why we are there, or what is an Englishman doing in this frontier-village. It is enough that we are there, and the world is good. "To Peace!"

They want us to stay for three days at least. They are

preparing a dozen dishes for us. They bring bottles of rum, *tsuica*, wine. We own the world, and we give it to you. The fiery son-in-law of Putnik shouts a toast of goodwill, and Jack Lindsay replies, "I knew that the Serbs here were free, but I did not know that they were so joyously free." The confused lights are blown softly and strangely in the low room where there is no space whatever for anyone to move and everyone is moving riotously. They are even dancing the *hora*. Ann Lindsay goes to dance in the street with a burly wild-eyed Serb. Putnik waves his arms, blessing the world.

The Timishoara son-in-law of the house manages somehow to convince the others that we cannot stay. We move out among the dancers and the fluttering flowers of rosy light. The deep tree-shadowy streets of the village rustle and ring with the echoes of all the hymeneals of time. Here is a free world, and its signature is joy.

A big gentleman with spectacles draws us suddenly into a house. "You can't go till you've sat down. You can't do it. This is a Serb's house. And when you sit down, you can't go till you've had something to drink. No one has ever done so monstrous a thing as refuse to sit down and, having sat, to drink. It is our custom. Look at my magnificent children." Putnik's son-in-law turns on the light, but the sleepy children do not seem to mind the noise, the glare. They turn over and sleep, and we go into the next room, to sit down and drink more glasses of *tsuica*. "Life is good. . . . Tell everyone. Tell your people."

At last we are in the street again, and near the cars. Everyone wants to tell us all over again about the new life, to say all the crucial things that they've forgotten to say—the things they now see so clearly by the light of the marriage-dance and the red flowers. "Come again!" Putnik embraces one with a fierce friendliness; his son-in-law with shouting heartiness. One's cheeks are tingling from their powerful bristles. "Don't worry if your cars get bogged. We'll get all the tractors out," says Putnik.

We slither down the muddy roadway, trying to drive among the thistles and grass at the side. Our Skoda races ahead, and soon we don't know where we are. "Where do you think . . . ?" "Probably in Yugoslavia," someone replies.



After miles of mud we reach an unfamiliar set of buildings, and manage to find a militia-man who puts the driver on the right track. We race along a better road, with a moon coming up over the shoulder of a low hill, and the trees blurring and blowing up in soft masses. Till we see a big white light ahead. Then the big light breaks into several lights along the road, and we turn into Peciul.

They are still waiting. We are ushered into the town-hall, and the German youngsters and the Rumanians dance for us—the German girls in heavy white skirts flouncing out with lace hems, in rich blue scarves with red floral designs, the German lads in glittering hats of red and silver faldelals, the Rumanian couples in embroidered blouses. At a glance one can see who has been the economically privileged class in the past: the German youngsters are so much taller and bigger than the Rumanians. But now they dance together, dance separately, dance together again, dance in the ring of brotherhood. They sing too, and a crowd gathers outside the window. . . . It is the gentle and halcyonic ending of a tumultuous day. The German chairman of the People's Council thanks us in the name of the struggle for peace, and we try to find words adequate for their kindness, their grace, their patient courtesy. . .

As we move to the cars, a girl darts out and thrusts into Ann's hand a charming plaited bag—because she too danced with them.

The contrast of the joyous Serb village of the New Life with the wretched oppression of Rumanian, Albanian, Hungarian, Macedonian minorities a few miles away across the border in Yugoslavia, is so staggering that one can only point to it and gasp. The experience of its staunch and certain happiness had a strength, a mounting force, that left an indelible impression. It was the sort of thing that at once takes its place with the half-dozen or so events in one's life that go straight to the depths in one's spirit. These people are free and happy or there is no meaning in words, no meaning in anything.

## 9

## JEWS, ARMENIANS, TURKS AND TATARS

IN February, 1945, a law was passed on the nationalities in Rumania, giving everyone full civil and political equality and forbidding any inquiry into the racial origin of a citizen. In August a further law extended these provisions and defined the penalties for infringement; it laid down the right of using one's mother-tongue and prohibited under severe penalties all efforts to build up national exclusiveness in any group, or to stir up hatred through differences of race, religion, nationality. In December, 1948, a resolution of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers' Party insisted on the work yet to be done in the full implementation of the law; it referred to the attitudes sometimes taken to the Serbs and called on all Party members to do their utmost in educating people to the meaning of equality and in combatting chauvinism of every kind. The new Constitution, which sets up the Hungarian Autonomous Region, reaffirms the whole position in the most precise form possible.

In no country in the world has antisemitism been more virulent than in Rumania before the Liberation. To look only at recent history, we find:

A campaign to deny citizenship to the Jews, beginning as soon as the new constitution was validated in 1923, suited the liberal Government of Ionel Bratianu and all following governments. By intricate legal trickery, thousands of Jews were stricken from the citizen lists, even before the short-lived Goga government issued its law for revision of Jewish citizenship in 1938, and thus deprived about 250,000 Jews of their citizenship. This law, while never voided, affected the economic existence of the Jews less than one would



expect, for, as the Excellencies said, "things written on paper" had a short life in Rumania and could be easily overcome by greasing the right palms. It was only rough on those who did not have enough money for this bakhshish. (R. D. Waldeck *Athenee Palace*, 1943)

That is, the Jewish masses were attacked, but the handful of rich Jews could buy a privileged position. When Antonescu came to power, he expropriated all Jewish rural property for worthless bonds and at a nominal price. The Jews were to be legally eliminated from the economic life of the country within one or two years; Iron Guards, experts at terrorism and blackmail, but at nothing else, were put in charge of important Jewish businesses; and if any Jews complained at losing villas or cars, the police raided them at night, took them to the prefecture, and beat them up till they signed everything away. Under Horia Sima the terrorism intensified.

First of all the Guardists got what amounted to a green light in persecuting the Jews. Two hundred squads of six men each were turned loose in Bucharest every night for raids on Jewish houses. Officially the purpose was to search for hidden money, but in reality these Guardists looted, terrorised and blackmailed the Jews into giving up silver, jewels, money, whatever was in reach. The leather-clad figures of these boys with their high fur caps and their motor-cycles became a nightly feature of Bucharest, the symbol of Guardist terror.

Jewish shops were confiscated openly by Guardists, without even the formality of purchase, and the Jewish shop owners were robbed of their last farthing, in the smaller towns even more than in Bucharest.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the persecution attacked the better-off Jews as the fascist grip tightened; but at no time did the really rich Jews, the capitalists like Auschnitt, suffer in any way. On the contrary, they were hand in glove with the fascists and sold their own people.

