

Lucian Blaga in Romania's Communist World: The Notion of a Middle
Ground

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*I will not crush the world's corolla of wonders
and I will not kill
with reason
the mysteries I meet along my way
in flowers, eyes, lips, and graves.
The light of others
drowns the deep magic hidden
in the profound darkness.
I increase the world's enigma
with my light
much as the moon with its white beams
does not diminish but increases
the shimmering mystery of night—
I enrich the darkening horizon
with chills of the great secret.
All that is hard to know
becomes a greater riddle
under my very eyes
because I love alike
flowers, lips, eyes, and graves.*

Lucian Blaga, "I Will Not Crush the World's Corolla of Wonders"¹

Introduction: The Sun Rises in the East

Lucian Blaga never crushed the world's corolla of wonders. Instead, he constructed a legacy of poetry and philosophy that still stands as a pillar of Romanian letters in the twentieth-century. Conflicting ideologies, incredible violence, and the end of the imperial era reigned supreme over the European continent during the twentieth-century. Within this changing world, Lucian Blaga found a niche within Romanian culture that has remained to this day. This thesis aims to elucidate the impact of Blaga's works in a Communist framework. Blaga was a foremost Romanian intellectual of the interwar period whom the Romanian Communist regime suppressed and drove into internal exile. In a broad perspective, the thesis explains the official cultural policies of Romanian communism and the contestation of those policies by repressed

¹ Lucian Blaga, "I Will Not Crush the World's Corolla of Wonders," in *At the Court of Yearning: Poems by Lucian Blaga*, trans. Andrei Condrescu. (Columbus, 1989), 3. Poem first appeared in *Glasul Bucovinei*, 1919.

intellectuals. Simultaneously, the thesis argues that Lucian Blaga, as the author, did *not* join the Party or an actual *communist intellectual space* of his own accord, but nevertheless generated his own appeal, even while living in the desolate conditions of an internal exile. How and why was Lucian Blaga's work, originally censored by the Communist regime from 1945 until the early 1960s, appropriated into the official culture of a Romanian Communism that rested upon increased public education, innovations in propaganda, and thus intellectual power for the masses?

That process began in 1962 under the leadership of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and continued during the authoritarian dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu. The key paradox of the process, and perhaps the regime as well, rested in the appropriation of a cultural analysis of contemporary and national Romanian modernity that was opposed to the dominant Marxist ideology of the communist world. Because many Romanians who lived before Communism's arrival found Blaga's counter world appealing, communist cultural policy makers connected to it as well, but thereby weakened their own 'lofty' goals. Blaga's literature and the communists were part of a give-and-take sphere in which both were agents: the official agents, i.e. communists, and the unofficial agent in the dark, Blaga.

The Communist Intellectual Space: Romania's Position

The thesis studies at length the existence of an intellectual space, or sphere, created by the State in order to control public discourse. The 'space' was created for the purposes of a complete cultural transformation, the making of the new Communist Man. Nonetheless, the State incorporated nationalist elements into its ideology that contrasted with the internationalism of Communism; it saw the appropriation of so-called reactionary and nationalist intellectuals as a

necessary step to ensure the success of its ideology. In order to explicate the inconsistency of national communism, Katherine Verdery² and Michael Shafir,³ two authors whose expertise extends into the study of Romanian intellectual and cultural history, will be studied extensively; Eastern European intellectuals such as Vaclav Havel⁴ and Czeslaw Milosz⁵, whose experiences closely resembled those of their Romanian counterparts, will be studied additionally.

Culture represented one of the primary targets of the Communists. By creating a new Romanian culture that would combine socialist values with a Romanian flavor, the State attempted to educate and control the Romanians into becoming the 'new men' of socialism. According to Shafir, however, culture ignited a "conflict between the 'official' and the 'dominant' political cultures and their respective articulators."⁶ The term 'official' symbolizes the government's idealized position towards culture, while 'dominant' refers to the intellectuals creating an alternate cultural sphere. Culture may be found in the newspapers, journals, books, films, and other mediums of intellectual activity. But, the important factor to keep in mind, as Shafir argues, is that

Books, however, do not write themselves, nor do films make themselves... These are but the *instruments* of intellectual articulation, while the *agents* of political socialization behind them are the writers, the authors of scripts, the playwrights.

The process of political socialization in the context of an induced change of

² Katherine Verdery. *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Verdery's study is considered by many to be the standard work on national ideology in communist Romania; it was written before the break-up of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe but published only after 1991.

³ Michael Shafir. "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania." *Orbis* vol. 27 iss. 2 (1983). Shafir's article primarily describes the interaction between intellectuals and the Romanian policy makers.

⁴ Vaclav Havel. *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe*. Ed. by John Keane. London: Hutchinson Press, 1985.

⁵ Czeslaw Milosz. *The Captive Mind*. Trans. by Jane Zielonko. New York: Vintage International, 1990 (originally published in 1953).

⁶ Shafir, 395.

political culture, therefore, necessitates, first of all, a process of “socialization of the socializer.”⁷

The socialization of the socializer entailed the creation of new values. In order to create a Communist political culture that embodied Leninist/Marxist values and Romanian values, the two had to be reconciled. The means through which this socialization process would be attained, however, did not necessarily fit with the ends. The ends mattered most, as witnessed in Romania’s case, as well as other Eastern European countries; violence and suppression to facilitate these results was almost necessary. Furthermore, the Communist socialization required that the process occur top-down, from the official policy of the State down to the agents, and *not* bottom-up, from the agents of culture to the State.

The State was the powerful, monolithic body that dictated to the intellectuals what to write, or how certain social elements and values should be portrayed in other cultural mediums. The intellectuals, as seen by Shafir and Havel, were powerless in the face of the State monolith and needed to assent to its requests. In the post-totalitarian world of Communism, a term coined by Czech intellectual Vaclav Havel in the 1970s, the “system demands conformity, uniformity, and discipline.”⁸ It allowed no room for truth and plurality, but rather created an impermeable “world of appearances,” in which every member was powerless in the face of the overriding principle of Communism.⁹ Thus, this suggests that almost no dynamic existed between State and intellectuals. However, I propose that a dynamic *did* exist in the world of Romanian Communism, not to a large extent, but to the extent that values and culture changed in ways that revealed a less rigid, and more fluid interaction between the two agents of culture. Culture thus

⁷ Shafir, 396.

⁸ Havel, 30.

⁹ *Ibid*, 40.

became a contested terrain, with both agents striving to create their version of Romanian culture the overriding one.

The concept of intellectual, and the cultural power he possessed, must be explained.

According to Verdery, an intellectual is

...anyone whose social practice invokes claims to knowledge or to the creation and maintenance of cultural values and whose claim is at least partly acknowledged by others. That is, to “be” an intellectual means to make knowledge/value claims, to gain some degree of social recognition for them, and to participate in social relations on the basis of exchange of claims and recognition.¹⁰

This definition of intellectual fits particularly well within the already defined structure of the cultural struggle of Communist Romania. An intellectual’s degree of social recognition points to a privileged status in a society. This privileged status serves to either legitimize the political power or de-legitimize it. Verdery believes that social privilege and legitimization caused a “space of legitimation,” in which, nonetheless, the possibility existed that intellectuals did not “always serve the existing system of power but [could have been] a locus for forming alternative consciousness or images of social reality.”¹¹ This alternative consciousness of social reality was one of the main threats to the Communists. By controlling the agents, the State believed it controlled the content. Yet, as Havel reminds us, it could not contain the “dreadful wellspring of truth” that some intellectuals, as Lucian Blaga, embodied.¹²

¹⁰ Verdery, 16.

¹¹ Ibid, 17.

¹² Havel, 42.

Romanian Intellectuals-Collaborators or Dissenters?

A recurring argument in distant and more recent literature claims that intellectuals in East European countries played a role in Communist society that was to provide ideological justification for pragmatic political action.¹³ Regarding Romania specifically, the argument was put forth first by Stephen Fischer-Galati in his 1966 article “East Central Europe: Continuity and Change” in the *Journal of International Affairs*, which analyzed the position of Romanian intellectuals. His article proves invaluable because it was written at the time these changes were taking place, not only in Romania but all over Eastern Europe, and also because it puts forward the thesis that the East European Communist rulers were, for the most part, “nationalists in communist clothing.”¹⁴ The ‘nationalism argument’ is entertained not only by Fischer-Galati, but also a handful of other notable scholars, such as Katherine Verdery and Michael Shafir. Their focus concerns mainly the position of intellectuals in Romania, as well as how the idea of the ‘nation’ ignited the cultural struggle between the Party and intellectuals.

Fischer-Galati claims that by the mid-1960, the Communist rulers had realized that they had alienated the masses through intensive Stalinization policies. Thus, in the case of Romania, they attempted to rekindle existing anti-Russian and anti-Hungarian sentiments by exploiting a ‘bourgeois nationalism’ reminiscent of the interwar period in pursuit of their regime’s newly independent course.¹⁵ This national socialist society entailed a quest for an independent economy, one which had only recently freed itself from its dependence on the Soviet economy. The search for this independence gave way to Romania’s exploitation of its own national resources, opening up new positions to professionals barred during the Stalinization era.

¹³ Stephen Fischer-Galati. “East Central Europe: Continuity and Change.” *Journal of International Affairs* 20 (1966): 1.

¹⁴ Ibid, 1.

¹⁵ Ibid, 2.

Although freedom of the press increased, it was still “nationalist in form and socialist in context.”¹⁶ A relationship between intellectual and state ensued in which each side benefited, granting intellectuals privileged status but also excluding them from the power elite. Fischer-Galati’s argument was later adopted by Verdery and Shafir, but also needs to be taken with a grain of salt. It is important to point out that the article was written in 1966 as several important developments were taking place not just in Romania, but all over Eastern Europe, as well the Soviet Union. His strong and unsympathetic language could be explained in terms of his possible personal disenchantment with those political and social developments. Although a work from that time period can be seen as somehow more truth preserving owing to its place in time, it can also be argued that such a work can almost always and undoubtedly be negatively shaped by its contemporary developments.

Though Katherine Verdery does not mention Stephen Fischer-Galati anywhere in her work, their arguments run along similar lines. Nonetheless, Verdery’s argument is more concerned with the manner in which questions of Romanian identity within certain intellectual discourses of the Communist period created public and political battles, which “perpetuated a Romanian national ideology within an order claiming to be socialist.”¹⁷ The implications of this constant battle, Verdery claims, undermined the Marxist-Leninist ideology that had been in place until 1962 and, thus, created its own brand of a national communism (or national socialism) for the remainder of Nicolae Ceausescu’s rule from the 1960s to 1989. Verdery claims that national discourse nearly disappeared, from 1947 until the 1960s, as intense Stalinization and Marxist-Leninist ideology efficiently reduced the national discourse that had been brewing prior to World War II. Furthermore, she believes that the reintroduction of national ideology at a public level

¹⁶ Fischer-Galati, 6.

¹⁷ Verdery, 3.

occurred not only because the Party saw the concept of the 'Nation' as a useful instrument, but because of the way in which intellectuals conceived the nation and how they "drew their boundaries and sought their advantages."¹⁸ Thus, she concludes, the Party strove to maintain its own meaning of 'national essence' so as to properly represent and protect the interests that it perceived to be those of the nation.

An important scholar from whom Verdery borrows much of her work is Michael Shafir, whose 1983 article in the summer edition of *Orbis*, entitled "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania," looks more closely at the relationship that had formed between Romania's state and its intellectuals. Shafir's argument is based on the idea, earlier explained by Fischer-Galati, that the role of intellectuals in Romania's national communist society reduced them to "acquiescence," a much more dispassionate label than Fischer-Galati's "collaboration." The complacency of the Romanian intellectuals, Shafir argues, prevented them from "acting as a catalyst in bringing about state-society confrontations" as had occurred in other communist societies such as Poland and Czechoslovakia.¹⁹

Shafir traces what he calls the main elements of Romanian intellectual political subculture: "an intensive nationalism, passivity, leftover imprints of corrupting Oriental mentalities, and dissimulation."²⁰ The most important part of his argument is the proposal that these factors played a decisive part in the intellectuals' response to changing circumstances within the communist political environment.²¹ Shafir describes Stalinization and de-Stalinization as two periods in which changing political circumstances caused the Communist leaders to reshape political culture, and thus, interact with intellectuals differently. While the Stalinization

¹⁸ Verdery, 303.

¹⁹ Shafir, 393. See also Vaclav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless* (1985), and Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind* (1953) for explanations of intellectual movements of resistance in those countries.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 394.

²¹ *Ibid*, 394.

period witnessed an anti-nationalist, pro-Soviet “primitive accumulation of legitimacy” through the deconstruction and reintegration of intellectuals, the de-Stalinization period, also known as The Thaw, witnessed Communist efforts to replace its negative image with one embodying historical continuity and national aspirations for independence.²² In this changed climate, intellectuals were free to criticize the immediate past, thus appearing to dissent; in reality, however, Shafir argues they were only providing evidence for their consent.²³ Verdery subscribes to this as well, only her position is not as strongly stated.

Purpose of Thesis

The thesis argues that Lucian Blaga, a Romanian intellectual of national and international import, represented an atypical case of *the* Romanian intellectual. Though Blaga necessarily reinforced Communist rule by the appropriation of his poetry and philosophy, he potentially destabilized it. The cultural, intellectual sphere was greatly contested, liminal, and contradictory at best. By studying Lucian Blaga, an intellectual with a ‘nationalist’ past in the interwar period, the thesis shows how the Romanian communist government interacted with intellectuals in a general sense, and especially those who had been associated with nationalism; in addition, it reveals the fluidity between both makers of culture, the Party and intellectuals, and how public/civic discourse was shaped accordingly.

Katherine Verdery’s argument resembles this proposition more than Shafir’s, but still comes up short in describing the level of fluidity that resulted from State-intellectual interaction and discourse. An additional corrective to these works, and especially Fischer-Galati’s, is the idea that nationalism was to be found even in the Stalinization period during the late 1940s and

²² Shafir, 410.

²³ Ibid, 413.

1950s. The thesis claims that nationalism effectively was replaced by internationalism in that time period, and had no room in any the official policies of the Romanian communist government. As witnessed by Lucretiu Patrascanu's demise in 1954, a high-ranking Communist official who was an outspoken and vocal supporter of Romanian nationalism, as well as the effective repression of interwar nationalist intellectuals, nationalism was necessarily incompatible with Marxism and Stalinism. Only in the 1960s did nationalism regain its popularity and became incorporated into a hybrid, national communist ideology by Nicolae Ceausescu.

In order to explain the philosophy of the communists the thesis uses two primary documents from the Central Committee, one dating from 1946 and another dating from 1957.²⁴ In addition, the propaganda methods and advancements of the Romanian Communist Party are described by a third Central Committee document from 1949.²⁵ Concerning Blaga's internal exile, the compilations of his daughter Dorli Blaga are used, one containing her father's Securitate file and the other containing family correspondence.²⁶ These compilations provide glimpses into the life of Lucian Blaga during his exile, as well as a glimpse into the mind of a repressed individual.

²⁴ Patrascanu, Lucretiu. *Pozitia Partidului Comunist Roman Fata de Intelectuali : Cuvintare Tinuta Duminica 9 Decembrie 1945 In Sala « Scala »*. (*The Position of The Communist Party Toward Intellectuals : Speech Held on Sunday, December 9, 1945 in Scala Hall*). Bucharest: Editura Partidului Comunist Roman, 1946. [Procured June, 2008, in Bucharest, Romania].

