ROMANIA

West German Reporter Discusses Minorities, Village Destruction

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[Serialized article on Romania by Walter H. Rueb]

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["The Dredges of Systematization Keep Rolling On"]

[Text]

Horror and Hope at the World's Biggest Construction Site

A narrow street branches off E 60/15 on the Bucharest-Ploiesti-Brasov Highway 30 km north of the capital. It leads to Snagov on the lake by the same name with a picturesque island, a monastery, and Dracula's grave. Herds of sheep are grazing on the meadows, you can see brown tilled land, an ocean of trees, and a couple of villages along the way.

Tiny Ciofliceni is the first to pop up out of the haze. Simple, old houses, a couple of fences, a dozen half-dilapidated huts—that is all. No shops, no church, no school, no people. Such desolation so near the capital?

The next village comes into view quickly. Is this where the first villages are being systematized—as it says so harmlessly in the official announcements—here, in the vicinity of Romania's capital? In Ghermanesti likewise there are single-story houses with little windows and big gardens as well as crumbling little huts lining the street. But 3-story new residential housing blocks, made of bright-colored concrete, rise behind them. They are inhabited. There is a car parked in front of an apartment house entrance, laundry is hanging on the balconies, and music comes out of a window. But there is just emptiness yawning between the old and the new houses. Is this the work of bulldozers?

Off the road leading to Snagov, you sink ankle-deep into the muck. But, in return, you do run into people. Women with babushkas and a couple of strong men wearing boots are wading through the mud, moving tree trunks, pushing piles of dirt and mountains of rubble, boards, and bent metal aside. They look up, they pose for the camera and laugh, but they do not reply to questions. They are obviously afraid; they are just being cautious. That would be quite understandable: According to a government decree, unauthorized contact with foreigners is forbidden—even with Soviets.

But there would really be so many questions to answer. Old, primitive little houses with dug-up gardens still stand between the new apartment blocks. Are they also to be torn down? Foundations have been excavated everywhere and cranes reach up into the sky here and there. Are even more housing developments to be erected? In one place, a house is being wrecked right next to a new building. Where are its inhabitants?

The women and men do not tire of laughing and posing. But they also keep silent. They wave as we leave Ghermanesti behind. Minutes later we spot Snagov. But where is Vladiceasca?

According to the map, the village should be between Ghermanesti and Snagov. But I cannot find it. There are no trails branching off the country road, nor are there any rises in the ground behind which it might be hidden. The landscape is flat and unobstructed as far as the eye can see but there are no people there either—like in a science fiction movie. Did the dredges of systematization gobble the village up?

There is silence about that also in Bucharest. On the other hand, there is a lot of talk about the ticklish topic that put Romania in the dock. "The systematization plans have been in existence since 1965," says Alexandru Budisteanu of the National Planning Institute in Bucharest. The 60-year-old boss of 125 employees of this government agency briefed us in German: "Initially, plans called for a new arrangement of the territory but Law No 58 concerning the systematization of the territory and of urban and rural landscapes was published on 29 October 1974 with a view to the further development of socialist society."

The official German of the government agency chief concerning the intention of integrating the lifestyle and civilization of the rural population with that of the city dwellers sounds stilted. Chief of State and Party Boss Nicolae Ceausescu expressed the objective rather more concisely in an interview given to DIE WELT at the end of 1988: "We would like to have the communities experience a radical improvement over the next 10 years. First of all, we would like to guarantee good conditions for our school system, for health care, and for cultural activities. We want to build apartments. Our villages are gradually to be given a new appearance. The number of communities will remain as large as it is now."

Sandbox Games Ignore Human Yearnings

Just 10 months earlier, Ceausescu had frightened Romania and the world with the following announcement: "We must radically reduce the number of villages from the current figure of 13,000 to 5,000 or at most 6,000."

Even during the time thereafter, Romania's "Conducator" did not deviate from his statement in spite of worldwide outcries and protests. The German-language NEUER WEG [New Way] of Bucharest quoted him as follows early in May 1988: "We must reduce the number of villages almost by one-half."