In January, 1941, on Bloody Sunday, there were terrible massacres of Jews all over Rumania by the Iron Guards under Sima. Tens of thousands were dragged into the abbatoirs or

<sup>1</sup> I cite an eye-witness, the American journalist Waldeck who was in Bucharest in 1940-1; no one who reads her book could suspect her of even mild socialist sympathies.

the woods round Bucharest and shot, and the same murders went on at Jashi and elsewhere. The prisoners at Jilava, Jews and anti-fascists, were mowed down. "The Guardist official who gave the story to the foreign press," says Waldeck, "a charming young man brought up in the United States, ended his report with a defiant statement of his own to the effect that every single Guardist approved of the Jilava mass-murder, and this was so."

And now, a few years later, the Jews have equal rights, on paper and in fact, with everyone else in Rumania. All disabilities have been lifted, and Jews play their part in building the new society, at all levels.

Well may they say, as they recently said in Jashi, "The memory of the victims of fascism is not for sale. Nobody and nothing will ever be able to rehabilitate the murderers." They were thinking indignantly of the efforts to rehabilitate the Nazis as part of the rearmament of West Germany. Saul Grinberg, Stakhanovite in a Jashi textile mill, adds, "We honest-minded Jews have not forgotten the sufferings of the past, and we are firmly fighting for peace and socialism, for the happiness of our families."

Before the Liberation the Jews, some quarter of a million, were mainly in small production, shoemakers, tailors, button-sellers. Though they were mostly gathered in the big cities, many industries flatly refused to have them, for example the railways. While conditions of the masses kept on deteriorating, the small group of Jewish bankers and industrialists grew richer and more powerful. Many towns (Jashi, Oradea, etc.) had ghettos. No Jews were allowed to be army-officers or get into the state-apparatus. During the war those who were not murdered were put in labour battalions.

"We're now in another world," says Feldman, thinking of the bad old days when anyone speaking Yiddish in a tramcar was liable to be thrashed and thrown off. He is secretary of the Jewish Democratic Committee, a fair quiet man with a resolute manner. He tells us how 34 relatives of his were murdered in Jashi in 1941. "How did you escape?" we ask. "Oh, I was in jail for political activity," he says. "It saved my life." There is no touch of self-pity about him; he speaks calmly of the facts, in a world where such facts are forever in the past. That is the



only Iron Curtain in these parts of the world, the barrier that men feel cuts them off for all time from the mad inhumanity of the dead past.

Some 60,000 Jewish men and women have gone into industry, and many Jews appear among the leading innovators and stakhanovites. There are two Yiddish state-theatres, at Bucharest and Jashi, which at times tour in the provinces, playing the Yiddish classics such as the works of Sholem Aleikhem, translations, and new Yiddish dramas. The cultural association Ikuf works to raise the level of the Jews; it has sections in many towns, dealing with drama, song, and so on, and controlling libraries. The Bucharest choir is particularly popular. Ikuf helps composers and writers, and works with the Union of Writers in arranging conferences of writers and readers. Large numbers of translations and original works are published in Yiddish. There is a Yiddish weekly as well as a monthly review, with a weekly for Hungarian-speaking Jews and a twice-weekly for Rumanian-speakers. Yiddish broadcasts are made twice a week, and often include talks by Jewish stakhanovites. All the Jewish religious festivals are carried on, and none of the 400 synagogues has been closed (as was falsely stated, says Feldman, at the World Congress of Jews which he attended in Switzerland in 1948).

What of the problems? Here, as everywhere in the world, there is conflict between the strict traditionalists among the Jews and the more liberally-minded; but the young generally are moving away from the closed-circle, the exclusiveness that was inevitable when Jews were fighting for their very existence. The factory is the great solvent of old rigidities and intolerances. Some of the older Jews are too set in their ways to be happy, however, in factories. But many of these feel at home in artisan co-operatives. Some 4,500 are in such organisations, carpenters and shoemakers and tailors.

Armenians settled all round the Black Sea after the destruction of Ani in the 11th century. They were in Moldavia by the 19th century and have maintained groups in the towns ever since—though migration back to Soviet Armenia began from the 1920's. They still number about 7,000, mainly in Braila, Galatsi, Bucharest, and have a rich cultural life, with ensembles,

choirs, bands, drama-groups, dance-groups, at Bucharest, Galatsi, Craiova, Constantza. They own four schools and six pre-schools, a weekly and a monthly in Armenian. The library of the Democratic Armenian Committee has some 10,000 books, of which 6,000 were donated by the Soviet Union in one year.

The Turks and Tatars number over 28,000—though many Turks were drawn back to Turkey between the wars by Kemalist propaganda. Seventy per cent speak their mother-tongues. Up to a few years ago they were almost wholly land-workers; but now many are well known as industrial shock-workers—e.g. Gamebet Isat with his mining-group. It is in their collective farms, however, that they have made their biggest advance. Turks and Tatars have built up a very high record of collectivism in the Constantza area.

The island of Ada Kaleh far up the Danube, forgotten in the treaty of 1867, remained Turkish till the 1914-18 war. This narrow wooded island, with its minarets white against the greenery, is now a busy tobacco-manufactory.

The Tatars have 66 schools and one college, the Turks have 21 schools. The cultural revolution in their little crumbling villages has been extreme. The veiled women who could not even work in the fields near a stranger are now outspoken equals on the collectives or the construction yards of the Canal; some are deputies in the Councils. Libraries have been opened in all the villages, and culture centres that have won prizes with their art-teams. The Mufti still resides at Constantza, and since 1945 a school for his clerical cadres has been at work in Medgidia. The Moslem church plays a strong part in the struggle for peace, and the Mufti has shown his readiness to co-operate with the Christians on this issue.

There are some 13,000 to 14,000 Bulgarians in Rumania, mostly land-workers, especially cattle-men, though a few work in textiles and metallurgy. Bulgarian poor and middle farmers have thronged into the collectives, and Pavel Teacenco of Colonia Bulgaria in the Timishoara area led the way at the spring-sowing. They have eleven schools, including a middle one, with their own textbooks.



The gypsies are spread all over the country. Before 1848 they were sold as slaves; and in Galatsi remnants of the gypsy slave-quarters can still be seen at the end of gardens. The 1848 uprising of the people freed the gypsies; but with the re-imposition of reaction, slavery returned. (In 1844 the gypsies on the monastic lands of Moldavia had been freed, and Alexandri wrote his poem *Disrobirea Tsiganilor* to celebrate the occasion.) In late 1855 an edict freed all the gypsies of Moldavia. Now the Vatrachi have often gone into the collective farms. One finds a handful of gypsies among the various nationalities that make up many collectives. Others, as in Moldavia, still wander about, fashioning oddments, doing odd jobs, acting as tinkers. Near Craiova there is one wholly gypsy collective.

The Nazis persecuted them cruelly, rounded them up and sent them into concentration camps in the Ukraine. Many, however, slipped away and survived. There are a few gypsy schools: at Garcina, for example, in the Stalin region. And in 1950 a school was built by voluntary labour in the gypsy quarter of Cinka Panna, of the Oradea region: here is an art-group widely famed for its songs, dances, music. In and around Cluj there are other well-known ensembles. There has even been progress made in teaching the adult illiterates. A class at Sf. Gheorghe began with four persons, then increased to 16, 40, 53, and was so successful that a second course was asked for. Similar classes operate at many places.

