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THE MAY 1990 ELECTIONS
IN ROMANIA

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION REPORT

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**INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO
THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS**

May 20, 1990

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the report of the 60-member international delegation that observed the May 20, 1990 Romanian national elections. It is based on information gathered by the sponsoring organizations prior to the elections and by the delegation teams that visited 11 regions of the country during the elections. The report presents a national perspective on the electoral process, including the campaign, voting procedures and the tabulation of the results.

The report was prepared under the auspices of the delegation's sponsoring organizations, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRIIA), after consultations with members of the delegation. While these consultations indicate a consensus for the conclusions reached herein, NDI and NRIIA assume full responsibility for the accuracy of the report.

The report was drafted by NDI advisor Thomas Carothers and NDI Deputy Program Director Karen Clark. The team reports were prepared by delegation members and Institute staff. For NDI, the report was edited by Executive Vice President Kenneth Wollack, Senior Consultant Larry Garber, and Public Information Director Sue Grabowski. For NRIIA, the report was edited by Consultant Peter Schramm, Program Director Margaret Thompson, and Program Officer Edward Stewart. NDI Program Secretary Jacqueline Dorsey assisted in the report's production.

NDI and NRIIA extend their thanks to the leadership and members of this observer delegation and others who have visited Romania on behalf of the Institutes to assist in promoting democratic

development in the country. We wish to acknowledge the NDI and NRIIA staff, and in particular, Deborah Hauger, for their work in arranging the delegation's activities in Romania. The Institutes also express appreciation to the many Romanians who took time from their busy schedules before and after the elections to share their perspectives on the election and to facilitate the delegation's work.

The delegation's mission was made possible with funds provided by the U.S. Congress as part of a special program to assist the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. The Agency for International Development (AID) administered the Congressional funds, which were provided to NDI and NRIIA through the National Endowment for Democracy.

FOREWORD

We were honored to participate as co-leaders of the international observer delegation for the May 20 elections in Romania sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs. The opportunity to bear witness, along with our distinguished colleagues from 20 nations, to this historic occasion was both memorable and rewarding. We would like to thank the members of the delegation and the Institutes for this opportunity.

For those of us who had this privilege, the events of the last several months have been sobering. Unfortunately, reservations expressed by international observers regarding a democratic transition in Romania are as relevant today as they were then. As one surveys the progress of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe, it is difficult not to lament the lack of progress, and at times, the regression evident in Romania today.

To be sure, the challenges of establishing democratic institutions and processes in Romania would loom large for any government, regardless of its intentions. Romania is a country where the most exhaustive attempts at analysis often only result in the conclusion that much "remains unclear." This is a peculiar legacy of the previous regime, under which people's capacity to gather and communicate information was severely restricted.

The complete absence of civic and political space during the past five decades created an environment in which the preeminence of speculation, paranoia and rumor will be difficult to overcome. Internal repression, control and manipulation fragmented the

population, creating profound misunderstandings along regional, ethnic, and educational lines. The sudden opening of December 1989 provided some room to create institutions to mediate these differences; however, it will take time for Romanians to develop the institutions and to learn how to use them effectively.

This report contends that the May 20 elections were but a first step in Romania's political development. In May, our delegation expressed hope that the newly-elected government would pursue concrete measures toward establishing "a genuinely pluralistic environment." The events of June 13-15 in Bucharest, during which police forces and, subsequently, miners forcibly attempted to "restore order," were roundly criticized by the international community as reminiscent of totalitarian rule. The government's role in these violent attacks against peaceful demonstrators again raised concerns about the democratic credentials of the National Salvation Front. Moreover, the recurrence of violent confrontations in August suggests that the underlying causes for instability in Romania remain unaddressed.

Nevertheless, there are hopeful signs that democratic activists in Romania are working to promote reconciliation and progress. Independent and opposition newspapers seek to establish their own production and distribution capacities. Opposition political parties are reorganizing themselves and exploring the prospects for increased cooperation. Nonpartisan groups -- trade unions, student organizations, and other independent associations -- are institutionalizing themselves and conducting programs to develop civic awareness and participation.

These efforts deserve continuing support, material as well as moral, from the international community. They also require tolerance, at a minimum, and encouragement from a government that cannot unilaterally impose change from above.

Romania's deprivation during the last 45 years has been economic, political, and social. Despite a long period of isolation and control, the events of December 1989 released great expectations within the population, and these hopes will continue to grow. The

people's desire to realize their human potential should not be held hostage to the fears of change.

Rather, the path to stability will be smoother if all segments of the society recognize their stake in a democratic Romania and work together to achieve consensus, reconciliation and progress. The actors in this effort are and will be Romanians – it is Romanians who have already begun the process of changing their lives. However, the components of a democratic Romania will be universal – a free and independent press, viable democratic political parties, free and fair elections, and above all, a concerned citizenry ready to assume the rights and responsibilities of freedom.

We believe that the international community is ready to assist Romania's democrats along this difficult path – many countries have successfully confronted the challenges posed by inertia and fear and are willing to share these experiences. Such exchanges are not only in Romania's interest, but in our own. As we learn more about the struggles of others to participate in the decisions that govern their lives, we become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of our own people.

Many of the delegates in Romania during the elections were impressed by the extent to which young people who had never known anything but totalitarianism could identify so strongly with ideals often taken for granted in democratic societies. Their commitment and desire to build a new Romania remains an inspiration and will, we hope, be heard and utilized by a government that professed the same goal in May.

Joseph I. Lieberman
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Roy Hattersley
United Kingdom

Harrison Schmitt
United States

August 1990

TEAM DEPLOYMENTS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A 60-member international delegation, organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs, observed the May 20, 1990 presidential and parliamentary elections. The elections were held less than six months after Romania's long-reigning dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, was ousted in a bloody revolution. Moreover, the elections occurred in a country bereft of democratic traditions and deeply scarred by the repression of the past half century. Ion Iliescu, the candidate of the ruling National Salvation Front (the "Front"), was elected president, and the Front garnered 66 percent and 67 percent of the seats in the Assembly of Deputies and Senate, respectively.

The following are the delegation's summary conclusions concerning aspects of the electoral process:

1. Given Romania's long experience of brutal communist dictatorship, the May elections represent an historic opening and a necessary first step toward the achievement of a democratic political system. Nonetheless, there were very significant flaws that affected the overall fairness of the electoral process and that underscore the need for major structural reforms in the Romanian political environment.

2. The Front had considerable advantages during the electoral campaign, including control of and access to television, radio, newspapers, campaign funds, printing facilities, vehicles, telephone lines, and other supplies and resources basic to a political campaign. Moreover, the Front used its position as the dominant party in the interim government to exploit these advantages rather than to level

the playing field of the campaign, and its general attitude was not conducive to the promotion of a free and open campaign. Consequently, despite its large margin of victory, the democratic credentials of the Front have not been established with these elections.

3. The human rights environment of the campaign was poor. Opposition candidates' and parties' exercise of their basic rights of expression and assembly was frequently met with intimidation and harassment, including serious beatings and physical destruction, often instigated by Front supporters. The Front-dominated government failed to condemn and discourage acts of violence.

4. The opposition was weak and fragmented not only because of the intimidation and harassment, but because of the inherent difficulties in simultaneously reconstituting parties from nothing and conducting a national campaign in the space of five months.

5. The balloting process was not marked by systematic fraud, although there were many procedural problems in the administration of the election, and a number of the irregularities benefitted the Front. Given the large margin of victory, it appears that irregularities did not affect the outcome of the elections. Nonetheless, to avoid the recurrence of such irregularities in future elections, the delegation recommends the adoption of several administrative reforms to promote greater confidence in the process. (See Chapter 6.)

6. Finally, the Romanian electorate, particularly in rural areas, faced the election uninformed and without a real understanding of choice and the concept of a multi-party, secret ballot. There is an urgent need to undertake education programs designed to ensure that voters in future elections are better informed about the process and the choices they may exercise.

With the completion of the May 20 elections, Romania is embarking upon a new phase in its transition from totalitarian rule to democratic government. The real test of the democratic nature and intentions of the Front will come as it leads the new government in adopting a new constitution, transforming the economy, and establishing a framework for the political and civil society in Romania.

INTRODUCTION

On December 22, 1989, Nicolae Ceausescu, absolute ruler of Romania for more than 20 years, was ousted as a result of a popular revolt. With the fall of Ceausescu, Romania joined the tide of political change sweeping through Central and Eastern Europe. The Romanian revolution differed, however, from the democratic openings in the rest of the region in several significant respects.

Romania was the last of the Iron Curtain countries to overthrow totalitarian rule. Processes of political change began years ago in the rest of the region, and even decades ago in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In Romania, by contrast, not even a partial opening occurred before the events of December 1989. While other Central and Eastern European countries supported long-standing anti-communist groups (i.e., Solidarity in Poland, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia), Romania's revolution was triggered by a random chain of events with no consolidated, democratic opposition capable of gaining power. The revolution was also distinctive in its violence. Hundreds of Romanians were killed, and pitched battles ensued between the army and Ceausescu loyalists in the secret police in Bucharest and several other cities.

The Romanian revolution was not only the most violent, but also the least certain of the Eastern European democratic openings. The Romanian people deposed Ceausescu. Whether they succeeded in establishing democratic government was unclear in the wake of the December revolution and remains obscure even today.

After a brief and turbulent electoral campaign, national elections were held in Romania on May 20, 1990 to elect a president, a Senate

and an Assembly of Deputies. Ion Iliescu, the candidate of the National Salvation Front, the group that took power after the fall of Ceausescu, garnered 86 percent of the presidential vote. The Front also dominated the Senate and the Assembly races, winning 67 percent and 66 percent respectively of the seats in the two chambers. The only opposition party that made a notable showing was the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR), which received seven percent of the vote in the Senate and Assembly races.

The National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRIIA) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) have closely followed and sought to support the democratization process in Romania. During the electoral campaign, NRIIA provided technical advice to newly formed political parties on party organization and management, message development, grassroots membership recruitment and elections monitoring. NRIIA also organized seminars and consultative meetings with leadership and activists of the National Peasant Party, the National Liberal Party and the Democratic Center Bloc (a coalition of 10 small parties). The National Peasant and Liberal Parties received a modest amount of material aid in the form of office equipment.

NDI's program in Romania focused on assistance to nonpartisan student associations, intellectual groups and trade unions for election monitoring and voter education programs. An NDI-sponsored seminar in Bucharest last April for members of these groups focused on programs of nonpartisan political action and featured political experts and leaders of successful civic organizations from the Philippines, Chile, Paraguay and Nicaragua. Following the seminar, several participants announced the formation of the National Center for Free Elections (CENAL).¹ In cooperation with Northeastern University of Boston, Massachusetts, NDI also provided infrastructure

¹ Due to a dearth of knowledge about democratic politics and the short time frame leading up to the elections, CENAL was unable to develop a national presence. However, the effort was organized successfully at local levels, particularly in Brasov.

support to student and intellectual groups for voter education and election monitoring programs.

NDI and NRIIA jointly sponsored an international observer mission for the May elections. The delegation comprised 60 members from 20 countries and was led by U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, Britain's Deputy Labour Party Leader Roy Hattersley and former U.S. Senator and Apollo astronaut Harrison Schmitt. On May 18, the entire delegation met with presidential candidates, political party leaders, journalists, government and election officials, and representatives of student, intellectual and trade union groups. The observer group then separated into teams, and travelled to different regions of the country where they met with local election officials and party representatives prior to the election, and watched the voting and counting process. (See Appendix I.)

Some teams returned to Bucharest early Monday morning. Based on consultations with members of these teams and the telephone reports of those remaining outside Bucharest, the delegation issued a statement on Monday, May 21. (See Appendix II.) The delegation's statement received wide coverage in the international media and more limited coverage in the domestic press. Some delegates and staff remained in Bucharest until May 28 to gather additional information on the counting process and announcement of the results.

Chapter 1

*HISTORICAL BACKGROUND*²

A. Pre-Communist Romania

Modern Romania occupies roughly the territory of ancient Dacia, a distant province of the Roman empire in the second and third centuries. After the Romans abandoned Dacia in 270, the area was overrun for 900 years by a succession of invaders, including the Goths, Slavs, Avars, Bulgars and Magyars. Between the 13th and 19th centuries, present-day Romania was divided into three regions – Transylvania, Walachia and Moldavia. Transylvania was subject to Hungarian rule for much of the period; Walachia and Moldavia were under Ottoman rule. In the 19th century, with Russia and later Austria challenging Turkish control, a Romanian national movement gained strength. At the 1878 Congress of Berlin, Walachia and Moldavia became an independent kingdom of Romania. Transylvania remained a dependency of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

After an initial position of neutrality, Romania entered World War I on the Allied side in 1916. It was overrun by Austrian and German forces and was forced to accept an unfavorable peace settlement in February 1918. Just before the defeat of Germany in November 1918, however, Romania again declared war on Germany.

² One source of information for this chapter is the pre-election *Report on the May 20, 1990 Elections*, by the International Human Rights Law Group. The mission upon which the report is based was partially funded by the National Democratic Institute.

In the post-war peace settlements, Romania received major territorial gains, including Transylvania from Hungary, Bessarabia from the Soviet Union, and Dobruja from Bulgaria.

During the next two decades the Romanian government, by form a constitutional monarchy, attempted to unify this greater Romania while fending off attempts by Hungary, the Soviet Union and Bulgaria to regain their lost territories. Political life in the inter-war period was turbulent. King Ferdinand, who had assumed the throne in 1914, died in 1927, provoking a succession crisis. His son, Crown Prince Carol, had been forced to leave Romania in the midst of a personal scandal in 1925. Carol's infant son Michael became king under a regency in 1927, but Carol returned in 1930 and assumed the throne as Carol II. Periodic elections were held throughout these years and control of the government passed among the Liberal Party, the Peasant Party and the People's Party, all of which were conservative parties representing different sectors of the economic elite.

Both fascist and communist parties formed in the 1920s. The Fascist Legion of the Archangel Michael emerged in the 1930s, along with its military wing, the Iron Guard, a virulently anti-Semitic group that employed terror tactics to promote its reactionary political program. King Carol faced competing pressures, on one hand from the Iron Guard and on the other hand from the Soviet Union concerning Bessarabia. He consolidated his power in dictatorial fashion in 1938, attempted to suppress the Iron Guard, and befriended Hitler on the common ground of anti-Soviet interests.

Unbeknownst to Carol, however, Hitler had made an agreement with Stalin to allow the Soviet Union to retake Bessarabia; in 1940, Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union, Transylvania to Hungary and southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. Carol abdicated in humiliation; his son Michael, then 19 years old, became king. Subsequently, General Ion Antonescu, appealing to Romanian nationalism, assumed control as a military dictator; the Iron Guard reconsolidated its power, and in June 1941, Romania joined the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

Soviet forces entered Romania in 1944. Forces loyal to King Michael overthrew Antonescu's fascist government, and the king surrendered to the Soviet Union and ordered Romania to fight on the side of the Allies. In the post-war settlement, Romania received Transylvania back from Hungary. Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, however, remained under Soviet control.

Under the Soviet-American-British agreements of 1944 and 1945 on the status of occupied Europe, Romania was to be governed by a popular front made up of all major democratic groups in the country. However, the Romanian Communist Party, reorganized and controlled by the Soviet Union, subverted this process.

National elections were held in November 1946. By most accounts, the Peasant Party won a majority of votes. The communists declared victory, however, and took control of the government by force. King Michael abdicated in 1947, the Peasant Party was outlawed and the Communist Party consolidated absolute political control.

B. Communist Romania

Communist rule in Romania was marked by two periods: the first from the end of World War II to the mid-1960s; and the second from the mid-1960s to 1989. During the first period Gheorghie Gheorghiu-Dej headed the Communist Party, which prior to the 1960s was formally titled the "Romanian Workers' Party." In those years, Romania joined COMECON and the Warsaw Pact; the army was reconfigured by Soviet advisers into an instrument for internal social and political control; and a pervasive secret police force, the Securitate, was developed. All independent social institutions were destroyed or co-opted by the government as the Communist Party subsumed the state. Harsh political repression was combined with a Stalinist economic program aimed at the collectivization of agriculture and the development of heavy industry.

In 1965, Nicolae Ceausescu, an early member of the Romanian communist movement, succeeded Gheorghiu-Dej as head of the Communist Party. Despite the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1958, Romania had been chafing for some time under the Soviet Union's

strong influence. Ceausescu quickly staked out an independent foreign policy line: Romania established relations with West Germany in 1967 (the first Warsaw Pact country to do so); maintained diplomatic relations with Israel after the 1967 Six Day War; criticized the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; and teamed with Yugoslavian President Josip Tito in asserting an independent communist path. Ceausescu's divergence from Moscow assured him a favorable image in the West. He visited the White House four times between 1968 and 1979, was knighted by the British government, and received for Romania various Western economic concessions not accorded other East European countries.

Although he pursued a flexible foreign policy line, Ceausescu maintained a policy of harsh political repression at home. Ceausescu oversaw the expansion of the Securitate into a gigantic network of police and informers that exercised a degree of social control without parallel behind the Iron Curtain. No dissent was tolerated, and domestic surveillance reached Orwellian proportions. In the latter years of Ceausescu's rule, for example, Romanians were required to report to police the content of all conversations with foreigners. Very few Romanians were permitted to visit the West, and even travel to other "socialist" countries was difficult.

Ceausescu relentlessly pursued an economic development program based upon the expansion of heavy industry, particularly petrochemicals, even as the pitfalls of such an approach were becoming obvious in the rest of Eastern Europe. Romania borrowed heavily from the West in the 1970s to finance this industrial program, and on paper, the Romanian economy grew at impressive rates. In real terms, however, the living standards of Romanians sank to below pre-war levels; except for Albania, Romanians came to suffer the lowest standard of living in Europe. In the 1980s, Ceausescu imposed a punishing austerity program to force rapid repayment of the foreign debt. Basic elements of everyday life such as home heating, electricity, and hot water were tightly rationed, and essential foodstuffs became scarce commodities.

In the later years of his regime, Ceausescu – together with his wife Elena and youngest son, Nicu – consolidated power into a family

dictatorship unique in Eastern Europe. Ceausescu fostered a personality cult and launched massive projects whose only rationale was to serve his increasing megalomania. The most visible sign of this obsessive self-absorption was the House of the Republic, a gargantuan palace built on the ruins of a historic Bucharest neighborhood. He also initiated a plan to raze more than half of the country's villages and move villagers to "agro-industrial" centers. This program was obliterating the vestiges of traditional Romanian society that had survived decades of Ceausescu's capricious and destructive rule.

C. The December Revolution

As the democratic tide swept most of Central and Eastern Europe in 1988 and 1989, questions were raised both within and outside of Romania regarding how long Ceausescu could maintain his totalitarian grip on the country. Ceausescu responded by denouncing the democratic trends in the region as a betrayal of socialism and as a plot fabricated jointly by the United States and the Soviet Union. At the 14th Communist Party Congress held in November 1989, many Romanians anticipated or hoped that Ceausescu would launch a new liberalization policy. However, Ceausescu only reaffirmed his uncompromising views, producing widespread tension and anger among the population.

In December, with little warning and remarkable rapidity, the revolution occurred. The revolution began in Timisoara, a Transylvanian city with a significant population of ethnic Hungarians. A crowd gathered spontaneously on December 15 to protect a prominent minister, Laszlo Tokes, who had been harassed by the police and was threatened with eviction from his church. The crowd swelled on December 16 and was transformed into a massive demonstration with clear anti-government overtones.

On December 17, Ceausescu, enraged that the demonstration had not been crushed, ordered the army to suppress it with force. Later that day, army and Securitate personnel opened fire on the demonstrators, killing and wounding many in what became known as "the Timisoara massacre." The exact casualty figures are unclear; the

common belief in Romania is that between 300 and 400 persons were killed. Despite the violence, the demonstrations resumed in Timisoara; word of the December 17 massacre and the continued protests quickly spread throughout the country.

On December 20, Ceausescu addressed the nation on television. He denounced the Timisoara demonstrators as "a few groups of hooligan elements ... organized and unleashed in close connection with reactionary, imperialist, irredentist, chauvinist circles and foreign espionage services" and demanded a rally the next day. Party workers dutifully assembled a crowd of thousands in front of the Communist Party Central Committee headquarters in Bucharest. As Ceausescu spoke, however, shouts of "Timisoara! Timisoara!" emerged from the crowd. Ceausescu was so surprised and distracted that the broadcast of the rally was suspended for several minutes.

Ceausescu managed to complete his speech, but the spell of absolute rule had been broken. The rally was transformed into an anti-Ceausescu demonstration, and shortly thereafter shots were fired into the crowd. By most accounts, the gunfire came from the rifles of the elite and well-trained Securitate officers. Having heard reports of a rift between at least some segments of the army and the Securitate, the demonstrators appealed for support from the armed forces, which soon began to battle the Securitate.

The demonstrations spread to other parts of the city and continued into the next day, December 22. Attempting to address the crowd outside the Central Committee headquarters, Ceausescu and his wife were greeted with a hail of potatoes and stones. They retreated into the building; the crowd surged after them. Shortly thereafter, the Ceausescus fled from the roof in a helicopter.

In the hours following Ceausescu's departure, a small group of people assembled at the Central Committee building and declared themselves in charge. This group was led by Ion Iliescu, a career Party official who had fallen out of Ceausescu's favor in 1971, and Silviu Brucan, a high-level Party official who had expressed public opposition to Ceausescu in early 1989. They declared the formation of the Council for National Salvation and, within a few days, consolidated friendly relations with the army. The Council soon was

enlarged to 36 members and became the transitional government as well as the leadership of what was known as the National Salvation Front.

Battles continued in Bucharest and some other cities for several days, with most of the fighting occurring between army personnel and Securitate members loyal to Ceausescu. The Ceausescus were apprehended by the army outside of Bucharest shortly after they fled. On Christmas day, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu were quickly tried by a military tribunal and executed. With Ceausescu's death, armed resistance by Securitate members dwindled, and by the end of December the National Salvation Front Council effectively controlled the country.

D. Emergence of the Provisional Council for National Unity

In the weeks immediately following Ceausescu's downfall, the National Salvation Front enjoyed widespread popularity and legitimacy in Romania. On December 28, the Front announced an eight-point program to protect basic rights and develop a democratic system in Romania. Front spokespersons emphasized that their goal was to lead Romania into the community of modern democratic nations and stated that the Front was merely an interim steward that would step down following democratic elections. Political parties formed rapidly, including traditional parties that had existed before 1946 – most notably the National Liberal Party, the National Peasant Party and the Social Democratic Party – and new parties, ecological and ethnic minority groups.

On January 23, 1990, the Front reversed course and announced that it would field candidates and compete for power in the elections then scheduled for April 1990. This announcement provoked large, angry demonstrations by other political parties, student groups and intellectuals, who openly questioned the Front's democratic credentials and speculated that the Front intended to replace the Ceausescu regime with a new form of one-party rule. Several former dissidents also resigned from the Front. The three traditional parties demanded that the Front resign from government and that a new

government be formed in which non-Front parties and other groups would be represented.

After very large, tense demonstrations and counter-demonstrations³ in late January and early February, the Front dissolved the National Salvation Front Council and announced the creation of a multiparty "Provisional Council of National Unity" (CPUN). The CPUN was to have consisted of 180 members, half from the Front and half from non-Front groups. It eventually became a somewhat larger body that was dominated by the Front, although it included representatives from the opposition parties and other independent groups. The CPUN acted, in effect, as a "mini-parliament" through which measures proposed by the new government were debated and amended before implementation. Its 21-member Executive Bureau included Ion Iliescu as CPUN President, Prime Minister Petre Roman, Republican Party leader Ion Minzatu, prominent actor Ion Caramitrou, and Liberal Party President Radu Campeanu.