Many critics suspect that Ceausescu would like to integrate the share of 28 percent of all Romanians, who are left in agriculture, with the rest of the country after the progress that has been made in industrialization; on the other hand, other critics describe the planned systematization as an instrument for achieving the assimilation of the Hungarian and German minorities in a rather cold-hearted fashion.

Budisteanu counters fears and reproaches—how often has he tried to dispel and refute them?—with a logic that sounds convincing at first: "Systematization is based only on objective grounds. After all, this concerns primarily Romanians only. There are 21 million of them while the Hungarian minority has been figured at 2 million and the German minority at just barely 200,000. There are more than 13,000 villages in Romania. Most of them are in an archaic state. Only a few houses have running water and thousands of villages have neither sewers nor electric power and telephones. The infrastructure is also insufficient. The villages have no shops, no kindergartens, no schools, no hospitals, no theaters, no movie houses, and no cultural centers. Romania would now like to bring the villages up to the standard of the cities but does not have enough money to do that. But there is one way out: Only a portion of the villages are to be modernized. The rest of the villages will remain untouched. The inhabitants can continue to live there as they have in the past. Of course, no more government money is to be invested in nonsystematized villages. We hope that the inhabitants of these villages will move to the new centers quite on their own."

Budisteanu protested that systematization is aimed neither at the Hungarian, nor at the German minority. "In Transylvania, by the way, the houses reveal a considerably higher standard than in other regions," he observed. "This is why less money is being channeled there in connection with systematization. By the way, there were still 15,221 villages in 1956. In other words, around 2,221 of those villages disappeared in about 30 years—without causing the slightest stir. The cause of the campaign against Romania is the hostility of a neighboring state. The campaign spread from there to the countries of Western Europe. Radio Free Europe and Deutsche Welle [German Wave] really outdid themselves in spreading inaccurate statements about a large-scale village destruction effort in Romania." After a brief pause, Budisteanu added, with a sideswipe at a practice pursued by the Soviets: "We do not jam radio broadcasts."

In response to the question as to which country was supposedly the instigator of the campaign against Romania, Budisteanu replied without hesitation: "Hungary." He pulled four thick photo albums from a shelf and put them on the table. The standard examples of the socialist planned economy and bureaucracy reveals statistics and descriptions of apartment houses, kindergartens, schools, doctors, hospitals, athletic fields, and other facilities serving for the common welfare in each planned agribusiness center—and they do that on many thousands of pages, in black-and-white and in color.

The books also spell out the per capita industrial output. The sandbox games played by the planners go all the way to considerations as to which industrial production facilities have to be settled in one village or another. But there is not a word in these thick volumes about the yearnings of the people to retain their little piece of land, their garden, their sheep and hogs and chickens and rabbits, and above all their few little freedoms in a village community far from the oppressive omnipresence of the party and the collective.

There is no room for sentimentality and the wishes of the people as the country starts out on its move into a new age. The watchword is efficiency and the goal is a new society. In the government offices in the capital, everybody is determined and is directed from topside immediately to tackle the attainment of the ambitious goals of systematization. The relentless vehemence is currently mitigated only by the endeavor to let Western protest cries die out by moving ahead cautiously at home and by having the planning centers come out with soothing sounds.

As you travel through Romania, it is difficult to get a picture of the status of systematization which is now only in its beginnings. You have to look for examples because there are no general surveys and what little information is available is contradictory.

The horror news about emigrees and refugees, about politicians and association bosses concerning the "extinction of old cultures" as well as the "leveling of national identities all the way to the destruction of churches and other cultural monuments" and the printed criticism directed against "cynicism" and "selective seeing" as heard and viewed by a respected television reporter who, during a visit to Romania, saw and heard everything for himself, everything that was the exact opposite of what he had heard before his trip—all that is really rough on the person who seeks the facts. The image of Romania dwindles down to wrecked houses and new buildings but there are many even more serious problems around. And you get a constant stream of protestations and declarations from privileged Romanians who are allowed to talk to foreigners and eat and drink with them whenever this is in the interest of the state.