We could continue with a discussion of the other minorities—Polish, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Greek, Ceiangai (a group akin to the Magyars and Szeklers), all with their own schools.<sup>1</sup> But lack of space forbids. However, here is a glimpse of one of the oddest of the minorities, the Lippovans, a tribal group who were also religious dissenters and who emigrated some centuries ago from Russia. They used to live in extreme poverty, in the Danubian delta, fishing hard all day for sturgeon, sterlet, or other Black Sea fish, under dangerous conditions, to swell the profits of the big merchants. Their land was one of swamps, brackish sands, huge willows on low mudbanks, heavy floating *plaur*, reedy spaces thick with storks, cormorants, cranes, herons and ducks; and they made flour from the waterweed

<sup>1</sup> There are 48 dailies and periodicals in non-Rumanian languages. In 1951, 888 book-titles of the minority tongues appeared (4,215,000 copies).

seeds and boiled the stems. Their houses were often a mere bed on four stakes, roofed with plaited reeds. At Valcov was their main home, where caviare was crudely made, a winding canal-town amid willow-groves—across the delta from which lay the Turkish village of Babadag with mosques and saints' tombs, in wooded country.

Now they have excellent motor-boats, with the "Red October" lifeboat close at hand in stormy weather. They wear good oilskins and rubber boots, use the latest tackle, and have a special dispensary at Jurilovca. They work for the state-fishery, and many of them have taken technical courses. Some have become coast-pilots, others are mechanics. Three are studying to be works engineers.

What Dumitriu says of the great Canal is true of almost every collective farm or works in the land. For almost everywhere one finds members of the various nationalities working harmoniously together:

It is the work of hundreds of technicians and thousands of workers who come from every corner of our land, belong to all the nationalities of our people and are a sort of reduced image of our whole fatherland; and their work is also an image of the creative work of the whole Republic—a great construction destined to revive the heritage of the past, better the lives of men, serve the future of our people and of all people. There is something to be proud of, there is something to defend against the enemies of peace.



## CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

"If you haven't lived in Rumania before the war," a man told us, "you can't possibly realise the changes. You can't imagine what it means for us even to have an honest policeman. Why, in my village in North Transylvania, as a boy I used to have to pay the local gendarme a few coins weekly before I could even ride my bike along the street to school—otherwise he'd trump up some charge of broken by-laws."

"The Russians used to say: 'When we cross the Rumanian frontier we hear the trains going *bakhshish bakhshish*. . . .'"

"I've seen the Moldavian peasants living with their pigs in one room. I've seen areas like the valley of the Jiu where the miners hardly knew of vegetables—hadn't heard of tomatoes."

Those are the kinds of remarks that one gets if one asks about the pre-liberation world, in which even bread was a luxury beyond the reach of the peasants, who lived on maize-porridge, *mamalgă*. Some 25 per cent of the population was quite illiterate, and another 27 per cent could just about sign their names. By the end of 1951 over 2,500,000 adults had been taught to read and write, and illiteracy will be wiped out by the end of the plan, 1955.

There were no maternity hospitals in the countryside. Now there are over a thousand, and 300 more are in the plan. Till 1946 no woman had ever been at an agricultural college. In 1952 some 34 per cent of the students at the many such colleges were women.

One plain token of the great new expansion of cultural energies is the vast amount of building that goes on. A new broadcasting house is being raised: we saw part of its warren of studios. (In Rumania they have discarded disc recording and

use only tapes.) But the House of Scânteia ("The Spark") stands as the clearest expression of the new life, where soon they will be printing 150,000 books or brochures daily, and three millions of various newspapers. The noble proportions and forms of this tremendous edifice can already be recognised, and it is typical of a socialist society that though it is only half-finished, large sections are already in production. We saw its long airy rooms, its diverse machines, its easy integration of processes, which include all forms of binding as well as printing. This great construction stands out in the field of culture as the Danube Canal and the Stejar hydro-electric station in the general economic field.

The story of Scânteia House is worth some consideration, since it shows clearly the principles of socialist art, of socialist realism, in its working-out. In April, 1948, the problem of meeting the new demands for papers, pamphlets, and books had grown so acute that a group was set up to deal with it. A preliminary project with eight variants (adapted to various possible sites) was completed. Next, 14 variants, with their respective façades and total structures, were studied, and the initial scheme was gradually enlarged to keep up with the ever-widening cultural needs that socialist construction had brought about. In August, 1949, a draft project was submitted, with the plan of a settlement for the workers, and with several façades and perspectives. The basic aesthetic and ideological problems of architectural expression were thoroughly debated at each stage, and many functionalist and dissymmetrical plans were rejected. The correct fusion of classical tradition, national characteristics, and practical needs was the aim; clear criticisms were made of all the failures to achieve it—i.e. by cosmopolitanism, the false generalisation that ignores national roots; by constructivism, the dehumanised abstraction that sees the machine as the master of man; and by the various combinations of these methods, which in dissymmetrical or blank forms reject the attempt to express both the functional needs and the human aspirations in their fullness.

A draft plan was adopted ensuring a harmony of volumes by their gradual increase. The first stage of solving the problems had been reached.



Many difficult technological problems had shown up. The architects, therefore, turned to their colleagues in the Soviet Union, and drew on their wide experience. Soviet experts made a report on the entire technological process of the combine specifying the areas required and the rational placing of the machinery. Also, the Rumanian architects discussed the general problems of socialist architecture with Soviet Academicians.

Thus Horia Maicu, one of these architects, tells us how the solutions were found:

Starting out from the site of the building and from its volume, and taking into account the fact that the structure must be a monumental structure, it was decided that the location should have the most favourable perspective, and, if possible, the perspective of one of the main thoroughfares of the Capital. . . .

Separation of the central buildings from the administration and the printing shop buildings was condemned, it was stressed that the unity of the whole enterprise must find expression in the unity of composition of the plan. There must be no break between theory and practice, no antagonism between mental and manual labour. The entire structure must form a single whole, one idea which must be expressed in a single though complex architectural ensemble.

Many of the drafts were dissymetric. But

even if a masterpiece, such as the Vassili Blajenyi Cathedral, has a number of dissymmetrical elements (towers, cupolas, etc.), these are fully compensated by the general balance. While the various solutions were being proposed, a number of observations were made. . . . A structure such as the one we have in mind must be dynamic and forward-looking.

The symmetrical solutions provided with an upper loggia might seem better, being airier. However, objections were made about their barrenness. The required structure must reflect the triumph of man over nature and over the social forces which fettered him, his confidence in the future, his steady march forward along the road on which he is led by the party of the working class.