As doubts emerged about the political intentions of the Front, questions also were raised about its origins. Some Romanians claimed that the Front formed before Ceausescu's fall, perhaps early in 1989. In this account, Iliescu and other alienated Party members joined disaffected army officers and began plotting against Ceausescu. When the violence erupted in Timisoara, they capitalized on the situation to oust the dictator. This view of the revolution gained much currency among Romania's students and intellectuals. The Front was seen not as a spontaneous product of the revolution, but as a premeditated, manipulative group that had executed a putsch to depose Ceausescu and substitute new personalities with the same absolute power. The

³ The National Salvation Front twice called upon local factory workers and miners from the Jiu Valley to "restore order" in Bucharest and to demonstrate support for the transitional government. Held on January 28 and February 18, these counter-demonstrations resulted in numerous injuries of peaceful demonstrators and innocent bystanders and were frequently cited by the opposition as an example of the Front's willingness to encourage undemocratic practices.

Front's leadership vehemently denied these charges, maintaining that its organization was the spontaneous result of a popular revolt.⁴

⁴ In an August 1990 interview in the pro-government newspaper *Adevarul*, Silviu Brucan and General Nicolae Militaru, former senior officials of the Front, asserted that a plot to overthrow Ceausescu had begun in the 1970s and that by 1989, the plotters had secured the support of most of the army and the Securitate. They said that the December revolution's violence against demonstrators was carried out by special units of the Securitate still loyal to Ceausescu and by Palestinian terrorists trained by Securitate officers. See Appendix III for the *The Washington Post* account of the article.

Chapter 2

THE ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

The development of the Romanian electoral law assumed particular significance in the wake of the Front's decision to participate in national elections. This reversal of the Front's initial promise to act only as a provisional caretaker government combined with several other factors to produce doubts about the legitimacy of the Front's exercise of even transitional power. There was growing discontent over the prominent role of former high-level Communist Party officials within the Front, which contributed to an increasing sense of mystery surrounding the Front's origins and organization. And perhaps most important, the Front appeared resistant, or reluctant, to confront and bring to justice the most odious elements of the *nomenklatura*⁵ and the Securitate. Lukewarm support from the international community⁶ created an additional pressure on the Front to hold elections that would settle the question of legitimacy as quickly as possible.

Several opposition leaders argued that because of Romania's long isolation and complete absence of democratic practices, elections

⁵ The *nomenklatura* refers to the vast network of Communist Party activists that existed in all communist-bloc countries and dominated all economic, social and political institutions.

⁶ Despite numerous appeals by the new Romanian government, most Western governments were reluctant to commit major amounts of foreign assistance until "free and fair elections" were held.

would be meaningless without the passage of a substantial period of time to encourage a process of political maturation within the citizenry. The new and historical parties faced considerable obstacles in organizing after more than 40 years of one-party domination. Moreover, while the new climate was certainly more conducive to free expression, five months was insufficient to permit informed political decisions.

At the same time, the Front's capacity to maintain order for very long without a popular mandate argued in favor of early elections. The circumstances of the revolution had created a genuine tension between the immediate need to establish legitimacy and the desire to establish gradually a meaningful foundation for the development of democratic traditions. The development of the new electoral law thus reflected these strains.

An electoral law began to be discussed in late January and was ultimately adopted on March 14. After considerable debate and modification, the law functioned as both a mini-constitution that set out the form of government for post-revolutionary Romania and a detailed set of electoral procedures for electing the president and a bicameral parliament.

A. The Electoral Law

1. *Offices to be elected*

The electoral law established that "the basis of Romania's government is a pluralist democracy" and that power would be separated into legislative, executive and judicial branches. Unlike its formerly communist neighbors, Romania included direct presidential elections as part of its first post-communist electoral exercise.⁷

⁷ In Hungary, a roundtable agreement to hold direct presidential elections was rejected in a referendum; President Arpad Goenez was elected by the National Assembly. In Poland, General Wojciech Jaruzelski retained the presidency through the transition process. In Czechoslovakia, the new President, Vaclav Havel, was chosen by the National Assembly. In Bulgaria, Petar Mladenov was designated by the

According to the law, the president would be elected by popular vote and would exercise certain specified powers through the drafting and ratification of a new constitution.⁸ The law also called for the newly-elected president to resign from membership in any political party after the election.⁹ The presidency was contested by three candidates: Radu Campeanu of the National Liberal Party; Ion Iliescu of the National Salvation Front, and Ion Ratiu of the National Peasants' Party Christian and Democratic.

The law stipulated procedures to elect a 387-member Assembly of Deputies and a 119-member Senate.¹⁰ Constituency lines were drawn on the basis of existing administrative units which included 40 *judets* or districts, plus the municipality of Bucharest. The initial draft of the election law also specified procedures for the election of local officials; the idea of electing local officials was later rejected in the CPUN.

The new parliament functions as a Constituent Assembly that will write and adopt the constitution. It has up to 18 months to complete this task; the law does not specify the method of adoption to be used. Once the new constitution has been approved, "the parliament shall decide on new elections, within one year." These new elections are presumably both for the presidency and the

roundtable participants to serve as president during an 18-month transition period; he was later forced to resign and his successor, Zhelyu Zhelev – the leader of the opposition coalition – was elected by the Grand National Assembly.

⁸ Electoral Decree, Art. 82.

⁹ *Id.*, Art. 81.

¹⁰ The law also provided that additional deputies' seats be appointed after the election to ensure representation of ethnic minorities. This process increased the total number of seats in the Assembly of Deputies to 396.

parliament. Meanwhile, until the constitution takes effect, the parliament also functions as a law-making body.¹¹

The law established a complex system of proportional representation designed to ensure small parties' representation in the Assembly of Deputies almost exactly in proportion to the percentage of votes they obtained. This represented a significant change from the initial draft law, which proposed the election of parliamentary representatives from single-member districts on the basis of a simple plurality. The Liberal Party was credited with encouraging this change to ensure greater participation by minority parties in the constitution-drafting process.¹²

2. Campaign period and qualifications for candidacy

The electoral law provided for multiparty participation in the electoral campaign and called for a free and secret vote.¹³ It stipulated a 60-day campaign period to begin on the day when the election date was publicly announced (March 19) and to end two days before election day, which was separately proclaimed as May 20.

Under the law, 100,001 signatures were required for presidential candidates to qualify for the campaign, whereas only 251 signatures were necessary for political parties and independent candidates to compete in the parliamentary elections.¹⁴ The decision to set a high

¹¹ Electoral Law, Art. 80.

¹² Unlike other electoral laws in Central and Eastern Europe, there was no requirement that a party receive a minimum national threshold percentage to obtain parliamentary seats. This allowed for the allocation of seats to parties that received less than 1 percent of the vote. Romania's presidential contest was the only office for which the candidate was required to draw a minimum threshold of 50 percent of the votes from all *eligible* voters. If a candidate did not obtain this threshold, a run-off election would have been necessary to elect the new president.

¹³ Electoral Law, Art. 3.

¹⁴ *Id.*, Art. 11.

threshold for presidential candidates reflected a desire to avoid a highly fragmented presidential campaign. All candidates and parties were required to submit petitions for candidacy by April 20.¹⁵

There were relatively few restrictions on qualification for candidacy. However, Article 10 of the electoral law proscribed from standing as candidates "those persons who have committed abuses in political, judicial and administrative functions, who have infringed upon fundamental human rights, as well as those persons who have organized or who have been instruments of repression in the service of the security forces, the former police and militia forces." The wording of this provision was adopted as a compromise to an alternative provision that would have barred former Communist Party officials (and some members of the National Salvation Front) from contesting the elections. In fact, Article 10 proved largely ineffective in limiting candidate participation in the elections.¹⁶ However, the provision was not completely ignored, and its application in at least one case was pernicious. (See Chapter 3.)

3. *Election Administration*

The electoral law provided for the creation of a Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) and provincial electoral bureaus in each *judet* and the Bucharest municipality.¹⁷ The Central Electoral Bureau was to be composed of: a) seven justices of the Supreme Court of Justice chosen by lot from the 38 members of the Court and b) one representative from each of the 10 political parties that presented the largest overall number of candidate lists. The BEC was partially constituted with the Supreme Court justices immediately following the

¹⁵ *Id.*, Art. 39.

¹⁶ Surprisingly, little debate centered on the implications of excluding *any* party (or former Party member) from participating in an open, democratic election. Nevertheless, restrictions on electoral participation raise questions about the desirability (and democratic nature) of such provisions.

¹⁷ Electoral Law, Arts. 29-37.

adoption the electoral law. The political party representatives were not added to the BEC, however, until May 2, primarily because review of the parties' candidates lists took longer than anticipated. The political independence of the Supreme Court justices would, on the surface, seem doubtful, given the judiciary's subservience to the Communist Party during Ceausescu regime. However, the participation of the justices in the national BEC was not a significant issue in the debate over the electoral law and was not raised by opposition parties as a point of contention prior to the election.

The BEC was charged with preparing election day instructions for local election officials, proclaiming results conveyed from local electoral bureaus, and resolving registered complaints concerning the conduct of the campaign, election-day activities, and the counting process. It was also designated as the primary government liaison for foreign election observers. In practice, many of the regulations stipulating the implementation of election day procedures were developed quite late in the campaign because party representatives were chosen only three weeks before the election.

The *judet*-level electoral bureaus (also known as BECs) consisted of three district judges (drawn by lot from the pool of judges in the *judet*) and one representative from each of the six parties presenting the largest number of candidate lists in the *judet*. As with the Central Bureau, the party representatives joined the *judet* bureaus only toward the end of the campaign. The *judet* bureaus were responsible for posting and verifying voter lists, reviewing petitions submitted by parties and candidates to run in the elections, preparing and delivering ballots and other voting paraphernalia for the all of the voting sections in the *judet*, selecting and training officials to administer the election-day procedures, conducting *judet*-level vote tabulations and conveying the results to Bucharest. The decentralized nature of administrative preparations for the elections and the delay in producing regulations at the national level contributed to some of the inconsistencies and confusion observed on May 20.

4. Voter registration

All Romanians 18 years or older during 1990 were eligible to vote, except for "those persons who are mentally ill and retarded and are placed under interdiction, as well as persons deprived of their voting rights during a period established by a judicial decision of conviction."¹⁸ There was no voter registration process *per se*. Instead, electoral lists were drawn up by the mayors' offices in every town, village, municipality and city based on population registries. In order to have a national identification card, which was also necessary to vote, every citizen had to be registered with the local authorities.

According to the electoral law, the lists were to be posted at least 30 days before the election. Once the lists were posted, a voter was responsible for verifying that his/her name appeared on the list in his/her area of residence. If a name did not appear, a voter could appeal and have his/her name added. Some opposition parties alleged that lists were not always displayed in accordance with the law.

During the campaign, the opposition parties raised questions about the accuracy of the electoral lists. They alleged, for example, that some names appeared more than once on the same list, that the names of deceased persons and minors were on the lists, and that in general the lists were based on an outdated census that contained incorrect information. Some opposition party members contended that the inaccuracies in the voting lists would lead to electoral abuses by the Front.¹⁹ The delegation generally found on election day, however, that the lists appeared reasonably accurate and were not being used as part of any systematic fraudulent voting.

¹⁸ Id., Art. 10.

¹⁹ This charge was repeated after the announcement of the election results. (See Chapter 6.)

5. Access for foreign observers

Romanian authorities provided broad access for foreign observers to all phases of the electoral process.²⁰ During the election law drafting period and campaign, government officials and opposition party representatives repeatedly welcomed the presence of foreign observers for the elections. The BEC formally invited the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) member countries, and numerous private organizations, including NDI and NRIIA, to observe the elections. Opposition parties urged a massive observer presence, particularly during the campaign period, to deter what some believed would be pervasive intimidation and fraud.

Many Romanians overestimated the degree of influence observers could exercise in the process. Some opposition parties apparently believed that the presence of foreign observers obviated the need for the parties to monitor and document campaign and electoral abuses. Some government officials hoped that the presence of observers would confer legitimacy on the process, which the opposition parties were not likely to grant.

B. Major Parties

Although no organized opposition movement existed during the Ceausescu years, more than 80 political parties were registered during the five months preceding the May 20 election. This proliferation of parties was undoubtedly helped by the 251-signature threshold required to register a party. Also, the process for verifying those signatures was ill-defined and rarely implemented. Moreover, legal provisions providing some form of public financing for political parties offered financial incentives to establish a new party.

Fewer than a dozen of these 80 parties were particularly visible during the campaign. The most active parties included the Front, the three historical parties mentioned above, the ecology parties and the ethnic Hungarian party. The three traditional parties considered

²⁰ See Appendix IV.

forming a united opposition but were unable to do so. However, they did agree not to join a coalition government led by the Front.

The remaining parties were very small, often consisting of just a handful of leaders or even a single leader, and claiming at best only regional support. The major opposition parties claimed that some of the small parties were offshoots of the Front and were designed to confuse the electorate through the use of names similar to those of the major opposition parties.

The Front's apparent reluctance (or inability) to make a convincing case that the party and transitional government were separate – and the prominent role of former members of the *nomenklatura* – led opposition parties and other groups to view the Front's participation in the election campaign as a mere perpetuation of communist control. Throughout the campaign, however, the Front never claimed any relationship to the old Romanian Communist Party (PCR), even as a "reform communist" entity. While there was some debate over the status of the PCR's activists, resources and properties, there was virtually no party that publicly associated with the former "leading political force" of Romanian society.²¹

²¹ This also distinguishes the Romanian election from its counterparts throughout the region; in virtually every other Central and Eastern European country, reformist elements of the former ruling Communist Parties openly contested the elections as updated, moderate versions of their previous incarnations -- most frequently under the socialist label. Notwithstanding the fact that the Communist Party of Romania (PCR) enjoyed the largest per capita membership in the region (estimated at one-sixth of the population), it was virtually invisible as an electoral force

The unique nature of the Ceausescu dictatorship may provide one explanation of this phenomenon. The extent to which Ceausescu and his family controlled, indeed personified, the PCR gave little opportunity for others within the party to develop even a reformist agenda for the party. As a result, the PCR had become completely discredited as an institution.

1. The National Salvation Front

The National Salvation Front (the "Front") emerged during the December revolution as a coalition that included former leading Communist Party officials, other Party members marginalized by Ceausescu, and some prominent non-communist dissidents. The Front's president was Ion Iliescu, a life-long Communist Party member who had fallen out of favor with Ceausescu in 1971 and had most recently managed Romania's largest technical publishing house. The Front's number two leader was Petre Roman, a 42-year-old professor of engineering at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest whose father had been a founding member of the Romanian Communist Party. Also important in the Front's leadership was Silviu Brucan, a former ambassador to the United States who along with five other disaffected communist officials, sent an open letter to Ceausescu in March 1989, accusing him of "destroying Romania's economy and terrorizing the population by abusing the secret police." Other leaders included senior military officials such as General Nicolae Militaru and General Victor Stanculescu, who succeeded Militaru as the Front's minister of defense.

In late December, the Front added to its ranks a number of leading dissidents such as the Reverend Laszlo Tokes, the writer Doina Cornea, the poet Ana Blandiana and some student activists. Many of these independent members of the Front resigned in January and February 1990, protesting the political aspirations of the Front and what they described as its anti-democratic practices. Other political independents, such as Minister of Culture Andre Plesu and Minister of Education Mihai Sora, remained in the Front in their governmental capacities; Plesu, though, ran for parliament as an independent candidate.

Responding to the population's deeply-held and widespread suspicion of political parties, the Front maintained that it was a political umbrella "movement" rather than a party, and welcomed everyone seeking democracy and reconciliation in Romania. Its political platform was described only vaguely during the campaign. Iliescu, Roman and Brucan made broad statements regarding Romania's movement toward a mixed economic system and the

development of an "original Romanian democracy." The Front sought to portray a vivid picture of the poverty and chaos that would result from an opposition victory, and organized much of its campaign around the personality of Iliescu. Its campaign raised the specter of massive unemployment should the opposition win and carry out privatization policies that would result in foreign ownership of major industries. The Front, however, did not set out any detailed plans during the campaign.

The Front also emphasized its "home-grown" appeal – Iliescu was the only presidential candidate who had not been in exile – and generally eschewed discussion of the party's foreign policies and international contacts. Addressing foreign observers, President Iliescu announced the Front had applied for membership to the Socialist International, considered itself a social democratic party and would model a government after the Swedish political system. He also pledged to seek a coalition government with opposition parties.

2. The National Liberal Party

The National Liberal Party (the "Liberal Party") is one of the three Romanian parties formed in the 19th century. A major political force in the country until 1946, the party was disbanded in 1948 and outlawed during the Ceausescu era. Revived after the December revolution, the Liberal Party reorganized and was officially registered in January 1990.

Prior to World War II, the Liberal Party represented the conservative monied classes in Romania. In the 1990 campaign, the Liberals held a less clearly defined base, although they gained support among the middle class, intellectuals and students. The party advocated a vigorous economic modernization program including privatization, foreign investment, reestablishment of private property rights, establishment of legal and institutional guarantees for civil and political rights, and creation of a multiparty, pluralistic political system.

The Liberals were led by Radu Campeanu, who returned to Romania shortly after Ceausescu's execution, having spent more than 10 years in exile in the West. Campeanu was one of three presidential candidates in the 1990 campaign. The Liberal Party

applied for membership to the Liberal International and received some support from that organization's Western European member parties.

3. *The National Peasant Party, Christian and Democratic*

The National Peasant Party, Christian and Democratic (the "Peasant Party") is another of the historic Romanian parties. It was particularly prominent on the political scene during the 1930s and 1940s. Estimated to have received close to 70 percent of the vote in the 1946 elections, the Peasant Party was the strongest party before the communists came to power. Outlawed in 1947, the Peasant Party – like the Liberals – reorganized shortly after the revolution and was officially registered in January 1990.

The party claims to represent the interests of peasants in Romania, but in the inter-war period was associated with the large landlords and was considered a party of the center-right or right. In the 1990 campaign, the Peasant Party supported a transition to a market economy and the decollectivization of agriculture. Like the Liberals and the Front (and virtually all other contesting parties), the Peasant Party platform called broadly for democratization in Romania, but was short on specifics.

The Peasant Party leadership included Cornel Coposu and Ion Puiu, both of whom survived years of imprisonment in the immediate post-war era. The party's presidential candidate was Ion Ratiu, who returned to Romania in March 1990, after more than 50 years of exile in Great Britain. A wealthy entrepreneur, Ratiu's personal contributions to the party were its major source of funds.

The Peasant Party applied for membership to the Christian Democratic International in early 1990 and added the reference "Christian Democratic" to its name. It is not known what degree of

support the Peasant Party received from the Christian Democratic International or its member parties.²²

4. *The Social Democratic Party*

The Social Democratic Party is the least significant of the three historical Romanian political parties. It did not play a major role in the inter-war period and does not have a developed constituency in Romania. Its 1990 campaign platform supported free expression, free trade unions and equitable distribution of income and wealth. The Social Democratic Party also sought to join the Socialist International. The party chairman in 1990 was Sergiu Cunescu. He did not seek the presidency.

5. *Ethnic parties*

A number of parties formed after December 1989 to represent the interests of ethnic national groups in Romania. Ethnic Hungarians are the largest such group in the country, (approximately 10 percent of the total population of Romania) and formed such ethnic parties, as the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) and the Romanian Hungarian Alliance.

Other ethnic parties included the German Democratic Forum, which formed in December 1989, to represent the interests of

²² The Peasant Party had come under criticism for not purging itself of certain anti-Semitic and anti-Hungarian elements of the far right. Although the party denied any connection with anti-Semitism, a March 1990 article in the party's newspaper charged that Jews were largely responsible for the beginning of the communist movement in Romania. The paper also carried a cartoon of a Jew caricatured as the Devil. When asked about this by NDI staff members in March, a party leader asserted that the contents of the article were historical fact and professed not to understand the meaning of the cartoon.

Some proponents of the Peasant Party pointed out that the party newspaper had carried other articles strongly defending the Romanian Jewish community. They also claimed that a daily Front publication, *Azi*, had run anti-Semitic and anti-Hungarian articles.

Romania's approximately 200,000 ethnic Germans, and the Romanian Gypsy Party, which formed to advance the interests of the estimated 2 to 3 million Gypsies who live in Romania.

Another party that contested the election on an ethnic, or more appropriately, nationalist, appeal was the Alliance for the Unity of Romanians (AUR). Based primarily in Transylvania, its campaign platform was largely oriented toward promoting Romanian culture and nationality, and its supporters were resistant to further contact and integration with the West. Some claimed that the AUR membership was dominated by ultra-rightist elements strongly antagonistic to Hungarians, Germans, and other ethnic minorities.

6. *Ecological parties*

As was the case in several Central and Eastern European countries, an ecological movement emerged after the December revolution in the form of parties and non-party groups organized to promote a pro-environmental platform and to express dissatisfaction with the alternatives posed by the historical parties. The ecological movement considers itself to be nonpolitical, but aims to put ecological issues on the national agenda. The two most prominent ecological groups to run candidates for the Senate and Assembly of Deputies were the Romanian Ecological Movement (MER) and the Romanian Ecological Party (REP).

7. *Other parties*

Dozens of other small parties qualified for the elections. These included several small parties with regional, professional, or political interests that did not fit with the historical parties, and in some cases sought to establish new political alternatives to the historical parties as well as to the Front. Some of these forged varying degrees of cooperation with each other, such as the Democratic Center Bloc parties. Others, as mentioned above, were reportedly linked to the Front.

There were also numerous independent candidates, particularly in Bucharest. Some of these candidates were prominent intellectuals with dissident credentials but no previous political experience, such as

Radu Filipescu, Gabriel Liiceanu, Petre Mihai Bacanu, and Stelian Tanase; others, such as the poet Mircea Dinescu and actor Ion Caramitrou, had participated in the CPUN.

C. Nonpartisan Groups

The distrust of parties – particularly among young people – led to the emergence of several influential groups that were opposed to the government but did not promote candidates in the elections. Some of these – student organizations, trade unions, and associations of intellectuals – emerged just after the revolution. Others developed in response to growing disillusionment with the Front. Collectively they formed the core of an opposition that operated independently of the political parties, which in turn maintained their distance from these groups.

As part of the fledgling effort to establish a National Center for Free Elections (CENAL – see Introduction), some members of these groups applied to the Central Election Bureau for permission to observe the elections in a nonpartisan capacity. Although the BEC's response was never received in writing, requests were reportedly denied on the grounds that there were already too many persons permitted access to the polling sites (i.e., party representatives, journalists, and foreign observers).

1. *Student groups*

Numerous student groups formed after the December revolution to focus specifically on educational issues and, as the Front's legitimacy came under increasing challenge, to advocate major political reforms. Some groups formed at particular universities, such as the Free Students' Union at the Polytechnic Institute. Others were confederations of student groups organized in academic institutions throughout the country, such as the prominent League of Students (the largest chapter of which was based at the University of Bucharest).

The key role students played in the revolution gave them a special voice as the conscience of the 1990 campaign – at least within urban areas. Students avoided party affiliations in most cases, opting

for a general platform in favor of democracy and, most emphatically, against communism. Reluctant to endorse individual candidates, student activists were uniform in their opposition to the Front. They were the most vocal proponents of the view that the Front was merely the old Communist Party operating under a new name. (See Chapter 3.) Student organizations received some assistance from abroad — including equipment, supplies and vehicles — and consistently petitioned the government for access to funds and buildings previously controlled by the communist students' and youth organizations.

2. *The Group for Social Dialogue*

The Group for Social Dialogue is an independent group of intellectuals that formed after the fall of Ceausescu. Many of its members are long-time dissidents, and the Group commands great respect among educated Romanians for the caliber and integrity of its membership.

Created as a means of bringing together important intellectuals and providing a forum for their talents and knowledge in political, cultural, and academic pursuits, the Group received financial support from abroad and obtained some government resources as well.²³ Widely viewed as an opposition organization the Group also published a weekly newspaper, 22, that reported on a variety of social and political events, as well as the results of some opinion polls conducted by the Group's sociologists.