But even they cannot eliminate the facts from the face of the earth—not even those in the Neppendorf section of Sibiu. For centuries, the present-day suburb of this city, which was mentioned in documents for the first time in 1192, was an independent village; but it was incorporated in 1950. Now this suburb is being systematized. The old and partly crumbling houses without running water and electric power were being torn down and are being torn down. Where they stood, there now rise

5-story, uniform apartment house blocks. Prefabricated parts for more new buildings were lying around in various places. Numerous foundations have been excavated. Foundation work is in progress for new buildings while, right next-door, bulldozers destroy the old. Cranes tower over Neppendorf, trucks stir up dust, and platoons of workers populate the scene.

A couple of Neppendorf inhabitants pass by this hell. Full of distrust, they hasten past you. Rage and indignation, powerlessness and pessimism mark their faces. Nobody stops, nobody answers any questions.

That is quite understandable. On the other hand, should one be astonished that factual reports from Romania are so incomplete and that interpretations of events are so inaccurate and that SIEBENBUERGISCHE ZEITUNG [Transylvania Journal] in Munich was able to ask whether a German journalist talked to the thousands of people in the villages of Transylvania who had to sign their declaration of consent for the wrecking of their houses, street by street? Did any of them ever see the wrecking plans for Leschkirch, Grossau, Kleinscheuern, Talmesch, Freck, Marktschelken, and Muehlbach?

In Neppendorf, a farmer whipped the two horses drawing his wagon as he spotted my camera and shouted curses in German as he took off; at that moment, I recalled the mockery expressed by SIEBENBUERGISCHE ZEITUNG about journalists from the Federal Republic who, in Tartlau, admired the church-castle and failed to note that an entire section of the town with beautiful and sound farmhouses had been torn down. But how could one possibly get to the truth in a state where the rulers talk for propaganda reasons and where the tortured keep silent out of fear?

But the Saxons of Transylvania and the Swabians from the Banat have more reason for bitterness than a visitor to Romania who is criticized because of his incomplete reports. They certainly suffered a lot over the past 45 years: After Romania switched sides during World War II, there were deportations to the USSR, there was punishment through total expropriation, nationalization in 1948, followed by losses due to emigration and assimilation, and finally economic misery and threat to cultural identity.

And now there is this systematization. Rage because of the inability to stop systematization and the accompanying destruction of their way of life as well as hatred for those who are responsible for this—that is what sticks in their craw. When will the first violent explosions happen?

Most inhabitants of Neppendorf are of peasant origin. Romania's development from an agricultural country before the war to an industrial state however changed their existence fundamentally; today, only 28 percent of the population live in the country and only one-fourth are working in agriculture.

Most families get their income from work in industry plus a secondary occupation in agriculture. Nobody asks about the number of working hours they put in. Almost all of them are raising their own vegetables, growing flowers, many keep horses, chickens, and rabbits, as well as some sheep or a couple of hogs. And there are many people in Neppendorf who derive a second income as craftsmen.

Misery and hatred have turned many into alcoholics.

In a hotel in Sibiu, 68-year-old man commented on my description as follows: "They are afraid that they might no longer be able to pursue their profitable secondary activities after their houses have been torn down." He comes from Berlin, is a Jew, and emigrated to Romania in 1939. A 45-year-old Saxon from Transylvania took the opportunity of all of the hubbub caused by a wedding in the hotel to talk to me about events in the suburb of Sibiu. "The Germans of Neppendorf are losing not only their houses but also their land, their coexistence with their neighbors, their sheltered life in their enclosed inside farmyards, and they must give up their animals; they are then exposed to the supply disaster like all the others. Take a close look at what goes on in Neppendorf. Then there will no longer be any doubts about the extent of the disaster that is taking shape here."