Anonymous. *Rolul Intelectualilor in Construirea Socialismului in Republica Populara Romina* (The Role of Intellectuals in the Building of Socialism in Popular Republic of Romania). C.C. of the P. C. R. Fund, The Section of Propaganda and Agitation. File Nr. 1/ 1957. Bucharest: Romanian National Archives. [Procured June, 2008 in Bucharest, Romania].

²⁵ Anonymous. *Munca de Propaganda a Partidului Muncitoresc Roman*. (*The Propaganda Work of The Romanian Workers Party*). C. C. of P. C. R. Fund, Nr. 364, 1949. Bucharest: Romanian National Archives. [Procured June, 2008 in Bucharest, Romania].

²⁶ Dorli Blaga. *Correspondenta de Familie (Family Correspondence)*. (Bucharest: Editura Universal Dalsi, 2000).
Dorli Blaga, Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate (Blaga under Surveillance of the Securitate)*. (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1999).

In Chapter 1, entitled “Lucian Blaga’s Romania: Nationalism and its Downfall, 1917-1957,” the thesis describes the political environment of the interwar period, World War II, and the introduction of Communism in Romania until the year 1957. Furthermore, it stresses the idea that nationalism was almost necessary for both political and intellectual success in the interwar period, while after the end of World War II, it clashed with the Communist internationalism that proclaimed the self determination of minorities. Romania, a country with a troubled and xenophobic past, witnessed an intense process whose aim was to create a socialist state based on Soviet models. The chapter foregrounds Blaga’s career and achievements, and his eventual surveillance by the Securitate forces. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the relationship between Party and intellectuals and how that relationship witnessed continuous changes as a result of external factors, such as the Hungarian uprising of 1956, as well as internal political power struggles.

In Chapter 2, entitled “Lucian Blaga’s Internal Exile: the Securitate Years, 1948-1961” the thesis discusses at length the treatment of ‘nationalist’ intellectuals in the Romanian state, as well as Lucian Blaga’s own experiences within that environment. The RCP saw the Securitate as its enforcement tool and a means through which it sought to eliminate the remnants of Romania’s fascist past. Blaga’s experiences under the surveillance of the Securitate are detailed in numerous records that have been compiled by his daughter, Dorli Blaga. Nonetheless, the Securitate could never arrest or commit violence against him owing to the national and international prestige to which he laid claim; few Romanian authors had achieved acclaim of such proportions. In addition, his daughter’s compilation of the Blaga family correspondence proved to be a valuable source for dissecting the mind of an intellectual living in an internal

exile. Thus, the chapter relies heavily on *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*²⁷ and *Corespondenta de Familie*.²⁸

In Chapter 3, entitled “A Small Victory: The Rehabilitation of Lucian Blaga and Romania’s Autonomy, 1962-1970” the thesis examines the way in which Blaga’s poems, plays, and philosophical treatises were gradually co-opted by the RCP’s communist intellectuals. This is achieved by studying the introductions and prefaces of his works, beginning in the early 1960s until the year 1970, as a way to show how he reinforced Romanian ‘national’ communism and how he became an active agent in the creation of culture. This fact also points to the inherent weaknesses in Communism, and how his philosophy of the ‘spatiul mioritic’²⁹ destabilized Communist ideology. Although he died in 1961, his writing lived on and actively conceived a Romanian identity that remains to this day. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the political changes that led to the re-introduction of nationalism into the cultural and public sphere. Khrushchev’s secret speech, Stalin’s death, and the change in the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party from Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej into the hands of Nicolae Ceausescu served as precursors to Romania’s eventual political self-determination free from Moscow’s control. Thus, as the Romanian State consolidated control of its own economy, it also saw fit to consolidate the control of the country’s culture by incorporating nationalist themes and transforming previously repressed intellectuals such as Blaga into ‘national’ icons.

²⁷ Dorli Blaga, Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate (Blaga under Surveillance of the Securitate)*. (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1999).

²⁸ Dorli Blaga. *Corespondenta de Familie (Family Correspondence)*. (Bucharest: Editura Universal Dalsi, 2000).

²⁹ The mioritic space was a term coined by Blaga to describe the connection between the Romanian landscape and Romanian identity, and to show how that identity supposedly remained intact from the Dacian ancestors to the present. Chapter 3 examines this space and idea in more detail.

Chapter 1: Lucian Blaga's Romania: Nationalism and its Downfall, 1917-1957

The story began in 1917, a time when the European continent was embroiled in the First World War. As the Axis Powers and the Central Powers battled each other on both the western and the eastern front, Russia battled its own ideological war. A whirlwind of revolutionary fervor among young Russians, eager on demolishing the Old Russia, wanted to create their own version of Russia and to base it on the Communist principles of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Unknowingly at the time, the two Russian Revolutions of 1917, the first in February and the second, more commonly known as the Bolshevik Revolution, in October, would change the landscape of Europe, and especially Eastern Europe, for almost the entirety of the twentieth-century. For the remaining twenty years leading up to the onset of the Second World War, Europe found itself in a changing world, ideologically split between the successes of Bolshevism in Russia and later, Nazism in Germany.

The chapter studies and highlights Lucian Blaga's career achievements. It argues that Lucian Blaga's international and national fame gained during the interwar years placed him in the ranks of problematic intellectuals, whose fates were in the hands of the Communists. Nationalism became the stigma of most interwar intellectuals; as an idea, nationalism was replaced by internationalism, the self-determination of minorities. In addition, the chapter argues that advancements in propaganda served the purposes of the Communists in gaining control over the population and strengthening the RCP's rule. Nonetheless, events such as the Hungarian Revolution exposed the internal weaknesses of the RCP, and revealed the instability of the cultural sphere, which was still rife with struggle. Lastly, Romania's economic dependence on the Soviet Union turned the country into the 'breadbasket' of Eastern Europe, while the RCP

sought economic independence. This economic position created a continuous antagonism that ignited the rift between the two countries in the early 1960s.

The Successes of Lucian Blaga in the Interwar Period

Some claim Lucian Blaga to be “probably the most daring, most ambitious, and most insistent builder of a philosophical system of all Romanian philosophers... [his] concept of *spatiul mioritic*, which he coined to capture Romanians’ spiritual and aesthetic geography, has since become commonplace—to the point of triviality—in Romanian discourse on the nation, its folklore, and its identity.”³⁰ Lucian Blaga established himself in the Romanian world of letters in the 1920s and 1930s, a period to which some refer as a Golden Age of Romanian intellectual flowering.

Lucian Blaga was born in 1895 in Lancram, a small Romanian village in Transylvania, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was born into an Orthodox priest’s family, that of Isidor Blaga, of which he was the ninth and last child. For Blaga, the centrality of the village and home shaped his life, an occurrence common among the predominantly agrarian and traditional Romanians. The village represented to him “an area of wonderful interferences: here, reality, with its palpable foundations, confronted with the Biblical story and mythology, which also had their own certainties.”³¹ Later, as the First World War began, Blaga enrolled in the School of Theology at Sibiu, in Transylvania, in order to not fight in the Austro-Hungarian Army against Romanian troops. The problem was that the numerous Romanians in Transylvania and Banat who fought in World War I fought against the Romanian Armies of the Old Kingdom, which

³⁰ Irina Lizeveanu. “Generational Politics and the Philosophy of Culture: Lucian Blaga between Tradition and Modernism.” *Austrian History Yearbook* 33 (2002): 208.

³¹ Lucian Blaga. *Hronicul si Cintecul Virstelor (The Chronicle and Song of the Ages)*. Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1973, p. 32. The memoir was originally written in 1946 but it was not published until 1963.

were enemies of the Germans and Austrians. He continued his studies in 1917 at Vienna, where revolutionary activity was fomenting and coming from the East. His account of the Russian Revolution foreshadowed the eventual communist takeover of Eastern Europe, by claiming that “The Russian theory was leaving her land full of abstract principles, and was taking her first steps into the world: this underground movement is overcoming obstacles, and conquering at an historical level.”³²

By the early 1920s, Blaga had launched his career into the literary circles of Romania. He had published his first volume of his *Poems of Light* and had received an extremely positive review from Nicolae Iorga, a leading intellectual at the time writing for *Neamul Romanesc*.³³ In 1921, he founded the journal *Gandirea* with other intellectuals of the same generation who had experienced the unification of 1918 and the radical changes that ensued within Greater Romania.³⁴ The journal’s modernist approach clashed with the established intellectual currents, and by 1926, the journal had headed into an “aggressive and...extreme right-wing political” direction.³⁵ In the meantime, Blaga had distanced himself from the overly nationalist journal and had published several books dealing with Romanian mythical figures, as well as collections of poems.

By 1936, he had fully entrenched himself into the Romanian academic world: he was bestowed membership into the Romanian Academy, a “supreme symbolic recognition” of his work.³⁶ Although at times his philosophy was deemed too modernist, or even irrational, by some, Blaga was recognized for his “early formulation of...Romanianness” in which he attempted to

³² Blaga. *Hronicul*, 174.

³³ *Ibid*, 205.

³⁴ Lizeveanu, *Generational Politics*, 211.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 213.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 223.

define the “metaphysical basis for Romanian identity.”³⁷ With his focus on the centrality of the village in Romanian life and influence by German philosophers, such as Spengler, Freud, and Frobenius, he ruralized and indigenized the “national essence.”³⁸ In 1939, Blaga became a professor at the University of Cluj, a position that he had sought for most of life. He had also previously gained diplomatic appointments to Warsaw, Prague, Bern, Vienna, Lisbon, and had also served as state undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1937-38 under the Goga-Cuza government.³⁹ Nonetheless, the seeming Golden Age of Romanian history had its share of political and social troubles, to which Blaga was not immune.

The Interwar Period: Political Extremism, Nationalism, and anti-Semitism

The interwar period in Europe was dominated by an increasing nationalism and anti-Semitism that ultimately led to Nazi Germany igniting World War II and the Holocaust. For many countries, such as Romania, Poland, Hungary, and even France, the desire for *national* determination, and not that of minorities, dominated the rhetoric of leadership during the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁰ Especially in Romania, whose unification had been achieved only in 1918, conjoining the three regions of the Old Kingdom, Transylvania, and Moldova into what became known as Greater Romania, the desire for national determination was strongly felt.⁴¹ As these regions contained large numbers of minorities, such as Hungarian, Jewish, and Russian, whose claims to their own determination contrasted those of Romanian unification policy, “Bucharest’s disinclination to seek accommodation with the various national minorities... was based on

³⁷ Katherine Verdery. *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu’s Romania*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 49.

³⁸ Verdery, 49.

³⁹ Lizeveanu, *Generational Politics*, 235.

⁴⁰ Leon Volovici. *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*. trans. Charles Kormos. (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1991).

Stephen Fischer-Galati. *20th Century Rumania*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

⁴¹ Ibid, 30.

economic fears as much as on the need to perpetuate the nationalist-chauvinist and anti-Semitic traditions.”⁴²

Furthermore, interwar Romania was an “unstable landscape, demonstrated by the frequent changes of government, the factionalism of the parties, and the leapfrog of political personalities from party to party.”⁴³ Because political and socioeconomic problems arising from the unification of Greater Romania were not solved by the constant changes of government or failed agrarian reforms, various political figures and parties sought support from the greater population by employing anti-Semitism and rousing the xenophobic character of the Romanians, which at the time lived in mainly rural areas and were agrarian and tradition oriented.⁴⁴ One may rightfully assume that in such a volatile climate, political orientations of both the extreme right and left would be widespread. For the most part, the extreme right dominated interwar Romania. Legionary fascism, as employed by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, gained ground among the rural peasantry and other disgruntled strata of society, whose political orientations and “anti” stances bound them together. The Legionaries appealed to a large number of Romanians also because numerous parties and political figures were unable to create an economically stable Greater Romania.⁴⁵

Communism during the interwar period was not successful in Romania. Originating in the last two decades of the nineteenth-century, Romanian socialism was mainly influenced by the socialist principles of the French Revolution. Romanian socialism first began as a very small group of elite, middle-class members of various national origins. Calling itself the Social

⁴² Fischer-Galati, 30.

⁴³ Irina Livezeanu. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 21.

⁴⁴ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics* and Fischer-Galati both have similar opinions concerning the highly-charged political climate at the time.

⁴⁵ See Stephen Fischer-Galati, *20th Century Romania*.

Democratic Party, the small group would become what was known as the Romanian Communist Party. As claimed by both Ghita Ionescu, a Romanian historian writing from London in 1963, as well as Vladimir Tismaneanu, a Romanian political scientist writing in the West in 2003, the Romanian Socialist movement was characterized as an “exotic import” more than anything else.⁴⁶

It is primarily argued that the movement itself was an intellectual endeavor influenced by several, outside, non-Romanian factors rather than an organic, ‘grassroots’ movement. In agreement with Michael Shafir, Ghita Ionescu, and Stephen Fischer-Galati, Tismaneanu claims that this so-called ‘exotic’ characteristic is intended to refer to the three main elements that determined the Romanian socialist movement’s nature: the socio-economic character of the country at the end of the nineteenth-century, which was mostly agrarian; the non-Romanian origin of many of the leaders of the different socialist movements emerging; the disregard displayed by these parties regarding Romania’s national aspirations. A key region that was disputed between Romania and Russia at the time was the region of Basarabia, which had been under Russian control since 1812 and would continue so until 1918, then a part of Greater Romania, only to be later reclaimed by the Soviet Union during World War II.

The Communists were necessarily perceived as a threat to Romanian national aspirations. Even though they were known to have a more militant character, the Romanian communists and Moscow “were impotent to undermine the political stability of Greater Rumania. As a rule, communist agitation for socioeconomic reform and “democracy” fell on deaf ears...the politicians of the Old Kingdom, true to their nationalist anti-Semitic tradition, readily associated

⁴⁶ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons*, 2003, p. 38. See also Ghita Ionescu, *Communism In Rumania* (1963).

the alleged threat from the East with the “Jewish peril.”⁴⁷ Owing to that description, the activities of the communists were severely restricted. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the socialist/communist movement was declared illegal as of 1924.⁴⁸ The few loyal Communist adherents were to be found either in prisons or working through underground networks, and numbered no more than 1,000 members, a figure which seems to be the general consensus among most historians of Romanian Communism.⁴⁹

Winds of Change: World War II and its Aftermath

The Second World War caused significant changes in the political and social environment of Romania. Allied with Hitler’s Nazi Germany, the Fascist Romanian government led by Marshal Ion Antonescu espoused a virulent nationalism and anti-Semitism. In addition, by allying with Germany, Romania was officially fighting against the Soviet Union. However, it is not so much the history of World War II that is important to the development of the Romanian Communist Party, but the *end* of it. As the last years of the war approached, and Germany’s defeat appeared more and more probable, the Soviet Army increasingly neared Romanian borders. Romania, caught in the predicament of continuing to fight for Germany or switch sides and fight for the Soviets, chose the latter. On August 23, 1944, as Tismaneanu claims, “a coup overthrew the pro-Nazi dictatorship of Marshal Ion Antonescu and brought Romania into the antifascist coalition.”⁵⁰ The Soviet ‘liberation’ of Romania from fascist forces soon followed. As Ghita Ionescu claims in his 1964 history of the RCP, “When the first tanks rolled into Bucharest on 31 August they were received calmly by the citizens, although only hastily gathered

⁴⁷ Fischer-Galati, 32-33.