The Group attempted to use its influence to raise the level of political debate and, on occasion, to mediate between the government and anti-government demonstrators. Individual members of the Group participated in the CPUN, contributing to the development of the election law and the adoption of a proportional representation system. After considerable internal debate over the extent to which the Group should involve itself directly in the electoral campaign,

²³ The Group's building, centrally located in Bucharest, had been one of Nicu Ceausescu's offices under the old regime.

some members of the group ran for parliament as independent candidates.

3. Fratia – the independent trade union confederation

Under Ceausescu, Romanian unions were centralized under the General Trade Union Organization (UGSR). After the revolution, an alternative labor confederation, Fratia (Brotherhood), formed and began to compete with the old labor organization, renamed as the Free Trade Unions of Romania, for the adherence of particular unions and the control of union funds. Fratia gained the support of a number of unions, particularly white-collar unions. Fratia did not participate in the campaign as a political party and did not support any party, but did advocate a program supporting a market economy and the modernization of management structures. Some Fratia member unions in the Bucharest municipality recruited volunteers to serve as polling site administrators on election day.

4. Other independent groups

Post-revolutionary Romania also witnessed the emergence of several independent groups that formed to advocate human rights and commemorate the ideals of the revolution. Based primarily in Bucharest and Timisoara and composed primarily of white-collar professionals, these groups included the Group of 16-21 December, the People's Alliance, the Anti-Totalitarian Forum, the Alternative Movement, the Independent Group for Democracy, the Timisoara Society, and the Former Political Prisoners' Association. These organizations published small newspapers and were the spark for the ongoing demonstration in University Square that took place throughout April and May. (See Chapter 3.) Some of their leaders and members ran as independent candidates in the elections.

D. Civic and Voter Education

Despite the fact that these were the first multi-party elections in 45 years in Romania, there was remarkably little civic education prior to the election. In April, representatives of the Central Election Bureau told NDI and NRILA representatives that the BEC, in

cooperation with the government television, would conduct a comprehensive education program to explain the electoral process to the electorate. As it turned out, this program consisted primarily of a few televised advertisements that ran during the last two days before the elections explaining what the ballot looked like and how to stamp it. The simulation showed a stamp placed on the Front candidate list. Few voters reported that they had seen these advertisements, or indeed been exposed to any information about the election day procedures.

Several newspapers ran articles throughout the campaign explaining the electoral process. However, since many newspapers were not widely distributed (see Chapter 3), this was not a frequently cited source of information. Most voters said that their primary source of information about the campaign and the election was television.

On election eve, Romanian television broadcast a debate among the three presidential candidates. Originally scheduled for one hour, the debate ran for nearly three hours and represented the first chance for most prospective voters to view all three candidates simultaneously. Individual interviews with the three candidates were also broadcast during the final week of the campaign.

Chapter 3

THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

Even before the campaign officially began, the historical parties and some independent groups actively opposed the May 20 election date. On February 1, the Peasant and Liberal Parties urged that the elections be postponed until at least September to allow for adequate time to educate the Romanian people about the electoral process.²⁴ Nonetheless, a postponement would have also left the Front open to the criticism that it was trying to consolidate power without a popular mandate. In any event, the proposal was rejected by the Front-dominated CPUN.

The electoral campaign was a turbulent, complex affair. In the five months preceding the May 20 elections, Romania underwent an abrupt transformation from a society intolerant of any dissent to one in which different political movements could express their views and the population was permitted to exercise real political choice. The electorate was beginning to form into groups along the lines of economic interests and political values. Loyalty to particular candidates or parties, however, was based largely on personal appeals and attachments, and the campaign was driven more by personalities than issues.

²⁴ The Peasant Party and Liberal Party issued several joint statements urging postponement and condemning violence during the campaign.

President Iliescu was the dominant personality in the campaign for both the Front and the opposition. A clearly recognizable figure to the electorate since he emerged on the balcony of the Communist Party headquarters in the wake of Ceausescu's departure, Iliescu was synonymous with the Front, and for many, with the December revolution.

Soon after the December revolution, Iliescu and the Front moved quickly to improve the economic situation, particularly outside Bucharest. The work week was shortened, pay increases were instituted, electricity and heat became readily available, and inventories of food destined for export were transferred to stores for local consumption. For a population traumatized by the oppressive Ceausescu regime, these improvements, combined with a more open political environment, further enhanced Iliescu's popularity.²⁵

As violence continued during the campaign, the opposition parties focused increasingly on Iliescu's failure to discourage intimidation. After initially blaming the Front in more general terms, the parties – and in particular, the presidential candidates – attributed the prevalence of violence to Iliescu personally.

For other opposition groups, Iliescu personified the Ceausescu and communist legacy. Criticisms of Iliescu's failure to account for the post-revolutionary disposition of the former Communist Party's apparatus and activists were widespread among students and intellectuals, who had been demonstrating since April 22 in support of the "Proclamation of Timisoara" and against the government.

Authored by an opposition group known as the Timisoara Society, the Proclamation was a populist declaration in support of democratization. A national alliance developed to advocate the Proclamation's proposals and claimed between three and six million supporters. Article 8 of the Proclamation urged that all former

²⁵ The election results showed that Iliescu's popularity ran well ahead of the Front. In fact, several prominent opponents of the Front, citing the need for stability, confided to delegation members that they had voted for Iliescu. See Chapter 6.

leaders of the Communist Party, members of the *nomenklatura*, and Securitate officers be barred from participating in the first three elections for any public office, including the presidency. This particular article was a direct challenge to President Iliescu's candidacy because of his history as a Communist Party activist.

As the elections drew near, supporters of the Proclamation urged that the electoral law be amended to incorporate the language of Article 8. This call became the rallying point of an ongoing demonstration in Bucharest's University Square, which was initiated by small independent groups and quickly drew the support of students and intellectuals. Occupation of the Square, labeled the "neocommunist-free zone" by the demonstrators, required the rerouting of traffic around a three-block area.

Despite an early attempt to remove the protestors from the Square by force, the demonstration became a six-week peaceful sit-in that periodically attracted up to 15,000 people and inspired similar rallies in other cities throughout the country during April and May.²⁶ Demonstrators shouted anti-communist slogans, urged the removal of President Iliescu and Interior Minister Mihai Chitac, sang political songs that either celebrated the December revolution or mocked the current government, and listened attentively to the variety of speakers who addressed the crowd. Several dozen activists pitched tents on the Square and began a hunger strike. Iliescu characterized the protestors as *golani* (hooligans) which, was the term used by Ceausescu to describe opponents. Many demonstrators proudly displayed makeshift *golani* buttons, and huge banners (in French and English) urging "*Golans* of the world, unite!" were hung across the Square shortly before the elections.

²⁶ In mid-June, the government ordered police to clear University Square, which by then was occupied by less than 200 protestors. The police's use of force led to an outbreak of violence that prompted President-elect Iliescu to claim that the government was threatened by a "legionary rebellion" and to call upon miners from the Jiu valley to "restore order" in Bucharest. The incidents of June 13-15, in which scores of innocent persons were injured, drew worldwide condemnation.

In the week preceding the elections, Ratiu and Campeanu again condemned the campaign violence and announced their support of Article 8, echoing the demands of the opposition in the Square. This prompted widespread rumors that they had withdrawn from the presidential race. Finally, when some foreign governments also publicly expressed concern over the violence, Iliescu issued a statement condemning the violence and asking supporters of all parties to conduct themselves peaceably.

Although the campaign was highly emotional and negative, it was confined primarily to Bucharest and other major cities. Opposition party campaigns consisted of a scattering of rallies, some posters and leaflets, some TV spots for various parties and considerable writings in newspapers. In towns and villages there was little campaign activity at all. The paucity of campaign activities reflected the limitations placed on the opposition by the government and its supporters (described in detail below) as well as the general organizational weakness of the opposition parties.

The campaign did not take place on a level playing field. The Front had many advantages that greatly exceeded the typical perquisites of incumbency in democratic societies. The identity between party and state that had existed for more than 40 years was only slightly disrupted by the December revolution. The Front thus enjoyed throughout the campaign an ability to use almost all the resources of the state – such as money, equipment, personnel – as well as the state's traditionally high level of social and political control in the service of its campaign.

The most important issues concerning the fairness of the campaign were the following:

A. Access to Electronic Media

Under Ceausescu, only one television station operated in Romania. Its broadcasts were brief (often no more than two hours of programming per day) and almost exclusively devoted to propaganda featuring the words and activities of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu.

Since December 1989, no new television stations have been established. However, the existing station began broadcasting more hours per day and, during the campaign, followed the government line somewhat less ardently. For example, television covered extensively the lively debate in the CPUN, albeit usually very late at night. Although the Front enjoyed a clear majority within the "parliament," opposition voices were frequently heard. Nonetheless, television remains almost entirely pro-government and has not established any serious claim to independence.

During the campaign, televised news coverage was clearly biased in favor of the Front. President Iliescu and Prime Minister Petre Roman were constantly featured on the news and almost exclusively in a very favorable light. In contrast, the activities of the opposition candidates and parties were rarely reported, and only then with a negative tone. Given that the TV news is probably the most influential source of information in the country, the bias of TV news constituted a major structural advantage for the Front.

A typical example of this bias occurred in the campaign news coverage of April 22. On that day both the Peasant Party and the Front held political rallies at which their respective presidential candidates spoke. According to NDI staff who attended both events, each rally attracted approximately 15,000 people. On the TV news that evening, the Peasant Party rally received less than 60 seconds of coverage depicting a few people loitering on the edge of an apparently small gathering. In contrast, the broadcast coverage of Front rally lasted 10 minutes, with camera shots cutting back and forth between Iliescu speaking and wide-angle pans of a cheering crowd. As the speech ended, Iliescu's face was super-imposed against the Romanian flag and held in soft focus as dramatic music rose on the soundtrack – the image that concluded the news broadcast of April 22.

Coverage of the ongoing demonstration in University Square was similarly distorted, particularly in the early days of the rally. News broadcasts featured images of badly dressed and apparently drunken persons lingering aimlessly around the Square and frequently focused on the presence of Gypsies, an extremely unpopular minority in

Romania. Commentary accompanying these images characterized the gathering in desultory and contemptuous terms. Responding to pressures, the official broadcasts eventually began to portray the demonstration more accurately. On one evening, a spokesperson from the Square appeared briefly on television and explained the purpose of the demonstration.

The electoral law provided that all parties have equal access to the television,²⁷ and the opposition parties were allocated some time for campaign spots on the television. There were, however, problems with this access. First, the criteria for determining which parties would receive what time were never clarified, and the opposition parties complained about unfair distribution of TV time. Second, the campaign spots were shown at different times, in some cases at obscure hours such as the very early morning. Neither the parties nor the TV viewers were given any notice as to when campaign spots would appear.

Third, given the lack of independent media production facilities in Romania, the opposition's video campaign materials were often qualitatively inferior to the Front's, which enjoyed access to the state's studio. Opposition parties complained that this was exacerbated by the television station's practice of "editing" campaign videos in a manner that generally portrayed opposition party activities in a negative light. For example, the tape of the April 22 Peasant Party rally was reportedly edited to include unflattering footage of the candidate and crowds from other events.

The equal access media provision offered a mixed signal. On one hand, it was a positive measure insofar as it offered all parties, regardless of size, at least some opportunity to convey a message to the voters. It also contributed to the impression that opposition viewpoints were tolerated and could be expressed on government television. In practice, however, that access diluted the message of the most organized parties and contributed to the general confusion generated by the proliferation of parties. In this context, it is

²⁷ Electoral Law, Art. 51.

questionable whether the access provision contributed measurably to the development of voter education and informed participation in the electoral process.

Radio faced similar problems of news bias and lack of significant access for campaign spots. Radio broadcasting remains nearly as limited and as closely controlled as television and did not play a significant role in the campaign.

B. Newspapers

The number of newspapers published in Romania has increased dramatically since the December revolution. Many independent papers emerged, and opposition parties began to publish newspapers as well. This development, while representing a significant improvement in freedom of expression, was nevertheless marred by some serious limitations during the campaign.

Because of the country's limited printing facilities, all newspapers were produced on state-owned presses. As a result, the printing of newspapers was restricted and subject to government control. This seriously limited the length of newspapers, their frequency and the number of each issue published. Representatives of opposition newspapers were reportedly told that particular issues or articles were not printed because the publishing house employees refused to print certain material.

Efforts to establish independent printing facilities met with government resistance. The Peasant Party bought a printing press outside of Romania and applied for permission to use it for producing the party newspaper and other materials. The government denied approval – despite the fact that the equipment (and circumstances of its purchase) met every existing legal requirement. The presidential candidate of the Peasant Party, Ion Ratiu, appealed directly to President Iliescu for permission to use the printing press and was refused.²⁸ The Liberal Party reportedly underwent a similar

²⁸ A similar request by Ratiu to establish an independent television station was also denied.

experience with a printing press donated by Western European sources. Delegation members asked a senior advisor to President Iliescu the government's reason for preventing the use of the private printing press, but received no reply.

Newspaper distribution was also a problem. For the most part, independent and opposition newspapers were readily available in Bucharest. They were available in provincial cities, although only with difficulty and usually with several days delay. Newspapers were unavailable in towns and villages except when hand-carried by a party worker to a particular location. Distribution, like printing, relied almost completely on the state network. Opposition parties alleged that the distribution system discriminated against their papers and that attempts to obtain wider distribution were constantly frustrated.

Journalists and editors complained frequently that newspapers placed on trains in Bucharest would be unloaded and burned before reaching their destination. In the smaller towns outside Bucharest, the local postal authority was responsible for the receipt and distribution of newspapers. Opposition party officials cited examples where party members in an outlying town would meet a train scheduled to deliver papers only to be told that none has been sent from Bucharest. At the same time, opposition newspaper staff in Bucharest, who had witnessed the papers being placed on the train, would receive confirmation from the local postmaster that the papers had arrived and been distributed – along with payment, in full, for all the papers "sold." Similar complaints were raised by the staff of Romania's leading independent newspaper, *Romania Libera*, which has no ties to any political party.

Even papers printed outside the country encountered distribution difficulties. Because of the inability to gain access to private presses, the Peasant Party printed its newspaper, *Dreptatea*, in Bulgaria and transported it by trucks to Romania. While the first truck was permitted into Romania, subsequent shipments were allowed entry only after significant delays.

In addition to encountering problems of printing and distribution, opposition parties experienced what they described as systematic intimidation designed to discourage publication or at least

limit their range of expression. Staff of the Peasant Party newspaper reported receiving at least one threat of violence a day and alleged that a group of editors had been attacked, resulting in one serious injury. Several opposition papers complained of attacks on their headquarters. According to opposition activists, this atmosphere made it difficult to recruit staff and to operate effectively. There was a very limited pool of experienced journalists on which to draw, and the prospects of intimidation, they claimed, drove away many prospective workers.

Like television, print media coverage of opposition activities usually contained a negative bias – even in newspapers that claimed independence from the government. *Adevarul*, formerly the Communist Party daily paper *Scinteia*, was particularly critical of the University Square demonstrations and frequently used its space to dismiss the allegations of campaign violence printed in the opposition parties' newspapers. At the same time, *Adevarul*, which enjoyed the largest circulation in the country, reported quite favorably on the activities of the Front and its leadership; in one edition, a story described Prime Minister Roman's and President Iliescu's "accurate and concrete" answers at a press conference and noted their "genuine concern for the destiny of the country."

C. Other Materials and Methods of Information Dissemination

Under Ceausescu, Romania experienced an extraordinary centralization of information and communication. Typewriters were registered with the police, copying machines were impossible to buy, mimeograph machines were non-existent, and even simple materials such as paper and recording cassettes were difficult to obtain in any significant quantities. Access to foreign newspapers and other publications from abroad was limited to the highest echelons of the Romanian government. Although aspects of Romanian society have opened up significantly since December, the centralization of information has only recently begun to change – a reality that posed a tremendous liability for the opposition parties.

During the campaign, the opposition had difficulty obtaining basic materials for the campaign such as paper, newsprint, posters,

audio and video cassettes and ink. The paper shortage was a particularly serious problem for newspapers. Regular daily papers were forced to reduce circulation during the campaign because part of their paper rations was allocated to political parties so that the latter could produce campaign materials. The government controlled most of the paper and printing supplies produced in the country and buying them from abroad was administratively difficult and prohibitively expensive.

Similarly, obtaining equipment to record or copy information such as typewriters, computers, video cameras, tape recorders, copying machines, printers and mimeograph machines was nearly impossible. Foreign donations of these items were hindered by bureaucratic procedures that often delayed receipt of the goods until just before the election.

D. Campaign Financing

Obtaining adequate financing was a critical issue for all opposition parties, particularly because they were facing a party which, as discussed above, enjoyed the advantages of a very special type of incumbency. The electoral law provided for the possibility of public campaign financing,²⁹ but the implementation of this provision was very unclear. There were conflicting reports about whether and how much support was provided by the government to the various parties.³⁰ The parties complained about a lack of public financing,

²⁹ Election Law, Art. 53.

³⁰ According to a report by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), parties were to be awarded "start-up" costs of 400,000 lei (approximately \$20,000 US at the official rate). Additional monies were to be distributed according to the number of candidate lists each party fielded in the country. The Central Electoral Bureau "assumed [the disbursement of funds] was handled by the Ministry of Finance." See *Romania in the Wake of Ceausescu: An Assessment of the Romanian Electoral System on Election Eve*, May 1990, IFES.

and were unable to raise significant funds from the impoverished Romanian population.

The electoral law initially prohibited the receipt of cash from foreign sources, although this provision was reportedly amended to permit the practice if such receipts were documented.³¹ The total amount of such funding is unclear. Opposition parties anticipating the receipt of foreign funds complained that receipt of the monies was deliberately delayed by "waiting period requirements" imposed on foreign currency. The declaration requirements governing receipt of foreign assistance do not appear to have been followed or enforced, in keeping with the generally lackadaisical approach taken to campaign financing by all parties.

E. Intimidation and Harassment

The campaign was marred by a steady stream of reported instances of violence, harassment, and intimidation against candidates and party members. The victims of these incidents were almost always members of the opposition, and the instigators were often alleged to be the police personnel directly associated with the Front or with supporters of the Front. The Front reported very few incidents of violence other than the destruction of windows in some Front headquarters.

A large number of candidates and party organizers reported being victims of attacks or even assassination attempts. The most visible of these were directed against presidential candidates. In April, Peasant Party presidential candidate Ion Ratiu was bombarded with stones and bottles by groups of Front supporters during a campaign visit to the city of Buzau. Ratiu sought refuge at the local police headquarters. After making desperate calls to the local armed forces commander to request protection and safe passage for Ratiu, the police chief was told that no help was available. Ratiu escaped the mob only after sending decoy cars out the front of the police station and escaping through a rear entrance. The decoy cars were

³¹ See IFES report, p. 13.

immediately attacked by the crowd, the doors ripped open and windows smashed.³²

In early May, Liberal Party presidential candidate Radu Campeanu, while campaigning in the city of Braila, was attacked by crowds carrying rocks, bricks and glass. Campeanu was beaten and one of his top aides – mistaken for Campeanu because of his similar build and hair – was severely beaten by members of the crowd shouting, "we're going to kill you, Campeanu."

Opposition party headquarters were also subject to attacks. In Iasi, for example, both the Liberal and Peasant Party's headquarters were assaulted; the Peasant Party reported that its building was attacked 12 times. Considerable harassment also occurred at rallies where groups threatened or attacked persons participating in opposition-related events. The police were reportedly notified of the incidents but took no action.

Many opposition members reported receiving written or telephone threats warning them to desist from their political activity. Even casual conversations in the street could prompt confrontation. One Romanian exile said that during a walk in a small village just outside Bucharest, he and a friend were speaking about the campaign in German. Upon momentarily greeting some children during their stroll, the two men were confronted by farmers carrying pitchforks, who warned them to stop trying to influence Romanian children with foreign propaganda against the Front.

³² Ratiu's wife and other family members were also physically attacked during the campaign. While leaving a hospital where she had been making a visit, Mrs. Ratiu's motorcade was attacked by a crowd wielding iron bars and clubs. The group's three cars were beaten and windows smashed; Mrs. Ratiu attributed her escape to the quick action of her bodyguards. Three weeks after the incident, Ratiu had received no response to official complaints filed with the Bucharest police. According to Ratiu, government spokespersons, responding to charges that the incident was orchestrated by the Front, characterized the assailants as a "spontaneous crowd."

Local demonstrations throughout the country held either in support of the demonstration in University Square or by individual opposition political parties were repeatedly broken up by groups voicing their support for the Front. Participants at a rally in Constanta supporting the Timisoara Proclamation held during the weekend of April 28 claimed that the rally was interrupted by a crowd carrying sticks and shouting pro-Front slogans.

When asked whether they reported the incidents of harassment and intimidation to the police, almost all opposition members replied that notifying the police was useless at best and potentially dangerous. Peasant Party representatives from Iasi, whose headquarters were repeatedly attacked, called the police only to have the police come and ransack the building.

In mid-May, the Peasant Party released statistics and letters documenting violence against the party and its members. According to this information, between January and early May, 133 party officials had been seriously injured, 388 beaten while inside party offices located throughout the country, 189 party members attacked in their own homes and two party canvassers killed.

In the four weeks preceding the elections, opposition party and independent newspapers reported incidents of campaign-related violence on almost a daily basis. In contrast, the pro-government electronic and print media carried few stories of this nature; those that referred to campaign violence at all usually reported that the opposition's allegations were "exaggerated."

The failure of Iliescu to use the powers of the interim government to help ensure a safe, tolerant, and pluralistic campaign environment was repeatedly criticized by his presidential rivals, who deplored the President's refusal to instruct the police and army to provide adequate protection for opposition candidates and supporters. Iliescu also made numerous public statements characterizing as illegal many opposition party rallies and other demonstrations, claiming that the government would tolerate these activities but could not protect them should "others" decide to take action.

When questioned by delegation members about incidents of violence against students, intellectuals and opposition party members, senior government officials in several *judets* responded similarly that violence against Front opponents was perpetrated by Front supporters who "just don't like what the others have to say," and that the government could not be expected to be responsible for the actions of its supporters. Members of the opposition, however, viewed the violence as being not only tolerated and encouraged, but organized – and in some cases, carried out – by the Front and government itself. Many reports of violence in Bucharest and outlying areas were accompanied by reports of Securitate involvement (widely believed by the opposition to be used by the Front government to implement much of the anti-opposition activity.)

F. Ethnic Tensions

Ethnic minority groups residing within Romania include Germans, Bulgarians, Turks, Hungarians, Jews and Gypsies. Hungarians are the most politically organized of these groups, representing approximately 10 percent of the population. They have formed the largest ethnic party in the country, the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR).

The majority of UDMR membership resides in the region of Transylvania, a territory in which Hungarian and Romanian communities have experienced varying degrees of violence and repression throughout alternating periods of Hungarian and Romanian control. The Ceausescu regime exacerbated tensions between these communities with policies forcing Hungarians to resettle outside of Transylvania, and encouraging Romanians, particularly from Moldavia, to move into Transylvania. The purpose of these policies was to dilute large concentrations of the Hungarian population within Romanian borders.

While cooperation between Romanians and Hungarians in Timisoara initially contributed to the December revolution, the subsequent liberalization heightened long-simmering strains between these communities in other cities. On March 20, 1990, these tensions exploded into violent street battles in the Transylvanian city of Tirgu

Mures that left at least six dead and 300 wounded. Each side blamed extremists from the other for the fighting; some attributed the conflict to Securitate provocation. The incident sharpened the growing perception that the Hungarian minority issue would play a more visible, and possibly conflictive, role in the new Romanian political order.

The emergence of the *Vatra Romaneasca* (Romanian Hearth), a nationalist pro-Romanian movement is viewed by many observers as a disturbing development for those seeking greater inter-ethnic harmony. Supporters of the movement claim that its call for a centralized, unitary state (including territories no longer under Romanian sovereignty) and promotion of Romanian cultural traditions strike a resonant chord among Romanians who believe that ethnic minorities received special treatment under the Ceausescu regime. Opponents point to *Vatra Romaneasca* documents that characterize numerous ethnic groups as "alien elements ... who never did have a home anywhere in our land," and cite the movement's position that Romanian be adopted as the country's official language as examples of *Vatra's* intention to widen existing divisions and incite ethnic violence.