There are also signs of hope at Romania's huge construction site. In Oradea—a big city with 223,000 inhabitants in the northwestern part of Romania, only 12 km from the Hungarian border—the downtown section has been converted into one big pedestrian paradise. There were no bulldozers at work on the "Street of the Republic" but rather specialists for urban renewal and restoration. Now old, historical buildings stand next to new, modern utilitarian structures. The masonry, which bespeaks a long history, was touched up with original paint. The entire environment is rather unusual for a socialist country. There are shops, attractive sidewalk cafes, and cozy beer gardens. The Romanians obviously like what has been created here: the place is crawling with people.

In the new section named "Stephen the Great," not far from the Oradea main railroad station, however, those responsible for systematization really sinned. Here, 75,000 people have been squeezed into huge apartment developments but only very few of the old houses were spared. Some of them stand lost and empty between the big new buildings. Are they to be torn down once the excitement about systematization has died down abroad?

The new section is located along a wide street. It is soon to be connected to the nearby industrial centers by means of a streetcar line. In front of the high-rise apartment houses there are green spaces and squares with outdoor shelters. A couple of gypsy youngsters can be seen playing there and, next to them, half a dozen men are passing the brandy bottle around already in the

forenoon. A high-rise apartment house dweller interrupts his job of repairing his car, shakes his head, and says in good German: "Some of the inhabitants of the old development became alcoholics because they lost their houses." He looks around several times before he answers my question: "No, I am a Romanian but I used to attend the German school. That was long ago." Spotting a pedestrian about 100 yards away, he falls silent and makes a rejecting movement with his hand.

In Cluj-Napoca, old houses are being torn down in a suburb, right next to a huge apartment development. But in the heart of the city, the eye rejoices over the many historical buildings; in Sighisoara, a medieval open-air museum of architecture—the historical core high above the new city has been preserved. But in the new city, they are busy tearing down old houses along a much-traveled street. They do this obviously without any bad conscience: the construction workers wave at the reporter, they pose for the camera, and, with gestures, they ask you to take their picture. The people of 700-year-old Sighisoara—42,000 inhabitants including now only 9 percent Germans—have suffered much in recent decades. There were devastating floods in 1970 and 1975; in 1977, there was an earthquake. And then reconstruction and systematization were carried out parallel. The Little Kockel River, which spilled over its banks twice, was straightened out along with some river control work, the river bed was widened to 70m and a new bridge was built in place of the old one. The 300-year-old wooden bridge was not destroyed by man but by the force of the water.

In the course of systematization, the railroad right-of-way was shifted, new streets were built, and a lake holding 25 million cubic meters of water was put behind a man-made earth embankment in front of the city. Besides, 13,000 apartments were built in the new city; the apartment developments correspond to the simple architectural style of the old city; they only have four stories and are painted in pleasing colors. The city's historical treasures in the Gothic and Baroque styles were not touched; they include the clock tower, the mountain church, the monastery church, the city wall with its preserved towers, the Venetian House, the house with the antlers, and the Dracula House. Very beautiful museums were established in the clock tower and the Dracula House.

The West German government recently received documentation about past systematization work in the settlement area of the Saxons of Transylvania—with the request that it provide financial support for a planned survey of German architectural monuments in Transylvania.

"In the rural area, the inhabitants of only 12.5 percent of the communities know anything about the development plans of their little towns and only in 7.5 percent of the villages are there any hints that they are to be eliminated," it says in the documentation which is based on data supplied by Saxons from Transylvania. "Work is started in the communities but it is often slowed down by the lack of funds and the passive resistance of the local authorities; this work as a rule involves tearing down the sections around the outskirts and the tenements in the downtown section. Living conditions and sanitary facilities in the apartment houses, into which the inhabitants of the destroyed houses are resettled by force, are disastrous according to the reports."

The documentation states that cemeteries and churches are crumbling in the Saxon communities and villages which are now inhabited only by a few Transylvania Saxons or none at all. "Not infrequently, the entire village simply vanishes," so goes the complaint. "At the end of 1988, 45 percent of the Evangelical churches and more than 50 percent of the church-castles were in need of renovation and about one-third of the Saxon cemeteries need major repair work, mostly along the walls. Tomorrow, more villages, cemeteries, churches, and church-castles will crumble."