⁴⁸ Tismaneanu, 56.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 59.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 85.

communist cohorts of the 'Patriotic Guard' acclaimed them."⁵¹ Thus, when the Soviet forces crossed over into Romanian territory and entered Bucharest, they introduced a Romanian government that was carefully chosen from active members of the Romanian Communist Party, such as Lucretiu Patrascanu, who became minister of justice, and Gheorge Gheorghiu-Dej, who would become president of Romania in the 1950s.

The appointment of these 'cohorts' was implemented so as to direct influence from Moscow in order to have the Communist government in Romania operate according to Soviet wishes. Only the most loyal members, who had remained faithful to the Communist cause throughout the war, were chosen. Following 1944, membership in the RCP increased dramatically, from the 1,000 members that it maintained over the course of twenty years to around 55,000 by 1945.⁵² August 23, 1944 would remain as a historical date, becoming the Romanian national day and remaining so until 1989.

To understand the extent to which the Soviet Union assumed control of the Romanian government as a result of the 1944 proceedings, one must not look any further than the wartime discussion between Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin concerning spheres of influence in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. According to the agreement, Soviet Russia would assume control of ninety percent of Romania, leaving the remaining ten percent to other superpowers, in exchange for the British control of ninety percent of Greece.⁵³ The mere idea of carving up each other's interests in the small countries geographically caught between the superpowers points to the argument that the Soviet Union believed it had much to gain in Romania. The stringent political control and purges that soon followed in Romania should therefore be seen as the Soviet methods by which it meant to gain and pursue its various interests.

⁵¹ Ionescu, 84.

⁵² Tismaneanu, 87.

⁵³ Ionescu, 92.

Communist Transformations: Economic, Social, and Cultural

The year following August 23, 1944 represented a period of continuous changes of government leadership and ideologies. No less than three provisional governments were installed until the end of the war in 1945. Immediately following the end of the war, however, according to Ghita Ionescu, a period described as one of a “duality of power” ensued, in which the Soviet army’s presence offered enough protection against any other foreign interference in Romania, specifically the United States and Great Britain, and made “...possible the ‘qualitative change’ from the provisional first stage to the second stage which was the ‘stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism.’”⁵⁴ The Petru Groza government, installed in March of 1945 following the Yalta Conference, is referred to as the “Popular Democratic Regime” and represents the complete enclosure of Romania by the Soviet Union from any Western interference. Within this period, it is safe to say that slowly but surely, the Communists appointed into positions of power by the Soviet Union, along with the swift elimination of opposing parties, assumed full control of the impoverished and war-stricken Romania. Through means of intimidation and poll result manipulation, the elections of November 19, 1946 consolidated the Communists’ power. Wolff, cited by Ghita Ionescu, claims that on the aforementioned day, “...the Rumanian people went to the polls in an election in which every fraudulent, violent, and unscrupulous device ever used in the Balkans was brought into full play.”⁵⁵ Accordingly, the Soviets were willing to use almost any method that would further their interests in the new satellite countries, and especially in Romania. Furthermore, the Romanian Communists installed into positions of power benefited from the protection the

⁵⁴ Ionescu, 107.

⁵⁵ Wolff, cited in Ionescu, 124.

Soviets offered against opposition, as well as the benefits resulting from their new high appointments.

The Romanian Kingdom was transformed into a totalitarian state as of January 1948. The monarchy was dissolved, a statewide terror eliminated every remnant of the capitalistic and monarchic regime, and the communists took control of the power vacuum that had formed as a result of the terror. Romania set the course for the transformation of the country into an industrial-agrarian power. These plans were first enacted in the nationalization of the industry in June, 1948. Every major industry was under state control, including not only the industrial enterprise, but also banking, insurance, mining, and transportation.⁵⁶ With the enactment of the new law passed by the Grand National Assembly, the state increased its share of these industries because the shares of private owners passed to the state. The law passed on June 11 proclaimed a new beginning for Romanian society and economy. It envisioned an independence that the country would gain as a result of the bill's passing, by putting an end to state capitalism, allowing the working class to assume control of both the economy and the political system, and liquidating privately-owned businesses.

The June 11 bill announced an end to foreign expropriation of Romanian goods. While this was, for the most part, true, the bill exempted from expropriation a certain member of the United Nations, the Soviet Union. Not coincidentally, the Soviet Union created 'Sovroms' in Romania, which were regulating bodies controlling a large part of heavy industries and gaining a large share of the profits from those industries. These Sovroms were established in critical areas of the economy, namely the oil, transportation, wood, banking, natural gas, insurance, chemical,

⁵⁶ Ionescu, 161.

building, metallurgical, and tractor industries.⁵⁷ The Soviet Union thus stood to gain immensely through the establishment of Sovroms in critical industries.

On a social level, new, professional cadres were appointed throughout Romania in order to serve three purposes. According to Ghita Ionescu, a Romanian historian writing in 1963, this would

(a) giv[e] the workers a direct share in the conduct of the state; (b) [transform] workers into intellectuals through education; and (c) us[e] and re-educat[e] the specialists taken over from the past.⁵⁸

By allowing the working class to assume such positions, the RCP hoped to increase its manpower as well as its economic independence, an idea that had been vigorously debated during the interwar period, when much of the Romanian economy depended on foreign capital coming from the West. The transformation of workers into intellectuals represented a step into the creation of a homogenous culture that embodied Soviet style, communist principles. However, the specter of the Soviet Union directed much of this economic and educational reconstruction, turning economic independence into dependence.

Culturally, the Romanian Workers Party, which was the initial name of the RCP, achieved numerous successes in the short five years from its inception by spreading socialism through its propaganda network. In a 1949 document released by the Central Committee of the Party, several successes in the spreading of propaganda and educational reforms among the peasants and working class were fully described. The establishment of many committees based in rural areas had its main purpose the education of the proletarian classes according to socialist tenets. Numerous propaganda methods aimed at education were found in radio, film (especially

⁵⁷ Ionescu, 164.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 167.

Soviet films), art and cultural centers, as well as the increased publication of books, articles, and Party periodicals. The propaganda plan aimed to educate the workers about the history of the Soviet Union, to introduce and spread the writings of Soviet authors, so as to use the Soviet example of culture and to mimic it.⁵⁹

The article proclaimed that, "An important place in our Party's propaganda is reserved for the education of the workers in learning the spirit of international proletarianism, and the spirit of love for the U.S.S.R."⁶⁰ Such feelings between Romanians and Russians as a whole, however, were atypical before the sudden rise to power of Communism. Moreover, the document ignores the historical antagonism between the two countries regarding the disputed region of Basarabia. The various organizational bodies of the Communist Party (in this case, the Workers Party) were committed to entrenching Marxist philosophy and values into its most important class, the proletarians. This way, the State sought to gain support from the masses. Support from established intellectuals, however, posed more critical problems for the RCP.

Suppression of Nationalism and the Securitate's Repression of Intellectuals

The Romanian Communist Party's relationship to its intellectuals, as well as the larger segments of its population in the period 1948-1958 may be divided, according to Michael Shafir, into two stages: the transformative period and the post-transformative period.⁶¹ These two periods largely corresponded to the political actions of Stalinization, occurring from 1948 until Stalin's death in 1953, and de-Stalinization, occurring from 1953 to 1958 and including the New Course, or Thaw, policies of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. These divisions entailed in the scheme

⁵⁹ Anonymous. *Munca de Propaganda a Partidului Muncitoresc Roman (The Propaganda Work of The Romanian Workers Party)*, 1949, 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 4.

⁶¹ Michael Shafir. "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania." *Orbis* vol. 27 iss. 2 (1983).

of the RCP a “primitive accumulation of legitimacy” by which the Party tried to “destroy the patterns upon which the hegemony of the counterelites had been based.”⁶² The vehicle for such destruction lay in the hands of the Securitate, described by Dennis Deletant as “the blunt instrument of repression of the Communist Party... [which] was set up according to a Soviet blueprint and under Soviet direction.”⁶³ During the transformative period, a ruthless campaign directed against all segments of society that ran counter to Communism’s policies ensued, targeting peasants, the ‘bourgeois’ elements that still remained, priests, intellectuals, etc. During the post-transformative period, a relaxation of such policies followed, yet repression still remained. An estimated 70,000 people were detained and arrested during the transformative and post-transformative periods, 1948-1958, without counting, however, another 80,000 peasants that were detained during the collectivization process, as well as another 20,000 detainees who comprised the large working force in the labor colonies of the Danube-Black Sea Canal.⁶⁴ Of these, around 4,000 were sentenced to death.

The Securitate did not spare intellectuals in their repression. Although the RCP saw intellectuals as an integral part of its plans for a new society, “intellectuals represented a class which, through its structure, allowed elements of bourgeois ideology to permeate it, and also had the means through which to propagate such an ideology.”⁶⁵ For this reason, the Securitate became the RCP’s medium of destroying those bourgeois elements. The means through which the Securitate achieved such purposes were constant terror and supervision, which sometimes led to mass arrests, interrogations, beatings, and executions.

⁶² Shafir, 397.

⁶³ Dennis Deletant. *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948-1965*. (London: Hurst and Company, 1999), 114.

⁶⁴ Deletant, 196.

⁶⁵ Ana-Maria Catanus. *Intellectualii Romani in Arhivele Comunismului (Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives)*. edited by Dan Catanus,. (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2006), 167.

Lucretiu Patrascanu, an early leader of the Communist Party, hinted in a 1945 speech the repression that followed. Coming immediately after World War II's end and the initiation of the Communist government in Romania in 1944, his 1945 speech detailed the Party stance as it existed then toward intellectuals who "need[ed] to revise their old positions."⁶⁶ According to Patrascanu, the Communist Party fought for democracy; the only obstacle to the democratic Communist realization was the existence of those intellectuals who were unwilling to join the new Party's ranks. Patrascanu presents a curious case to the study of Communism of Romania. He was one of the few members of the Romanian Communist Party before World War II, who "...joined the party at an early age, totally identified with the Leninist-Stalinist creed, never challenged the official CPSU and Comintern documents, and continued to be faithful to his communist...ideals until his arrest in early 1948."⁶⁷ Ironically enough, however, his fate resembled that of those intellectuals against which he so vehemently spoke.

Patrascanu alluded to the French and Russian Revolutions as two great trials and successes of history in which intellectuals "played a leading role."⁶⁸ Implying that those great, social transformations would not have occurred without the involvement of the intellectual force, Patrascanu left an open door for those Romanian intellectuals who had not yet conceded and contributed to the Communist cause to do so. Understanding the role of history as an integral component of Communism, in which history's finality comes with the advent of the new Communist man, intellectuals of differing opinions had no choice but to join the Party ranks, or emigrate. Those who would do neither suffered greatly. In closing his speech, Patrascanu

⁶⁶Lucretiu Patrascanu. *Pozitia Partidului Comunist Roman Fata de Intelectuali : Cuvintare Tinuta Duminica 9 Decembrie 1945 In Sala « Scala »*. (*The Position of The Communist Party Toward Intellectuals : Speech Held on Sunday, December 9, 1945 in Scala Hall*). Bucharest: Editura Partidului Comunist Roman, 1946. Procured June, 2008.

⁶⁷Vladimir Tismaneanu. *Stalinism for all Seasons*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, p.66.

⁶⁸ Patrascanu, 16.

claimed that, "They [the rightist intellectuals] need to realize that we live in moments in which 'going back' does not exist. Neither history nor society knows returns..."⁶⁹ To intellectuals such as Lucian Blaga, necessarily included in the problematic list, there would be no turning back to the days of the interwar period.

The Thaw: A Revision of the Communist Intellectual Space

In 1953, Joseph Stalin died and left the Soviet Union and its satellites in disarray. For many of those countries, this prompted the initiation of a thaw in policy or "New Course."⁷⁰ This meant a relaxation of previous Stalinist policies which put the satellites at economic disadvantages to produce for the Soviet Union; an example is the dissolution of Sovroms and the reorientation towards domestic economic requirements.⁷¹ The thaw also entailed on opening of relations with other countries, in the East as well as the West, regardless of their social systems. This did not mean, however, that Romania would undergo a completely internationalist agenda; instead, it stressed "national self-determination within the socialist camp."⁷² Nor did it mean that nationalism became a statewide policy, but rather that "the equating of the Party's interests and policies with those of the Rumanian state was designed to secure the allegiance of the people to the "Rumanian" leadership of Gheorghiu-Dej as against "internationalist, cosmopolitan" rule."⁷³ Fischer-Galati believes that this represented the beginning of a peculiar breed of communist nationalism, formed by 1955.

⁶⁹ Patrascanu, 17.

⁷⁰ See Fischer-Galati, *Socialist Republic of Romania*, 57-76, Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for all Seasons*, 136-167, Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, 219-252, John L. Keep, *Last of the Empires*, 48-49, and others.

⁷¹ Fischer-Galati, 57.

⁷² *Ibid*, 59.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 59.

The thaw, however, roused up the people against the government in certain East European satellites, namely Poland and Hungary. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 directly caused a backlash in Romania. Labeled as reactionary events spurred by nationalism, the Hungarian uprising of 1956 aroused feelings of solidarity among the large Magyar population of Romania with those of their fellow Hungarians. In what was a sporadic outburst against the Kadar regime ruthlessly crushed by Soviet troops, a feeling of unease was also felt across the border in Romania.⁷⁴ In large cities such as Bucharest, Timisoara, Cluj, and Iasi, Hungarian and Romanian students demonstrated in the streets, requesting improved standards of living and an end to teaching Russian in schools.⁷⁵ Unsuccessful in its efforts, the uprising attracted a large number of Soviet troops in Hungary, and also increased their numbers within Romania, because Romanian policymakers saw the demonstrations as a threat to Transylvania, a region with a large Hungarian minority population.⁷⁶

The uprising showed the Romanian state that its attempts at indoctrinating the youth had relatively failed; thus, instead of relaxing educational policies, it sought to increase those policies and consolidate its power. Domestically, "The Hungarian Revolution made most Romanians realize that any changes in the domestic...position of the country would have to be entrusted to the leadership of the Rumanian Workers' Party."⁷⁷ Accordingly, "...those intellectuals...who had made their peace with the regime, hoping for liberalization though the restoration of the cultural...ties with the West" realized that they must learn to coexist with Dej's government.⁷⁸ Regarding relations with the Soviet Union, however, Romania realized that the Soviet Union

⁷⁴ See Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania* (1963) pp.267-287 for a discussion of the Hungarian Revolution's impact on the Romanian government.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 270.

⁷⁶ Fischer-Galati, 62.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 65.

⁷⁸ Fischer-Galati, 65.

would not respect the political integrity of its bloc members. While the Romanian government requested Soviet troops to leave that same year, Soviet troops remained in Romania until 1958.⁷⁹ Any movements toward a political reorientation away from Moscow would remain unfulfilled as long as Soviet troops were stationed within Romanian borders.⁸⁰

Thus, in 1957, the Central Committee released a document revising its position towards intellectuals. Arriving immediately after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and roughly twelve years after Lucretiu Patrascanu's speech, the Central Committee report on the role of intellectuals within socialism embodied a changed position from that of 1945, and within the context of an altered communist environment in Romania.⁸¹ According to the document, intellectuals, of whom scientists, engineers, philosophers, educators, etc. were a part, were instrumental in the building of socialism. The Romanian Workers Party had supported the ideological and organizational work of Communist intellectuals in order to contribute to the growth of socialist economy and culture. For the remaining nationalist intellectuals, however, conformity to the new Communist ideology became integral not only for themselves, but also for the State. Those intellectuals who were unwilling to concede to the tenets of socialism still existed but needed to be eliminated. They allegedly continued their work through underground networks, attempting to bring back their philosophies to listening ears by "maintaining and distributing ideas and theories intended to create confusion;" thus, the Party believed it was its duty to remove those elements as well as to continue educating socialism to the masses, for fear

⁷⁹ Silviu Brucan. *The Wasted Generation: Memoirs of the Romanian Journey from Capitalism to Socialism and Back*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 55.