Although, in view of its purpose, the structure must have a façade of a certain sobriety, it is essential that it should be adorned both by architectural and by sculptural means,

which, to our mind, are one and the same thing. Our basic principle is unity of architecture and sculpture. That is why we must make use of the interplay of profiles which give relief and depth to façades, of sculptural ornamentation and colour, of groups of statues which should harmonise the surroundings of the building and the building itself and form an integral part thereof.

Much attention was paid to the relation of the building with the roads running to it, the pools, fountains, gardens of its park, the effective repetition and variation of the main façade-motives throughout the structure. Thus, the central façade's arched portico seems recalled in the two advancing wings and in the two porticos leading to the culture-centre and the dining-hall. "It is like a musical motive," says Maicu, "which appears in various forms in a symphony. The link and unity of conception between the various façades is thus made plain." The smaller buildings were conceived as graceful in form and carefully decorated, so as not to appear secondary straggling wings, but to make up an integral part of the whole, stressing the march of increasing volumes towards the heart and brain of the composition, the central body. Sides and rear are treated as thoroughly as the central façade. The workers enter through a monumental and central gate, or through the porticos. The balance of the masses of the structure means that there must be no jamming or crowding; the various buildings must be joined by porticos or lesser buildings, with a result of considered space and relief to the whole mass. Hard, sharp, technical lines are rejected. Constructivists forget that "architecture is an art, and, what is more, it is sculpture," says Maicu. "Their drafts are for the most part simple linear designs and belong to industrial design, not to art." What is needed is the sustained effort that makes "architecture a living human art, linked with popular traditions, conscious of the gains of the present, and showing the bright path to the future. The creation of beauty requires effort. The artist must work hard and continually exert himself. To create a thing of beauty, enthusiasm and resolute determination to overcome difficulties are needed. Thorough study of popular and national architecture, and the use of everything valuable and beautiful in popular tradition, greatly helps us in fulfilling our task. This



does not mean that the first popular motive we meet should be used; the matter must be thoroughly studied so that that which is typical and more progressive may be discovered, that which reflects best of all the genius of the people and harmonises best with their aspirations." The criterion of such popular art is that it is "popular in concept, popular by tradition, popular because it is understood and appreciated by the people. The argument that the material determines the form is a false argument, as is made plain by the history of architecture. Stone was the basic material in Greek, Roman, and Gothic architecture: that did not stop every epoch from developing new specific forms. It follows that it is not the material which generates forms, but the epoch, man and the artist."

These are the lines along which the foundation of a socialist architecture is achieved. And on May 8th, 1951, in honour of the 30th anniversary of the Party of the working class, the works were started off, ahead of schedule. Printing had begun, though only a part of the building was finished. The great rotary press, built in the Soviet Union, rattled and roared into production.<sup>1</sup>

In all fields of culture, building goes on fast. In 1945 there were three provincial theatres, now there are 20, of which three are Hungarian. There are 20 puppet theatres for children. A new well-equipped theatre goes up in Constanta. Bucharest is getting a new opera house, and the bombed-out National Theatre is being reconstructed. Some 12,000 cultural centres and reading-rooms have been built.

Education has made so large a development since 1944 that it cannot be compared at all with the previous state of things. In 1938 there were some 41 university faculties mainly concerned with turning out functionaries for the industrialists and bankers; now there are 135 (15 Hungarian) which train

<sup>1</sup> There will be also 457 various machines, with all operations mechanised. Books will be printed on improved plane machines able to print in two colours. The combine will also have its own workshop manufacturing spare parts as well as all necessary laboratories and a technical office. Also, a section to make various commodities out of waste-products. The building covers some 25,000 sq. metres and has a volume of 744,500 cubic metres. Soviet methods of reinforced concrete are used, which, as compared with American methods for building with a metallic framework, saves 20 per cent of metal and achieves a 30 per cent increase in space-rigidity.

specialists for every branch of technology and scholarship, vitally linked with the rich movement of their socialist world. By 1955 the number of university students will be practically equal to that in Britain, with more than three times the population. New institutes have been set up to deal with problems of coal, iron, steel, agriculture, railways. For coal mining alone there have been created four technical, nine vocational and nearly 200 qualifying schools. A great new university centre is to be built at Bucharest. Large numbers of workers take special courses, often by correspondence, and the working class has already begun to bring forth its own intelligentsia. All sorts of training schools or colleges have sprung up in hosts, generally with an intense cultural life, with their own halls, libraries, clubs, sports facilities.

We have already described the work of the new Rumanian Academy. It is this flourishing centre of science, whose research projects are closely linked with the needs of the expanding life of the Republic, which has taken the place of the old Rumanian Academy. Founded in 1880, the old Academy was very little concerned about the natural sciences. Academicians were elected mainly with a view to their personal wealth and social position, and it was in fact little better than a club of learned reactionaries. Though the Academy professed to be mainly concerned with the development of language and literature, great progressive writers, like the poet Eminescu and the playwright Caragiale, who are the pride of Rumanian literature, were never admitted. Caragiale was eventually forced to live abroad, from whence he hurled his denunciations at the King and nobles, whom the Academicians were fawning upon, for the massacres of the peasants in 1907.

Rumania has had her great scientific figures of the past, like Victor Babes, who died in 1926, and was a consistent fighter for a scientific materialist outlook; the mathematician Emil Bacaloglu, who never gave up his fight against spiritualism and obscurantism; the geologist Stefanescu; or Aurel Vlaicu, who was a pioneer in aerodynamics and aviation. But few scientists ever got into the Academy, and those who did were unable to impose any scientific tendency in its work. Scientists were forced to work individually and to meet their own expenses, and many of their results had to be published abroad. There



was a complete lack of connection between scientific research and the requirements of industry, few facilities for experimental work, and consequently research was, for the most part, of a highly abstract and theoretical kind.

The socialist science of the new Academy has four outstanding characteristics. First, its conscious aim is directly to serve the people's needs and the upbuilding of socialist economy. Second, it organises planned, collective research, in close collaboration with the various ministries and principal enterprises, and receives the fullest material support and facilities for research from the people's state. Third, it does not cut itself off from the working people, but recruits their aid, and acts constantly as a means of popular enlightenment and education. Fourth, it bases itself on a consistent materialist outlook, and fights against the idealist and metaphysical outlook which had penetrated so much of the science of the past.

Although the organisation of the new science in Rumania has been of such short duration, new cadres of scientific workers are already being drawn from the ranks of the working people. Thousands of young workers, men and women, are entering the universities and higher schools every year. And along with this are workers' schools, running both full-time and evening courses, to prepare students to train as scientists. Thus, as socialism is building, a new type of socialist scientist is being born, recruited from among the working people instead of from the narrow circle of the former "educated classes".