Systematization has already been started according to the disclosures of this documentation in Agnetheln (Sibiu District) and Bistritz (Bistritz District). There are great unrest and fear among the 13,000 inhabitants—including 2,300 Transylvania Saxons—because they do not know where they will live in the future. Of the 50,000 inhabitants of the district town of Bistritz, only 98 are Transylvania Saxons; most of them are more than 70 years old. An inhabitant described the situation thus: "The entire city is to be rebuilt."

The documentation contains detailed data about planned systematization in ten communities and villages in the Sibiu, Regen, and Brasov districts; it also mentions the names of villages whose condition would lead us to conclude that they are silently doomed to decay. Here they are: Dendorf, Hundertbuecheln, Moenchsdorf, Kyrieleis, Rosch, Streitfort, Tobsdof, Waldhuetten, and Wolkendorf.

"Cultural values and the well-developed settlement areas of the German minority in Romania, of the other minorities, and of the Romanian population are in danger," it says in the conclusions presented in this documentation. "Outstanding cultural achievements by the Transylvania Saxons, their cultural and existential identity, and their cultural past are threatened with extermination by the systematization plans. One must reflect about possibilities of saving them."

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["Contradictions Involving Flight and Emigration"]

[Text]

Yearning for a Life Without Hunger and Fear

Many voices strong, the children's choir belted out the song "Pioneers Want to Go Hiking" in the auditorium of the German school in Brasov. The girls and boys are all dressed up already during the rehearsal for parents' night. Nicolae Ceausescu smiles down upon them from a

framed photo on the wall between the emblem of the Communist Party of Romania and the country's coat of arms. He is said to rejoice as he looks at the younger generation and listens to its song.

And does he keep it up even as he hears the chorus of hunters from Weber's "Freischuetz" and Beethoven's "Hymn to Might?" "Yes," says school principal Hannelore Schuller recalling the school's motto which is engraved on a plaque in the staircase of the old building which has been too small for a long time now: "You who come here to learn deportment and discipline do out of your own will that which is fitting for good people."

The motto still applies, says Hannelore Schuller. In point of fact, Johannes Honterus, the school's founder, still runs the place. A monument to the great 16th-century Transylvania theologian, humanist, and reformer stands impressively and quite noticeably opposite the school. Like a symbol, the monument and the school are overshadowed by the "Black Church" of Brasov.

Is this a sign of hope? The gray-haired school principal understands the question only too well. "Neither the Transylvania Saxons, nor the German language are dying out in Romania," she says. "Our school is currently attended by 1,130 girls and boys. It was placed under the government in 1948. In 1970, it was converted into a general-education institution and in 1977 it was turned into an academy. Only half of the students are of German origin. Today we have more and more mixed marriages. The community would not have survived without them."

Hannelore Schuller anticipates objections and questions and changes the topic. "School attendance is mandatory up to the 10th grade. But 80 percent of the students try to take the final exam; at the end of the 12th year of schooling, 100 percent pass the final exam. The classroom language is German and we greatly stress vocational training as well as music, choir practice, and folk dancing. In our school theater, we present plays by Kleist, Brecht, Frisch, and Duerrenmatt. There is a regular cultural exchange between the German schools in Sibiu, Sighisoara, and Brasov. Our choral groups, as well as our dance and theatrical troupes are constantly on the road. No child needs to learn German in school. Any child who comes here already has a mastery of German. This alleged discrimination against the German minority is simply not there. There is no discrimination."

So, why do people who are determined to leave form long lines in front of the German embassy in Bucharest? "Because you cannot stand life in this country. We yearn for a life without hunger, shortages, and fear," replies a wife and mother who is waiting to leave. A teacher couple, suspended from their jobs since they filed their application, explained their decision to leave thus: "Romanization is getting stronger all the time and prospects for the future are getting worse all the time."