⁸⁰ Brucan, 55.

⁸¹ Anonymous. *Rolul Intelectualilor in Construirea Socialismului in Republica Populara Romina (The Role of Intellectuals in the Building of Socialism in Popular Republic of Romania)*. Central Committee of the P. C. R. Fund, The Section of Propaganda and Agitation. File Nr. 1/ 1957. Bucharest: Romanian National Archives. [Procured June, 2008 in Bucharest, Romania].

of the masses turning against them.⁸² In short, the RCP blamed 'nationalist' intellectuals for the Hungarian Uprising of 1956.

In its attempt to legitimize the rule of the Dej government and its increasing centralization as a result of the Hungarian Revolution, the Party recognized that socialism, in order to be successful, had to be taught to the entire population. It may even be claimed that the Party still suffered from those years during the interwar period, in which its existence was illegal. The sentiment of compensating for this perceived inferiority complex, and of extreme paranoia, may be sensed when reading documents of the Central Committee. The document's admittance that even in 1957 socialism was still a work in progress reveals that its popularity still lagged in Romania.

The Role of Nationalism

Placing the concept of the *nation* within an acceptable form became one of the most heated debates in the creation of the communist intellectual space. As can be obviously understood, the idea of a nation and nationalism within an *internationalist* oriented philosophy, i.e. communism, is in itself a paradox. Reconciling the historically nationalist tendencies of Romanians with communist doctrine proved to be both challenging and controversial for politicians and intellectuals alike.

Lucretiu Patrascanu believed in 1945 that nationalism *was* an integral component of Romanian Communism, though his version of nationalism differed from that of the interwar intellectuals. According to Katherine Verdery, a noted scholar of Romanian Communism, Patrascanu "was prepared to defend the Nation, though under the conditions set by the

⁸² Anonymous. *RoIul Intelectualilor* (1957), 13.

Communist International,” which, she claims “... was not easy.”⁸³ Labeled as both patriotic and Marxist, Patrascanu dismissed the idea that those interwar intellectuals were, by his definition, nationalists. He claimed that the idea of the nation was only monopolized by them, and in actuality they only used that idea to betray Romania when Transylvania was lost in the Second Vienna Award.⁸⁴ What Patrascanu proposed in terms of a nationalistic framework was completely identified with the masses “in a socialist culture... [which] will always maintain its national form,” and not its international character proposed by Communism.⁸⁵

The Central Committee document on the role of intellectuals (1957) in the building of socialism specifically explained, however, that “the strengthening of proletarian internationalism and the combating of bourgeois nationalism” was one of the main goals of the Romanian Workers (Communist) Party.⁸⁶ The Party’s new policies of opening up relations with other socialist countries, and even countries in the West, were echoed by the Central Committee. Though remnants of nationalism and chauvinism still existed in 1957, the Committee maintained its anti-nationalist position. Consequently, we are presented with a conscious attempt to eliminate the idea of nation and nationalism. This fact, however, does not point to nationalism’s complete elimination from intellectual circles. As the Hungarian Revolution’s effects on the Romanian population show, the nation and nationalism were still concepts hotly debated, confused, repressed, and subsequently praised even within a communist regime.

⁸³ Verdery, 54.

⁸⁴ Patrascanu, 14.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 15.

⁸⁶ Anonymous. *Rolul Intelectualilor*. (1957), 14.

Chapter 2: Lucian Blaga's Internal Exile: The Securitate Years, 1948-1961

The Securitate changed social relationships among the Romanian population. As described by Ana-Maria Catanus, the penetration of the Securitate into the lives and minds of the population was so severe and intense that it “revolutionised not just society’s structures, but also personal behaviour. Animated conversation gave way to furtive whispers, or was expressed in parables, suggestion replaced open discussion, and the simplest of messages was wrapped in code.”⁸⁷ Between 1948 and 1961, Lucian Blaga endured much of the terror of the Securitate. Nevertheless, he did not experience the horrors of labor camps or political prisons like many of his contemporaries. This can be explained by the intellectual ‘infamy’ or possible ‘untouchability’ that he possessed. The following chapter will discuss the control that the Securitate assumed over the population, including Lucian Blaga. The intensity of his surveillance reveals the threat the Securitate believed he posed to the stability of a Communist world. Furthermore, the chapter examines Blaga’s internal exile and his continued activity.

Adaptability to the new social mores became vital for people living within the Socialist bloc. Much like the Polish intellectual Czeslaw Milosz claimed in *The Captive Mind* (1953)⁸⁸, they had to become actors, had to build an outer role that was on guard at all times so as not to betray their inner thoughts, and had to “keep alert” against possible secret police informers, even members of their own families. To this new ‘actor’ Milosz gave the name of Ketman, a term borrowed from Islamic civilization.⁸⁹ Ketman, in Islamic culture, represented someone who did not conform internally to the teachings of the Islamic faith, but instead chose to be “...in possession of truth...[and who]...must, therefore, keep silent about one’s true convictions if

⁸⁷ Deletant, 114.

⁸⁸ Czeslaw Milosz. *The Captive Mind*. Trans. by Jane Zielonko. New York: Vintage International, 1990 (originally published in 1953).

⁸⁹ Ibid, 54-57.

possible.”⁹⁰ The allusion to the concept of ‘truth’ runs similarly to that of Vaclav Havel, whose own Ketman greengrocer in *The Power of the Powerless* chose to live within the truth by refusing to display the slogan “Workers of the World, Unite!” in his window shop.⁹¹ This act, according to Havel, was only one of the “...[many] means by which a person or a group could revolt against manipulation.”⁹² Thus, Ketman was living the truth, yet not overtly displaying it; only when he believed the time to be right, he acted.

The Captive Mind by Milosz is a treatise on four different intellectuals within Poland, disguised under pseudonyms such as Alpha, the Moralist, Beta, the Disappointed Lover, Gamma, the Slave of History, and Delta, the Troubadour. These four were intellectuals whose lives took different turns when the Soviet Union arrived in Poland, and yet who responded in ways that, to Milosz, represented four symptomatic cases of intellectuals living under the pressures of a Marxist regime. The title of the book is telling of the minds and abilities of those intellectuals. The book, furthermore, symbolizes Milosz’s attack on totalitarian governments and their control of the minds of the population, as well as many more negative characteristics inherent in totalitarian regimes. Though written while in exile, *The Captive Mind* stands the test of time for its defense of a ‘free’ mind and its opposition to any form of absolutism. Although Milosz’s work should not be taken as *truth* at face value, because it does contain certain personal biases against intellectuals with which he had disagreements, it does reveal the framework for being an intellectual in a Communist regime. The choices were few, and although some specific cases such as Lucian Blaga’s do not completely fit the picture, the choices were rather inflexible.

⁹⁰ Milosz, 57. Milosz borrowed the term Ketman from Arthur de Gobineau, a French writer whose *Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia* discussed and studied at length Islamic culture and customs in the nineteenth-century.

⁹¹ Vaclav Havel. *The Power of the Powerless*. 39.

⁹² *Ibid*, 43.

Accordingly, it may be claimed that Lucian Blaga adopted the veil of Ketman during his lifetime under the Communist regime, in order to protect himself and his family from the violence that many other intellectuals endured. He kept his convictions under wraps and chose to live within the truth only through his writing. The Securitate closely watched Lucian Blaga as well, although his case is considered a 'special' one due to an array of reasons.⁹³ In fact, according to I.D. Sirbu, a close friend of Blaga's who endured the violent interrogations of the Securitate, "Blaga was huge, [the Securitate] had to hit him indirectly."⁹⁴ Because of this 'power,' Blaga represented an atypical case as compared to other Romanian intellectuals, for his national and international fame placed him among the ranks of 'untouchable' intellectuals, who survived the Securitate's purges.

Blaga under Surveillance of the Securitate

The year 1944 marks the beginning of a long and grueling period for intellectual Lucian Blaga until his death in 1961. It signals the beginning of the Communist rule of Romania, begun with the introduction of a puppet government by the Soviet Union, as well as the beginning of Lucian Blaga's 'internal exile' quickly following the Communist installation. In a matter of only a few years, Blaga, among many other intellectuals, "saw [his] future, once assuredly brilliant, crash about [his] ears," as Katherine Verdery so astutely remarks in her work, entitled *National Ideology Under Socialism*.⁹⁵

⁹³ Catanus, 170.

⁹⁴ I.D. Sirbu. From a letter in 1978 to Maria Enescu, in which he confessed the beatings he endured in Jilava in 1959 and described the methods through which the Securitate tried to make him claim falsities about Blaga and his daughter. The letter is quoted in Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Under Surveillance of the Securitate*. (Cluj-Napoca: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1999), 22.

⁹⁵ Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism*, 199.

Dorli Blaga, the daughter of Blaga, has for the length of her lifetime researched the various documents compiled on Blaga, mostly from the archives of the Securitate. These documents describe in full detail the extent to which Blaga was supervised and spied on in his lifetime during the Communist regime. Blaga's close supervision began in the year 1946, the year in which he vehemently refused to join the Central Committee of the Communist Party, a position he maintained until the day of his death.⁹⁶ Accordingly, the first file on Blaga was initiated in 1946, when an Austrian publishing house sent a request to the Romanian government to translate a collection of Blaga's poems into German, on the condition that Blaga was not considered by the Romanian Communist government a collaborator and sympathizer with Nazi Germany during World War II. The answer from the Romanian government accused Blaga of having had sympathies with the Nazi regime and served as ambassador to Lisbon under the dictatorship of Legionary Marshal Ion Antonescu, according to Dorli Blaga.⁹⁷ Thus, it comes as no surprise that only two years later, in 1948, Lucian Blaga was removed from his position as professor of philosophy at the University of Cluj and later relegated to the position of a functionary at the Academy Library in Cluj. Since Blaga was considered one of the leading figures of problematic intellectuals with nationalist ties, his previous books were banned and his current writings remained unpublished until 1962.⁹⁸

In order to understand why these events occurred and how Lucian Blaga was transformed from hero to villain in a matter of a few years, a close look at the Securitate records compiled by Dorli Blaga and Dan Catanus is necessary; this reveals the extent to which he was supervised and how he posed a threat to the Communist government, yet the Securitate did not arrest or deport

⁹⁶ Dorli Blaga, Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate (Blaga under Surveillance of the Securitate)*. (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1999), 46. See also Dan Catanus. *Intelectuali Romani in Arhivele Comunismului (Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives)*. (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2006), 170.

⁹⁷ Dorli Blaga, *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*, (1999), 10.

⁹⁸ Verdery, 199-200.

him. The chapter examines documents from the late 1940s, as well as selected documents from the first and second half of the 1950s.⁹⁹

On January 12, 1947 a meeting took place in the city of Cluj in which several professors and distinguished persons gathered at the Hungarian Theatre, spoke publicly, and then rallied down the streets holding various propaganda signs. Lucian Blaga, whose attendance and participation was expected, did not take part in the manifestations. Therefore, an individual search into the proceedings of Lucian Blaga that day was instigated and set into motion.¹⁰⁰ This text represents one of the few Securitate documents from the post-war period and proves that documentary evidence is fragmentary at best. Most of what historians know of Blaga's immediate post-war life comes from the works of his daughter and Ion Balu.

Lucian Blaga reemerges in the records of the Securitate in 1954. In an early text from January 8, 1954 enacted by the Securitate Committee of Cluj, the Securitate once again decided to open the file on Blaga. The specific reasons behind this action are unclear at best, but the text makes references to his continued inability to adapt to Party lines and his standing as a member of "the enemy entourage at present."¹⁰¹ The vague language of the text continuously incriminates him and begins by presenting a short biography of Lucian Blaga. Providing a biographical sketch, even if much of the content did not always correspond to truth, was a common procedure for many Securitate documents, because it portrayed the lifetime work of Lucian Blaga as one with many perceived blemishes. The 1954 document briefly summarizes Blaga's diplomatic activities beginning in the early 1920s, and describes at length his political connections to the

⁹⁹ Regarding the decade of the 1950s and the Securitate literature on Blaga, I use both Dorli Blaga's collection as well as *Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives*, compiled by Dan Catanus.

¹⁰⁰ Gheorghe Craciun. "Chestura Politiei Municipiului Cluj catre Inspectoratul Regional de Politie." in *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*, ed. Dorli Blaga. (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1999), 51-52.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous. « Raport-Fisa Privitor la numitul Blaga Lucian, domiciliat in Cluj, Str. Popa Farcas nr. 20 (Report File Concerning Lucian Blaga, residing in Cluj, 20 Popa Farcas Street).» *Intelectuali Romani in Arhivele Comunismului (Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives)*, edited by Dan Catanus, 202-207. (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2006), 206.

King at the time and the government, deemed capitalist and reactionary by the unnamed Securitate author. In many instances, the document makes virulent references to Blaga's work, about which the author claims that it was based on "an intuitionist culture and philosophy, with mystical leanings, and which, in [the Communist] popular democratic regime, are considered decadent and forbidden from appearing anymore."¹⁰² The continuous references to a 'mystical' and 'decadent' nature in Blaga's philosophy owe themselves in a large part to the origins of his philosophy. Blaga was strongly influenced by the philosophy emanating from Germany at the turn of the century, a philosophy that found its basis in the workings of a large 'unknown,' an entity that operated in the subconscious of human minds. One of the main drawbacks of this philosophy was its adoption by the Fascist regimes of Germany and Italy during the interwar period. Because of those influences, Blaga was accordingly portrayed as one of the leading figures of the Communist regime's enemies, and one incapable to adapt to that regime.

The foregone conclusion is that merely by association with previous politicians deemed enemies, Blaga became the enemy. Furthermore, his writing and philosophy did not merely stand on their own only as pieces of literature, but became the core of what he was. In other words, Blaga *was* his writing. Unwilling to adapt to the Party line or to have any political association with the communists, Blaga became the scapegoat enemy. Ghita Ionescu provides an explanation to why Blaga's unaffected treatment towards the communists earned him a position of State enemy, by claiming that "A-politism was...and has remained the regime's most recurrent complaint against the Rumanian writers."¹⁰³ It was considered a crime of serious

¹⁰² Anonymous. « Raport-Fisa Privitor la numitul Blaga Lucian, domiciliat in Cluj, Str. Popa Farcas nr. 20 (Report File Concerning Lucian Blaga, residing in Cluj, 20 Popa Farcas Street).» 8 January, 1954. *Intelectuali Romani in Arhivele Comunismului (Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives)*, edited by Dan Catanus, 202-207. (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2006), 204.

¹⁰³ Ionescu, 310.

proportions among members of the 'intelligentsia' and Blaga was obviously 'guilty' of such a crime.