Individual instances of ethnic tensions arose during the campaign as well. According to Helsinki Watch, an ethnic Romanian resident of Tirgu Mures known for her support of Hungarian language educational programs was repeatedly intimidated and harassed during the campaign with threatening phone calls and letters. Her petition to run as a candidate for the Assembly of Deputies was subsequently denied by the Mures *judet* electoral bureau on the grounds that her advocacy of Hungarian language instruction "caused protests of the Romanian population" and therefore violated Article 10 of the electoral law.³³

³³ "News From Romania: Election Report," Helsinki Watch, May 15, 1990.

Chapter 4

THE ELECTION

The NDI/NRIIA delegation separated into 11 teams to observe the voting and counting processes throughout the country. Ten groups of three to seven persons travelled to the provincial cities of Baia Mare, Brasov, Cluj, Constanta, Craiova, Iasi, Piatra Neamt, Sibiu, Timisoara and Tirgu Mures. One group of 20 remained in the Bucharest area. The day before the elections, the groups met with local party representatives, electoral officials, mayors and representatives of local nonpartisan organizations.³⁴ On election day, the teams subdivided into smaller groups of two or three each, and visited polling sites in the cities, towns and villages in their respective provinces.³⁵ The groups visited more than 1,000 polling sites out of a total of approximately 12,500. (See Appendix VII for team reports).

A. The Balloting Process

Romanians cast ballots at one of 12,500 polling sites (voting sections) throughout the country. The electoral law stipulated that residential areas encompassing 2,000 inhabitants or less would each be accorded one voting section; areas with larger populations would have voting section for every 1,500 to 3,000 residents. A voting section was expected to accommodate an average of 1,300 voters.

³⁴ See Appendix V for the delegation's terms of reference.

³⁵ See Appendix VI for the delegation's election day checklist.

Each polling site was administered by an electoral bureau comprised of a president, vice-president and representatives of up to seven political parties. The president and vice-president were selected by lot from a pool of attorneys, judges, or "other impartial persons;" party representatives were likewise designated in a lottery system. Accredited journalists and foreign observers were also granted access to the polling site.

In some cases, polling site administrators were chosen only a few days before the election. Party representatives at the Bucharest municipal Central Election Bureau (BEC) commented two days before the election that the BEC was experiencing difficulties recruiting adequate numbers of people to administer all of the polling sites in the area. Some polling site administrators said that they had been given little if any instruction about their election day duties and were ignorant of the procedures and rules.

The polls opened at 6 am on May 20 and were scheduled to close at 11 pm that evening. As a voter entered the polling station, he/she presented identification to the voting section officials. Most voters used their national ID cards, but passports or birth certificates were also used (although this was not specified in the electoral law.) Voters working away from home were required to present a certificate prepared by local government officials at their place of residence that authorized them to vote in their work area (and removed their names from the electoral list at home.) Voters who did not present an absentee certificate were asked to sign the voter list and in most cases were permitted to vote anyway.

Upon verifying the voter's identification, election officials would hand the voter three ballots – one for each of the three offices – and a rubber stamp with which to mark the ballots. Once inside the voting booth, a voter could stamp each ballot once to select a presidential candidate and a candidate for senate and assembly. The voter then returned to the polling table, where he/she was handed an envelope and had his/her identification card stamped with the word "voted." The voter then folded each ballot separately, placed all three ballots into the envelope and deposited the envelope into the ballot box.

B. Delegation's Observations

The NDI/NRIIA delegation and other foreign observers were afforded excellent access to all aspects of the process by the Romanian government. The Romanian electorate was pleased to have foreign observers at the elections, and some had overly high expectations about the role foreign observers could play. Despite scattered incidents of observers being denied permission to enter polling sites, particularly after the counting had begun, election officials throughout the country welcomed observers and offered their cooperation. The government-controlled television station, however, did not carry any information about the delegation's statement on May 21. (See Appendix II.) Statements issued by other observers that were highly favorable toward the elections were carried on the television and in the pro-government print media.

Most delegation members reported a generally peaceful process on election day, with voters patiently waiting in long lines to participate in the first multi-party election in nearly half a century. At the same time, some delegation members noted numerous administrative problems and, in some instances, serious irregularities. However, there appeared to be no systematic efforts to commit fraud.

1. Presence of opposition party representatives at the polling site

The presidents and vice-presidents at most polling sites appeared intent on administering the process in a neutral fashion. They frequently responded to inquiries regarding party affiliation by stressing their apolitical status. Nonetheless, in some areas, the presidents and vice-presidents were viewed by opposition party representatives as sympathetic to the government, and in a few cases, were responsible for the irregularities observed. In some areas, particularly Moldavia, the presidents and vice-presidents were government employees.³⁶

³⁶ Local mayors were also present at some polling stations and often had a clearly supervisory role.

The presence of party representatives in the polling sites varied widely across the country. On average, there were two to four party representatives in each polling station. Invariably, a Front representative was present; other parties fielding election workers included the Liberal and Peasant parties, and occasionally, the Social Democratic Party, the Ecologist Party, or one of the other small parties. In Transylvania, a representative of one of the Hungarian parties was usually present. In a small percentage of stations, more than four party representatives were present and in some cases, particularly in Moldavia, there were no opposition party representatives at all.

The scarcity of party representatives at most polling stations was, according to the presidents of the polling stations, caused by the failure of the opposition parties to recruit enough people. When asked about this issue, opposition party leaders responded that they had difficulty recruiting personnel to cover all of the polling stations, adding that in some regions, party supporters feared violence or harassment.

The presence of opposition party representatives at the polling sites, while a positive sign, was no guarantee that the process would be administered in an even-handed manner. Delegation members observed that the Front representatives tended to dominate other party representatives, both in terms of delegating the tasks to be performed and in establishing the general atmosphere of the polling station. In some cases, non-Front party representatives met delegation members outside the polling station and told them that Front representatives were bullying voters as well as the opposition party representatives.

2. The ballots

There were three separate ballots for the presidential, senate and assembly races. For the parliamentary offices, ballots often comprised many pages, as each party's entire candidate list was printed. These "booklets" constituted a confusing set of materials, particularly to people with little voting experience. (See Appendix VIII.)

Voters rarely received instructions from polling officials; instead they were simply handed the ballots and pointed toward the voting booths. It was evident that many of the voters, especially older people in the countryside, had only a vague idea of what to do with the ballots.

The exact level of illiteracy in Romania is not known, but is clearly significant. The ballots were particularly difficult for illiterate voters to understand. Party symbols were placed next to the party names, but the symbols were very small, poorly reproduced, and not printed in color. Many voters in the villages had not seen the symbols of parties other than the Front due to the inability of the opposition parties to widely disseminate materials.

3. Assistance to voters

Many voters were accompanied into the polling booths by others who helped them vote. In most cases, this assistance appeared to be benign and came from family members who were helping older people who could not read well or were unfamiliar with voting procedures. In other cases, however, election administrators and party representatives (usually Front representatives) assisted voters inside the polling booths. The frequency of these instances (upward of 60 percent at some polling sites) was viewed by the delegation members as inconsistent with the principle of a secret ballot. It also highlighted the need for a nationwide voter education program.

4. Ballot paper

Voters were required to return to the polling tables after voting to obtain the envelope in which the ballots were to be placed. Voters often folded the ballots directly in front of the officials, and the officials often took the ballots from the voter to show how the ballots should be folded or to fold the ballots themselves. This not only wasted a great deal of time, but potentially compromised the secrecy of the voting process. The ballot paper was very thin and could be read from behind. When the ballots were folded, it was easy to see where the ballot had been stamped, particularly on the presidential ballot that consisted of only one page.

5. *Informed voting*

The problem of secrecy stemmed not only from technical problems (thin ballot paper and folding ballots in front of polling officials), but also from a general lack of understanding among many voters. Many voters, particularly in the villages and towns, appeared to have no comprehension that the ballot was their personal possession and that voting was a secret process. Members of the delegation observed numerous voters marking their ballots and just handing them back to the polling officials or voting in front of the officials.

The delegation attempted to assess whether voters were fearful of voting freely. Some delegation members reported that their inquiries in this regard were met with reassurances by voters that they felt completely free in their selections. Other delegates commented that they sensed fear among people they interviewed or heard second-hand accounts of it. In general, however, fear (in the sense of intimidation) was a more significant factor during the campaign than on election day – particularly for political activists, whose prognostications of widespread intimidation on election day were based largely on their experiences during the campaign. The delegation could not detect, or find a rationale for, any attempt at systematic intimidation of the electorate.

6. *Procedural inconsistencies*

The implementation of voting procedures varied from one polling station to the next on such matters as: whether and when ID cards were stamped; whether voters had to present an absentee certificate; whether voters were required to sign a parallel electoral list when the envelopes were distributed; and whether voters were supposed to fold the ballots. There also were observed differences in the number of officials each voter came in contact with and whether an official sat next to the ballot box. These inconsistencies reflected inexperienced, inadequately trained polling officials, and a certain general casualness about the administration of the voting process.

The inconsistencies in verifying voter identification, combined with the laxity of some officials with respect to requiring absentee certificates, created an opening for multiple voting. Theoretically, a person could vote at the location where his/her name appeared on the electoral list and then go somewhere else, tell polling officials that he/she worked in that area, and vote a second time.

The delegation did not detect practices of multiple voting on any significant scale and did not witness any evidence of multiple voting organized by any party. In most cases, voters cast ballots at the voting section where their names were listed, used their national ID card and had that card stamped upon leaving the polling station.

7. Political materials in the polling stations

Delegation members observed instances in which the Front's campaign material, especially roses (the Front's campaign symbol), were displayed in the polling station. Front posters were often visible at the entrance to polling stations. Some party representatives in the polling stations, both Front and opposition, wore campaign buttons. The presence of campaign buttons was, in one sense, a negative feature, in that it introduced partisan materials directly into the polling stations, in violation of the electoral law. On the other hand, the presence of non-Front buttons conveyed to voters a sense that the Front did not uniformly control all the polling stations.

8. Pre-marked ballots

In at least two cases in different parts of the country, delegation members discovered ballots pre-marked for the Front. In one case, the pre-marked ballot was simply handed to a delegation member who had requested a sample ballot. In another case, a non-Front party representative told a delegation member that pre-marked ballots were being handed out and retrieved one from a stack of ballots. However, the delegation did not observe or receive evidence that this practice was conducted on a significant scale.

9. Delays at the polling stations

Due to the overly-bureaucratic procedures and the inexperience of both the voters and the polling officials, the overall voting process was extremely slow. Some voters took as long as 15 minutes in the voting booth. Also, the number of booths in a polling site usually did not exceed five, often creating large crowds within the voting section. Long lines formed at some polling stations and many voters had to wait for two or three hours. At the instruction of the BEC, many polling stations remained open past 11 pm to process all the voters in line, but some voters, frustrated over the delays, were ultimately unable to vote because of the overcrowded conditions.

Chapter 5

THE COUNTING PROCESS

The vote-counting was scheduled to begin immediately upon the closing of the polls. However, with polling officials exhausted after 17 hours of uninterrupted work, the counting process was often delayed.

A. The Vote Count

Before the counting could begin, each voting section was required to account for the unused ballots. The handling of these ballots was somewhat haphazard. In some polling stations, officials used an elaborate annulment process in which polling officials drew a line through each of the 16 pages of the ballots and wrote the word "annulled" on each page. In other stations, the president simply tied a string around the unused ballots and sealed the knot with an official seal.

Upon establishing the number of unused ballots, the president of the polling station opened each envelope, separated the three ballots, read off the votes, and two officials (two party representatives or the vice-president and one party representative) recorded the votes on tally sheets. Spoiled ballots (those with stamps on more than one party list or candidate) were set aside, and the total number of spoiled ballots was reported along with the valid results. Once the counting was complete, the presidents of the stations prepared two official records of the vote tabulation. Those records, along with all the ballots, were taken to the *judet's* central electoral bureau by military personnel. At the central bureau, the votes from all the stations were totalled and reported to the Central Electoral Bureau in Bucharest.

When the counting process began, many party representatives had given up out of exhaustion and had gone home. This increased the number of polling stations in which there were no non-Front party representatives.

According to delegation members in Brasov, the handling of the ballots by the local electoral bureau was extremely casual. Unguarded ballots were seen in the hallways, no verification of unused ballots was performed and there was a generally high level of disorganization regarding the collection and transportation of ballots.

B. Announcement of Official Results

The Central Election Bureau did not announce the results of the May 20 election until five days later. This delay was largely attributed to the complex system by which parties were allocated seats in the parliament, particularly for Deputies' seats. (See Appendix IX for a summary of the allocation process.)

The earliest projections of election results were based on an exit poll conducted with approximately 60,000 voters by a West German polling organization, Infas. Infas representatives conducting the poll were assisted by local officials, and at some polling stations, the government provided the pollsters with special telephones to communicate with the capital. The BBC reported that the poll was financed at least in part by the government.

The results of the poll were announced on Romanian television at around midnight on election day, just as some of the polling stations were closing. The poll projected an 89 percent victory for Iliescu in the presidential race and a 73 percent victory for the Front in the Senate and Deputy races. On Monday evening, the poll was reported on the TV news in some detail. The broadcast emphasized the scientific nature of the poll and the technology used by Infas. The news broadcast displayed images directly from the screens of the computers used by the pollsters.

In keeping with the minimal effort undertaken to increase voter understanding of the electoral process, the poll results were broadcast without any commentary or analysis of the election, showing only

successive images of computer screens recording the Front's overwhelming victory. The broadcast was concluded with the image of a rose (the Front's campaign symbol), which was held on the screen in silence for approximately 30 seconds. Contrasting views about the conduct, implications, and significance of the elections received virtually no television coverage.

On Tuesday, actual results began to be reported on the TV news. By late Tuesday evening, the TV was reporting results based on 50 percent of the returns. Again, the TV news only reported the results with no other coverage of the election.

Although the delay in announcing the results was largely attributed to the complex process of allocating legislative seats, there were widespread rumors in Bucharest during the week after the election that the count was being manipulated. Proponents of this view cited the BEC's revised estimate of eligible voters late in the campaign. In mid-April, BEC officials estimated that there were close to 16 million eligible voters for the May 20 elections. Later estimates in the waning days of the campaign shifted between 16 and 17 million. The final total of eligible voters, according to the BEC, was 17,200,722.³⁷ The higher estimates were criticized as an unrealistically high percentage of Romania's total population (23 million), and critics charged that the number of eligible voters and actual turnout figure were being manipulated to disguise the electoral fraud allegedly committed by the Front (multiple voting or pre-marked ballots, in particular).

When asked about these stories, BEC officials responded that problems with the electoral lists were widely known but an inevitable consequence of the short time in which administrators had to prepare for the elections. They dismissed the charges of manipulation as "sour grapes" by a demoralized opposition and stated that no party had

³⁷ "Romanian Election: Final Returns of the May 20 Elections," ROMPRES (official Romanian news agency), May 25, 1990. See Appendix X for Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) translated summary of the ROMPRES statement of election results.

submitted proof to support the allegations. One official at the BEC claimed that the delay in announcing the results was the fault of the parties, who were reportedly bickering with their own disgruntled (and defeated) candidates over the ordering of candidates on the party lists. The BEC added that no formal complaints of these allegations had been filed by any of the parties.

The final results were announced at 7 pm on Friday, May 25. (See Appendix X.) Actual voter turnout was reported at 14.8 million, with 3 percent of the ballots cast declared spoiled or invalid. In the presidential race, Ion Iliescu received 85 percent, Radu Campeanu 10 percent, and Ion Ratiu 4 percent. In the Senate, the National Salvation Front drew 67 percent, the UDMR 7 percent, the Liberal Party 7 percent, and the Peasant Party 2.5 percent. In the Assembly of Deputies, the Front won 66 percent, the UDMR 7 percent, the Liberals 6 percent, and other parties less than 3 percent. Several parties that received less than 1 percent of the vote were allocated seats in both the Assembly of Deputies and the Senate.

C. Resolution of Electoral Complaints

According to the opposition, the process of documenting and filing official complaints regarding the conduct of the election was a useless exercise. Party leaders emphasized the traditional reluctance of most Romanians to challenge authority and the fears of retaliation by government supporters and employees. Moreover, they claimed, the state apparatus provided little reassurance that complaints would even be investigated.

Notwithstanding this view, the leading opposition parties did file numerous complaints of intimidation and harassment, and some documented practices of multiple voting. However, the BEC announced on May 25 that all complaints filed to date had been dismissed. Further complaints, it stated, would have to be referred to the newly-elected parliament or the local police, as the BEC had "completed its work."

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

The May 1990 elections were historically significant for Romania. As the first multi-party elections since the 1940s, they represented a notable departure from the decades of totalitarianism that robbed modern Romania of its economic, political and social vitality. The elections represent, however, only a first, and very partial, step in the process of establishing a truly democratic society in Romania.

The electoral campaign was seriously flawed. The Front enjoyed substantial advantages over a weak, fragmented opposition. Some of these advantages were manifested in the tangible resources (i.e., campaign funds, vehicles, access to printing presses and paper, control over the television and radio), derived from the Front's position as the dominant governing party. Some advantages were less tangible and more derivative of recent history, i.e., a fear of change, the longtime link between Party and state, and a deep conditioning of Romanians to unquestioningly accept authority.

The Front did little to level the electoral playing field or to promote a tolerant and pluralistic political environment. If anything, the Front exploited its advantages and, in its capacity as the ruling party, permitted a campaign marred by persistent reports of harassment and intimidation against opposition members. As a result, opposition parties were unable to communicate adequately with the electorate.

The election itself, set apart from the campaign, proved to be a reasonable process, notwithstanding considerable procedural disorganization and a number of intentional irregularities favoring the Front. There was not sufficient evidence, however, to prove that the irregularities affected the outcome of the elections.

One must evaluate election day, however, in conjunction with the overall process. Given the campaign environment and the absence of a civic society, the election outcome was virtually predetermined. One former dissident and a member of the Group for Social Dialogue accounted for the victory of Ion Iliescu and the National Salvation Front this way:

The massive vote for the Front was a conservative vote. People were afraid of change. They were trying to put behind them the last 45 terrible years, and felt that the improvement brought about by the revolution would be jeopardized by political instability. People were afraid of inflation, unemployment, the loss of social benefits, and so on. They perceived the Front as the guarantor of continuity and security.³⁸

As one member of the international delegation commented, "the real question is not whether the election was free and fair, but whether it was meaningful."

B. Recommendations

Although the elections were an important step in the political evolution of Romania, they were only a transitional phase in the ongoing political process. The new parliament must now begin drafting a constitution and within two-and-a-half years, new elections will be held both for president and parliament. This phase of the transition should give all competing parties sufficient time to organize themselves and will provide a crucial period for testing the political intentions of the National Salvation Front.

³⁸ *Uncaptive Minds*, Vol. III, No. 3, July 1990, published by the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe.

In the spirit of supporting a full democratic transition in Romania, the NDI/NRIIA delegation members offer the following recommendations regarding the upcoming electoral process.

1. Ensuring a More Open Electoral Campaign

Political and civil rights: The exercise of fundamental political and civil rights was severely hindered during the electoral campaign. The government should make every effort to desist from and discourage all forms of intimidation and harassment of persons exercising political and civil rights, such as the rights of free expression and free assembly. The government should vigorously investigate all incidents of violence, intimidation and harassment, particularly those directed at individuals exercising their rights, and should prosecute those responsible for these acts.

Civic education: The level of knowledge within the Romanian citizenry about the significance and importance of democratic elections and governance was insufficient to ensure meaningful participation in the electoral process. The government should acknowledge the need to educate citizens as to the meaning of democracy and the importance of multiparty elections, and should encourage the activities of political parties and civic groups in this regard. Programs to inform citizens about the next elections, and to promote informed participation in the process – whether as candidates, voters or observers – should receive government support.

Electronic Media: Access to and use of electronic media primarily benefitted the ruling National Salvation Front. Opposition parties should be permitted significant quantities of publicly scheduled television and radio time at reasonable times of the day and evening. The delegation encourages the establishment of one or more independent television and radio stations, and recommends that television news coverage on the official channel be more balanced.

Newspapers: Control of printing facilities unfairly served the interests of the ruling party. Printing and distribution of newspapers should be decentralized and removed from government control and supervision. In particular, the establishment and operation of private printing presses for newspapers should be permitted and encouraged.

Other materials and sources of information: Other means of disseminating information during the campaign were severely and unnecessarily restricted. The delegation recommends the removal of barriers to all forms of information dissemination, including access to paper, typewriters, copying machines, computers and mimeograph machines. Such materials and equipment should be made publicly available, and the government monopoly on them should be ended.

Campaign financing: The inequity of financial resources was highly advantageous to the Front. Provisions for public financing should be clarified and expanded to reduce the dramatic disparity between resources available to the Front and to all other parties.

Election observers: The ability to participate in monitoring the electoral process increases greater civic awareness among all segments of the society. The government should permit representatives of nonpartisan Romanian groups to join party representatives in observing future elections.

2. *The Election Process*

Voter registration: The integrity of voter registration lists must be ensured to increase confidence in the electoral process. For future elections, new voter registration lists should be prepared. Provisions for scrutiny by opposition political parties and nonpartisan groups should also be developed.

Improve administration of the voting process: The number of polling stations was insufficient to permit all interested Romanians the opportunity to vote without unreasonable delays. The government should consider ways to ensure a more expeditious balloting process. Increasing the number of polling stations and increasing the number of voting tables and booths at each station would improve the situation. Polling stations should be large enough to accommodate more voters. Intensive and early training of nonpartisan election officials should also be instituted.

Shift work for polling station officials: To prevent fatigue of polling station officials, the government should consider having two shifts of polling station officials for each site.

Clarify procedures for voter identification: The absence of clear voter identification guidelines provides the possibility for widespread electoral fraud. Rules about what identification documents are acceptable on election day should be clarified. Rules regarding voting away from one's home district should be restricted to prevent the possibility of multiple voting. Rules regarding stamping of identification documents after voting should be clarified.

Ballot simplification and integrity: The ballots in the May elections were unduly complicated for an inexperienced, uninformed and, at times, illiterate electorate. Notwithstanding the costs associated with simplifying this process, the delegation recommends that the three ballots be condensed into one, preferably a one-page ballot with columns for each major race. Provisions for illiterate voters should be made by including large color symbols for each party.

Ballot secrecy: Appreciation of the concept of a secret ballot was insufficient to ensure informed participation in the electoral process. Civic education should stress ballot secrecy and the need for voters to control their ballots from the time they receive them until they deposit them in the box. Restrictions on assistance inside voting booths should be strictly applied. Posters depicting the voting process should be displayed at each polling station and inside voting booths. Ballots should be printed on thicker, non-transparent paper.

Clarify procedures on unused ballots: The absence of clear procedures on the handling of unused ballots gives rise to the possibility of electoral fraud. Unused ballots should be systematically handled at the start of the counting process. Procedures for annulling unused ballots should be simplified and standardized.

Improve count reliability: Public awareness of the counting process is inordinately dependent on announcements from the central authorities. Each polling station should be required to post publicly its results and keep them posted for several days after the election.

Organized transportation of ballots: The process of transporting ballots from voting sections to counting centers is not uniformly clear. Methods for transporting ballots from polling stations to central

bureaus should be standardized and allow for supervision by opposition party representatives and nonpartisan observers.

Secure ballots after the count: Safeguards for the disposition of valid and spoiled ballots were insufficient to ensure appropriate handling of possible challenges to the conduct of the vote count. The electoral bureau should develop clear procedures for verifying and storing ballots and apply those procedures uniformly throughout the country.

Electoral Grievances: A nonpartisan body, either within the electoral bureau or the judiciary, should vigorously investigate all complaints regarding the electoral process – the campaign, voting and counting. Such investigations should continue after the elections if necessary, and those found responsible for illegal actions should be prosecuted.