Blessing of Early Flight and Misfortune of Late Birth

It is difficult and even impossible to start a meaningful conversation with Transylvania Saxons. Romanians are forbidden to have any contacts with foreigners. Their lives are controlled by distrust and fear because the party and the secret service have their ears everywhere. But most afraid are those who have filed an application for emigration. They live a withdrawn life, they go completely underground—out of fear that they might be cheated out of their long-awaited departure by some misstep. They are being interrogated and they are being pressured and some of them are assigned a lower-paying job. But the local militia members get a big bonus if they manage to "persuade" a person to withdraw his application.

The game is up—that is the prevailing mood here. The Transylvania Saxons and the Swabians from the Banat, who left years ago, got the benefit of early flight; those who stuck it out now curse the misfortune of late birth. For decades, they have been bearing an invisible but horrible burden: too often they think of the good old days when they had big farms, when they were masters of the land and when they had reasons to praise God in their mighty church-castles. Did God desert them?

A diplomat from a Western European country commented rather hopelessly on the problem of the emigrees: "They have missed the bus. Too many Germans have already left. The rest must also leave or they must be assimilated. The large numbers of refugees going to Hungary are depressing. In recent years, 30,000 people fled to Hungary; 80 percent belonged to the Hungarian minority in Romania and 5 percent were Germans."

Long is the list of sins committed by Romania. The uprooting of the Germans as an ethnic group and the hopelessness of being able to educate the children as Germans, the dearth of opportunities for individual development and freedom to move around, and, finally, discrimination in employment and college admissions—these are mentioned again and again as reasons for emigration and flight. Even larger is the number of those critics who deplore the catastrophic supply situation, the omnipresence of the minions of the communist snooper state, the manifold chicanery, and the continuing poor way of life.

College graduates and intellectuals but also peasants and workers are dissatisfied and discouraged in view of the difficulties encountered in nurturing their cultural identity. "There is no reasonable German newspaper in Romania and radio and television only bring 1 hour of

programs per day in the German language," a teacher railed. "Moreover, the German broadcasts are scheduled at a time when the majority of the workers are on the job. Here is a typical example of routine practice: Outward appearances are carefully maintained but the intended effect is achieved without any loss of efficiency. The German language is an obstacle to the rulers in Bucharest on their way to total Romanization. This is why its use is obstructed wherever possible. The registration of newborn children with non-Romanian names is also refused. And German city names may not be used officially, they may not be printed in newspapers and signs with German place names may no longer be posted at the entry to towns and villages. Pretty soon, German will only be a language on tombstones."

The exodus of the Germans from Romania—and stiff bribes often speed up the processing of emigration applications—in recent years above all hit the ranks of highly skilled and educated individuals, creating big gaps. "In the meantime, only 230,000 Germans are living in Romania," says a spokesman at the German embassy in Bucharest. Each year, about 10,000 Transylvania Saxons and Swabians from the Banat leave Romania."

A spokesman at the Foreign Ministry in Bucharest comments: "We regret every emigration. Romania does not like to lose Germans, for human as well as economic reasons. They are able people and they have done much for our country. On the other hand, their education has cost the state lots of money." A foreign observer noted: "This is why they literally sell the Germans off. Bonn has to pay 8,000 marks for every emigre from Romania. Now Ceausescu wants to up the ante. This is a disgusting form of human slavery. As a matter of fact, Romania has been the home of these people for generations. But can you call a country your home where you do not have the freedom to preserve your own identity and where in the end you are even sold off?"

Regime loyalists contradict these charges. The existence of the German-language newspapers, such as NEUER WEG, NEUE BANATER ZEITUNG, KARPATEN RUNDSCHAU, WOCHE, as well as the monthly magazine NEUE LITERATUR actually do refute one assertion. But what about the others?