A second reason for the Securitate reopening Blaga's file may be found in the existence of the Literary Circle and the claim that Blaga was responsible for it. The 'Literary Circle' was created in 1942 by a group of some of his students at the University of Sibiu. The group had gathered monthly to discuss Blaga's philosophical works; they were, according to the Securitate, "based on bourgeois ideology and philosophy," and therefore represented enemy elements.¹⁰⁴ The group was publicly dissolved in 1944 and its magazine forbidden from publication immediately after August 23. Despite its inability to publish anymore, the Circle continued to meet on a regular basis, meetings at which Blaga was sometimes present.¹⁰⁵ Dorli Blaga, who had frequented the Circle's meetings as a child, recounts the Circle's existence as follows: "The Circle's members maintained their independence. Blaga was always a 'guest' of the Circle. But their moral fiber, the fact that they did not make concessions... and their European spirit bothered; many of them paid with years in prison."¹⁰⁶ A 1954 Securitate document claims that Blaga actively participated at the Circle's meetings and that in one specific instance, during the years 1948-1949, "he personally read various passages from his and others' work."¹⁰⁷ Thus, Blaga was guilty of crime by association with a 'renegade' Literary Circle, a serious enough association to cause the Securitate to reopen his file. The association, however, did not prove that he was, in fact, *responsible* for its existence. Continuous references to the Literary Circle are found in abundance in Securitate records.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous. "Raport-Fisa" (1954), 205.

¹⁰⁵ Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 35.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous. "Raport-Fisa" (1954) 206.

After Blaga had lost his position as professor University of Cluj and began work at the Academy Library in Cluj, the RCP considered that it had put Blaga into a position from which he was unable to exert much influence. Nonetheless, the supervision of Blaga intensified in the years 1955 to 1959, because of the request in the West to nominate him for the Nobel Prize in 1956.¹⁰⁸ Blaga's popularity outside of Romania likely had an effect on the nomination. In a 1958 hearing, Blaga claimed that his poems had been translated into Russian, German, French, Italian, Hungarian, and so forth.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the Nobel nomination, the intensification of Blaga corresponded to the post-Hungarian uprising of 1956, a period in which the RCP, as well as other Soviet bloc governments, hardened its stance toward intellectuals, and especially sought to educate them in the art of 'socialist writing.'¹¹⁰ In a June 27, 1958 article appearing in *Scanteia*, the RCP's directive journal, the Central Committee decided that "party organizations would continue to fight against revisionism and any foreign ideologies whatever their manifestations, against nationalism, idealistic conceptions, reactionary bourgeois aesthetics, manifestations of bourgeois morality, etc."¹¹¹

Following the official *Scanteia* directive in 1958, Mihail Iubu, a close friend of Blaga and member of the Literary Circle, was arrested. Fifteen other intellectuals, many of whom were either friends or acquaintances of Blaga, were also arrested following Iubu's arrest. They were accused of creating an anti-government plot for which Lucian Blaga was the supposed organizer and conductor.¹¹² The arrests and subsequent interrogations were meant to give truth to the claims that Blaga was indeed guilty of treason against the Romanian state, keeping contact with

¹⁰⁸ Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 18.

¹⁰⁹ Lucian Blaga. *Memoriu de Activitate*. (1958) in *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 217.

¹¹⁰ Ghita Ionescu. *Communism in Rumania*. (1964), 309-310.

¹¹¹ *Scanteia*. (1958). Quoted in Ionescu, 310.

¹¹² Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 48.

foreign nations, and conspiring to publish his hidden manuscripts abroad.¹¹³ Seemingly, the Securitate did not believe that it had enough legal recourse to arrest Blaga based on the accounts of nationalism found in his previous works, or his insistent refusal to join the Party.

An October 31, 1958 document reveals the extent to which the Securitate sought a reason to arrest him. During Blaga's trip to Bucharest to visit Dr. Voiculescu Vasile, one of the friends arrested earlier in the year, Blaga met with some writers, one of which was a Securitate agent by the pseudonym of Stefan Dragomirescu.¹¹⁴ According to the text, Blaga unknowingly confided in him that a group of young writers in Cluj were sympathetic of his plight after the campaign of accusations typified him as a representative of mystical and reactionary literature. Furthermore, Blaga confessed of the 1956 visit of three members of the Romanian Literary Academy who had requested a public declaration to join the Party in order to become a member of the Academy. Nonetheless, Blaga believed that he was unable to perform such an act, which to him meant "a repudiation of an entire life's work."¹¹⁵ The writer of the 1958 document made a curious claim, namely that Blaga proceeded to confess to the agent that he had over 15 volumes of manuscripts that had been unpublished and which he invited the agent to read in Cluj. The truth of that claim stands on shaky ground, however, because by 1958, Blaga knew he was being followed and that his works represented the reason for which the RCP stigmatized him. In fact, earlier in 1958, Blaga confessed to Valeriu Anania, another close friend, that he was scared to visit Dr. Vasile Voiculescu.¹¹⁶ The visit did occur, as the 1958 document points out, but whether Blaga felt safe enough to confide to agent Stefan Dragomirescu such private details is highly doubtful.

¹¹³ Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 37.

¹¹⁴ Lieutenant Bredisteanu. "Plan de marsrutizare." 31 October, 1958. *Intellectualii Romani in Arhivele Comunismului (Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives)*. edited by Dan Catanus. (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2006), 264-266.

¹¹⁵ Lucian Blaga. Quoted in "Plan de marsrutizare." 31 October, 1958. 264.

¹¹⁶ Blaga, quoted in Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 48.

The arrests made in 1958 of fifteen of Blaga's acquaintances and friends did not provide enough grounds for his arrest; the individual meeting with agent Ștefan Dragomirescu did not incriminate him enough, either. Yet, of the fifteen arrested, most were sentenced to 3-5 years in a correctional facility, while for Grigore Popa and Ioan Boanta, hard labor sentences of 22 and 25 years, respectively, were given out.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Securitate did not relent in Blaga's surveillance. On November 29, 1958, Blaga was interrogated by the Securitate, which released the document under the title of *Memoriu de Activitate (Record of Activity)*. *Memoriu de Activitate* stands as a document of the interrogation, in which Blaga gave a brief autobiographical sketch of his career, attempting to put all the Securitate's accusations to rest by refuting claims that he maintained contact in Western countries. As mentioned previously, the Nobel Prize nomination received by Blaga and announced on foreign radio stations provided the link with 'foreign ideologies' mentioned in the 1958 *Scanteia* article, and a reason to watch closely his every action. Blaga claimed in the 1958 hearing, however, that he had no knowledge at the time of his nomination, nor that he had any contact or correspondence with the West, dating from August 23, 1944, the date on which the RCP established its government.¹¹⁸ Disregarding Blaga's claims, the Securitate continued to intensively spy on him until 1961, and had over thirteen informers following him.¹¹⁹

By 1959, Blaga's surveillance had intensified. A document dated from January 20, 1959 lays out a plan of action taken by the Securitate forces in Cluj to continue the surveillance of

¹¹⁷ Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 49.

¹¹⁸ Lucian Blaga. *Memoriu de Activitate*. (1958). Quoted in Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 217.

¹¹⁹ Ion Balu. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 46.

Lucian Blaga.¹²⁰ The scope of the action, coming only two months after his hearing, was concerned with the existence of the fifteen manuscripts that Blaga had confessed to agent Dragomirescu in October, 1958. The action was successful in seizing several unpublished manuscripts and poems, but not the fifteen mentioned earlier.¹²¹ The failure of finding the problematic manuscripts prompted the Securitate to wiretap Blaga's house, intercept his mail, and conduct a thorough search of his domicile. Furthermore, agent Dragomirescu was required, once again, to pose as an interested and friendly acquaintance and gain access to Blaga's house. He was to report back to Securitate headquarters to present whether Blaga still considered himself "the only representative of the national idea," as the document claimed that Blaga had once confessed to Dragomirescu.¹²² In this context, 'national idea' substituted for the continuous accusation of nationalism brought against Blaga. He was considered a representative of the 'national idea,' a curious accusation that would be turned on its head in 1962.

The Securitate continued Blaga's surveillance until his death in 1961. Furthermore, the Securitate began their surveillance of his daughter, Dorli Blaga, in April of 1960.¹²³ For the extent of Blaga's lifetime, the RCP and Securitate sought to undermine him, arrest him, and remove him from his position of relative influence. Nevertheless, it did not succeed; instead, it harmed countless people associated with his name, as well as thousands of other intellectuals and laymen alike. For the power and terror that the Securitate became infamous, it is almost surprising that they could not bring down one man. An intriguing question thus arises and may be asked as follows: *Why* did the Securitate follow him for more than a decade and a half, while

¹²⁰ Breban, Iosif. "Plan de masuri privind actiunea dusa asupra lui Blaga Lucian din Cluj, str. Martinuzzi nr. 14." In *Intelectuali Romani in Arhivele Comunismului (Romanian Intellectuals in Communism's Archives)*. edited by Dan Catanus. (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2006), 266-272.

¹²¹ Breban, "Plan de Masuri." In *Intelectuali Romani*. (2006), 267.

¹²² Ibid, 268.

¹²³ Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 20.

at the same time allowing him to quite possibly perform the deeds of 'the enemy,' instead of arresting him and putting him away so that he was not able to disseminate his ideas so 'freely'? The answer to that question resides in the power of his work and in the massive appeal that he amassed even under the dire conditions of 'internal exile' in which he was allowed to function as a member of society.

Lucian Blaga's 'Internal Exile' and Continued Activity

The concept of 'internal exile' appears to be a contradiction in itself, but in the world of Communist Eastern Europe, it contained a clear definition for most of the people inhabiting those countries. Internal, for the purposes of the thesis, connotes both a physical place, as in remaining and living in one's country of residence, as well as a mental place, much like the Ketman of Milosz. According to Ghita Ionescu,

the expression 'internal exile' piquantly describes the situation of the creative intelligentsia in the RPR...those who do not resist openly, cross the frontiers, or accept the party rules and conditions entirely. It is formed of those who continue to play cat and mouse with the regime, by allowing it to publish their soulless and uninspired works and yet refusing to throw themselves into the fray as the party demands.¹²⁴

Lucian Blaga's 'internal exile' fits Ionescu's definition, without, however, being a part of the active intelligentsia whose 'soulless' works were still being published; Blaga did not subscribe to Party tenets, nor did he write openly Communist works. Instead, the only works published during his 'exile' were translations of Goethe's *Faust*, *Din Lirica Universala*, which included

¹²⁴ Ionescu, 312.

translated poems from various languages, and *Opere* by Lessing.¹²⁵ This does not mean, however, that other than these works, Blaga discontinued his writing. On the contrary, he claimed that from 1919 to the time that his *Memoriu de Activitate* hearing was undertaken by the Securitate in 1958, he still actively wrote.¹²⁶ In fact, as his daughter Dorli Blaga claims, he wrote intensely during his internal exile, almost as much he had written before 1947.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, he wrote knowing that these works would not be published during his lifetime. Whether he intended to publish them one day remains unknown; this, however, points to the following argument: By writing for ‘the drawer’ Blaga consciously dissented against the regime; yet, by remaining silent, and not actively protesting or advocating change, Blaga became a collaborator. In 1957, with the knowledge of the interrogations of his close friends and relatives, Blaga decided to hide all of his manuscripts in his daughter’s husband’s apartment, a place whose inconspicuous nature served Blaga well.¹²⁸

After Blaga had lost his professorship at the Cluj University in 1948-1949, he retained a position as professor at the Institute of History and Philosophy in Cluj until 1951.¹²⁹ In 1951, however, he was transferred to the Academy Library in Cluj as a librarian functionary. This event signaled the onset of his ‘internal exile,’ as well as his employment for the next ten years. This position required him to work over eight hours per day, six days a week, with a long and strenuous walk in the undulating streets of Cluj; at that time, he was fifty-five years old, he took his meals at the Conservatory, and his health was deteriorating.¹³⁰ In a letter from October of 1951, Blaga described to his daughter the efforts in adapting to the new program, to the “new life

¹²⁵ Lucian Blaga. *Memoriu de Activitate*. (1958). Quoted in Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 217.

¹²⁶ Blaga, *Memoriu de Activitate*, (1958), 216.

¹²⁷ Dorli Blaga. *Blaga Supravegheat de Securitate*. (1999), 19.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 20.

¹²⁹ Anonymous. “Raport-Fisa.” (1954), 205.

¹³⁰ Dorli Blaga. *Correspondenta de Familie (Family Correspondence)*. (Bucharest: Editura Universal Dalsi, 2000), 12.

with fixed and very un-poetic hours,” a “route, however, [which] is preferable to others.”¹³¹ On Sundays, he would lie in bed, listen to the radio, and would try to maintain his ‘literary’ lifestyle by writing a poem. It was an “insufferable” lifestyle, he claimed, but tolerable because “What remains is the verse, because everything else is going under the ground.”¹³² As of 1951, therefore, Blaga had acknowledged his relegation within Romanian Communist society.

One of the main projects that Blaga worked on during his tenure at the Academy Library was the translation of *Faust* by Goethe, which began in 1950 and continued until 1954. For this, he received a payment from the Literary Fund of the Writers’ Union. The method of payments was based on the Soviet literary model, in which a writer received a fixed amount of money as an advance for the ‘royalties’ that the work would receive from the Literary Fund once published; in return, the writer was expected to write, or translate, a certain number of verses or pages.¹³³ As early as 1951, however, problems arose with his payments. He repeatedly did not receive the payments, and was forced to ask his daughter to go speak to the Writers’ Union and request the apportioned sum.¹³⁴ This sum, which he would eventually receive every time, would go towards his meager living expenses, as well as small amounts sent to his daughter.

Blaga continued his work translating for the Academy, while also pursuing his own projects. In a 1951 letter, he candidly admitted to his daughter that he had begun and almost finished his large treatise on the idea of experiment, which would be published posthumously as *The Mathematical Experiment and Spirit*.¹³⁵ This, for the meantime, would be accessible only to him and his daughter. By 1953, the tone of his letters gained an air of urgency and apprehension.

¹³¹ Lucian Blaga. “Letter from October, 1958 to Dorli Blaga.” in *Correspondenta de Familie (Family Correspondence)*. (Bucharest: Editura Universal Dalsi, 2000), 10.

¹³² Lucian Blaga. “Letter from October, 1958 to Dorli Blaga.”, 10.

¹³³ Dorli Blaga. *Correspondenta de Familie*. (2000), 13.

¹³⁴ Lucian Blaga. “Letter from 24 October, 1951 to Dorli.” in *Correspondenta de Familie*. (2000), 12-13.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 16.

In a letter dated from 20 September, 1953, he confessed to his daughter his fear that something would happen to him, leaving his translation of *Faust* unfinished.¹³⁶ This marks one of the first realizations of Blaga that the Securitate was watching him closely, even in 1953, and that he feared being arrested and deported like many problematic intellectuals at the time. Nonetheless, he finished *Faust* by 1954.

Between 1954 and 1956, Dorli Blaga asserts that the correspondence between her and her father greatly decreased, and especially any further discussion about the projects on which he was secretly working. Correspondence was routinely opened and checked, and any incriminating evidence would have led to an examination of his 'secret' literature.¹³⁷ By 1956, the turbulent events around Hungary and Poland, as well as his nomination for the Nobel Prize, greatly affected Blaga's circumstances. His surveillance intensified and his request to receive a pension upon his retirement was denied. In a letter from late fall of 1956, Blaga determinedly requested his daughter to help him with his pension. He claimed that he had lost over 40,000 Romanian lei within a year and a half, a sum he should have received from the Literary Fund.¹³⁸ The letter points to the outrage felt by Blaga, a man who had felt himself shunned by the country about which he constantly wrote during his illustrious career, but which would not even repay his lifetime of work.¹³⁹ Furthermore, that same year he had been relegated from a category I translator to a category III, while, as he claimed, "foreigners are nominating me for the Nobel Prize."¹⁴⁰ The pension issue took over a year to unravel and by 1957, it was resolved by Decree 117 of the Grand National Assembly.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Lucian Blaga. "Letter from 20 September, 1953 to Dorli." in *Correspondenta de Familie*. (2000), 23.