APPENDICES

MAY 18, 1990 PRESS STATEMENT**OPENING STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
OBSERVER DELEGATION**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am Senator Joseph Lieberman. I am pleased to introduce the international observer delegation that is here in Romania to observe the May 20 presidential and legislative elections. This delegation has been organized by the National Democratic and the National Republican Institutes for International Affairs – NDI and NRIIA, respectively. Affiliated with the two political parties of the United States, the institutes conduct international programs to support democratic development around the world and have frequently cosponsored election observation missions such as this one.

Before we explain the purpose of our visit here, allow me to introduce the co-leaders of this delegation. To my right is Roy Hattersley, Deputy Labour Leader in Great Britain, and to my left is former U.S. Senator and Apollo astronaut, Harrison Schmitt. I would also like to mention that this 60-member delegation includes parliamentarians, political party leaders, election administrators and other elections experts from 20 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. Many of the individuals here have participated in previous missions that the institutes have organized in other countries.

This delegation is in Romania by invitation to observe the developments of the electoral process. The revolution of December 1989 that captured so much of the world's attention set in motion a series of events that, with considerable effort, can lead to the development and consolidation of a fully democratic society in Romania. In two days, Romanians will have the opportunity to cast their ballots in the first multi-party elections here in nearly half a century.

While there has been debate in Romania about aspects of these elections, virtually all sectors of the population appear to be participating in the process. Although only a short time has passed

since the December revolution, these elections are an important opportunity to demonstrate that a new political era -- one offering the prospect of democratic government and respect for human rights -- has begun in Romania.

It is important to remember that the purpose of these elections is the formation of a transitional government whose primary purpose is the drafting of a new constitution, and then new elections will be held.

Given the historic nature of these elections and their significance for the future of Romania, it is not surprising that the elections have attracted significant international attention. Romanians have welcomed this attention and expressed appreciation that this (and other) delegations are present for these elections.

We have two purposes during our stay in Romania. First, we wish to demonstrate international support for free and fair elections and for a democratic system in Romania. We also are here to learn from the people of Romania about the nature of the electoral process and its implications for Romania's future as a democratic country.

We have already met today with a broad spectrum of Romanians to obtain their views on the electoral process. Tomorrow the delegation will divide into small teams that will visit eleven regions of the country. We will speak with Romanians involved in the electoral process in each of these areas and, on Sunday, we will observe the balloting and counting processes.

The two sponsoring organizations have been monitoring the electoral process over the past three months and the delegation will now assess three distinct elements of the process. First with respect to the election campaign, delegates will seek to ascertain whether the political environment and the electoral laws and regulations allowed all participants in the process the opportunity to make their views known to the electorate.

Second, regarding the procedures on election day, we will analyze whether the voters were able to cast their ballots in secret and without fear or intimidation. And third in analyzing the counting

process, we will attempt to determine whether the ballots have been counted accurately.

The delegation will regroup in Bucharest on Monday for a debriefing session for the preparation of a final statement. We will report our observations to the international community at a press conference in this hotel. Our observations of this process will, we expect, reflect those of the Romanian people themselves.

We wish to reiterate our support for the people of Romania who, as they go to the polls on May 20, are taking an historic step toward the development of a new and democratic Romania in which political pluralism will flourish, individual and collective liberties will be protected, human rights will be respected, and the rule of law will be institutionalized.

**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION
TO THE ROMANIAN ELECTIONS**

May 21, 1990
Bucharest, Romania

We are pleased to offer this preliminary statement on behalf of the International Observer Delegation organized jointly by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs. Our delegation is comprised of 60 members from 20 nations. Our groups have deployed to 10 regions around Romania and here in the Bucharest area. Some of these teams are still in the field, and we are in touch with them by telephone.

This preliminary statement is issued on the basis of our analysis of the campaign period and on what we have seen during yesterday's election and the early stages of the counting. We expect to make a further more comprehensive report at a later time.

Any judgement on the Romanian elections, the first multiparty electoral contests in nearly half a century, must take into account the national trauma inflicted on the people of Romania by decades of brutal communist dictatorships. Consequently, the country faced the election, only five months after the December revolution, without the political experience, preparation, and infrastructure which would have permitted a completely free and fair election. The democratic opposition should be congratulated for its willingness to compete vigorously under such difficult circumstances.

The process was flawed. But the very fact that an election has taken place is itself a remarkable achievement which none of us would have believed possible a year ago. The delegation recognizes that there has been a significant political opening in Romania since the December 22 revolution: political parties have now organized, there is greater freedom of expression, and hope for the future is developing.

As we noted, however, the election process was far from perfect. Key among the areas of greatest concern to our delegation are:

1) The centralized means of creating and distributing political information remain under the control of the government led by the National Salvation Front. This situation prevented opposition views from being effectively presented in all regions of the country. Specifically, the government did not permit the establishment of an independent printing facility or of independent broadcasting.

2) The government did not promptly and vigorously condemn incidents of intimidation including attacks on opposition candidates and party activists. Nor has the government adequately identified former Securitate personnel nor brought to trial those who fired on the people during the December revolution. Both these situations have added to the distrust and suspicion which exists among a large portion of the electorate.

3) And, finally, the general attitude of the National Salvation Front toward opposition parties and groups did not serve to promote a genuinely pluralistic and tolerant political environment.

Against this background, the people of Romania displayed a remarkable enthusiasm for democracy. Regardless of the ultimate outcomes of the election, the final decision of the Romanian voters deserves our respect.

Our teams did note instances of irregularities, but we did not observe systematic electoral fraud. Isolated instances of ballot box stuffing have been reported, as have incidents in which adequate physical control of the ballots was not maintained. We also are concerned at the frequency of instances, particularly in rural areas, in which electoral authorities assisted voters inside the voting booths. While this situation may have arisen from a lack of understanding and the complexity of the balloting process, it is nonetheless inconsistent with the principle of a secret ballot. There was also a general inconsistency in the application of the "voted" stamp to identity cards which could have allowed for multiple voting.

Given all of these factors, this election can be a significant step on the road to democracy. We cannot be more conclusive at this time because so much more remains to be done. The burdens and responsibilities for democratization will fall largely on the shoulders of the elected representatives and leaders of this country. All of the democratic institutions and parties will have to remain active and engaged in the effort to bring stable democracy to Romania.

The democratic credentials of the National Salvation Front have not been fully established by this election. If victorious, the Front must take greater steps toward establishing a genuinely pluralistic political environment. These include:

1. Guarantee a free press, allowing the creation and distribution of printed material, and the development of an independent electronic media.
2. Engage in meaningful dialogue with opposition groups – including the students – in an effort to achieve genuine national reconciliation. Such reconciliation will also require an attitude of greater tolerance and respect of opposition voices by the National Salvation Front.
3. Encourage and cooperate in the development of a nationwide civic and voter education program to address the consequences of the 45 years of communist domination.
4. And, above all, promote the adoption of a democratic constitution and institutions at all levels which guarantee political and human rights for all Romanian citizens.

In closing, we note that this election will produce a short-term transitional government and that new elections will follow the adoption of a constitution. This transition government will be judged on its actions, as well as its words. In addressing the challenges of Romanian society the government should note the words of a student leader who told our delegation that "the greatest evils inherited from the previous government are inertia and fear."

In the days ahead, our delegation offers the courageous people of Romania our solidarity and steadfast support as they embark upon a new era of democratic freedoms and responsibilities.

Romanian Revolution Depicted as Planned Coup, Not Uprising

By Marc Champion
Special to The Washington Post

BUCURESTI, Romania, Aug. 21—The rule and life of Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu ended last December in a palace coup d'etat that had been in various stages of planning since the mid-1970s, not in the spontaneous, popular uprising depicted by the government that replaced and executed him, two of the alleged plotters said today.

Silviu Brucan and Nicolae Militaru, both former top officials of the National Salvation Front interim government, said longtime conspirators against Ceausescu, including themselves, had already secured

the support of the army and most of the Securitate secret police in the cause of overthrowing Ceausescu before Romanians took to the streets in Timisoara in a popular uprising last Dec. 16-19 "Civil war" and a "bloody massacre throughout the country" were thus averted when the uprising spread to Bucharest Dec. 21, they said in an interview in the pro-government newspaper *Adevarul*.

"The idea that [the army's] 180-degree change [in disobeying orders and siding with the demonstrators] was spontaneous is completely false," said Brucan.

The conspirators also had settled on Ion Iliescu, now president, to be Ceausescu's replacement, according to Brucan and Militaru. "I hope

everyone will be shocked," Brucan said today.

However, according to their account, Iliescu does not appear to have been part of the conspiracy, at least in its early stages.

According to their account, it was Gen. Militaru who opened the doors of the Central Committee building on Dec. 22 while Ceausescu gave what turned out to be his final speech from the building's balcony. A mob stormed into the building during the speech, and Ceausescu fled by helicopter.

Brucan and Militaru stressed that the conspirators did not start the December uprising in Timisoara. It took them by surprise, they said.

According to their interview, the plot against Ceausescu was hatched

in the mid-1970s, when three generals—Militaru, Ion Ionescu and Stephan Kovalyach—formed isolated dissident cells to penetrate the three pillars of Ceausescu's power: the army, the Securitate and the Communist Party.

By 1989, Brucan said, the support of most of the army and all of the Securitate's 25,000 regular troops was assured. The remaining 4,000 Securitate, however, were drawn from four specially trained units that remained loyal to Ceausescu. These, plus 60 Palestinians in training at Securitate bases, were the shadowy "terrorists" of the revolution who caused so much bloodshed, they said.

Brucan said the plotters had considered Iliescu a suitable replacement

for Ceausescu as early as the late 1970s. But initially, Brucan added, the conspirators rejected Iliescu as a choice because they considered him too hard-line a Communist.

Brucan said he hoped the interview would help "strengthen forces struggling for democracy." Both Brucan and Gen. Militaru were forced to resign from the National Salvation Front, which won controversial elections in May. Brucan was the new government's foreign affairs expert and spokesman, and Militaru the defense minister.

The current government spokesman, Mircea Podina, said the two were trying to gain attention with their statements, which he did not challenge.

R O M A N I A April 20, 1990
CENTRAL ELECTORAL BUREAU

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you that, on May 20, 1990, elections will be held in Romania for a bicameral Parliament and for the President of the country.

After a long period of dictatorship, these are the first free and democratic elections in our country. They will be an historic decisive moment in the evolution of the entire Romanian society on the path of democracy, political pluralism and observance of fundamental human rights.

The activity of your organisation for promoting and ensuring fundamental human rights and freedoms is widely known and appreciated on the international arena.

Therefore, on behalf of the Central Electoral Bureau, I have the pleasure to convey to your organisation the invitation to attend the May 20 elections as an observer.

I am confident that the presence of your organisation at the elections will be an important moment which would facilitate the development of our future co-operation to the benefit of promoting human rights, democracy and freedom.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Chairman,
Ovidiu Zărnescu
Central Electoral Bureau



Mr. Walter F. MONDALE
Chairman
National Democratic Institute
for International Affairs
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 605
Washington D.C. 20036

ANNEX

The granting of facilities to "observers" during the period of the elections in Romania is a prerogative of the Romanian Government, in its capacity as organizer and custodian of observing the legal conditions provided for the elections.

The observers could fulfil their mission from the beginning of the electoral campaign till the final conclusion of the elections.

For the purpose of facilitating their mission, within the boundaries of the provisions of Romania's internal laws and regulations, the observers will benefit of the following facilities:

- Freedom of information and documentation on the legal framework concerning the elections and on the norms governing basic human rights and freedoms;
- Freedom of travel and of establishing contacts with the leaders of any political group, with the candidates as well as with the voters;
- Free access to electoral meetings and to monitoring the election process in any of the country's localities under the terms of the electoral law;
- The observers will have to abide by their neutrality status and will not interfere in the electoral process; the ways of presenting their conclusions concerning the results of the elections to Governments or to the public opinion will rest to their own judgement;
- If they so wish, the observers could convene, at the end of their mission, press conferences and could request to be received by the Romanian authorities.

x

x

x

All expenses incurred by the observers throughout their mission will have to be covered entirely by them. The Romanian authorities will assist them in establishing contacts with the leaders of the political parties and with the candidates, and will facilitate their internal travel through travel and hotel reservations, car rentals etc.

The address of the Electoral Bureau in Bucharest is:

Str. Onești 2, Intrarea B,

București, ROMANIA

Tel.: 15.04.91

Telex: 11983 BCER

MEMORANDUM

May 8, 1990

TO: INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER
DELEGATION TO ROMANIA

FROM: Kenneth D. Wollack
NDI Executive Vice President

RE: Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRIIA) are jointly organizing a 60-member international delegation to observe the May 20 presidential and legislative elections in Romania. The delegation includes legislators, political party leaders, and election experts from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Western Hemisphere.

The joint NDI/NRIIA delegation, which is likely to be the largest international observer mission in Romania, has been invited by the Central Electoral Bureau and the major opposition parties. The delegation members will have credentials to watch both the voting and counting process. We also plan to liaison with other observer groups, some of which have asked to join our briefing sessions on Friday, May 18.

The May 20 election is the first multiparty electoral contest in Romania in nearly half a century. The oppressive Ceausescu regime, combined with Romania's almost complete isolation from the outside world during Communist rule, has led to a dearth of knowledge about democratic politics and institutions. The election is being held only five months after the December revolution. The May 20 election will, in effect, result in a short-term transitional government. The newly-elected parliament will form a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution, after which new national elections will be held.

NDI ACTIVITIES IN ROMANIA

NDI, in cooperation with Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts has provided support for Romanian organizations to monitor upcoming national elections, conduct voter and civic education, and promote participation in the electoral process. At a two-day seminar in Bucharest last April, experts from Chile, the Philippines, Paraguay, Nicaragua, and the U.S. advised on ways in which nonpartisan Romanian groups could effectively coordinate programs to support free and fair elections, and the democratization process.

From March 10-16, NDI and Northeastern University sent a seven-member survey mission to Bucharest to assess democratic development opportunities. During that survey mission, a number of nonpartisan groups expressed interest in enhancing efforts to promote civic awareness and a peaceful democratic transition. These prominent pro-democracy groups include student organizations, independent trade unions, and the Group for Social Dialogue, an association of academics, writers and artists.

Each of these groups sent national and local representatives to the NDI-sponsored seminar in April. Workshop sessions focused on organizational and communication techniques as well as issues relating to election monitoring, and voter and civic education.

The international trainers included political experts and leaders of successful civic organizations. They were: Mariano Quesada, former Secretary General, National Citizens Movement for Free Elections, the Philippines; Monica Jimenez, Director PARTICIPA, Chile; Esteban Caballero, Executive Director, Center for Democratic Studies, Paraguay; Hortensia Rivas, President, Confederation of Nicaraguan Teachers and Director of Training for Via Civica, Nicaragua; Jill Buckley, Partner, FMR Group, U.S.; and Steve Murphy, Associate, Fenix and King Communication, U.S.

Working with NDI, Northeastern University is providing Romanian civic organizations with infrastructure support, such as office equipment and video cameras.

ROLE OF OBSERVERS

Over the past several years, observer delegations have played a critical role in support of free and fair elections and the democratization process. Their presence has deterred potential misconduct, promoted confidence in the process, provided international solidarity with the transition to democracy and – in the case of the Philippines, Haiti and Panama – credibly exposed massive electoral fraud.

NDI and NRIIA have had extensive experiences in organizing international observer delegations, and have developed an international reputation for impartiality and professionalism. Either jointly or separately, the institutes have sponsored international observer missions for elections in the Philippines (1986,1987), Nicaragua, Honduras, Chile (1988, 1989), Taiwan, Namibia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Hungary, Paraguay, Haiti and Panama.

As in previous observer missions, NDI does not presume to supervise the election or interfere in Romanian affairs. NDI recognizes that the ultimate judgement about the process will be made by the Romanian people. Based on their assessment, Romanians will decide whether the election has legitimacy or moral authority which can be earned only through a fair electoral process conducted in a free and open environment.

This delegation's role is to reflect the consensus of the Romanian people as they assess the electoral process. The delegation's report will bear witness to that evaluation and will inform the international community about the nature of the election. In doing so, the delegation will abide by all Romanian electoral laws as they relate to outside observers.

The observations of this delegation and other credible sources will form the basis for our conclusions regarding the May 20 election and the atmosphere in which it was held. The delegation, therefore, must attempt to document observations and in all instances to distinguish factual from subjective judgements. To accomplish this task, the delegation will meet with government and election officials, presidential and legislative candidates, those active in the campaigns

of the major parties, journalists and representatives of other institutions that are playing a role in the country's political and electoral process.

Based on observations in the different regions of Romania the delegation will attempt to offer a national perspective in a statement we hope to issue Monday, May 21, in Bucharest. We request that delegation members not make any comments to the media regarding their personal observations of the election until after the delegation statement has been presented.

We would request that each team of observers prepare a short report based on its observations. These reports will be included in the delegation's final report which will be published shortly after the election. A small technical staff team will remain in Romania for any run-off elections and to gather further information on the process.

Based on NDI's past work in Romania, the following are among the issues that appear most relevant for consideration by the delegation.

I. PREPARATION FOR THE DELEGATION

- A. Were eligible voters adequately informed as to the importance of these elections? Were they adequately informed of the technical aspects of where and how to cast their ballots?
- B. Were the voters informed as to the identities, ideologies and platforms of the different candidates?

II. THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

- A. Were there any restrictions, *de facto* or *de jure*, that prevented the competing parties from conducting their respective campaigns in any region of the country?
- B. During the campaign, were party leaders or other individuals arrested, detained, physically attacked or intimidated in incidents that appear politically motivated?
- C. During the campaign, were there any incidents of intimidation by the security forces, political parties or

government officials designed to affect the elections? If yes, what was the response to such actions?

- D. Were there charges of illegal campaign practices by any of the participants? How did the authorities respond to these charges? Was there evidence to support these charges?
- E. Did ethnic conflicts adversely affect the political campaign?

III. ROLE OF THE MEDIA

- A. Did the competing parties obtain adequate and relatively equal access to the media?
- B. Did the government controlled media provide adequate and balanced coverage of the political campaign?
- C. Was the media censored during the campaign? Were journalists intimidated through arrests, detentions or the filing of charges during the campaign?

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ELECTIONS

- A. Was the composition and organization of the Central Electoral Bureau essentially nonpartisan? Did the Bureau and the local electoral officials act in a nonpartisan manner?
- B. Did the technical aspects of the election allow an orderly voting and counting process?
- C. Were there adequate safeguards to prevent widespread fraud in the balloting process? Were voters able to cast a secret ballot? Was there any intimidation of voters by security forces, local leaders or political parties on election day?
- D. Were there adequate safeguards to prevent widespread fraud in the vote counting process? Were disputes in the counting process resolved in a nonpartisan manner? Were there suspicious delays in the preparation or release of election returns?

- E. Were the pollwatchers designated by accredited parties permitted access to all polling sites and to the counting centers? Were the provisions governing accreditation and access to the polling sites adequate to ensure confidence in the process?

V. **THE RESULTS**

- A. Were the official results reported in accordance with the electoral law?
- B. Did the various Romanian institutions recognize the final election results? If not, were the challenges filed in accordance with the electoral law?

ELECTION DAY CHECKLIST

Romania - May 20, 1990

- I. Who is present at the polling site?
 - A. election officials designated by local council
 - B. party designated election officials and/or officials
 - C. candidates
 - D. media, nonpartisan groups, international observers

- II. Are the requisite materials present?
 - A. ballot boxes
 - B. electoral lists
 - C. ballots (either in one or three books)
 - D. control stamp placed on ballot box and on ballots
 - E. voter stamp to mark ballot
 - F. private room for marking ballot
 - G. forms for counting ballots
 - H. forms for preparing counting reports
 - I. strong box for locking away stamps

- III. Are the procedures being followed adequately to assure an administratively fair balloting process?
 - A. identification of voters
 - B. instruction to voters
 - C. ensuring secrecy of the ballot
 - D. marking ballots with control stamp
 - E. permitting all members of the commission and other authorized personnel to observe the process
 - F. handling complaints
 - G. consistency of procedures

- IV. Are there any irregularities alleged or observed?
 - A. late opening of polls or early closing
 - B. voters not included on lists
 - C. multiple voting
 - D. purposeful invalidation of ballots during voting
 - E. improper marking of ballots by election officials

- V. What is the atmosphere at the polling site?
 - A. number of people waiting to enter polling site and overall waiting time
 - B. time it takes to process individual voter
 - C. intimidation of voters of election officials (sources: police or security, party activity, other)
 - D. special consideration at polling sites near military bases

TEAM REPORTS

TEAM DEPLOYMENTS**INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER DELEGATION**

Romania - May 20, 1990

BAIA MARE

Mark Almond
 Ann Bradley
 John Cisky
 Derrick Smith
 Richard Viets
 (Bob Wald)

BRASOV

Terry Aulich
 George Bruno
 Theo Kralt
 Ceci Cole McInturff
 Thomas Melia
 Roumen Tsanev

BUCHAREST (six teams)

Dvora Avineri
 Jan Baran
 Bruce Benson
 Marshall Breger
 Karen Clark
 John Florescu
 Juan Garcia
 Jeff Hartshorn
 Roy Hattersley

BUCHAREST (Continued)

Rob Henderson
 Jim King
 Antonio La Pergola
 Michael Lewan
 Joseph Lieberman
 Leticia Martinez
 Thomas Melia
 Holly McGovern
 Antonio Rivera
 Gustavo Salazar
 Jack Schmitt
 Keith Schuette
 Daniel Tarschys
 Kenneth Wollack
 Jerzy Zurawiecki
 (Dmitri Ivanov)

CLUJ

Rodney Phillips
 Andrew Semmel
 Dorothy Taft
 Randy Tift
 (Eric Koenig)

CONSTANTA

Ken Bode
Joan Growe
Martin Krause
Emil Kushlakov

CRAIOVA

Peter Gandalovic
Larry Garber
Franklin Lavin
Sooroojnundun Moosun
(Petr Kornazhev)
(Julianna Haydoutova)

IASI

JoAnn Davidson
Jessica Douglas-Home
Juan Garcia Passalacqua
Georgi Georgiev
Ding Roco
Edward Stewart

PIATRA NEAMT

Mariano Quesada
Michael Ratner
Miroslav Sevlievski

SIBIU

Thomas Carothers
David Collenette
Jose Manny-Lalar
Charles Royer

TIMISOARA

Lyn Boyer
Sean Carroll
Norman Ornstein
Lottie Shackelford
Norbert Wimmer
Sue Wood
Zev Yaroslavsky

TRGU MURES

Tomas Hrivinak
Peter Schramm
(Joan Bingham)
(Ivaila Valkova)

Note: The Institutes also included members of other delegations as guests in its program. Noted with parentheses, these delegates represented the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections, the International Human Rights Law Group, and Northeastern University.

TEAM REPORTS***BAIA MARE****Team Members*

Mark Almond
Ann Bradley
Jon Cisky

Derek Smith
Richard Viets
(Robert Wald)

Baia Mare is a city of approximately 100,000 people located in far northwestern Romania, equidistant from the Soviet and Hungarian borders. Situated along the Somesul River, it is surrounded by the Carpathian mountains. Its proximity to Hungary gives Baia Mare a significant irredentist population, as well as various Hapsburgian architectural influences.

Perhaps more significant than election day itself were our impressions from Saturday, when we met with local parties and electoral officials. We heard, and were given documented and signed testimony of, numerous instances of campaign-related assaults, beatings, and destruction of property. Of the opposition parties, the Hungarians, Liberals, Peasants, and Gypsies were the most strongly represented. They implored us to act on their behalf, and tell the world what Iliescu's "socialists" were really doing. The Front's only grievance lay with the Western media, which they chastised for continuing to call them communists rather than their preferred name.