And yet, despite the lack of encouragement of science in the old Rumania, experience has proved that big reserves of scientific talent already existed in the country. From the beginning, there were qualified teachers and research workers for the new Institutes. Progressive members of the old Academy have played a leading part in establishing the new—and notably Traian Savulescu, the present President of the Rumanian Academy. Many of those who now occupy leading posts in science were, however, struggling students or junior assistants in the former years. Such people had been kept under, frustrated and denied opportunity in the past. All the greater has been the enthusiasm with which they have grasped at the opportunities now presented and shouldered the tasks to which they have been called.

We asked at the Academy whether intellectuals who had grown up under the old regime found it difficult to adapt themselves to the new socialist idea of science in the service of the people and of the dialectical materialist content of science. The secretary of the Academy told us, that far from finding such ideas alien, most scientists were welcoming them and making them their own. "Many had always been materialists, without knowing it," he said. And so they were glad to find the philosophical foundation of their scientific convictions. Moreover, the extreme frustration which scientists had suffered, and their patriotic desire to be at last able to serve their country and people in a practical way, had joined to raise the enthusiasm of scientific workers for the new programme of research, and they experienced in their own work the liberating character of the new ideas.

Rumanian science bears an intensely patriotic character. Owing to the domination of Rumanian industry in the past by foreign capital, the lack of development of science, and the fact that scientists were often forced as a consequence to publish their results in foreign journals, some had come to believe that there could be no such thing as Rumanian science, and even that the Rumanian language was "unsuitable" for the expression of scientific conclusions. From the start, the Academy set its face against this anti-national, cosmopolitan tendency.

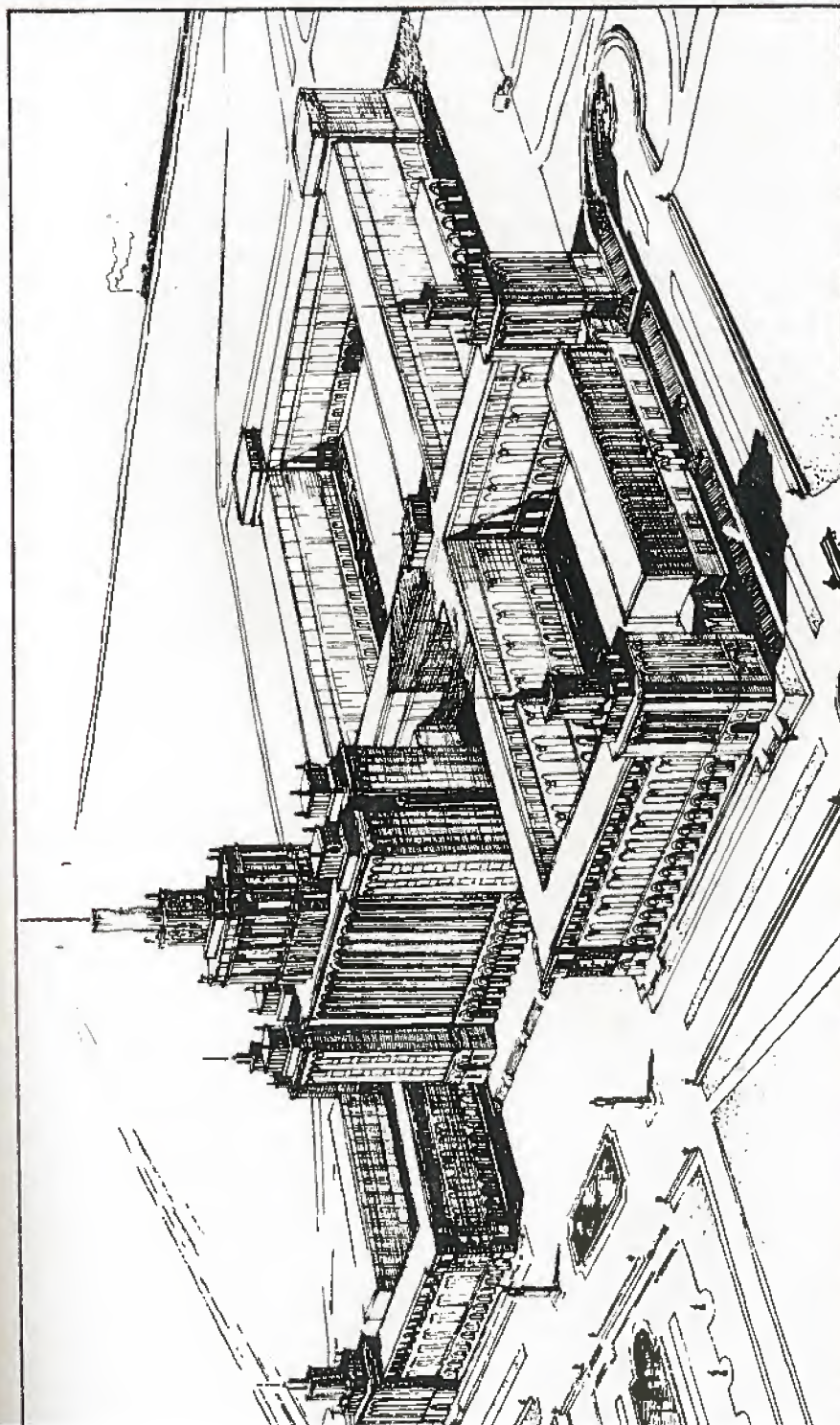
"No abstract world culture can exist without national roots and there is no universal abstract science on a plane above the nations," said President of the Academy Savulescu, speaking at a meeting of the Presidium in 1949. "What we term universal science actually represents the totality of all scientific work based on the contribution of the scientists of various nations. . . . The tendency towards the monopoly of the capitalist countries appears not only in economics and politics, but also in science. The original work of scientists from small countries is gradually stifled, and their production absorbed by the science of the ruling classes of the great capitalist countries. . . . It is the task of patriotic scientists to take a definite stand against the cosmopolitan attempts to obliterate the contribution of our country's science and culture to the



development of world science and culture. . . . When somebody tries to put away his property in the safes of foreign banks, the people's justice sentences him as a plotter against the interests of the people. But is the scientist less guilty, who, instead of sowing the seed of his thought in the earth of the country he belongs to, which supports him by the people's labour, tries to sell it to foreign governments which threaten us with wars or ask us to give up our independence and freedom? Those who would sell an invention or discovery to the highest bidder are tainted with commercial corruption. . . . We shall never say that a scientific work should not be translated into a foreign world-language, particularly if it covers a field which is of interest to scientists abroad and demands the collaboration of progressive scientists and fighters for peace, but it is essential that it should first be published in the language of the country, so that it is available to the people of the country. . . . Honouring progressive scientists of all countries, we should take pride in setting up a firm and high national science. We ask that our scientists should be devoted to the people, that their problems and themes should be part of the struggle for doing away with the backward conditions in the country, for carrying out the economic and cultural plan of the people's democratic state, for building socialism. Our scientists have the full support of the working people, who enthusiastically convert discoveries and scientific ideas into marvellous realities, and who know how to appreciate, to respect, love and reward true scientists as well as true artists."