¹³⁷ Dorli Blaga. *Correspondenta de Familie*. (2000), 31.

¹³⁸ Lucian Blaga. "Letter from late fall of 1956 to Dorli." in *Correspondenta de Familie*. (2000), 32-33.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 32.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 33.

¹⁴¹ Dorli Blaga. *Correspondenta de Familie*. (2000), 34.

In 1959, Blaga retired from the Academy. By the same year, he had also become a grandfather, but his health proceeded to get worse.¹⁴² Yet, even in poor health, the Securitate treated him as potentially dangerous, and as discussed earlier, continued their intense surveillance. There would be no respite from it until his death in 1961 following a deadly collapse. In his wake, Lucian Blaga left the legacy of his philosophy, poetry, and other writings intact, yet with the uncertainty that they would be published again. Much to what would have been his surprise, that moment came only a year later in 1962, and set the course for what became an intense rehabilitation of his entire body of work. This rehabilitation did not confine itself to Blaga, but included many other intellectuals whose careers paralleled Blaga's. Because of political environments changing within Romania, as well as 'national' messages contained within Blaga's work, the Communists realized they could co-opt his messages to legitimize their rule and add to Marxist patrimony. Allowing Blaga to remain free seems puzzling, but the following argument may be made. Not arresting or committing violence against him would have allowed the RCP to freely use his works after his death as they pleased, without being accused of contradicting themselves. In doing so, the Communists would lay a claim to national continuity of the cultural accomplishments of the interwar period, and paint themselves as upholders of Romanian values.

¹⁴² Dorli Blaga. *Corespondenta de Familie*, (2000), 36-38.

Chapter 3: A Small Victory: The Rehabilitation of Lucian Blaga and Romania's Autonomy, 1962-1970

Lucian Blaga passed away in 1961, leaving behind a legacy of poetry and philosophy unparalleled in Romanian literary history. Blaga died in anonymity, feverishly pursued by the Securitate police until the day of his death. The idea that his works would be republished within a Communist Romania had seemed near impossible in 1961, yet only a year later, the RCP initiated a course of action that brought problematic intellectuals of the interwar period back to the forefront of Romanian culture. Even at the time of Blaga's death, the course of action that would lead to Romania's autonomous standing in the Communist bloc had begun. Rehabilitating Lucian Blaga's works, among numerous other writings published by 'national' authors repressed by the regime, represented a step in the process of an overall larger plan of Romanian autonomy. The plan sought to focus inwardly the Romanian economy, industry, as well as its cultural traditions, and to slowly put an end to its dependence on the Soviet Union. In short, Romanian autonomy turned into a hybrid policy of national communism, incorporating precisely those 'national' cultural elements that the RCP had tried to erase since its installation in power. In co-opting specifically Blaga's concept of a 'mioritic space,' the regime reinforced its own national communist space, but also exposed Communism's inherent flaws and contradictions.

Romania's Autonomous Path

By the late 1950s, Communist Romania sought to weaken the control of the Soviet Union within its borders. Romania's movement toward autonomy began with the request of the Romanian government for the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1958. Such a seemingly bold proposition did not pose a threat to the Soviet Union, as Romania was encircled by Communist

countries on all sides and, thus, direct Western interference through the use of NATO troops could not be realized. On May 24, 1958, the Soviet Union recalled its troops from Romania, cut 119,000 troops in all of Eastern Europe, and by July 25, 1958, the remaining 35,000 Soviet troops left Romania.¹⁴³ The removal of troops represented one facet of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization plan. Though the Romanian request would point to a moral victory for the RCP and an initiation into a new course of autonomy, some scholars hold differing opinions on the importance of the troops' withdrawal and its impact on Romania's nascent "national communism." Scholars such as Stephen Fischer-Galati believe that Romania's autonomous course began in 1955 following the request for withdrawal of Soviet troops, while others such as Kenneth Jowitt, Vladimir Tismaneanu, Dennis Deletant, and Michael Shafir believe that 1962 stands as the starting point of Romania's autonomous new course toward national policies.¹⁴⁴ For the purposes of the thesis, the year 1962 will be seen as the beginning of Romania's 'national' course.

Various events ignited the inward reorientation of the RCP. Though 1955 can be seen as the beginning of the gradual development of a split between Romanian-Soviet affairs, it was not until 1961 that relations between the two countries worsened. In that year, Khrushchev announced a plan to give the Comecon, the economic body of the Soviet Union and its satellites, a "supranational planning role," and, "if accepted by Romania, [the planning role] would have obliged her to remain a supplier of raw materials, and to abandon her program of rapid

¹⁴³ Dennis Deletant. *Romania Under Communist Rule*. (Portland: Center for Romanian Studies, 1999), 96.

¹⁴⁴ See Stephen Fischer-Galati. *The New Rumania: From People's Democracy to Socialist Republic*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), vii. See also Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1944-1965*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). Vladimir Tismaneanu. *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Dennis Deletant. *Romania Under Communist Rule* (1999). Michael Shafir. *Romania: Politics, Economics, and Society*. (London: Frances Pinter, 1985).

industrialization, thus risking economic chaos at home.”¹⁴⁵ Vladimir Tismaneanu also claims that, “For the Romanians, developing their own industrial potential in addition to the agricultural sector was a matter of dignity, and Romania’s economic policy was the *casus belli* of the violent polemic between Bucharest and Moscow.”¹⁴⁶ Romania’s refusal to become the ‘breadbasket’ for the Soviet Union and other, more industrialized members of the Communist world, as well as its refusal to continue supplying raw materials while its own economy was in disarray, stood as powerful incentives for Romania to distance itself from the Soviet Union.

In addition to the economic reasons behind Romania’s course toward autonomy, the Sino-Soviet split of 1961 provided further grounds for the new course, which came to a head in 1964. At that time, Romania acted as a defiant mediator between the Soviet Union and China, and according to J. F. Brown, “Mao and the whole Sino-Soviet dispute... provided a tremendous boost to the prestige and self-respect of the Romanian Communist Party. Always considered one of the weakest in the bloc, it... assumed an importance second only to that of the Soviet and Chinese parties.”¹⁴⁷ Romania’s opposition to Soviet interference gained it national and international recognition, allowing it to open relations with the West once again.¹⁴⁸ Romania rejected Moscow’s privileged status in the Communist bloc, releasing a document in 1964 that effectively ended the socialist internationalism of the Soviet Union and espoused a commitment to national independence and sovereignty, claiming that,

Bearing in mind the diversity of the conditions of socialist construction, there are not and there can be no unique patterns and recipes; no one can decide what is and what is not correct for other countries or parties. It is up to every Marxist-

¹⁴⁵ Deletant. *Romania Under Communist Rule*. (1999), 101.

¹⁴⁶ Tismaneanu, 170.

¹⁴⁷ J. F. Brown. “Eastern Europe,” in *International Communism after Khrushchev*, ed. Leopold Labedz, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965), 79, quoted in Tismaneanu, 178.

¹⁴⁸ Tismaneanu, 182.

Leninist party; it is a sovereign right of each socialist state, to elaborate, choose, or change the forms and methods of socialist construction.¹⁴⁹

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the general secretary of the RCP at the time, considered necessary the national tenets of a new socialist path for Romania and its economy. Distancing himself and the RCP from the grips of the Soviet Union, Dej attempted to capitalize on the RCP's newfound popularity by attracting the intelligentsia to the party, as well as by making Communism, at the time still largely unpopular with the greater Romanian population, more palatable. The process was begun by rehabilitating numerous intellectuals, among whom Blaga figured prominently.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of previously problematic intellectuals began in 1962. Michael Shafir, a political scientist writing in the 1980s for the historical journal *Orbis*, traces the reasons behind this rehabilitation. In 1962, a thaw of previous cultural restrictions occurred and presented previously banned intellectuals during Stalin's reign with the opportunity of having their works published once again. Paradoxically, this period proved that "What yesterday may have been regarded as utterly unacceptable and "dysfunctional" for the system may today become "functional" in response to exogenous and/or indigenous endemic stress."¹⁵⁰ The endemic stress mentioned by Shafir refers to the Romanian-Soviet split that occurred in the first years of the 1960s. The change in Romania's relations with the Soviet Union caused the Romanian leaders to rethink their domestic policies, as well as to improve the image of the Communist party within the country by granting political amnesty to thousands of political prisoners and also by "opening

¹⁴⁹ *Declaratie cu privire la pozitia Partidului Muncitoresc Roman in problemele miscarii comuniste si muncitoresti internationale, adoptata de Plenara largita a C.C. al P.M.R din aprilie 1964* (Bucharest: Editura Politica, 1964). Translation quoted in Tismaneanu, 182.

¹⁵⁰ Shafir, "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania" in *Orbis*, (1983), 398.

the ranks of the party to segments of the population hitherto perceived as ideologically harmful.”¹⁵¹ Curiously enough, rehabilitated intellectuals and their work thus did have some sort of power in changing the rigid Marxist path of Communist Romania, but only *after* the leaders decided that it was in their best interests to do. The new path regarded the party as “not only the embodiment of the struggle for social justice, but also that of national aspirations to independence.”¹⁵² Thus, the best way to achieve national aspirations to independence was to turn specifically to those intellectuals who had been labeled nationalists, such as Lucian Blaga, and whose writings constituted a claim to an indigenous and unique Romanian culture. To this process Shafir refers as “guided liberalization.”¹⁵³

The openness towards intellectuals lasted well into the late 1960s. Initiated by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the ‘guided liberalization’ was forcefully pursued and continued under Nicolae Ceasescu, Romania’s dictatorial general secretary from 1965 until the fall of Communism and his globally recorded execution by the ‘mob’ in Romania in 1989. A short biographical sketch of Nicolae Ceasescu is necessary to further continue, because the infamy that his name has gained in recent history does not necessarily relate to the period currently studied. Though his rule began in 1965, Ceasescu’s megalomaniac tendencies did not begin to surface until well into the 1970s. Nevertheless, the first five years of his rule must be seen as a predecessor to what followed in the last two decades of Communism, which in the 1960s few could have predicted, yet had to accept by 1989.

Nicolae Ceasescu was born in 1918 in the southern region of Oltenia. He became an upstart Communist as a youth, joining the Party in his teenage years and being jailed four separate times between 1933 and 1938; it must be noted that in the 1920s and 1930s,

¹⁵¹ Shafir, 409.

¹⁵² Ibid, 410.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 410.

Communism was illegal in Romania.¹⁵⁴ Working his way up the ranks, Ceausescu became extremely loyal to the Communist cause, spending most of World War II either in underground networks or prison, where he met Gheorghiu-Dej. In fact, some historians claim that a certain ‘Communist nucleus’ formed in the Doftana prison, where Dej, Ceausescu, and other members of the future RCP had spent the better part of World War II for implementing the Grivita railroad strikes.¹⁵⁵ This nucleus consolidated the core of the RCP leadership. By the time of Romania’s Soviet ‘liberation’ on August 23, 1944, Ceausescu had established himself among the leadership of the RCP. In fact, in 1946 he was appointed regional secretary for the region of Oltenia, the place of his birth, where he gained hands-on experience in local elections and local party work.¹⁵⁶ Ceausescu survived the purges of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in the 1950s, and upon Dej’s sudden death in 1965, he filled the power vacuum that was left behind in the RCP due to Dej’s failure to appoint a successor.¹⁵⁷ Although Ceausescu’s rise to power is steeped in controversy, he was, according to Vladimir Tismaneanu, “the perfect figurehead... [because he was] the youngest member of the politburo...lacked any impressive credentials in his revolutionary biography and seemed modest and obedient.”¹⁵⁸ The belief of other senior party members that Ceausescu would blindly pursue their policies was mistaken at best, yet the charisma that Ceausescu possessed fooled many naïve minds.

Continuing the autonomous course pursued by Dej, Ceausescu shaped himself as a maverick who would earn the national and international fame of having “genuine commitment to Romanian national values.”¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, “The myth of the Romanian “national communism”

¹⁵⁴ Deletant, 104.

¹⁵⁵ Tismaneanu, 78-79.

¹⁵⁶ Deletant, 104-105.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 105.

¹⁵⁸ Tismaneanu, 186.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 186.

was hastily shaped, with Ceausescu presented as the symbol of this challenge to Moscow's domination of East-Central Europe."¹⁶⁰ Ideologically split with the Soviet Union and "Khrushchev's iconoclasm," Ceausescu chose the cult of personality modeled by Stalin, pursuing "a national Stalinist orientation after his master's [Dej's] passing away in March 1965."¹⁶¹ A brief look into how Ceausescu shaped such an attractive national policy, especially regarding culture and intellectuals, will reveal the extent of his brilliant, yet deadly, plan to attract a loyal and popular Communist base. Though much of Ceausescu's success must be attributed at least in part to Gheorghiu-Dej, the swelling in ranks of the Communist party in 1960 cannot be overlooked as a passing phenomenon. Stressing the national character of the new cultural policies proved to appeal to the Romanian people. In less than twenty years, the RCP grew from a mere 1,000 in 1944 to over 800,000 members by 1960, seeing its greatest increase in numbers in the early part of the 1960s.¹⁶²

By May 7, 1965, Ceausescu was freshly installed into office; on that day, he held a meeting with newly elected senior members of the RCP and scientists, in order to discuss the level of science and progress that would become the target for the Romanian state.¹⁶³ Ceausescu headed the new scientific direction of the RCP, attempting to base it on continuous change and adaptation. He claimed that,

Our Party bases its activity on the scientific concept of Marxist-Leninism, which teaches us to see things in continuous transformation and change, to look forward and not backward, to base our judgments not on some immovable theories, but to

¹⁶⁰ Tismaneanu, 187.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 187-188.

¹⁶² Ibid, 184.

¹⁶³ "Stenograma intalnirii din ziua de 7 mai 1965 a conducatorilor de partid si stat cu oameni de stiinta." In *P.C.R. si Intelectualii in Primii Ani ai Regimului Ceausescu: 1965-1972*. Edited by Alina Pavelescu, Laura Dumitru. (Bucharest: Arhivele Nationale ale Romaniei, 2007).

take note of changes that occur in life. The scientists in our country have contributed by appealing to different branches of science, in light of dialectic and historic materialism.¹⁶⁴

The idea of change foreshadowed the cultural policies that would follow in the speech's wake. Ceausescu's vision of progress thus amplified the idea of continuous change, mirroring the autonomous path pursued by Romania, as well as other political changes taking place in 1965. Not coincidentally, Ceausescu met only twelve days later to discuss the party stance involving the changes toward a 'national communism' in cultural and intellectual circles of the country.¹⁶⁵ The RCP would now endorse active creation in both literature and art, without interference, in order to augment and reinforce the cultural patrimony of Romania. Specifically, Ceausescu intended a continuation of socialist realism, yet with a Romanian 'flavor,' by claiming that,

The development of creative activity requires multilateral forms of expression. Without a doubt, no one can force one to write, paint, or compose a certain way, but what is required of artists is to always mirror reality, the truth about life, and to serve the nation of which they are a part...The men of letters and art are asked to continue the traditions of those before them, and to bring their own contributions so as to enrich our national culture, and at the same time, a universal culture.¹⁶⁶

Although in the previous speech, Ceausescu advocated looking to the future for progress, he nonetheless conceded that building a socialist Romania necessitated looking to the past and reviving traditions long thought to be decadent and incompatible with Communist ideology.

¹⁶⁴ Nicolae Ceausescu. *Stenograma 7 mai, 1965*, 3.