In stark contrast to the politically active party members, who were predominately urban and white collar, the average citizen in the countryside expressed few if any complaints. Yes, they thought the elections were fair. Yes, they felt well-informed about the voting process. Yes, they felt every party had equal access to the state-run media — which was clearly not the case. What struck our delegation most about the people we encountered was the seeming sincerity of their convictions.

As is the norm for election observation, our six-member group concentrated its efforts primarily in the countryside. Dividing into

teams of two, we arrived at our first polling places at approximately 5:30 am, a half hour before the polls opened. Over the course of the day, each of our three teams visited 25-30 polling sites.

None of our six delegates were first-hand witnesses to any fraudulent activity. Lines were long and disorganized, with many voters waiting over an hour, which led some of them to return home without voting – not insignificant in a country where waiting in line is a way of life. Once inside the polling station, it was generally hard to get back out, due to the voters trying to press their way in.

The voting process itself varied greatly from site to site. Sometimes ID cards were marked once their owners had voted, sometimes they were not. Everyone was allowed to vote, regardless of whether or not his or her name appeared on the list, in accordance with the Central Electoral Board's last minute decision. Local electoral officials were cooperative on the whole, though one official in a town near the Soviet border initially refused to let us view the booth and ask his commissioners their respective party affiliations. At our insistence, he phoned BEC headquarters in Bucharest, where he apparently was told to comply with our requests. Our last delegation visit to the Baia Mare city hall election night occurred around 3 am. At that time, no returns had been filed or tabulated, nor had any come in by Monday at 9 am when most of the delegation departed for Bucharest.

For future elections, our delegation would recommend the following:

1. Simplified balloting;
2. Shortened voting hours;
3. Prohibition of mayor, police, and other non-BEC officials from loitering about the polling sites; and
4. Greater voter education.

Based on the comments of the average citizens we encountered, Ion Iliescu was genuinely perceived as the redeemer, rescuing them from the abject horror of the Ceausescus. Situated as it is in the Carpathians, Baia Mare, as well as the rest of Mara Mures county, is dominated by mining. And Ion Iliescu had treated the miners very

well – shortening their work week from seven days to five, increasing their salaries significantly and diverting food supplies from the cities to local markets.

During his six short months in office, Ion Iliescu had bettered their lives appreciably. It is little wonder that these people voted willingly for Iliescu, and believed that their new system of government was indeed democratic.

Prepared by Ann Bradley

BRASOV

Team Members

Terry Aulich
George Bruno
Theo Kralt

Ceci Cole McInturff
Thomas Melia
Roumen Tsanev

METHODS

We met with local government officials, electoral board officials, the social dialogue group and representatives of the various political parties – all before election day. At those initial meetings, we were able to appreciate some of the animosity that had built up during the campaign. Complaints were aired mainly by opposition parties that focused on physical harassment of candidates and campaign workers, vandalism to party headquarters, unfair allocation of media resources, breaches of the electoral code and delays in the allocation of campaign headquarters. Most complaints were directed at the National Salvation Front (FSN) and its supporters. What was already striking on that first day was the willingness of all parties to voice their grievances, a situation which could be considered a hopeful start in a region emerging only recently from the controls of a repressive regime. We inspected the allocated party headquarters and found no evidence of favoritism in the distribution of facilities.

Throughout the campaign, the opposition parties and candidates were hampered by government policies, i.e., restrictions on printing

and the distribution of materials (pens, pencils, paper clips, gasoline); by the lack of basic tools, including cars, telephones and typewriters; and by inaccessibility of radio and television. These unnecessary restrictions made it difficult to know the identity of all of the candidates and their positions on the issues, and to promote a genuine dialogue among the competing parties. The opposition parties were not allowed to start their own broadcasting facilities or own their own printing operation. They were required to compete with the FSN for the printing and distribution of their materials and they usually lost. Material printed outside of the country was not allowed in.

On election day, we visited local stations around Brasov then headed into the surrounding region. We visited more than 100 booths and followed the count through the night and into the next day until about 2 pm. We were particularly careful to watch the counting and reporting at the Central Election Board headquarters in Brasov.

OUR FINDINGS

We did not find any evidence of organized electoral fraud on polling day or during the counting.

Organization of the election-day process was lacking in efficiency. Some of this caused long delays and certain polling booths were still open at 1 am, two hours after the official closing time. Exhaustion of party workers and polling officials was obvious and could be a factor in the future which could lead to mistakes or fraud.

Uniformly, voters exercised tremendous patience despite the waiting, the standing, and the absence of refreshment. In one case, ladies in their long black dresses, 60-70 years of age and older were required to exit the polling place through a window because the crowds of waiting voters cut off egress from the voting room.

Likewise, the major effect of using yet another stamp for the actual voting caused voters to wait until one was available. Frequently, sufficient numbers of stamps were unavailable to promote the constant and smooth flow of voting. Also, if a voter stamped

outside of the box or even on the line of the box, the ballot was invalid and the voting procedure began anew for that voter.

The envelope in which the ballot was placed entailed a series of extra and seemingly unnecessary tasks, i.e., handing them to the voter, putting the ballots inside (some voting sections put in two and others put in three) and then taking them out at the time of counting. Frequently, ballots after voting would be handled by persons other than the voter, i.e., FSN representatives, including folding the ballots, refolding the ballots, putting them in envelopes and taking them out of envelopes to check or count them.

Voter lists were not always posted one month before the election, nor were sample ballots always posted outside of the polling place. In some cases, local election officials believed the latter was illegal as violating the "no campaigning" restriction. At times, more than one voter, i.e., husband and wife, entered the polling booth at one time.

Many voters did not have a clear understanding of the actual voting procedures, thus requiring lengthy explanations, long lines on election day and in some cases election officials entering the voting booth with the voter.

More often than not, the FSN representative in the polling area positioned himself in a key location, generally by the ballot box. This presented an opportunity to subtly influence voters. No overt action was witnessed. Frequently, there was not a full slate of party representatives although almost always there was a FSN representative in the voting section.

The prescriptions of the Electoral Law were causes of misinterpretation and delays. The question of what constituted appropriate voter identification was a matter for dispute and varied interpretation. Time consuming requirements such as the depositing of ballot papers in an envelope were unnecessary. Legalistic procedures relating to the destination of valid ballot papers and the lack of any proper appeals procedures on or after polling day were a problem and left room for fraud based on the stealing of those ballot papers.

Transporting the ballots to the election central was usually done by one election official and one security person, presenting opportunity to alter the results. Cross checking the voter results, the number voting, the invalidated ballots and the total ballots given to a voting section often were inconsistent.

Inattentive security allowed open ballots to be deposited in Election Central in the hallway on the floor or loosely on the table. The voting paraphernalia was often not inventoried and secured so as to reduce opportunities of fraud, particularly the voting stamps and ink pads. The multiple links in the transmittal process that relied upon the oral transmission of information offered opportunity for error. In case of any challenge or dispute over a ballot, the appeal process was uncertain.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This campaign and election would not have been acceptable in any Western democracy. Yet considering the darkness of the last 46 years, a move towards democracy has been achieved. Despite some questions of fairness, virtually every voter asked said he or she would "trust the result."

The government has a limited period to make good on its election promises and demonstrate its long-term commitment to democracy. Many voters are looking toward the next election in two years. In a sense, this exercise was only a trial run. If the government does not move in the right direction soon, confrontation and violence in the streets are likely.

Thus, in a sense the driving force behind this election was the "goodwill" of the Romanian people. Great reliance was placed on trust on election day in the process. Unless the government opens up the campaign process next time, allowing functioning of a "loyal opposition" in the interim, tightens up the election procedures and permits participation by the opposition in drafting the new constitution, there will either be no next election or one with no credibility.

One of the highlights of our experience in Brasov was the availability of a 50-60 member Group for Information and Social Dialogue ("OPINIA") to assist in our election monitoring. This group provided maps, transportation, translators; it offered a briefing on local conditions; it had scoped out all of the assigned voting sections; it set up a network to relay information and track down rumors; it was knowledgeable about the voting rules. While virtually the whole group was comprised of opposition members, its commitment to democracy and to the free election process was genuine. Such organizations should be encouraged and expanded through help from NDI and NRIIA.

As a recommendation to our governments, it should be made clear to the new Romanian government that the future aid and trade concessions depend upon the tangible commitment to democracy, its involvement and respect for the opposition, and free elections within two years. NDI and NRIIA should be involved in assisting the Romanian authorities to re-write and improve the electoral laws to ensure that opportunities for fraud are limited.

NDI and NRIIA should have a continuing presence in Romania so as to aid its leaders including the opposition to move in the right direction. This should include emphasis on further development of organizing skills, techniques of peaceful opposition, maintenance of reliable statistics and records; and monitoring of government performance.

Additionally, development of one or more "friendship groups" in the United States should be encouraged so that after NDI and NRIIA are gone, the dialogue towards democracy may continue through the private individuals in Romania and the United States.

Finally, follow up visits by the Institutes are recommended in the fall to gauge the mood of the people, offer technical advice to the government (FSN) concerning future steps toward democracy, and

establish and institutionalize links to the opposition and to ascertain and act upon its needs.

Compiled from reports by Terry Aulich and George Bruno

BUCHAREST

Team Members

Dvora Avineri
John Florescu
Jim King

(Thomas Keady Jr.)
(Alix de Seife)

The group went to five sites between 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM.

STOP 1 Sector 2, Vergului Rd., "Universal Club"

9:00 AM

1. Lighting in the booths seemed inadequate; we thought that this may create a problem for older voters.
2. In several instances, men and women were voting together.
3. We spotted one man who went into several booths. We asked the officials what this man was doing, whether he was a husband, relative or whatever. When he was identified as a member of the Peasant Party, the Liberal Party representative stepped forward and the Peasant Party man took off. This incident was noted by Dvora.
4. The lines appeared to be long – perhaps a 1½ to 2 hour wait. The time between registration and completion of voting was about four minutes.
5. Overall, the process seemed smooth, the atmosphere serious and business-like.

STOP 2 Sector 3, Section 267 Coltea Hospital

9:40 AM

1. No sign outside the building indicating that this was a voting site – however, we were told that this station was reserved for patients and staff.
2. As above, procedure seemed to be orderly. There were few in line, and a television set played music and showed folk singers.

STOP 3 Sector 2, Calea Mosilor, Section 141/142, high school

10:05 AM

1. Unlike the earlier sites, the ballot boxes here were sealed (obviously broken) and stamped earlier this morning. This struck us as a good idea, and the only example of such practice so far.
2. Another good idea was that the ballot sheets (stamped invalid) were posted 20 meters before the entrance of the voting area. This way, the waiting voters could study the sheets and familiarize themselves with the names, forms, etc.
3. Occasionally, officials stepped into the booths to explain procedures.

STOP 4 Sector 3, Strada Sborului Section 168, high school

10:20 AM

1. No seal on the ballot boxes.
2. Curtains were touching floor, thus preventing one from seeing whether there was more than one person inside the booth.
3. Again, lighting was poor.
4. Presumably as a result of our visit, officials began checking couples to confirm that they were spouses.
5. There are about 3,000 registered at this particular site and roughly one-third had voted by the time we visited.

STOP 5 Sos Antiaeriana, Sector 5, 927 Military facility

11:20 AM

1. We were kept waiting about five minutes, presumably to check the ID papers of our translator. We were greeted cordially and taken to the voting area.
2. Some 200-300 soldiers were in orderly queues leading to the voting block. They were all in military gear but there was no sense that this was a military exercise. We were told that this was their right, not an obligation.
3. There are some 2,800 registered here and between one-quarter and one-third had voted by the time we arrived.
4. One member of the panel was absent: the Peasant Party. We were told by the president of the panel that he was expected but no one knew where he was.
5. We, by coincidence, ran into the Defense Minister, Victor Stanculescu. He was simply visiting the station. He talked with us and answered questions. It appears that he was not voting here, but was just on a goodwill visit. His presence raises the question of whether or not he was reminding the soldiers of the presence of the Iliescu government or whether he was simply being supportive of the voting process. He told us that he was moving on to other sites.
6. The curtains again were touching the floor.
7. The voting process was very smooth and organized. There was no political posters/literature or any party activity here or, for that matter, at any of the sites we visited.

STOP 6 Copaceni, (South of the city), District 19, Adunatii, (jud. Giurgiu)

3:40 PM

1. Primarily a peasant town, there were huge crowds, pushing, yelling – in all, general confusion outside the voting room. Officials were relatively slow in moving people along into the voting room.

2. The list of registered voters (numbering 2,438) was posted outside the building.
3. In terms of party representation, there was one representative from the Front and another from the Peasant Party. The Liberal party representative was absent, without explanation.
4. Often, two people would go into a booth – husband and wife, mother and son. It seems that in the countryside, such type of assistance is far more necessary, if only to read the ballot.

STOP 7 Budeni, District 19, No. 60

4:25 PM

1. Heavy early voting. By the time we arrived, 750 out of 884 registered voters had cast ballots. When we arrived, the place was dead.
2. ID cards were stamped if the voter did not live permanently in the town.
3. All three major parties were represented.

STOP 8 Comana, Jud. Ghiurghiu, No. 59

4:50 PM

1. There are 1,673 voters and roughly 60 percent had voted by the time we arrived.
2. All three political parties were represented, although the representative from the National Front seemed to be the first among equals (greeting us, answering questions, speaking for the group, etc.)
3. One interesting point is that the officials changed their system of validation in the course of the day. In the early morning and for two hours, officials stamped all IDs. Later, they stamped only those people who were not permanent residents of the town. This said, there appeared to be nothing sinister about the change only that, in the words of one official, "we know everybody who lives here so it's not necessary to stamp their cards."

4. Again, and quite often, two people would be in the booth. We were told that the voters were confused by the ballot – indeed, some didn't know how to read.
5. No visible sign of political propaganda. We were told that posters were hung some days earlier, but they were torn down. They said that most of their political information was gained through television and radio.
6. Given the broad support for the Front, we asked voters what they believed were the reasons for such a strong showing. They said that Iliescu had given them land, increased benefits for their children and most importantly had saved the country from Ceausescu. One said, "he grabbed the bull by the horns," the others simply reiterated comments that we heard earlier in the day.

Prepared by John Florescu

CLUJ

Team Members

Rodney Phillips
Andrew Semmel
Dorothy Taft

Randy Tift
(Eric Koenig)

The delegation visited 43 voting sites in the Cluj-Napoca area. These sites included voting stations within the city of Cluj-Napoca and in a dozen smaller towns and villages in the surrounding rural area. The area includes a large percentage of Hungarian (Magyar) and Gypsy voters whose sentiments differed to a degree with the mainstream Romanian voter on the issue of ethnic rights.

We observed several instances of irregularities and violations of the election rules throughout the region but judge that there was no systematic pattern of violations and that the overall impact of these abnormalities did not affect the results in a significant manner. We

also received information about campaign abuses that antedated the actual elections. Thus, while the election itself may have met minimal standards of a "free" election, we have some doubts as to the degree of "fairness" in the process leading up to the day of the elections.

Because of the long lines and delays in closing the voting stations, the delegation did not complete the task of witnessing the counting, transporting and final tabulation of the results in the *judet*. We did witness the closing and counting of votes in six different sites and detected few irregularities in that process.

Some of the flaws in the election-day process that we noted in our observations include the following:

- We suspect that the guards, both inside and outside voting stations, acted in ways that may have influenced some voters. As traffic regulators and explainers of the ballot and voting system, their influence could have been critical, given the history of heavy-handedness in Romania.
- In several sites, we witnessed two and three voters crowded into the same voting booth at the same time to the seeming indifference of election officials. Once these acts were identified, however, action was taken.
- The long, hard work day led to fatigue among election officials which led, naturally, to greater carelessness about procedures and greater laxity about rules and regulations as the day progressed. These conditions made for richer opportunities for fraud and deception.
- One polling site (Floresti, a few miles from Cluj,) with a single entrance and 10 polling booths had roughly 4,000 civilians crowding, and impatience resulted. Most of the remaining sites ranged from 2,500 to 4,000 voters.
- There was an inconsistent use of the certificate requirement, i.e., the requirement that allowed voters from one area to vote in another. In one site, we witnessed a voter who was denied the right to vote, despite the fact he had an appropriate ID, while one of our guides from Bucharest was allowed to vote without proper credentials.

Overall, the voters generally expressed widespread enthusiasm for the election and participated in a patient manner, despite the lateness of the hour for many.

Based on these broad observations, our team proposed three recommendations:

1. There should be more polling places to accommodate the large number of voters. As it now stands, too many voters are assigned to too few polling stations which creates crowding, fatigue, long lines, delayed closings and long hours into the evening to count the ballots.
2. The ballot should be simplified. The three-separate-ballot system in this election was cumbersome and difficult to understand, especially among voters inexperienced with choice and openness.
3. The polling results should be published in detail (by polling station) for public scrutiny in the press and other information media. This will allow for cross-validation of voting results by polling station and add further confidence to the announced results.

Prepared by Andrew Semmel

CONSTANTA

Team Members

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The polling population at each station clearly was too large. It was a rare polling station anywhere – even in villages – that wasn't busy with people waiting all day long. This proved to be most difficult on the administrators who had to cope with crowds all day, then close, secure and count ballots. This left ample opportunity for fraud since the counting lasted late into the night.

Unquestionably the post-polling hours represent a threat to the security and legitimacy of the election. If representatives of the parties aren't present, or if representatives of the Front were showing up to represent the opposition as well, then the necessary ingredients are in place for voting for all the names who didn't vote during polling hours.

This becomes especially important since Romania has a highly transient population. At almost all polling places that we visited, there were many names on spill-over lists of non-registered voters. In the cities, we were told this was caused by the large number of people who had moved without authorization in the last years of the Ceausescu regime. In the villages, polling places with 1,200-1,500 voters on the lists, sometimes an extra 700 people would show up. These were agricultural workers transported to the state and collective farms for the growing season. The extra voters were accommodated easily at their new polling places, but one wonders if they might also have been able to vote in their old polling places, thereby accounting for some of "overflow" voting that emerged as the counting was completed.

On the other hand, at no time did we witness a willful act of deception or fraud. Romanian polling officials were diligent and followed the rules closely. Deviations from prescribed routine were rare and did not seem in any way designed to intimidate voters or perpetrate fraud.

Occasionally we did observe more than one person in the voting booth, but when we asked about it, the explanation was that husband and wife were aiding each other or an elderly voter was receiving assistance from a relative. Also, there were visible paraphernalia and symbols of the Front at many polling places. This included a rose or pin in the lapel of the Front representative, a rose drawn on the blackboard, and a rose laying on the table where ballots were picked up. Occasionally, a member of the opposition would also have a party symbol laying in front of him or her at the table, but this was less common.

In our discussions with party representatives before the election, we often heard charges that (especially in villages) the opposition would be too intimidated to appear as officials at polling places. During the day of the election, however, that did not prove to be the case either in urban or rural voting stations. Oftentimes not every opposition party was represented, and sometimes the Front wasn't present. Usually, two or three or four parties besides the Front were represented.

After visiting the polling places, we sometimes conducted informal discussions with voters who already had voted. We asked them who was running the polling places? Did they feel any differently about voting this time as compared to the past? Was there any pressure to vote one way or another?

Who were the polling officers? In almost every instance these were identified as people who lived in the neighborhood or, in villages, as people who had a position of responsibility at the collective or state farm (head of the tractor barn, accountant, etc.). When we asked what had happened to the people who ran things before Ceausescu's death, the typical answers were that they had "gone away" or "retired."

Difference in voting this time? Without exception the answers were that this was a free ballot, a real choice, completely different than the past. We found no one saying that they felt they were substituting one set of communists for another. That seemed to be an opinion very much represented by the students and other gathered in the square in Bucharest, but not much at all in the neighborhoods and villages.

Any pressure to vote one way or another? Again, the answers were unanimous that they were fully free to vote any way they wanted to. When asked about the length of her wait in line – which was then about two more hours – one woman said, "We wait in many lines. This is the only one worth waiting in." When we asked voters who they thought would win, most said Iliescu for sure, but were split at the Senate and Parliament levels. In some cases, voters and polling officials suggested that the agrarian or Peasant Party would do well

in their area because a local candidate was running or a prominent national official was from the region.

All in all, we witnessed an election that was conducted surprisingly free of complaints and irregularities. Obviously, others saw a less democratic process. Also, rumors and threats spread before the election cannot be ignored in evaluating the overall process. However, Romania's election is being judged in comparison to other elections in Eastern Europe at this time, and it needs to be evaluated in the context of its recent history, the time available for campaigning, access to information, freedom to organize, and overall democracy of the process.

Prepared by Ken Bode

CRAIOVA

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INTRODUCTION

The NDI/NRIIA dispatched a six-member team to Craiova on Saturday, May 19 to examine election activities in that district.

We spent Saturday, May 19 meeting with party officials, candidates and election officials, and we spent election day, May 20, observing some 40 polling places, conducting interviews with voters and again meeting with election officials and political parties.

OBSERVATIONS

We observed election activities which were largely orderly. However, we did note frequent irregularities and even some examples of fraud. Beyond the election activities themselves, we noted that the climate of the elections during the campaign period seemed consistently to provide an advantage to one of the parties at the

expense of the other parties. Specifically, we noted a number of formal and informal government policies which either granted the National Salvation Front an advantage or preserved for it an advantage already held by virtue of its incumbency.

On election day, most of the voting took place more or less along conventional lines. That is to say, the privacy of the vote was ensured and there were safeguards to ensure that people could not vote more than once. We noticed many improper procedures during the voting process, but for the most part, it seemed to be a lack of familiarity with elections rather than an intent to perpetuate fraud. It should be noted that every one of the more than 30 people we talked with about this vote was confident their vote was a private matter. Additionally, none felt they had been subject to undue pressure. While these interviews are by no means conclusive, they do at least provide an indication.

There were, however, examples of fraud. In one incident, an election official was stamping and inserting a large number of ballots in the ballot box by himself. When he was questioned at the time, he explained he was voting for people unable to vote for themselves. However, a special mobile ballot box had been established for that purpose. When he was questioned at the end of the day, he explained his actions slightly differently. He said he was simply inserting in the box ballots of people who had already voted. Even if one were to accept this excuse, his actions would be a gross irregularity.

In another example, our team noticed a man inserting two ballots in the ballot box. When he was asked about this, he explained that he was simply inserting his wife's ballot for her. Yet upon further questioning, it was determined that his wife was not at the polling place.

Beyond those specific examples of fraud, there were two practices which raised concern in the group over the sanctity of the vote. First, the participation of opposition parties as election observers was sporadic. Most polling places we visited had at least one opposition party observer. Many had more than one, but several

had none. In addition, opposition parties did not coordinate their presence to ensure that every polling place had at least some coverage. Also, the opposition parties did not administer their own independent vote count and reporting system. Thus, one of the chief guarantees for fair elections was not fully implemented.

The second point involved assistance given to voters. Because of the complicated ballot, lack of familiarity with the voting process, and because of voters who were illiterate, elderly, or otherwise handicapped, we estimate a significant number of voters requested assistance from officials in casting a ballot. In some places, this figure could have been 10 to 20 percent. We noticed that there were no regular practice for the assistance of voters and that the procedure could easily be corrupted.

A final observation involves the lack of political campaign as we understand the term in the U.S. In our "man-on-the-street" discussions, not one of the 30+ people we talked to either received a piece of campaign literature or heard a candidate speak. They all mentioned television and radio as the media through which they received information. Our group found it surprising that, given there were 315 candidates for Senate or Deputy in a district of approximately one million people, public speeches and campaign literature were not prominent features in the campaign. One National Liberal Party candidate for Deputy told us she made no speeches at all during the campaign and that was the norm for candidates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The ballot needs to be shortened and simplified. The British election team told us they found it took an average of eight minutes for a person to cast a ballot. Not only does this complication put a burden on the voter, it also places a burden on the election system, requiring balloting to continue for a long time and placing a strain on election officials and party observers.
2. The voting and counting process needs to be open to opposition parties and civic groups. Opposition parties need to coordinate

their observation efforts. They should have a program of relieving observers and sharing information with each other and the media throughout the day. Civic groups should be allowed to observe the process.