The aim of making science the property of the whole people, of building up a truly popular, scientific culture, is carried on not only through the schools, universities and workers' schools, but in a mass way through the Society for Spreading Science and Culture. Its committee, headed by Savulescu, calls on the services as lecturers of over 30,000 Academicians, professors, doctors, engineers, technicians, writers and artists. Its activity has increased steeply. Whereas 430 lectures were arranged in the last months of 1949, the number held in 1951 was 140,000, attended by nearly 14 million people. More than half the lectures were given in the villages. One of the main aims is to promote popular scientific understanding of the ordinary

Model for Scănteia House, Bucharest's great publishing centre.

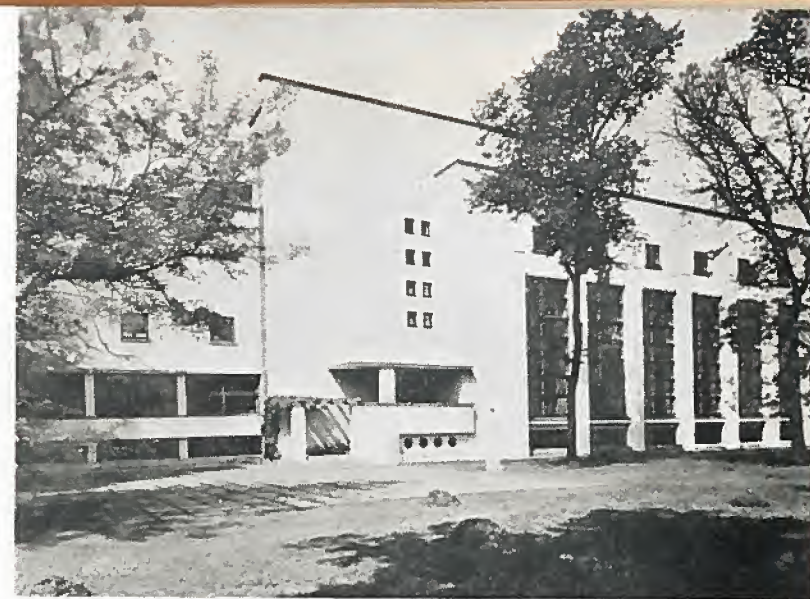






Chemistry students at Bucharest.

Students at a new technical school of pisciculture.



Library of the Rumanian Academy, Bucharest.

A students' club in Bucharest.







Dofana prison. This painting by Cincurencu shows Gheorghiu-Dej and other Communist prisoners resisting the guards who are driving them to the notorious "Block H".

phenomena of nature: for example, on the occasion of the eclipse of the sun on February 25th, 1952, over 1,600 lectures were given, and 60,000 copies of a poster explaining the eclipse were printed, as well as a popular pamphlet. Many lectures deal with medical subjects, amongst the most important being a country-wide "Mother and Child" series. No less than 1,700 lectures have been given about the great writer Caragiale.

The Society issues a magazine, *Science and Culture*, and has published nearly two million copies of booklets, as well as preparing science documentary films. Travelling exhibitions have been organised, such as one on "The Origin and Evolution of Man". The Society has branches and lecturing units throughout the country—28 regional branches, 165 district branches, and 442 lecturing units in factories and villages, whose task is to spread the light of science.

Another important society engaged in the popularisation of science is the Michurin Society, or Society for the Propagation of the Agricultural Sciences, which is active in the villages. It has more than 27,000 members, organised in 1,500 "Michurin circles".

Other important cultural organisations are Arlus, the Society for Friendly Relations with the Soviet Union, which has a huge library of Russian literature; and the Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which also has a large library, this time of books in all languages, that is made much use of by students. The Institute also has its own publishing house for foreign translations; Cartea Rusa specialises in books from Russian.

Art training goes on at the same pace as the other cultural activities. One detail will suffice. This summer over 750 students toured the industrial centres, gave shows, studied the local art, held conferences. The Institute of Art History has been specially studying the work of the Szeklers, Saxon, Swabe, and Ceangai minorities.

Folk-art, pictorial, decorative, musical or literary, is studied and fostered with the utmost care. The moribund old Archives attached to the Composers' Society has become one of the liveliest institutes in Rumania, making immense collections by tape or film of the living folk-expressions. Under its aegis the



vigorous popular music of Rumania has been freed from the burden of café-exploitation which broke down the health of many talented musicians and corrupted their art. Its Barbu Lăutaru orchestra sets the standard of highly developed performances which remain true to the spirit of the folk. Among other things it has saved the panpipe from extinction. Sabin Dragoi, Director of the Folk-lore Institute, says that 35 other groups have been formed throughout the country, "with the role of preserving the specific popular music of the region and conserving the purity of its folk-song and its style of performance."

The very intelligent and sensitive lead given by the Institute has helped in the development of new folk-lore, new folk-songs, new folk-dances which validly build on the old bases to express the new life. A. L. Lloyd, who saw the dances, "The Hammering of Fire," by groups at Vistea de Jos, near Sibiu, was enthusiastic at the rhythmic subtlety, the organic vitality, of dances that defined labour-process. The Taraci group of the Cluj region has similarly developed dances linked with the tractor and the harvest.<sup>1</sup>

Cultural Caravans are sent into the remoter areas with cinemas, libraries. In 1951 they visited 514 socialist units on the land; in 1952, in April and May, they served 466 communes and farms with some 20,000 books. They take the cinema to groups who have never previously seen a film. Further, the Farmworkers' Union organised 12 travelling cinemas in various parts of the country. Films are used educationally, to raise the level of agricultural or industrial knowledge, but feature-films, coloured children's films, and so on, are also taken around. For educational films or books, teachers and professors are drawn in to present the work at special meetings.

Writers play an active part in the building of the new culture, both in their books and in the conferences and discussions

<sup>1</sup> There is a co-operative making folk-costumes with 436 members at Tismana-Gorj. At Bucharest is a splendid Folk Museum. Before the war "there can only be said to be the beginning of a museum of folk art . . . the first scratchings of the surface," Sacheverell Sitwell (*Rumanian Journey*, 1938).