¹⁶⁵ "Stenograma inalnirii conducatorilor de partid si de stat cu oameni de cultura si arta 19 mai 1965." In *In P.C.R. si Intelectualii in Primii Ani ai Regimului Ceausescu: 1965-1972*. Edited by Alina Pavelescu, Laura Dumitru. (Bucharest: Arhivele Nationale ale Romaniei, 2007).

¹⁶⁶ Nicolae Ceausescu. *Stenograma 19 mai 1965*, 23.

Enriching the national culture meant incorporating a nationalist past that the RCP was unable to quell during its first twenty years in power. Thus, instead of continuing the repressive policies of the 1940s and 1950s, Ceausescu saw a wellspring of opportunity in constructing the RCP as a defender of historical traditions; this tactic, as Vladimir Tismaneanu claims, found mass appeal because it “champ[ioned] long-repressed national grievances.”¹⁶⁷ In addition, by advocating openness toward free expression of literature and art, at least for the time being, Ceausescu unleashed a flood of republications that would intensify the so-called “revalorification of the national heritage.”¹⁶⁸ Within this ‘revalorification’ process, enthusiastic new intellectuals joined the ranks, believing themselves to truly be ‘free’; yet, as Michael Shafir claims, intellectuals became a legitimizing tool for the RCP’s national aspirations.¹⁶⁹ Amidst this changed climate, Lucian Blaga once again entered cultural circles, but this time only as a dead hero of Romanian letters. His memory and legacy hung in the air, ready for eager Communists to use to their advantage.

Blaga’s Appeal and Power: Real or Imagined? The Rehabilitation years, 1962-1970

In 1962, the RCP published Lucian Blaga once again. It must be noted, however, that the republication of Blaga was first of poems that had been written, yet not published, during the years in which he lived under Communist rule. The works that had been published during the Communist period had been translations of Goethe and Lessing, but not Blaga’s own poetry or philosophy. Yet, in 1962, a compilation of his more recent poems entitled *Poezii (Poems)* was put into circulation. The man in charge for collecting, compiling, and introducing the *Poezii* was a Communist literary critic known as George Ivascu, whose expertise and contact with Blaga

¹⁶⁷ Tismaneanu, 184.

¹⁶⁸ Shafir, 413.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 409.

during the poet's life propelled him to numerous other introductions to Blaga's work that soon followed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Swiftly following the 1962 publication of *Poezii*, the biography entitled *Lucian Blaga* was immediately released in 1963 under the supervision of another Communist author, Ovidiu Crohmalniceanu.¹⁷⁰ The Crohmalniceanu biography stood as an overview of Blaga's literary accomplishments from the beginning of the twentieth-century until the 1950s, reviewing and explaining his poetical works and only slightly delving into Blaga's controversial philosophy; nevertheless, Crohmalniceanu became the first Communist author to do so.¹⁷¹

Of Blaga's efforts in poetry, Crohmalniceanu claims that the poet was a "singular apparition in the Romanian lyric," originating from the Ardeal, a Romanian region whose many authors had been labeled as "prophets of the national and social struggle."¹⁷² Yet, the author notes that Blaga differed from the Ardeal school of thought more than he belonged to it. Owing to the powerful German influences of 'irrational and spiritualist philosophy' that undeniably shaped Blaga's poetry, "the poet cannot be regarded as belonging to any specific literary movement."¹⁷³ He was at once a traditionalist and a modernist, a mystic and a realist, yet always fleeing classification. Even in a 1926 interview included in the biography, Blaga's definition of his poetry points to the many paradoxes that he raised, claiming,

...although it is ultra-modern, in many ways it is more traditionalist than the regular traditionalism, because it renews a link with the primitive foundation of our souls, unaltered by Romanticism, naturalism, or symbolism.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Ovidiu S. Crohmalniceanu. *Lucian Blaga*. (Bucharest: Editura Pentru Literatură, 1963).

¹⁷¹ Katherine Verdery. *National Ideology Under Socialism*. (1991), 347.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 5.

¹⁷³ Verdery, 6.

¹⁷⁴ Lucian Blaga. "Interview in *Viata Literara*, nr. 21 (1926)." Quoted in Crohmalniceanu, *Lucian Blaga*, (1963), 14.

Blaga's poetry in the 1920s created much admiration and harsh criticism, as well as confusion. His expressionist symbols and continuous references to Schelling, Nietzsche, Frobenius, and Spengler imbued his poetry with a very European, yet spiritual, feel that "had been almost unknown in Romanian literature from Eminescu until then."¹⁷⁵

Crohmalniceanu further claimed that to study Blaga's poetry without studying his philosophy even summarily would be faulty. Crohmalniceanu primarily referred to the work that propelled Blaga into Romanian consciousness, known as the *Spatiul Mioritic (The Mioritic Space)*, and first released in 1936. Before continuing, a brief summary of Blaga's philosophy must be made. In *The Mioritic Space*, the pinnacle of his philosophy, Blaga attempted to define a Romanian space, one characterized by the way in which the Romanian countryside was shaped: hill followed by valley, followed by hill, and so forth. Blaga believed that in the subconscious minds of Romanians inhabiting this 'Mioritic Space' there existed an organic link between themselves and their environment. Blaga studied the style in which Romanians built their houses in the countryside and compared it to that of Saxon inhabitants of the same region, Ardeal. By pointing out the inherent differences in the two styles, Blaga believed that the *Romanian* style was maintained from the prehistoric time of the Dacians. At the same time, the Saxon style preserved its own German characteristics. According to Crohmalniceanu, however, Blaga attempted to "mythicize the Romanian village... [which] was the maintainer of national existence, and to defend it against the alienating effects of the modern city and outside pressures."¹⁷⁶ The village assumed a central role in the world and took on a mythical character, unaffected by the course of history; in other words, the village existed in an 'ahistoric' vacuum untouched by time. To Crohmalniceanu, the opposition to modernity and city life presented

¹⁷⁵ Crohmalniceanu, 15. Mihai Eminescu is regarded as Romania's foremost author. He wrote in the middle to late nineteenth-century.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 28.

dangerous parallels to 'irrationalist' German philosophers, whose philosophy was adopted by the fascist regimes of Western Europe.¹⁷⁷ Thus, it becomes clear that espousing an organic and primitive village untouched by time launched Blaga to widespread fame and acclaim in the interwar period, but likely caused his repression under the Communist regime.

According to Crohmalniceanu, Blaga's vision eliminated progress and canceled any effect or meaning that economic determination, according to Marxists, produced in history.¹⁷⁸ Yet, this metaphysical vision of Blaga added to the "national spirit" that, in 1963, had become a symbolic concept of the RCP.¹⁷⁹ This 'national spirit,' however, did not translate into the extreme nationalism of the interwar period. Crohmalniceanu attempted to dispel the nationalist accusations heaped onto Blaga during the 1940s and 1950s by presenting several articles in which Blaga vehemently criticized the 'racial idea' by labeling it a "racist messianism" which he had no intentions to praise or follow.¹⁸⁰ By doing so, Blaga had hoped to distance himself from the extremist directions in which members of his philosophical leanings had begun to take. Yet, as the previous chapter points out, such revelations did not provide sufficient grounds for clearing Lucian Blaga's 'nationalist' reputation. Although Blaga's poetry was clearly imbued with his philosophical orientations, orientations which found themselves at the forefront of "bourgeois ideology in the era of imperialism," Crohmalniceanu claimed that the essence of Blaga's poetry, and especially that evoking the Romanian folklore, had "an authentic Romanian air" that has "considerably enriched Romanian literature."¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Crohmalniceanu, 31.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 32.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 52.

¹⁸⁰ Lucian Blaga. "Despre rasa ca stil," (About race as style) in *Gandirea*, XI, nr. 2, 1932. quoted in Crohmalniceanu, 65.

¹⁸¹ Crohmalniceanu, 134, 176-177.

From the 1963 publication of *Lucian Blaga* by Ovidiu Crohmalniceanu, a gap of two years followed until the next publication about or from Blaga. In 1965, Blaga's memoir, entitled *Hronicul si Cantecul Varstelor*, was published under the supervision of George Ivascu, the critic who had been the first to supervise the release of *Poezii* in 1962.¹⁸² The memoir, which Blaga had written in 1946 but did not submit for publication, serves as an introduction into the life of Blaga, from the year of his birth until 1919, the year of the publications of his first volume of poetry, *Poemele Luminii*, which functioned as his introduction into the Romanian literary world. The period concerning his interwar successes, World War II, and the Soviet 'liberation' of 1944 are conspicuously absent from the memoir. Ivascu's introduction contained objections that resembled those of Crohmalniceanu, though not as explicit, along with increasing praise.

In 1966, the same George Ivascu compiled a Lucian Blaga anthology of folk poetry, whose introduction contained very similar praise to that of Ovidiu Crohmalniceanu in 1963.¹⁸³ Ivascu referred to Blaga as a "philosopher of culture, and above all, an artist," who "...attempted to define the stylistic foundation of Romanian creation, our formal specificity."¹⁸⁴ Blaga's attempts to define and create a *Romanian* space enabled him to become a 'spokesperson' for the national cause of the RCP. It must be noted, however, that even by 1966, none of Lucian Blaga's *philosophical* works saw renewed publication. Though most of the critics and presenters of Blaga's work summarized and hinted at the quality and structure of his philosophy, none of them grappled with the content as directly as Dumitru Ghise, the Communist critic who in 1969 was put in charge of introducing Blaga's magnum opus, *The Trilogy of Culture*.

¹⁸² Lucian Blaga. *Hronicul si Cantecul Varstelor*. Edited by and foreword from George Ivascu. (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1965).

¹⁸³ Lucian Blaga. *Lucian Blaga: Antologie de Poezie Populara*. Edited by George Ivascu, (Bucharest: Editura Pentru Literatura, 1966).

¹⁸⁴ George Ivascu. Introduction to *Lucian Blaga: Antologie de Poezie Populara*. (Bucharest: Editura Pentru Literatura, 1966), VII.

Blaga's Philosophical Treatise: The Trilogy of Culture

The Trilogy of Culture embodies the essence and layout of Blaga's philosophy.

Originally written and published in the 1930s, the trilogy was unavailable during the Communist era until 1969, the year it was once again republished. Events such as the autonomous course pursued by the RCP, along with the Prague Spring of 1968 in Czechoslovakia and Romania's renegade role in it, possibly triggered the release of Blaga's philosophy. In the wake of that turbulent spring, Ceausescu-led Romania increased its standing both at home and abroad; within this newfound popularity, tapping the problematic reservoir of Blaga's philosophy was finally possible.

The trilogy consisted of the three parts entitled "Horizon and Style," "The Mioritic Space," and "The Genesis of Metaphor and the Sense of Culture." Thus, in 1969, the republished edition contained all three parts unchanged, yet this time it contained a lengthy foreword from Dumitru Ghise, a Communist critic. The foreword praised and critiqued Blaga's philosophy in contrast to Communist ideology, and pointed to where the two currents converged, as well as where they differed. Ghise's study delved into the mythical space created by Blaga, and attempted to coalesce it with the newly formed Communist space.

Ghise differentiated between Blaga, the poet and Blaga, the philosopher. While the poetry of Blaga "entered deeply into the conscience and structure of [Romanian] spirituality," the philosophy of Blaga stood at the opposite end of the spectrum, deeply influenced by German 'irrationalist' philosophy.¹⁸⁵ Blaga's conceptualization of culture posed the problematic aspect of his philosophy. This concept of culture was irremediably separated from civilization and progress as seen in Communist terms, containing no causal explanations or objective

¹⁸⁵ Dumitru Ghise, foreword to *The Trilogy of Culture*. By Lucian Blaga (Bucharest: Editura Pentru Literatura Universala, 1969), V.

determinations; Blaga's culture existed in a world unaffected by the course of history, and without the revolutionary and social determinations which Marxism believed to be factual. In addition, because Blaga's vision of culture was determined by a sense of style that each people preserved from ancient times, a style preserved and dictated by the subconscious, it symbolized a concept that could not be "translated into rational terms," according to Ghise.¹⁸⁶

Ghise wrote the foreword in the dialectical manner characteristic of Communist writings, in which the author or work discussed is firstly critiqued, and its flaws revealed, to be immediately followed by an alternative that advocates better interpretations or methods. Accordingly, after critiquing Blaga's concept of culture, Ghise proceeded in describing how Marxist-Leninist philosophy, because of its generous virtuosity to critically, but constructively discuss non-Marxist philosophies, was able to integrate Blaga and his philosophy within this Marxist spectrum.¹⁸⁷ The dialectical dialogue between the critic and Blaga served to show how certain facets of Blaga's philosophy did actually conform to Marxist ideology. The most important aspect of Blaga's work, according to Ghise, was also the one that posed the most problems—culture. Ghise believed Blaga to be a "great humanist...who believed culture was tied to its creator's [man] destiny, his fulfillment, his beautiful way of being Man, of defeating his frailty and surviving."¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, this vision did not only conform to the Marxist idea of human progress, but also greatly contributed to the definition of "Romanian entities."¹⁸⁹

In light of Michael Shafir's argument, proposing that the Communist party attempted to embody national aspirations, it becomes obvious that Ghise used Blaga's claim of Romanian identity to solidify Communist appeal. Blaga, who had been labeled an enemy to the Communist

¹⁸⁶ Ghise, VI.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, VII.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, VIII.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, IX.

cause in the 1950s, became the hero upholding Romanian values. He was the “first, great explorer of the history of [our] thinking” and thus a pioneer for the Romanians.¹⁹⁰ Blaga’s mythical space, embodied by the village, did *not* conform to the new world that was being built on urban modernity and industrialization; the two concepts could never be reconciled.

Nevertheless, because Blaga focused his entire philosophy on the Romanian village and culture, and not on any other culture, Ghise believed that Blaga exposed the potential for culture and possibilities that could be found within Romanian life.¹⁹¹

Ghise believed that reading Blaga in a Communist world did not endanger that world; rather, it added layers of thinking that further germinated Communist ideology, and in this context, a purely *Romanian* Communist ideology. The layers of thinking mentioned by Ghise came as the result of a “dialectical development through confrontation.”¹⁹² He considered Blaga’s *Trilogy of Culture* to contain ripe material for such a confrontation, because “its intellectual substance, independent of the expression in which it was created, arouses meditation, asks questions and requires answers.”¹⁹³ Although Ghise never specifically spelled out the actual layers of thinking, he used Blaga as a starting point for cultural discourse. Reading Blaga critically would initiate a dialogue between two worlds diametrically opposed to each other, a space in which Romanian culture would be created.

However, because “Discourse is a site of struggle,” according to Nancy Ries, the struggle between Blaga’s culture and Communist culture forged a new cultural space in which a national Communist identity became the uniting symbol.¹⁹⁴ Yet, because this new identity was

¹⁹⁰ Ghise, IX.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, X.

¹⁹² Ibid, VIII.

¹⁹³ Ibid, VIII.

¹⁹⁴ Nancy Ries. *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 20.

Communist in shape and form, but national in its composition, it created an unstable space full of contradictions. National Communism revealed that “power was pliable...[but also]...productive” a concept explained by Steven Kotkin in *Magnetic Mountain* (1997), a study of Stalinism and Magnitogorsk.¹⁹⁵ Kotkin claims that “power relations created effects—of experience, identity, resistances. Concentrating on the rule articulation process in the encounters of daily life involves shifting the focus away from what the party and its programs *prevented* to what they *made possible*, intentionally and unintentionally.”¹⁹⁶ The RCP’s strategy exposed Communism’s inner weaknesses by having to adopt concepts that it considered diametrically opposite; this ‘made possible’ the creation of national communism, by definition inconsistent, yet in practice a more consistent ideology, in order to appeal to the Romanian masses.