3. There should be standard guidelines on assisting voters. Equality could be established by allowing assistance to be rotated among all parties, or by allowing the voter to specify who he or she would like to help.
4. Elections can only be truly democratic if they take place in a democratic atmosphere. The Romanian government must do everything it can to ensure vigorous competition among all candidates on an equal basis. In particular, equal access to the media and a campaign climate that encourages the free exchange of ideas need to be instituted for elections to be considered truly democratic.

Prepared by Franklin Lavin

IASI

Team Members

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What we seem to see developing in Romania is a one-party system with a *democracia de fachada* ("facade of democracy") very much in the mold of the Mexican experience in Latin America. Opposition sectors in the old Communist Party overthrew a party dictator, but the Party structure has survived in power disguised as a new National Salvation Front.

We want to emphasize our experience in Mironesa, the little village near the Soviet border. We found there the whole apparatus of the old Communist Party still in power, with massive vote for the

Front and persecution of the opposition parties. We even identified a fully garbed member of the Securitate with the traditional small hat and black leather jacket on, as in uniform, calling the shots in the office of the "new" mayor of the village.

Before any aid is extended, and before we agree to observe the elections in two years, we should state forcefully that drastic improvements in the democratic and electoral systems are required. Following are 12 recommended amendments to the electoral laws, without which we believe all efforts to be able to call Romania a democracy will be futile.

1. Distinguish government functionaries ("nonpartisan") from party (FSN).
2. Afford transportation to polls for all parties.
3. Afford space for posters and propaganda for all parties.
4. Distinguish media resources ("exit polling") from government or party institutions ("Institute for Public Opinion" with German advisors).
5. Expedite counting process by simplifying (three different ballots in three different colors, or three different boxes).
6. Create Electoral Prosecutors for investigating human or political rights abuses ("Yes, we will investigate after the elections.") promptly before the voting.
7. Identify proper party representatives at the polling stations.
8. Prevent more than one person entering the voting booth at one time. (Husbands voting for wives or other family members.)
9. Place stamps in control of at least two different parties (box with locks, for example, and two or three keys).
10. Provide more voting stations with less voters per station.
11. Prevent former communist functionaries from serving as "non-partisan" supervisors (specifically judges).

12. Amend Electoral Law to incorporate these guarantees as soon as possible so that there is time to educate the voters.

Prepared by Juan Garcia Passalacqua

PIATRA NEAMT

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The observer delegation was based in Piatra Neamt *judet*. The team broke into two groups to observe the voting during May 20. Together the two teams visited 36 voting stations with one team going north and west, entering the Suceava *judet* and the other team going east and south stopping at sites in the Bacau *judet*.

During the pre-election day briefings both the non-political groups and the opposition parties stressed threats which were made against them by representatives of the National Salvation Front and its supporters. Members of both groups feared losing their jobs and pensions and there had been cases of vandalism of the party headquarters and materials, specifically newspapers. They advised our group to be particularly aware if there was any representation of opposition parties at the voting stations. They believed that many party representatives would stay away out of fear.

On election day both teams of observers witnessed many irregularities, but only a few which we considered out of the ordinary. The most common complaint was the assistance of voters by voting station officials in the folding and depositing of the ballots in the ballot boxes. A simplification of the voting process in the next election would add to the credibility of the secret ballot. Another aspect which should be cleared up by the next elections is the stamping of voter identification cards. There was confusion about whether to stamp the cards and how to stamp them. This we were

told was due to the changing of procedure both on Friday and again on Saturday by the Central Electoral Bureau in Bucharest, and not every voting station had been notified. Other instances of problems were: government officials on the premises of the voting site, more than one person in the voting booth at a time, overcrowding outside and inside the voting station, and a lack of prior explanation on the voting procedure.

The actual voting by the people in Piatra Neamt went relatively smoothly and quietly. The voters themselves were generally enthusiastic about voting, and there was a relatively festive atmosphere while people waited to vote. Lines to vote had been forming prior to the polls opening, and during the course of the day some voters and officials said the wait was between two to three hours.

The next two phases of election day, the counting of ballots at each polling site and the transportation and counting of ballots at the *judet* centers, were extremely disorganized and chaotic. The teams watched the counting of ballots in nine voting stations and three *judet* centers. Although there was no specific case of wrongdoing, there was much opportunity for ballot tampering. It is our conclusion that it is at these phases that reform must take place. Other instances of disorganized behavior where it is possible to foresee problems were the security of the voting stamps, the cancellation and collection of invalidated ballots, and the storage and confirmation of valid ballots. An example of the disorganization was an unidentified person in the Piatra Neamt counting center who was going through a stack of ballots, supposedly both valid and invalid, and pulling out all those that were invalid. In a stack of more than 1,000, he was looking for 10. This typified the situation at the counting centers.

It should also be stated that the Romanian officials were very cooperative with our team both prior to election day and on May 20. Neither team faced any difficulties entering military bases or hospitals, or in questioning people at these facilities.

Our recommendations for improvement in the next elections, of course, would begin with the simplification of the ballot. This would

also simplify the voting process. We observed a manual count along with the computerized counting at one *judet* center, which we believe should be the practice at all *judet* centers. The need for computers may expedite the process in the future, but at these elections they only added to our skepticism. The *judet* center in Piatra Neamt only had to add 323 numbers.

We would also like to see more independent and party observers and monitors during the entire process, and that these groups be able to publicly report their observations and conclusions. As this area of the country was considered a Front stronghold, this recommendation would add a lot of credibility to the process and protection for a loyal opposition. It is our conclusion that with the experience of this election the next should proceed with a lot less suspicious behavior. The norms and regulations should be well established by the next elections.

Prepared by Michael Ratner

SIBIU

Team Members

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The team spent Saturday, May 19, meeting with the provincial government in Sibiu, the provincial electoral bureau, and representatives of the major political parties. Some basic facts about the province: the Sibiu *judet* has 508,000 inhabitants, of whom 355,953 were on electoral lists. There were 308 polling stations in the provinces with approximately 2,700 polling booths in these stations.

At the meeting with the provincial CPUN, officials of the government explained the voting procedures to the team. When asked about intimidation and harassment during the campaign, they replied that there had been only two cases; 1) in Sibiu, a window of

the Front headquarters had been broken; and 2) in a village, a violent confrontation between Peasant Party and Front supporters had occurred.

The electoral bureau explained to the team that six parties were represented on the bureau. Seven parties had presented full candidate lists in Sibiu. There were only six spots on the bureau for party representatives and so the parties drew lots to see which party would not be represented. The Liberal Party lost and did not get a representative. The electoral bureau said that the local bureaus in the villages had similar numbers of party representatives.

The non-Front Party representatives were very angry about many perceived unfairnesses in the campaign. Their complaints included: 1) the possibility that multiple voting might occur by persons presenting themselves to vote several times, using a different kind of ID each time (ID card, passport, working papers); 2) inaccurate voting lists with many persons on the list who do not exist; 3) domination of electoral bureaus by the Front; 4) harassment of non-Front party workers by Front thugs in many villages and towns; 5) very limited distribution of independent and opposition newspapers; 6) the Front using its position as the government party to campaign in factories and other workplaces; 7) the lack of provisions to help illiterate persons vote; 8) the unavailability of campaign funding; and 9) a general atmosphere of fear and repression.

The regional leader of the Front met with the team and presented a positive view of the campaign. He said that there were no serious incidents of violence or intimidation during the campaign and that considered in the broader context of the very recent fall of Ceausescu, the campaign was orderly and well-run. In his opinion, what acts of illegality did occur in the campaign had been directed against the Front, not the opposition parties. With respect to many complaints by the opposition parties, he stressed that one must keep in mind that most of the people involved in these parties are adventurers, not sincere people. He said it is natural that the average Romanian dislikes the opposition parties because Romanians are a naturally conservative people and see the Front as representing stability.

On election day, the team separated into two groups. One group visited parts of Sibiu and then went into the western part of the region. The other group covered parts of Sibiu and then the northern part of the region. Together the groups visited 35-40 polling stations.

In general, the voting was orderly, albeit slow. At almost all polling stations there were three or four party representatives, with one always from the Front and then two or three from the non-Front parties. The polling station officials were usually teachers, lawyers, doctors or other professionals. In some villages, the mayors (who were all Front members) were at the polling stations and were overseeing the administration of the station. The voting procedures varied somewhat from station to station with variations apparently the result of lack of central guidance rather than any fraud or manipulation.

In some villages, some voters were receiving assistance when voting. Persons would go into the voting booth with some voters and help them vote. In most cases this seemed to be family members helping an old person or an illiterate person in the family. In at least one station, however, help was being given to strangers by a Front member. In general, the voters found the ballots confusing, many showed only a dim understanding of what they were supposed to do with the ballots.

Partisan material decorated some of the polling stations. This usually consisted of materials that were the color of the Front's symbol or campaign buttons worn by the party representatives (both Front and non-Front).

Ballot secrecy was low. Many voters simply handed their ballots back to the polling station officials after voting. Many voters had little concept that the vote was secret. Outside of Sibiu, most of the voting was finished by the late afternoon. In Sibiu there were lines at some of the polling stations in the evening and the stations did not close until midnight or later.

The counting got going extremely slowly. Most stations did not start counting until 2 am. Many of the party representatives had gone

home by that point and did not observe the counting. The handling of the unused ballots after the stations were closed was very casual.

Prepared by Thomas Carothers

TIRGU MURES

Team Members

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Four members of the international delegation observed the Romanian elections in Mures county. The capital city is Tirgu Mures where large-scale ethnic violence between Romanians and Hungarians had taken place in March. A number of people were killed (how many is unclear) and hundreds injured. The situation in this regard was tense even during our time there.

Despite the particular interest that Tirgu Mures held for the delegation, we decided, based upon our own observation, as well as lengthy consultation with key players from the various political parties (including the Hungarian Party and Vatra Romanesca,) that we should spend most of our time in the towns and villages. This is what we did. We covered the length and breadth of the county, from Reghin in the North to Sighisoara in the South, visiting about 30 polling places. We also stayed an extra day in order to follow up on meetings with parties, and evaluate their reactions to the preliminary results.

The election atmosphere in Mures County differed substantially from that of the nation as a whole only in that the ethnic issue was omnipresent. Otherwise the whole election revolved around the December revolution, its meaning, and whether or not it was "stolen." In other words, the general point of view offered by the opposition parties (Peasants, Liberals, Hungarians, et. al.) that the National Salvation Front represented communism in another form was the only

real issue. Was the Front really a democratic means to democratic ends, or was it really an example of an internal communist coup that had the opportunity to take advantage of the "real" (that is, spontaneous) revolution of December in Timisoara? The opposition forces all thought that the Front had cleverly taken advantage of the situation and that the Romanian people (unfortunately, it was said) were not yet developed enough politically to see it. The outcome was predicted by all opposition figures. The meaning of this for the observers was that this political atmosphere so dominated the election process that questions of "intimidation" and "fear" took on different forms than ordinarily would have been expected.

The ordinary "democratic political activity" that one would rightly expect in an election was hard to find. Whole villages voted for a single party. For example, many villages were entirely Hungarian. When we asked if there were other parties represented, or whether another party even campaigned in the village, we were universally told that it was not necessary since everyone would vote for the Hungarian Party. And the reverse is also true. When we encountered villages that were entirely Romanian, rarely did we find a representative of the Hungarians there – and if there were any they were invariably sent over from the capitol – and sometimes a representative of the Front would be present.

The County Election Commission (as with almost all local ones) was entirely controlled by the Front (or the communists, as the opposition insisted on calling them.) There was also great confusion and disorganization. In one meeting in Tirgu Mures some persons came into the County Election Commission meeting, after we had begun reasonable conversations with them, interrupted, and proceeded to rage at the whole assembly. Only later in the evening did one "democratic" member of the Commission look us up at the hotel in order to try to explain his views, why the system was corrupt and pro-Front, and why he was entirely pessimistic about the election process as well as the outcome. According to him, the communist means of repression and fear continued unabated.

The day after the election we met with a Liberal Party leader who literally cried. He said that the preliminary results showed that

there was no hope. Romanians, he said, were gullible; Iliescu promised them a little more food, and a little less work, and that was enough for them. He thought an historic opportunity was lost, and it would be generations before it would be regained. He was very persuasive. We were all saddened.

Prepared by Peter Schramm

TIMISOARA

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PRE-ELECTION MEETINGS

On Saturday, May 19, the day before election day, the team met with local government and election officials, party representatives and leaders of civic organizations.

The team met first with the district Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) and city and district mayors at the Timis *judet* (district) hall. The BEC members included three elected judges and six political party representatives. Many of the BEC members preferred to discuss the electoral atmosphere, rather than the mechanics of the election. Some party representatives on the BEC were concerned that the electoral process had not been fair, with the National Salvation Front (FSN) holding an unfair advantage. Some also expressed worry over the existence of fear among voters; enough to prevent some from voting. Allegedly, some party activists, out of fear, had rescinded their offer to act as party poll watchers on election day.

In the early afternoon, the observer team met with nonpartisan groups, including representatives from the Society of Former Political Prisoners, the "Cub Still Leading" Association, the Europe Society

(student journalists), and the Timisoara Society. The former political prisoners — scientists, economists, philosophers, etc. — were represented in the meeting by four men who together had spent more than 30 years in prison. The Timisoara Society, made up of writers and journalists who had participated in the Timisoara revolt, was represented by Mr. Serban, the author of the *Timisoara Proclamation*.

The proclamation, a comprehensive document demanding an open and equal society with political and economic pluralism and tolerance, was published in March 1990, following a period of growing dissatisfaction with the democratization efforts and commitment to the revolution of the governing FSN. So far, the document claimed six million signatories, including 29 political parties, 33 independent organizations, and 29 media groups. Serban, echoing many others, said that he believed the actual election would be conducted fairly, but that the political atmosphere leading up to and present during the election period, was far from free and fair. "Romania will be in the strange situation of being the first country to freely-elect a communist government," he said.

From the first meetings we had and the first contacts we made it was clear that this city was cognizant of its historic role in the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu. People with whom we met were proud of Timisoara's role in the events of December 1989, and they were anxious to talk about them. Virtually every person with whom we spoke could give us a blow by blow, hour by hour description of the events of the rebellion in Opera Square, and they could give a detailed account of where they were during these fateful hours.

This atmosphere in the city of Timisoara was indicative of the feelings many of the political activists harbored as well. It should come as no surprise that among most of them there was great resentment and mistrust of the central government and the National Salvation Front. Timisoara (the city) did not appear to be friendly territory for the Front.

The meetings our group held during the afternoon of May 19 with the various political parties were telling. The opposition parties refused to meet with us and the Front representatives in the same

room. The animosities between the opposition and the Front were so great that it united all of the opposition together to an extent we didn't even detect in our meetings in Bucharest.

The Front representative behaved more like a victim than like an incumbent party member. The impression we got from him was clearly that Timisoara was not Front country. The opposition, on the other hand, all complained about the same problems: they hadn't been given the time or resources to mount a campaign. Communications were difficult – the Liberal Party representative telling us he had not been able to get a phone installed in his headquarters. It was difficult to get things printed, and once printed just as difficult to get printed materials distributed.

During our afternoon meetings on May 19, virtually all the opposition representatives predicted that the Front would win overwhelmingly in the Timis *judet*. They felt that the opposition had a better chance within the city, but in the countryside the Front had a lock on the apparatus, and on the hearts and minds of the peasants. There were constant disparaging remarks about the intelligence of the peasants; that they weren't smart enough to figure out that the Front was simply the old regime in disguise. None of the opposition representatives believed that there would be outright fraud in the elections. They simply believed that the process leading up to the election was so one-sided that the Front couldn't lose.

Anti-Front feelings in Timisoara were very intense. This should not have been surprising given the events of December 1989 there. The impression one got from the meetings and the visits to the polls on May 20 was that the opposition would do decidedly better in the city, but very poorly in the countryside.

ELECTION DAY

The seven-member team split into three groups to observe the polling. Polls opened on time and with little or no procedural or logistical problems. Polling sites had 1,000-3,000 registered voters on their rolls, but many polling officials expected non-registered voters, such as military and temporary workers living in the area, to cast ballots. At nearly every site, three or more party pollwatchers were

present. Front representation was universal, with the Liberal, the Peasant, and the Hungarian Party pollwatchers also widely represented.

Voting was heavy and continuous throughout the day. In viewing polling at approximately 50 sites, the observers saw no major incidents of fraudulent or erroneous voting. The biggest problems were lack of voter education and incomplete voting registers. Because of low voter education, polling officials and party pollwatchers often came to the assistance of voters, at times seemingly jeopardizing the secrecy of the ballot.

Some polling sites, especially in the city, still had lines of voters at the official closing time. These sites extended their hours to accommodate all voters in line. The high voter turnout, combined with the voting of non-registered voters, meant that many sites recorded more votes than they had registered voters (i.e., one polling site had 1,456 registrants, but recorded 1,538 votes). Party poll watchers, however, accepted these numbers as valid, with no complaints. Also during vote counting, 3-5 percent of votes cast were declared null, a number recognized as high, but felt to be legitimate given poor voter education.

Election day itself transpired as predicted by the people with whom we met the day before. In the city, one could not have distinguished this election from one held in Los Angeles (except for the large turnouts and long waits). The election seemed to be run in the precincts in a thoroughly professional and largely competent manner. One would not have known that the Romanians had not had a "free" election in nearly half a century. Crowds were orderly, and precinct officials seemed well prepared.

One problem we did witness at the end of the day (near midnight) was that some precincts had run out of ballots while others had a surplus. Election board officials were running around making transfers from one station to another late in the night without a requisite amount of ballot security. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a sincere effort to log the numbers of ballots leaving the polling place.

The countryside evoked a totally different environment. The towns and villages were clearly Front country. One could tell from the frequency with which precinct officials wore roses (the Front symbol), the number of Front posters in the vicinity of polling places, and other subtle and not-so-subtle reminders of who was in charge.

In the village of Rachita we arrived to find that the Peasant Party observer had been kicked out of the polling place for smoking, despite the fact that other observers and officials were smoking when we entered the place. It was simply an excuse to evict the Peasant representative. In the town of Faget, roses were displayed on the fence and door leading up to the polling place. In other towns, polling officials either wore roses in their hair, on their lapels, or wore Front pins. In one village, a truck adorned with Front posters was parked right in front of the polling place. In that precinct, the security man at the door held a rose conspicuously in his hand as he ushered people in to vote.

We witnessed one person coming out of the polling place with multiple ballots in one town, and the explanation was that she was voting for some invalids in her family (something that was a direct contravention to the election process). Clearly in the villages there was an atmosphere of intimidation. People were more reluctant to talk with us there. Where there was hostility towards our group, it was always in the villages. The Front and its symbols were ever-present inside and outside the precincts in the country towns and villages.

We stayed in the city during the ballot counting. We saw no irregularities in the two precincts we monitored in this regard. The counting was laborious and time-consuming, but the precinct officials seemed to know what they were doing. Due to our own schedules and the time-consuming nature of the vote count, we were unable to monitor the full counting process from ballot box to Bucharest election central. However, nothing in Timisoara that we witnessed seemed out of the ordinary.

All the precincts we visited, both in the countryside and in Timisoara, had observers representing at least three parties – always

the Front, and usually the Liberals and Peasants. We saw some Green Party and some Hungarian Party observers. However, in the villages as well as in the cities, the opposition seemed to be subservient to the Front officials.

We witnessed a series of isolated election problems which should be addressed, but they did not appear to be the product of systematic fraud in the Timisoara area. The problems included:

1. Inconsistency of when ID cards were stamped and when not. We were told that when a voter chose to vote in a polling place other than his own, he could do so by presenting his ID card and have it stamped so as to avoid his voting a second time in his home precinct. However, the same ID would not be stamped if he voted at his home precinct, and second at another one. This practice was clearly flawed. All ID cards should have been stamped at all voting places.
2. There were several instances of multiple ballots in the hands of voters. The excuse given that they were voting for ill relatives. However, election procedures provided and required that persons who couldn't vote in person be personally visited by precinct officials with an absentee ballot. We received some complaints from precinct officials that they did not have sufficient manpower or vehicles to meet the absentee voter demand. Other officials had no problem fulfilling their legal obligations to absentee voters.
3. Intimidation, primarily subtle, was pervasive in the countryside (some of which has already been mentioned). While the placement of campaign buttons and symbols in polling places can be seen from time to time in democratic countries, the Front seemed to have a monopoly on these violations in the Timisoara area – especially among the precinct officials.
4. Precinct officials handled the marked ballots in ways that the markings could be seen.
5. Inserting the ballots in envelopes substantially increased the processing time for counting the ballots. A one-page ballot

could be marked, folded, and inserted in the ballot box, without an envelope, thus saving time in counting.

6. Inability to print and disseminate campaign material and newspapers was a problem. This was a common complaint. Opposition parties had a great deal of difficulty getting phones installed or access to printing machines while the Front inherited the Communist Party's apparatus.

In summary, we witnessed some isolated problems and abuses in various precincts (all in the countryside), but on the whole they didn't appear to be the products of a systematic fraud. The problem with the election, as was reported to us by the opposition in Timisoara, was the lack of development of a credible opposition during the months that followed the revolution. And, the opposition held the Front and Iliescu totally responsible for this phenomenon.