We saw at Sinaia a Bucharest ensemble that performed Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Serb folk-dances with a magnificent gusto, verve and skill. It included a peasant whistler of incredible virtuosity: he could whistle like the little melancholy flute or render a *doina* like a panpipe.

about the books, in journalism and in criticism. Jack Lindsay had several talks with groups of writers, as well as individually, and gained a clear idea of the very extensive facilities and aids offered to the writer, established or beginning. We have already touched on the Literary Fund above, and shall here turn to other aspects of literary life. Mihai Novikov, one of the secretaries of the Union, who is still young though he was jailed for ten years for political reasons by the old regime, is a brilliant talker, and with quick imaginative phrases he ran through the main struggles and achievements of Rumanian poetry since Alexandri. Specially interesting was his detailed analysis of the way in which the older poets, often sympathetic to the people's aspirations but driven into obscurity and private idioms by the long years of oppressive government before 1944, have continued to develop and to struggle truly with their own inner problems—coming through in many cases to a very effective and rich utterance that succeeds in expressing the fullness of the new life. Younger poets have had different problems, coming more directly to the political struggle, but lacking the technical skills of the elder. Highly dynamic but wilful poets like Eugen Jebeleanu, or intimist poets like Maria Banush with something of a cult of "instinctive life", have realised the need of developing their art in active harmony with the rich vigorous life of people who have leaped into mastery of their fates; and the result has been the strengthening and maturing of the poet's art.

In novels too, Rumanian literature today can point to a number of works, both by young and old writers, in which the development of the people is matched by a powerful development of expressions capable of defining the complex vitality of the scene, its full conflict and resolution. Beside the works mentioned elsewhere in this book, the following are worth citing: of books that deal with the terrible lot of the peasants before 1944, *Barefoot* by Zaharia Stancu, and both *Mitrea Cocor* and *The Thatched-roof Cottagers* by Sadoveanu—of books that deal with the war, *The Fog* by E. Camilar—of books that show the struggle around the collective farms, *June*

<sup>1</sup> Mihai Beniuc is a noble poet whose struggle goes back to the 1930's; Dan Desliu and Veronica Porumbacu are examples of the highly skilled young poet. The veteran Toma links the world of Eminescu with that of such young poets. (Cited in the text are only works available in English or French.)



*Nights* by Dumitriu—of plays dealing with industry, Davidoglu's *The Miners*.

In the immediate post-war days the writers who felt their art bound up with the world of Maniu, Sima, Bratianu, carried on a furious campaign of denigration against the writers responsive to the people's aspirations. This campaign was so unscrupulous that it defeated itself, and swung the waverers over to the other side.

As the new Rumania was consolidated, the problem of revaluating the classics and bringing them to the people became one of the key tasks. In fact it still is, and will continue to be so for long. The decisive turning-point was in 1949 at the Conference of the Writers, when the issues of literature in the new society were first fully brought out. Since then development has been rapid. Writers have striven hard to penetrate the struggles of their society and to illuminate what is happening—not from some abstract vantage-point but as a living part of the process they clarify. In such an art the need to grasp the fundamental pattern of historical movement and change is essential, and the understanding of the relation of individual and society must be lifted to a new level of consciousness. What truly constitutes a social type, how characters are to be defined both as types and as individuals, and how the hero who concentrates the new drive into the future is to be represented: these are the key problems. And the new elements of form that art needs to develop are the elements that most concretely embody the resolution of these problems. Hence the new intensity of the fusion of art and life, the new active relation that art achieves and must achieve.

All these problems are keenly present in the minds of Rumanian writers. And they are well aware of the futility of short-cuts and stereotyped methods. Some of them made jokes about the mechanical way in which the question of the positive hero was at times approached. A writer goes to a factory and interviews the Stakhanovites, trying to pick out a "hero". One man is too short, one too tall, one isn't handsome enough, and the girls don't give satisfactory answers on the matter of love. However, the writer goes off blinking and tries to make up a composite "hero" at home—while the real heroes of the new life are jostling him in the street all the while. Another story was

about someone saying, "I can understand a woman loving a Stakhanovite or a Hero from Korea—but an ordinary man! how could it be done?" Such jokes express the healthy atmosphere of discussion, they embody the people's sure sense of the phoney.

Many were the stories of the New Reader. Stancu relates that he was once rung up at midnight and asked if he was going to bed. He said no, he was working. The caller was a worker who had read *Barefoot* and wanted elucidation on a number of points. Stancu smiles reminiscently, "Such a thing was impossible in the old days." Another writer mentions how he was stopped by a militiaman for some traffic offence; but when he gave his name, the man said, "Oh, you're the writer," and proceeded to analyse the writer's script in a recent film for half an hour with an acute critical sense. Then he let the writer off with a caution. Another writer remarks of the inrush of criticism and comment by the people, "Some writers didn't like it—at first." The key-phrase there is *at first*, for there would have to be something very wrong with a writer if he failed soon to thrive in this atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

We visit Grivitsa Rosie, where the violent strike of 1933 occurred. The big three-storey club of the railway workers has trailing plants on walls and niches, green and red against the white walls. There is a room where Stakhanovites or other workers bring their devices of plans and discuss techniques with scientists and experts. Here are set out a number of inventions which saved money or simplified processes. In another room they hold conferences: one night a week the workers read their own works, on another they discuss the professionals, preferably in their presence. (The most passionately discussed work of late has been a story by a woman worker on *Woman's Place*.) A choir has just been rehearsing and comes out of the music room in most vociferous argument on some point of interpretation. Below there is a large cinema, a fine open-air theatre which is used as an ice-rink in winter (a larger one is to be built, to

<sup>1</sup> There are special village-editions. Among the many publishers a word is deserved by the publishing house of the General Confederation of Labour. By April 1952 it had published 896 works in Rumanian, Hungarian, German, Serb (11,233,600 copies); it is specially concerned with technical and trade-union matters, labour protection, accounts by Stakhanovites, and so on, but deals also with sport, and general literature.

Literary periodicals include *Contemporarul* (weekly), *Rumanian Life* (monthly), the *Literary Almanacs* of Cluj and Jassi.



seat 2,000), a workroom where boys are making models of planes.

Eusebiu Camilar, born in 1910, was the son of a poor Moldavian peasant; he worked in the holiday period for landlords and saved money to get some schooling; then he toiled in a bakery and a laundry at Bucharest. In *The Fog* he shows plainly his roots in folk-culture; and he said: "I'll never renounce my folk-basis." His *Foundation*, dealing with the new village, was criticised by some of the people of the area that he treated, as laying too much emphasis on local oddities of speech. But Camilar is a writer who knows his own mind and can be trusted to keep developing his folk-elements in a vital way. He is very interested in the growth of a socialist folk-lore and cited as an example the tales rising in an area where the river-men had to wait for the waters to rise in a perilous section and where the waters are now controlled.

Dumitriu's *Dustless Highway* excited much comment among the canal workers. While they generally admired very much its ardent spirit and its feeling for people, some criticised weaknesses in the construction and the flatness of positive characters in comparison with the more backward ones. These are the comments that drive a writer to face the central problems of his work and help his development.

A large and villainous jail seems a peculiar item to bring into a chapter on culture; yet Doftana has its claims here. This is the large impregnable jail where the political prisoners went under the old regime, in the hills above Ploeshti. Founded to deal with the rebels of 1907, it housed the finest spirits of Rumania, the men of the anti-fascist struggle. Shattered by the earthquake of 1940, which killed many prisoners, it is now a museum, and it is the noble inscription that greets a visitor which vindicates its cultural role: *The First Marxist University in Rumania*. For here, under the most difficult and bestial conditions, the leaders of Rumania today studied their smuggled-in copies of Marxist literature.