Immediately following the republication of the *Trilogy of Culture* arrived the work, entitled, *Estetica lui Lucian Blaga (The Aesthetic of Lucian Blaga)* in 1970, by Dumitru Micu, another Communist critic whose praise of Blaga paralleled that of previous critics.¹⁹⁷ Micu’s study focused mainly on the aesthetic character of Blaga philosophy, but also grappled with the main philosophical tenets proposed by Blaga. According to Micu, Blaga created a “markedly original system of philosophy, in which a vision of art may also be found.”¹⁹⁸ It was in Blaga’s creation of a natural space, so often sung about in Romanian folk songs, which supposedly shaped the Romanian ‘spirit.’¹⁹⁹ According to Micu, Blaga’s comparative study between the Romanian style of building houses and the Saxons’ style dictated the specific consciousness of both people.²⁰⁰ Although Blaga’s study aroused much harsh criticism, Micu affirmed that

¹⁹⁵ Steven Kotkin. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 22.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 22.

¹⁹⁷ Dumitru Micu. *Estetica lui Lucian Blaga*. (Bucharest: Editura Pentru Literatura, 1970).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 5.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 63.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 64.

Blaga's vision did not concern an actual village or Romanian space, but the *idea* of it; Blaga "built a hypothetical village, one in which he tried to focus on the quintessence of the Romanian phenomenon."²⁰¹ Blaga's village was an idealist vision, raising more questions than it answered. Paradoxically, Micu's unsteady acceptance of this idealist concept showed that Marxism, at least in Romania, had by 1970 become a more fluid, and unstable at best, ideology. One needs only to look back to 1965 and Ceausescu's speech advocating change, progress, and a 'return' to previous historical traditions.

Nevertheless, this did not represent a full acceptance of Blaga. Micu concluded his case study of Lucian Blaga by asserting that Blaga's philosophy was not meant for people to fully believe, but rather "...to confuse, to arouse the intellect. Even if everything in his work is erroneous, it would still awaken through its intellectual pulse, the beauty of its construction...through creation."²⁰² Blaga's work thus became a thought experiment, but not one from which to learn lessons or objective facts. His analysis did not reveal a systematic methodology of studying every single Romanian village, but rather the village of his birth. Even so, Micu claimed, "To admire a thinker does not mean to accept his ideas as true."²⁰³ Blaga, once considered a thinker of no value, received respect from Marxists who believed that his ideas would, in fact, as Dumitru Ghise claimed in 1969, germinate Communist ideology by evoking those symbols and concepts that the Romanian Communist state, in its autonomous shape and form, sought to praise. As a sign of eternal opposition to "the mechanism of an urban, capitalist society," the Communist state found refuge in a mythical world of the past created by Blaga, himself a lifetime adversary of an urban world, both capitalist and Communist.²⁰⁴ Although

²⁰¹ Micu, 65.

²⁰² Ibid, 210.

²⁰³ Ibid, 210.

²⁰⁴ Ghise, IX.

Ghise believed that Blaga “wished to find the golden key with which to open the gates of a Romanian identity,” Blaga nonetheless became the ‘golden key’ for the Communists with which to open doors of power and to continue their rule.²⁰⁵

Blaga never became a Marxist thinker, not even in the eyes of his critics. In his death, his works lived a life of their own, creating, cultivating, and even imposing original ideas in an unstable Communist world. Although a dissenter to Communism and Marxism during his life, Blaga’s philosophy of the ‘spatiul mioritic’ paradoxically reinforced and destabilized Communism. To consider him a collaborator would be an exaggeration, but to ignore his role in creating a ‘national communist’ space would underscore the importance vested in him by the RCP.

In closing, it would be faulty to assume that the power Blaga’s works amassed during the republication period posed any considerable threat to the RCP and their stranglehold on cultural creation. A cultural struggle did ensue, in which the official policy fluctuated and changed, and intellectuals, both dead and alive, competed to create a Romanian cultural sphere based on national symbols. We are reminded that books do not write themselves, and especially in Blaga’s case, they also could not be rewritten. A body of written works must have existed for the rehabilitation plan to ever begin and on which to base its official tenets. Yet, the process started from the top of the RCP, the official culture makers, and not from the intellectuals themselves. Had the RCP leaders decided that such a plan would have meant absolute self-destruction, rehabilitation would have never occurred. Nevertheless, the leaders saw their plan as a way to tap long-awaited expectations of literary ‘freedoms,’ to make it seem as if freedom of expression and thought did exist. In hindsight, the plan worked. The RCP gained much popularity as Ceausescu championed patriotism, national heritage, and a link to Romania’s

²⁰⁵ Ghise, IX.

historical and ancestral roots. Instead of weakening the power of the RCP, the rehabilitation succeeded in reinforcing it. Historians such as Trond Gilberg believe that Ceausescu's control of the population became so strong that, to have been against him would have meant being against the Romanian nation.²⁰⁶ The RCP and Ceausescu led Romania for another twenty years, until the leader's execution in 1989. James P. Niessen, a scholar studying Ceausescu's rule, even goes so far as to claim that "Ceausescu's imagery of the Carpathians [was] oddly reminiscent of its symbolic role in the interwar works of...rehabilitated Lucian Blaga."²⁰⁷ Lucian Blaga, though dead, could not control the immense role that his works played in achieving this plan.

²⁰⁶ Trond Gilberg. *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu's Personal Dictatorship*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 241.

²⁰⁷ James P. Niessen. "Romanian Nationalism: An Ideology of Integration and Mobilization," in *Eastern European Nationalism in the 20th Century*, ed. Peter F. Sugar, (Washington, D.C.: American University Press, 1995), 297.

Conclusion

Studying Lucian Blaga as a Romanian intellectual whose problematic interwar writings were co-opted by the Romanian Communist Party presents the historian with a plethora of opportunities, yet with as many paradoxes and problems. Although Blaga's case represented a special one, in that he survived the repression of the Securitate, the Romanian Communist police force, his experiences, travails, and successes prove to be part of a larger phenomenon. Numerous other Romanian intellectuals underwent similar treatment, ranging from censure, imprisonment, deportation, exile, and even death, to be later rehabilitated under the auspices of a newfound autonomous path feverishly pursued by the RCP. The one concept that these intellectuals served to reinforce was the 'national idea,' one that the Communists in power realized they could use to augment the cultural sphere of Romania, as well as their control of it. In short, nationalism proved to be the deciding factor in the early repression of the 1940s and 1950s and the rehabilitation and appropriation of the 1960s and onward.

Lucian Blaga represents a special case because of the fame that he gained in the beginning of the twentieth-century. His poetry was first published in 1919 and received critical acclaim for the remainder of the interwar period. His philosophical works, written much later in 1937, became his magnum opus and situated him among the foremost Romanian men of letters. This fame did not limit itself to Romanian lands, but instead spread over to the rest of Europe, earning him international praise that few Romanian authors could claim. It was the content of his philosophy and the philosophical system, however, which seeped into the minds of most Romanians. His *Spatiul Mioritic*, released in 1937, created a Romanian world centered on the village life and on traditions and peculiarities that linked Romanians to their ancestral, Dacian past. This work enabled Blaga to achieve his lifelong dream of becoming a member of the

Romanian Academy, as well as earn a professorial position at the University of Cluj. His fame and notoriety launched him into political circles, whose orientations, however, became extreme and chauvinistic. His indirect ties to the fascists Iron Guard government of Romania during the interwar period proved to be the decisive factor in igniting his repression and internal exile under Communist rule.

Upon the arrival of the Communists and seizure of power on August 23, 1944, the life that Lucian Blaga and most other inhabitants of Eastern Europe had once known became obliterated under the framework of a new ideology. Arriving at the power vacuum left behind by World War II, the Soviet-led Communists took control and assumed complete power over the countries it 'liberated' from Fascist domination. The new communist ideology sought to demolish the remnants of a past filled with extreme nationalism, to deconstruct the Eastern European man, and to create a New Man. Basing itself on Stalinist principles of terror, violence, and elimination, as well Marxist ideals of internationalism and realism, communist ideology set in course a wave of deportations, executions, and show trials that affected millions of people residing not only in Romania, but in every other 'satellite' of the Soviet Union. These were directed exactly at those whose social standing, as well as political affiliations, could not coexist with Marxist principles in a communist world. For the remainder of the 1940s and 1950s, the deconstruction of the past continued in full force.

According to scholars, one of the first steps taken by the Communists was the "socialization of the socializer," meaning that those who became state intellectuals or who continued their work needed to create new values, upholding internationalism, collectivization, and revolutionary activity.²⁰⁸ In addition, stressing the historical fraternity between Romania's

²⁰⁸ Michael Shafir. "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania." *Orbis* vol. 27 iss. 2 (1983), 395.

history and Soviet history became paramount to the process. In the midst of such cataclysmic changes, Lucian Blaga was turned into a pariah of the RCP, losing his position at the University and having his works censored and unpublished. His internal exile was a direct result of the cultural 'revolution' undergoing in 1950s Romania.

Nevertheless, monumental events such as Stalin's death in 1953 and the Hungarian uprising of 1956 revealed the relative instability of both Romanian Communism, as well as Communism as a whole in Eastern Europe. The violent purges had achieved little success and had alienated the masses, especially in Romania, earning Communism a distinctly brutal notoriety. It must be understood, however, that many of the purges within Romania occurred as a result of Soviet commands to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the country's premier, and the subservient RCP. The control of the Soviet Union inside of its satellites must not be underestimated, for Soviet economy and industry relied heavily on its neighbors. It was these monumental events, however, that also ignited Romania's turn to national communism in the early 1960s in order to loosen the grip of Soviet control and domination.

Scholars agree that in 1962, as relations were worsening between the Soviet Union and Romania on economic, cultural, and industrial grounds, the RCP initiated its autonomy policy, an inwardly oriented policy that advocated a temporary return to the troubled past which it so forcefully tried to demolish earlier. Commencing the policy that became known as 'national communism' was first Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and was continued in 1965 after Dej's death by the infamous Nicolae Ceausescu. Ceausescu's brand of national communism proved successful. He quickly initiated open door policies to those intellectuals that had been repressed earlier and advocated free expression in the arts, sciences, and literature. This free expression, however,

must not be taken too literally, for the cultural relaxation that ensued was deftly controlled by the RCP.

Within this process of revitalizing the Romanian past and reviving the country's historical tradition away from Soviet influences, Lucian Blaga had a foremost role. The first republications of his work date to 1962, yet the most important one dates to 1969. In that year, Blaga's *Spatiul Mioritic* was once again launched to the public, yet this time with introductions from Communist critics who carefully evaluated the content and merits of his work. Republishing Blaga's philosophy had been a carefully measured step that took seven years. In 1962, only his poetry and less controversial writings had been published. Yet, in 1969, with Ceausescu's power unrivalled inside the country, as well as Ceausescu's ability to gain international acclaim for Romania's refusal to support Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the release of his philosophy came at a time of seeming political stability. Though Blaga's ideas, labeled both 'irrational' and 'idealist' by most critics, could never be reconciled with Marxist realism, they stood to reinforce the wellspring of national sentiments and patriotism provoked by the mass rehabilitations of the early 1960s. Through the symbolization of a mythical village, Blaga created a link between modern Romania and its Dacian, not Slavic, ancestors. Adopting Blaga's vision allowed the RCP to paint themselves as heroes championing a historical tradition that the Soviets had tried to quell through its installation of a puppet government.

The important question to be asked is whether this historical return to what may be called nationalism weakened Communism as an ideology, as well as the rule of its leaders. In hindsight, the historian has a favorable position of looking at what followed the rehabilitation period in the 1970s and 1980s. If the answer is to be found there, then it must mean that this plan served to reinforce and consolidate the rule of the Romanian leaders, and especially

Ceausescu's. His power increased exponentially during the following decades, and the national policies initiated in 1962 must not be seen as having had a small part in his success. Whether this policy weakened Communism as an ideology, however, is an entirely different matter.

While the tenets of Communism advocated internationalism, incorporating nationalism seems at best paradoxical. Yet, this paradox points to the existing malleability in the cultural sphere, a place in which the Communists had to accept that certain ideologies that did not necessarily conform to a strict Marxist realism could become part of a larger ideology operating under the terminology of Communism. Moreover, this shift towards historical traditions did not confine itself to Romanian borders. It saw increasing use in most Eastern European countries, namely Poland and Hungary.²⁰⁹ As the Soviet Union weakened its hold on the satellites following Stalin's death in 1953 and the de-Stalinization of Khrushchev, those countries revamped their policies within.

The Romanian experience, though symptomatic, had its own peculiarities and local flavor that set it apart from the rest of its satellite brethren. The brutality with which it repressed dissenters, and the lightning speed with which it brought those victims back to the fore of culture as national icons, equaled its counterparts in the Soviet Union and the rest of the Communist world.²¹⁰ The mass interrogations, imprisonment, and labor camps brought to mind the practices of the Cheka and NKVD in the Soviet 1930s. The horror stories that developed in the 1970s and 1980s under Ceausescu, in addition, deserve an entire study dedicated to them. From the anti-Hungarian policies of systematization to the cruel history of the anti-abortion ordinance and the

²⁰⁹ Misha Glenny. *The Balkans, 1804-1999: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers*. (London: Granta Books, 1999). Glenny's study represents a comprehensive study of each country in Eastern Europe and how nationalism shaped each country's history accordingly.

²¹⁰ For a study of nationalism in the Soviet Union and its propagation by intellectuals during the Soviet era, see Kevin O'Connor. *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks: Russian Nationalism and the Gorbachev Revolution*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006) and Ronald Grigor Suny. *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993).

masses of orphans resulting from it, the last twenty years of Ceausescu's rule witnessed a megalomaniac at work. Those years saw increasing nationalism to the point of extremism and complete isolation of the country from the rest of the world. The unfortunate part of his 'master plan' was that most of Romania's inhabitants had to endure hardships such as nightly power outages and bread lines, yet had to remain patriotic. In Romania, the unraveling of Communism witnessed a humanitarian crisis that ended in bloodshed. The Romanians, along with the rest of Eastern Europe, decided to take matters into their own hands and liberate themselves from the oppression of Communist rule. Christmas Day, 1989 stands as the day that Romania became once more democratic, executing their tyrannical ruler. Though the Revolution remains a questionable event, as well as its perpetrators, it signaled the beginning of a hopeful, new era in Romanian life. From that point on it may be claimed that Communism became extinct in practice, yet has remained alive in the minds of those who endured it. Nationalism, on the other hand, exploded once more in the 1990s. In spite of overwhelming globalization, one of few developments that may one day shatter imaginary boundaries and differences, nationalism has remained a faithful and 'fratricidal' servant of Eastern Europe.²¹¹

As a final point, the thesis acknowledges that several lacunas may appear as a result of this study. Localized and focused on the story of one man, Lucian Blaga, the thesis realizes that parts of the story may have been unintentionally left out. It nevertheless hopes that the study paints a picture of life in Eastern Europe during a critical period in the region's history and uncovers some of the many complexities of life in Communist society. It attempts to shed light on a liminal geographic area that has witnessed the exchange of power between East and West for hundreds of years, and yet it continues to be an area relatively overlooked in European

²¹¹ The term 'fratricidal' was borrowed from Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. (New York: Verso, 2006), originally published in 1983.

studies. For this reason, the thesis hopes to raise questions that will once be answered more fully by future historians of the region and provide a starting point for further research and discussion.

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