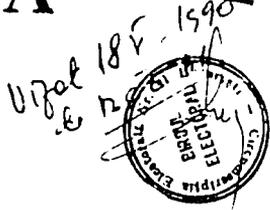
Compiled from reports by Sean Carroll and Zev Yaroslavsky

SAMPLE BALLOT
Assembly of Deputies
Bucharest

D

ROMÂNIA

ANULAT



BULETIN DE VOT
PENTRU ALEGEREA ADUNĂRII DEPUTAȚILOR

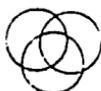
20 MAI 1990

Circumscripția electorală Nr. 4:

(Pages 1-4 of 24)

SAMPLE BALLOT
Assembly of Deputies
Bucharest

**PARTIDUL RADICAL
 DEMOCRAT
 BUCUREȘTI**



1. COSTEF FLORIAN
2. CARJEAN VICTORIA
3. ISTRATE GEORGE

**UNIUNEA CRESTINA
 DIN
 ROMANIA**



1. POP GHEORGHE
2. EREMIA MIRELA
3. DAN ION

**PARTIDUL UNIUNEA
 REPUBLICANA**



1. DEAC MIRCEA
2. IUGA GABRIEL
3. SMARANDESCU VASILE
4. NIȚU MIHAI
5. ANDREESCU CRISTIANA
 RODICA
6. ONEȘEANU D-TRU DAN
 IOAN
7. ONEȘEANU IRINA
8. NICULESCU ALEXANDRU'

**UNIUNEA DEMOCRATA
 A ROMILOR DIN ROMANIA**

1. RADUCANU GHEORGHE
2. NICOLAE GHEORGHE
3. IVAN GHEORGHE
4. IONIȚA ȘTEFAN

**PARTIDUL DEMOCRAT
 ECOLOGIST
 ORGANIZATIA
 MUNICIPIULUI
 BUCUREȘTI**



1. ANGHIELIȚA VADINEANU

SAMPLE BALLOT
Assembly of Deputies
Bucharest

**PARTIDUL NATIONAL
TĂRĂNESCU-CREȘTIN ȘI
DEMOCRAT**



1. DIACONESCU ION
2. CONSTANTINESCU
CONSTANTIN CLAPS
3. IONESCU-GALBENI
NICOLAE VASILE
4. LAZĂRESCU PAUL
5. MACARIE SERGIU
6. GHICA CONSTANTIN
7. WARIN SILVIA-NARCISA
8. ANTONIU IOAN
9. VASILE RADU
10. DRAGOMIRESCU ADRIANA
11. AMZUȚĂ CONSTANTIN
12. ENESCU GH. ION
13. COMĂNESCU GHEORGHE
14. BARBARESSO EMANOIL-DAN
15. GREGORIAN NICULAE
16. POPA MIRCEA-IOAN
17. ILIE MINODORA
18. STĂNESCU GHEORGHE-DAN
19. IACOVESCU ANDREI
20. TEODORESCU DUMITRU
21. IONESCU CONSTANTIN
22. PANĂ EMILIA
23. SILVESTRU MARIUS
24. TEODORESCU ION-EUGEN
25. IONESCU CORNELIU
26. POPA MIRCEA-ALEXANDRU
27. STĂNESCU CEZAR
28. HÂNCU CRISTIANA-MARIA
29. DIMITRIU LELIA-MIOARA
30. COȘEAC TEODOR-GABRIEL
31. DINUȚĂ IOAN
32. PUTUREANU MARIUS-
ADRIAN
33. CUZEA VALENTIN
34. PĂUNESCU M. COSTEL
35. PASCALE FELICIA
36. RĂDULESCU ȘERBAN-
ALEXANDRU-VICTOR
37. COTINGHIU MIHAIL
38. POPESCU RADU-MIRCEA
39. LEUCUȚĂ CORNEL

**PARTIDUL ECOLOGIST
ROMÂN**



1. WEBER ERNEST OTTO
2. TUDOR GHEORGHE
3. GRUIA LUCIAN
4. RĂDULESCU SORIN-
GABRIEL
5. PRODAN SORIN-MARGARIT
6. SUIU ION
7. STOICUȚ CRISTIANA
8. NISIPEANU TEODORA
9. CREANȚĂ ANTON

**PARTIDUL TINERETULUI
LIBER DEMOCRAT
DIN ROMÂNIA**



1. TODIRĂȘ IOAN
2. RAICU ROMEO
3. ZAHARIA VALENTIN-AMATO
4. ILIE CRISTIAN
5. NAE DINCĂ-EDUARD
6. ZLOTEA SEVASTIAN
7. SAVIN GHEORGHE
8. BOTAR REMUS

SAMPLE BALLOT
Assembly of Deputies
Bucharest

**PARTIDUL
 ALIANȚA PENTRU
 DEMOCRAȚIE**



1. NEGOIȚA VASILE
2. MAFTEI V. IOAN
3. VLAD ROMULUS
4. BUCATA LUCIAN
5. COTOR GABRIEL
6. VLAD STEFANIA
7. TATOMIR SORIN
8. BUCATA COSTEL
9. VEZUREANU D-TRU
10. GROMIC GEORGE-DAN

**PARTIDUL LIBERAL
 (AL LIBERTAȚII)
 DIN ROMANIA**



1. APOSTOL IAN-CONSTANTIN
2. DUMITRESCU BOGDAN
3. SERBAN TAMARA
4. NICOLE M. DAN-LIVIU
5. ZAMFIR MILEA
6. BENGHA MARIAN
7. MERISANU NICOLAE
8. PALOS NICOLETA-CORNELIA
9. RETAS MATEI
10. RADULESCU ADRIAN
11. RADU HOMER
12. GOIA DAN
13. NEPOTEAN LAURENTIU
14. CHIRITA DUMITRU-MARIAN
15. IONESCU MARIN
16. DINU NARCIS-IULIAN
17. HOPU ADELINA
18. GRAUR GABRIELA
19. COVACI IOSIF
20. LUPU ALEXANDRU DUMITRU
21. BARBULESCU DAN-MIRCEA
22. NAUM ANDREEA
23. VIȘOIU GHEORGHE
24. STOIAN VALERIU
25. LUPU ALEXANDRINA
26. CORAJ DUMITRU
27. IONESCU CRISTIAN-TEODOR
28. BUZATU ILIE
29. SECIU DAN-TEODOR
30. MOT LUCIA-MARIA
31. TOMA VASILICA
32. CONSTANTIN MARIA
33. BUDEANU STEFAN
34. ENESCU ION
35. MICU VIOREL
36. BUDE MARIANA
37. ANGHIEL VALENTIN
38. BABAN DRAGOS-ARMANI
39. IONESCU MARIAN

**SUMMARY: ALLOCATION FORMULA FOR
PARLIAMENTARY SEATS¹****CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES**

First, BEC officials at the *judet* level would determine an "electoral coefficient" to be applied in the allocation process. This coefficient was derived by dividing the total number of valid ballots cast in the *judet*) by the number of seats to be elected in the *judet*. Parties and candidates that received a number of votes equal to the electoral coefficient would get one seat. Parties that received more votes than the coefficient would be allocated additional seats proportional to the number of times that the coefficient was replicated in total number of votes they received. For example, if a party's vote total was three times the electoral coefficient, it would receive three seats. If the party's vote total was 3½ times the electoral coefficient, it would obtain three seats, with the remaining votes were considered "unused."

Some of the remaining seats were allocated in the second stage, which involved determining the total number of "unused" votes in the first stage of distributing seats. These "unused" votes referred to the number of votes received by parties on the national level that remained after the application of the coefficient system in the *judet*.

A party's unused votes were then successively divided by the total number of seats not yet allocated. (For example, if three seats were still unfilled throughout the entire nation after the first phase, each party's unused votes would be successively divided by 1, 2 and 3.) The results of this division were then arranged in descending order, with the lowest quotient designated as the "electoral distributor." The party's allocation of the remaining seats was then determined by dividing its unused votes by the electoral distributor.

This rather complex system can be described by the following hypothetical example. Assume that three parties (X, Y, and Z) have

¹ See the pre-election *Report on the May 20, 1990 Elections in Romania*, by the International Human Rights Law Group, May 1990.

unused vote totals of 75,000, 50,000, and 30,000 respectively, and that three seats are not yet allocated. The unused votes of each party are successively divided to arrive at the electoral distributor:

	Party X	Party Y	Party Z
Divided by 1	75,000	50,000	30,000
Divided by 2	37,500	25,000	15,000
Divided by 3	25,000	16,667	10,000

The three (because there are only 3 unfilled seats) highest quotients are ranked in descending order (75,000, 50,000, 37,500), with 37,500 designated as the electoral distributor. Party X would thus gain two of the remaining seats, because the electoral distributor can be evenly divided twice into its unused vote total of 75,000. Party Y, with 50,000 votes has the electoral distributor once and therefore receives the remaining seat.

Finally, the election bureau determined precisely which parties should fill specific *judet* seats not allocated after the first phase. Each party slated to receive seats in the second stage would divide the total number of unused votes from the national level by the unused votes it had in each *judet*. The resulting percentages would then be ranked in descending order. The party would then be allocated seats in those *judets* where its unused votes were the highest percentage of its unused national votes, up to the maximum number of seats designated by the second stage process. Individual candidates were awarded seats by their parties based on the order of their names on the party list.

SENATE

Parties and candidates received Senate seats based on the "electoral coefficient" process described above (total number of votes divided by number of seats). Remaining seats were filled by parties or candidates which had the highest number of unused votes in a *judet* after this formula was applied.

Electoral Bureau Issues Final Vote Tally

AU2505183790 Bucharest ROM/PRES in English
1746 GMT 25 May 90

["Romanian Election: Final Returns of the May 20 Elections"—ROMPRES headline]

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES 25/5/1990—The Central Electoral Bureau issued the following in connection with the May 20 elections:

For the presidential candidates 14,826,616 electors voted out of 17,200,722 listed (86.20 percent of the electorate).

The total number of valid votes is 14,378,693, while 447,923 votes (3.02 percent) were annulled.

Mr. Ion Iliescu, the National Salvation Front candidate, got 12,232,498 votes (85.07 percent).

Mr. Radu Campeanu, the National Liberal Party candidate, got 1,529,188 votes (10.16 percent).

Mr. Ion Ratiu, the Christian-Democratic National Peasants Party candidate, got 617,007 votes (4.29 percent).

For the Assembly of Deputies:	votes	percentage
1. National Salvation Front	9,089,659	64.31
2. Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania	991,601	7.23
3. National Liberal Party	879,290	6.41
4. Romanian Ecological Movement	358,864	2.62
5. Christian-Democratic National Peasants Party	351,357	2.56
6. Romanian Unity Alliance—RUA	290,875	2.12
7. Agrarian Democratic Party	250,403	1.83
8. Romanian Ecological Party	232,212	1.69
9. Socialist Democratic Party of Romania	143,393	1.05

The other political parties and groups gained less than one percent, among which: Social Democratic Party—0.53, Centrist Democratic Group—0.48, Germans' Democratic Forum—0.28, Bratianu Liberal Union—0.27, Romanis' Democratic Union—0.21, Lippovans' Community—0.13, Ukrainians' Union—0.12, Serbians' Democratic Union—0.07.

For the Senate:	votes	percentage
1. National Salvation Front	4,353,006	67.02
2. Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania	1,004,353	7.20
3. National Liberal Party	485,094	7.06
4. Christian-Democratic National Peasants Party	348,687	2.50

For the Senate:	votes	percentage
5. Romanian Ecological Movement	341,478	2.45
6. Romanian Unity Alliance—RUA	300,473	2.15
7. Agrarian Democratic Party	221,790	1.59
8. Romanian Ecological Party	192,574	1.38
9. Socialist Democratic Party of Romania	152,989	1.11

The other political parties and groups gained less than one percent, among which: Social Democratic Party—0.50, Centrist Democratic Group—0.47, National Reconstruction Party—0.38, Bratianu Liberal Union—0.26, Romanis' Democratic Union—0.14, Germans' Democratic Forum—0.14.

Final Count of Seats in Parliament

*AU2505212990 Bucharest ROMPRES in English
1938 GMT 25 May 90*

["Distribution of the Seats in the Assembly of Deputies and the Senate"—ROMPRES headline]

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES, 25/5/1990—Here is the distribution of the 387 seats in the Assembly of Deputies:

National Salvation Front	263
Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania	29
National Liberal Party	29
Romanian Ecological Movement	12
Christian-Democratic National Peasants Party	12
Romanian Unity Alliance—RUA	9
Agrarian Democratic Party	9
Romanian Ecologist Party	8
Socialist Democratic Party	5
Social Democratic Party	2
Centrist Democratic Group	2
Labour Democratic Party	1
Free-Change Party	1
National Reconstruction Party	1
Free Democratic Youth Party	1
German Democratic Forum	1
Bratianu Liberal Union	1
Romanian Democratic Union	1
Here is the distribution of the 119 seats in the Senate:	
National Salvation Front	42
Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania	12
National Liberal Party	9
Romanian Unity Alliance—RUA	2
Romanian Ecological Movement	1
Christian-Democratic National Peasants Party	1
Romanian Ecologist Party	1
Independents	1

I. PENTRU PRESEDINTE

Numărul alegătorilor potrivit listelor de alegători	17200722
Majoritatea absolută a alegătorilor din circumscripții	8600362
Numărul alegătorilor care s-au prezentat la urne	14826616
- în % față de numărul alegătorilor din lista	86,20
Numărul total al voturilor valabile exprimate	14378093
Numărul voturilor nule	447923

Situatia voturilor obtinute pe țară și pe circumscripții electorale de candidații la președinția României

	Ion Bieșcu		Radu Câmpeanu		Ion Rădu	
	Număr voturi	În % față de total voturi valabile exprimate	Număr voturi	În % față de total voturi valabile exprimate	Număr voturi	În % față de total voturi valabile exprimate
Total țară	12335498	85,07	1528468	10,64	877007	6,29
Alba	432467	89,97	17718	6,78	11208	4,25
Araud	341138	78,00	48883	18,75	19541	8,20
Argeș	396598	92,59	19872	6,67	11849	3,77
Bacău	427639	93,95	17423	4,03	10133	2,23
Bihor	288695	66,38	104298	36,44	30434	5,18
Bistrița-N.	188320	68,38	15477	8,07	8912	3,61
Botoșani	284958	86,20	7500	2,53	3747	1,27
Brașov	323470	80,31	53811	13,38	35493	8,23
Brăila	230721	83,82	10308	3,87	6885	2,31
București	340648	75,22	11887	3,23	5225	1,48
Caracul	217773	85,90	20504	8,20	12272	4,91
Cluj	212891	89,58	8901	3,68	3983	1,78
Cluj	242822	73,82	94806	19,94	29987	8,96
Cohotanița	439478	89,72	21523	6,44	18804	6,84
Covasna	48199	22,13	82588	88,88	2728	1,04
Dezembrița	227863	93,37	13541	5,88	9722	3,77
Doja	450232	81,01	28823	5,79	18837	2,88
Galați	358952	81,82	20668	6,29	11228	3,89
Gherghe	194747	83,27	8523	4,08	8524	3,83
Gorj	218258	93,53	9353	3,99	5818	2,48
Harghita	41918	19,58	184078	78,52	8258	3,85
Hușnău	320232	89,73	23321	6,83	13325	3,73
Ialomița	191648	95,82	8718	3,82	3289	1,61
Iasi	442885	92,15	21834	4,85	18878	3,31
Maramureș	283052	89,06	22985	7,23	12778	3,71
Mehedinți	198081	91,35	12572	5,86	6987	2,78
Mureș	236464	60,35	144190	38,79	11202	2,88
Neamț	344109	93,21	10628	3,04	6884	1,85
Olt	328300	95,16	11178	3,28	5432	1,58
Prahova	503231	89,41	34809	6,15	25022	4,45
Satu Mare	139138	89,29	49879	24,84	11799	5,88
Sibiu	127484	79,77	25845	16,05	6888	4,18
Sibiu	248908	83,39	29388	9,93	19799	6,88
Socava	397878	92,47	20534	4,77	11888	2,78
Teleorman	824516	84,72	12855	3,69	5430	1,58
Timiș	307204	70,18	97029	22,16	33680	7,88
Tulcea	181734	84,58	6241	3,68	3035	1,77
Vaslui	289328	88,63	8278	2,94	4043	1,48
Vâlcea	283598	93,59	11791	4,19	58280	2,12
Vrancea	237801	93,87	10029	4,28	8311	3,18
- București	1128928	78,72	175878	11,84	18894	11,84

II. PENTRU SENAT

Numărul alegătorilor potrivit listelor de alegători	17200 722
Numărul alegătorilor care s-au prezentat la urne	16029 796
- în % față de numărul alegătorilor din liste	94,12
Numărul voturilor valabile exprimate	13665 100
Numărul voturilor nule	200 504

Rezultatele voturilor obținute de partide și formațiuni politice⁽¹⁾ pe țară
și în circumscripțiile electorale, pentru senat

- în procente față de numărul voturilor valabile exprimate -

	Frontul Salvării Naționale	Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România	Partidul Național Liberal	Partidul Național Țărănesc-Creștin și Democrat	Asociația Națională din România	A. U. R. - Alibișta pentru Ținutul Buzău	Partidul Democrat Agrar din România	Partidul Ecologic Român	Partidul Național Democratic Român
Total țară	67,02	7,20	7,08	3,50	3,48	2,18	1,59	1,38	1,10
Alba	68,87	8,08	6,39	3,04	1,78	2,49	1,48	1,81	0,89
Arad	47,75	13,77	11,28	3,94	1,70	0,45	2,13	0,00	1,73
Argheș	77,82	0,00	3,83	1,94	3,99	0,00	1,78	0,50	3,43
Bacău	75,87	0,60	3,71	1,40	2,32	0,42	1,62	3,04	0,83
Bihor	49,74	28,88	6,53	2,39	1,83	2,11	2,40	0,00	0,88
Bistrița-N.	63,11	6,21	7,10	3,03	4,49	4,11	0,00	0,00	2,46
Botoșani	88,06	0,00	2,74	1,08	1,18	0,13	1,28	0,71	0,70
Brașov	53,78	9,68	9,63	2,93	4,46	3,81	2,19	0,00	0,68
Breila	37,75	0,00	4,00	1,23	1,73	0,28	1,83	2,08	2,11
București	80,84	0,06	3,48	1,23	2,78	8,37	8,87	8,08	8,43
Carag. B.	88,71	0,00	7,24	4,11	3,89	0,00	0,00	8,90	0,90
Călărași	83,58	0,00	2,88	1,87	2,83	4,00	2,19	2,13	2,90
Cluj	36,87	20,23	8,74	8,68	1,00	13,30	8,33	8,90	0,23
Constanța	72,98	0,00	8,11	2,88	4,24	0,47	2,49	0,00	8,84
Covna	37,53	74,67	3,68	0,40	0,78	8,00	8,77	8,00	8,83
Dâmbovița	21,12	0,00	4,80	1,87	1,83	0,28	2,03	2,13	8,83
Dolj	78,18	0,00	7,83	2,10	1,90	0,73	3,48	1,71	2,04
Galați	79,61	0,00	8,08	1,63	3,87	0,30	1,08	0,00	0,89
Gherghe	83,99	0,00	4,41	2,83	2,13	0,00	0,83	2,40	8,40
Gorj	80,63	0,00	4,63	3,24	1,87	0,00	1,38	1,73	1,05
Harghita	10,37	85,63	0,84	0,34	0,48	3,63	0,00	8,08	0,37
Hunedoara	71,90	4,68	7,82	2,18	4,38	0,00	1,82	2,95	0,88
Ialomița	85,30	0,00	3,19	3,45	3,13	0,46	2,13	0,00	1,03
Ișiț	10,72	0,00	6,38	1,50	1,83	0,27	2,18	1,68	1,84
Maramureș	62,59	10,38	8,78	2,74	3,69	2,81	2,81	0,00	3,24
Mehedinți	76,62	0,00	6,71	3,08	3,72	0,39	1,23	1,37	1,72
Mureș	52,52	12,51	1,93	1,01	0,31	34,38	0,37	0,50	0,63
Namă	83,12	0,00	3,59	1,26	3,93	0,00	0,98	1,38	1,46
Olt	87,75	0,00	3,50	1,23	1,60	0,58	1,89	0,00	0,33
Prahova	70,71	0,00	7,68	3,43	2,66	0,00	2,04	2,23	2,43
Salaș Mare	42,69	39,60	4,28	1,98	2,28	0,57	2,04	0,00	1,07
Sibiu	89,75	24,11	0,00	4,37	2,14	3,98	2,33	0,00	1,39
Sibiu	44,11	0,00	9,74	8,88	5,19	3,59	2,80	4,16	2,21
Suceava	78,45	0,00	8,82	2,38	2,51	0,00	1,70	4,84	1,42
Teleorman	86,60	0,00	4,18	1,40	1,83	0,30	2,30	0,00	1,38
Timiș	64,45	10,48	20,78	4,68	3,87	0,78	0,00	3,19	1,53
Tulcea	84,48	0,00	4,82	1,03	1,84	0,00	0,80	0,00	0,52
Vaslui	84,19	0,00	3,45	1,02	2,37	0,00	1,90	1,76	0,58
Vâlcea	82,18	0,17	8,71	1,68	1,81	0,00	1,30	0,98	0,47
Vrancea	75,61	0,00	4,60	1,70	1,64	0,51	1,03	1,74	2,14
București	60,24	0,00	15,83	8,82	2,41	0,37	1,20	2,45	0,63

III. PENTRU ADUNAREA DEPUTAȚILOR

Numărul alegătorilor potrivit listelor de alegători	27200722
Numărul alegătorilor care s-au prezentat la urne	24823017
- în % față de numărul alegătorilor din liste -	90,88
Numărul total al voturilor valabile exprimate	33707139
Numărul voturilor sale	3117858

Rezultatele voturilor obținute de partidele și formațiunile politice la țară
și în circumscricțiunile electorale, pentru adunarea deputaților
 - în procente față de numărul voturilor valabile exprimate -

	Frontul Popular Majoresc	Uniunea Comunistă Majorsc din România	Partidul Național Liberal	Măgăreșii, Măgăreșii din România	Partidul Național Țărănesc-Creștin și Democrat	A. U. M. Aliații noștri Dinaintea Românilor	Partidul Democrat Agrar din România	Partidul Ecologist Român	Partidul Socialist Democrat din România
Total țară	64,81	7,33	6,41	2,83	2,88	2,16	1,83	1,69	1,05
Alba	59,39	8,38	8,77	3,58	3,35	2,37	2,48	5,34	0,79
Arad	81,04	12,86	10,14	3,90	3,38	6,81	1,90	0,00	1,78
Argeș	77,48	6,17	8,88	4,71	1,89	0,00	1,42	0,00	2,45
Bacău	73,40	6,81	4,11	2,98	1,42	0,35	1,37	4,44	0,43
Bihor	48,42	12,28	8,18	2,51	2,79	2,04	2,98	1,73	1,46
Bistrița-N.	65,46	6,84	6,22	4,48	3,20	2,79	1,78	0,00	1,88
București	64,79	6,11	2,79	1,77	0,88	0,12	1,44	0,23	1,29
Brașov	64,88	9,26	9,63	8,13	2,17	6,32	1,71	7,12	0,88
Breila	41,66	0,11	2,72	1,89	1,22	0,37	1,81	2,23	2,64
Buzău	82,19	0,10	8,18	8,21	0,92	0,47	1,39	2,88	0,38
Caracul	67,61	3,18	9,03	8,72	6,02	0,00	2,31	0,00	0,87
Cluj	87,00	0,38	2,39	1,67	8,08	0,00	1,68	8,28	0,82
Cluj-Nap.	62,21	19,45	2,40	1,81	4,14	18,91	0,74	2,48	0,33
Constanța	69,48	0,21	8,04	8,12	8,00	0,30	0,37	0,00	0,85
Covna	26,63	17,10	8,62	8,44	0,82	0,40	0,00	0,00	0,25
Dâmbovița	79,48	0,09	4,38	8,07	8,21	0,32	2,28	1,88	0,48
Dolj	98,22	0,12	8,25	8,88	8,74	0,90	2,28	2,28	1,79
Galați	77,24	0,20	7,08	8,82	8,74	0,27	1,23	7,12	0,58
Ghurgu	82,91	0,19	4,42	1,64	1,88	0,00	0,83	1,04	1,06
Gorj	82,30	1,00	4,98	1,69	2,28	0,00	1,15	1,63	0,89
Harghita	21,04	85,73	2,04	0,38	0,31	1,38	0,00	0,00	0,18
Hunedoara	69,96	4,68	8,81	3,83	8,81	0,00	2,34	2,86	0,69
Ialomița	25,91	0,30	2,99	2,77	1,44	0,97	2,02	0,00	1,07
Iasi	72,82	0,23	6,50	3,08	1,63	0,39	2,92	1,28	2,92
Maramureș	60,83	10,08	4,87	4,44	2,88	2,02	1,48	0,00	1,78
Mehedinți	79,56	0,20	0,14	3,28	8,08	0,28	1,23	1,34	1,67
Mureș	14,27	41,96	1,73	0,44	0,89	34,38	0,41	0,69	0,74
Neamț	20,64	0,28	3,64	3,20	1,34	0,13	0,82	0,97	2,23
Olt	86,34	0,00	3,72	1,73	1,16	0,30	1,65	0,00	0,50
Orșova	86,29	0,00	7,82	4,28	2,34	0,25	2,47	3,08	1,02
Sabul Mare	41,73	38,16	4,40	2,55	2,37	0,71	2,01	0,00	1,00
Sălaj	87,28	23,08	0,00	1,81	4,42	3,65	1,98	0,00	1,27
Sibiu	48,23	2,80	8,82	6,75	2,82	2,42	3,09	8,37	1,81
Suceava	76,18	0,25	5,63	3,53	2,28	0,25	1,37	1,88	0,67
Tejoroman	87,15	0,00	3,79	1,47	1,36	0,27	1,49	0,00	1,13
Timiș	43,63	7,61	17,94	4,18	4,23	0,39	1,28	1,88	1,28
Tulcea	80,38	0,30	4,09	2,38	1,21	0,47	1,09	0,00	0,63
Vaslui	86,10	0,11	3,37	1,17	1,00	0,08	0,77	1,71	0,58
Vâlcea	82,59	0,30	8,15	1,73	1,68	0,00	1,34	2,11	0,26
Vrancea	80,93	0,08	4,81	2,76	1,90	0,32	1,25	1,81	1,42
Yucureștii	62,16	0,97	11,69	1,33	6,19	0,28	0,81	2,45	0,31