We saw its ugly tiers of cells, the gong that was beaten to cover the screams of tortured prisoners, the cell where Gheorgiu-Dej was put, the dark and dripping holes of section H where the heavily fettered prisoners were put in solitary confinement,

the offices where the commandant sat with his vicious whip and a large crucifix. The guide is a man who was half-blinded by his sufferings in the jail. The whole place is a monument to the evil past, and those capitalist-conditioned readers who think of Rumania as a totalitarian police-state with slave-camps, etc., might do well to consider the implications of such a monument, which, in its presentation, is calculated to raise the most passionate contempt and hatred of regimes based on oppression.

As we came out, we saw two peasant women sitting in the shade of a tree that had grown up in one of the yards. They were chatting happily together as if unaware that they reposed amid the shattered walls of hell.

In the old colonial Rumania foreign capital distorted the whole national economy and held back many easily possible developments. Only one of the six bauxite mines was worked. There was a heavy cut in silver mining in 1933, to keep world prices up. Many valuable minerals were not worked at all—manganese, molybdenum, chrome: foreign interests found them "economically unprofitable". There weren't enough spinning-mills to keep the 380 cotton weaving-mills going. Cotton was not grown to any appreciable extent, though suited to the climate. That world is gone, with the Maniu-type "democracy" that expressed it, never to return.

It is within the last couple of years that Rumania has begun to reap the benefits of socialist planning. A friend who was there two years ago could scarcely believe his eyes when he returned this August.

When told about the tremendous cultural advances made in Rumania, people in Britain often look puzzled and ask, "But how can such a backward country afford it? Look at Britain, a rich country, cutting all such investments and costs. . . ." And indeed the contrast is extreme. But the answer is simple. First the economy of Rumania is a peace economy, first and last directed to building a good life for the people. And secondly it is a planned socialist economy. That in so short a time it should have made such splendid advances is a plain object-lesson as to the endless resources that are tapped as soon as the burden of capitalist profit is thrown off and the country's



wealth goes to benefit the people who produce it. Very simple, but remarkable in its working-out, even to one who believes in the need of socialism and recognises theoretically that socialism releases new constructive forces.

A beautiful country, with the Carpathians bringing every sort of mountain grandeurs and delights—pleasant mountains, wild and various, but not of an alpine remoteness and chilliness. A people of astonishing charm, with a gaiety and a vividness all their own. Already the Rumanian People's Republic has laid the first and vital basis of a new culture, indestructibly socialist in its content and yet bright with a wit and energy that is specifically Rumanian and distinguishes it from all other socialist cultures. To have encountered and absorbed something of its strength and loveliness is to have permanently enriched one's life.

Among this warm-hearted people we never heard anywhere the word *Adio*. Always it was *La revedere*. "Till we meet again." Till we meet again.

## Appendix

### CLUJ AND ARAD

Cluj, the town of the Hungarian landlords, is not in the new Hungarian Region, as it is not in a thickly-populated Hungarian area. It remains, however, an important centre of Hungarian culture, though inevitably many of its activities will shift over to Târgu-Muresh.

In 1872 a University, named after the Emperor Francis Josef, was set up there, but only the rich could attend it. A centre of Hungarian chauvinism, it persecuted such few Rumanians as straggled in. When the Rumanians got Transylvania, they changed the name to that of King Ferdinand I, and simply reversed the chauvinism. Then Hitler's Vienna Diktat reversed things once more and the Rumanian University retreated to Sibiu.

After the Liberation it was decided to send the latter back and to create a new Hungarian University, named after Bolyai (the great Transylvanian mathematician). After the educational reforms of 1948 the Bolyai University was reorganised, with an institute of medicine and pharmacy, eight faculties for social sciences, new technical installations and an enlarged teaching body (several specialists being brought in). In 1949-51 a bombed wing was rebuilt, three new laboratories added, and a festival hall. Also a faculty of geographical geology was added, etc.

The Hungarian and Rumanian students of Cluj mix in the cultural centres, unite in social and cultural activities, exchange experience in studies, and work for the same goal of social good.

At Cluj there is also a Hungarian faculty at the Agronomic Institute and Hungarian sections at three institutes of the Fine Arts.

The State Opera-house is Hungarian; it tours the provinces, and in 1950 visited Bucharest with the aid of the railway workers' Union—pioneering with great open-air shows.

Hungarian workers have made many important inventions and innovations. Thus at Janos Herbak in the first quarter of 1952 there were 70 innovations, mostly now applied—a few still being studied.

Arad near the Hungarian border, a town of spacious avenues and greenbelts, shows advertisements in both Rumanian and Hungarian for its symphonic and popular concerts, its scientific and artistic conferences; its many libraries have books in both languages. Yet



before, it had scarcely any local cultural activity, and what there was, was chauvinist (some cinemas, one theatre, a few poor libraries).

Now there are 13 big libraries with reading rooms, and an intense life in the workers' clubs—20 choirs, 25 drama groups, 40 dance groups, all zealously followed by the public. Some 40 local writers hold regular conferences and discussions. In early 1952 there were 120 meetings at culture centres, attended by 20,000 people. On the Muresh banks by one of the park-gates stands the Culture Palace with library and museum of art and archaeology. There are eight cinemas, two theatres, a symphony orchestra, a big choir of popular music; some 60 schools in Rumanian, Hungarian, German, Czech and Serb, and a faculty of animal husbandry and veterinary science.

### RESITSA

Here are the big ironworks that employ Hungarians, Rumanians, Germans of the Timishoara Region. After 1945, at the time when steel was most urgently needed, there was large-scale sabotage of production. In January, 1945, the production fell to less than one-fourteenth of what it had been in 1943 for Goering. The right-wing Social Democrats,—for instance, Titel Petresco, Jumanca, Gherman,—worked with the industrialists, Popp, Bujoiu, Auschnitt.

But the workers in the forges and the rolling mills defeated these plots; and before long the works were turning out turbines, generators, compressors, petrol engines. . . .

M. Davidoglu in his play *City of Fire* (produced in May, 1950) deals with the conflict here. An old worker, an honest Social Democrat, has three sons—one of whom is opposed to the new society, while the other two are enthusiastically seeking to help. The old man cannot believe on the one hand in the new methods of production or on the other in the sabotaging acts of his treacherous son. But at last he sees the truth. He has claimed his retiring rights, but now he decides to go back to the works and carry on in the struggle for socialism.

Nearby a new city is being built, Lunca Pomosului. The rapid Bersava, that often used to flood the fields, has been dammed; and the new city, in fine country surroundings, is rising with big avenues and a large club section.

Using Soviet methods of prefabricated sections, the workers have raised the houses at record speed—by the end of 1952 there will be 114 blocks of flats.

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