This question was answered in the little town of Deva by five Transylvania Saxons. The town is located in the midst of a fertile region. Arable land, hops fields, and horse-drawn wagons as far as the eye can see while, in the villages, the streets are lined with single-story, roomy houses. They are built adjoining to each other and all of them have the typical inside courtyards of Transylvania. Here you cannot see anything of systematization. In the streets, women wearing babushkas, gab with each other and posters all over the place hail Ceausescu, his communism, his heroism, and the peace he preserves.

Nicolaus Rudolf Pilly, 58, who used to be a blast furnace engineer and who is now a pensioner, says categorically: "There can be no talk of discrimination against Germans. I was not a party member during my younger years but I still got to be department head. I got ten awards of medals and orders of labor." Wieland Schneider, 50, a motor vehicle engineer and graduate of the German academy in Sibiu, has been chief engineer and technical manager in a transportation enterprise in Deva since 1961. "Able and efficient people are in demand here," he says. "Anybody who can cut the mustard has an opportunity here. The achievements of the Germans are also being recognized. Many of them hold important jobs."

Electrical engineer Valentin Schmidt, 33, was the only German among all the Romanians in the academy. "I never suffered any discrimination," he assures us. "In Timisoara there were no problems of any kind either. That is where I studied. Out of 100 students, 15 were of Hungarian nationality and 10 were of German nationality. I am not a party member but still I am responsible for research work in a big enterprise. Only those who do a poor job and who thus burden the work force are being criticized and discriminated against."

Mining engineer Alfred Kristoff, 55, is working as chief engineer at an investment bank of Hunedoara District. "I am the only German in an enterprise with 60 employees," he says. "My wife is a Romanian. We have a son who is 22 years old and who will become a construction engineer. He attended primary school in Deva. German was taught in all four classes. There were also German-language courses in college. It is above all economic reasons that persuade Transylvania Saxons to file their applications for emigration."

A roundtable conversation with Transylvania Saxons is almost impossible in Romania in 1989—unless the party, as happened in Deva, orders a couple of informers to meet with a visitor from the West. But the statements made by the men of Deva coincide with those made by the highest representative of the Catholic Church in the Banat, as well as the German-language teacher Dietlinde Costin who is 26, the master mechanic Friederic Kartmann who is 48 years old, the medical doctor Paul-Juergen Porr who is 38, social scientist Gustav Adolf Klein who is 49, and engineer Wilhelm Kysela who is 59, in Cluj-Napoca. They had not been ordered by the party to speak out.

Vicar-General Cziza of the Timisoara Diocese—who is thus responsible for the Catholic Banat as well as the 300,000 faithful in Arad—is deeply moved by the emigration of so many Germans. "The war persuaded many to leave," said the 73-year-old cleric. "The watchword was family reunification. Today it is probably the prosperity of West Germany that attracts many."

Dietlinde Costin confesses: "As far as I can see, almost everybody leaves for economic reasons. Because of the departure of so many people, the community of the Transylvania Saxons has become unbalanced and has even been destroyed."

Friederic Kartmann owns a home; he works for the railroads and is the boss of 40 mechanics and workers. "One of my girl cousins emigrated," he revealed to us. "She is a pharmacist but she has not found a job in the Federal Republic so far. But we are well off. I am a party member but I also go to church regularly. I have to work hard, 48 hours a week. Every month, we are off only on one Saturday and we frequently have to put in overtime. I would never leave here. I know what I have here."

Paul-Juergen Porr is single, Protestant, an internist at the university clinic of the city of Cluj-Napoca with its 320,000 inhabitants; he regularly reads DER SPIEGEL and DIE ZEIT and is thus excellently informed about the Federal Republic. "I would not dream of submitting an emigration application," he admits. "I am satisfied here. Economic factors are the main reason behind this emigration."

Social scientist Gustav Adolf Klein is a member of the people's council of Cluj-Napoca, married, childless, and always travelling. "Last year I spent 3 weeks in a Bavarian village," he said. "There I had an opportunity to talk to Transylvania Saxons who had emigrated. They complained that they had no contact with other people, they had problems on the job and they had difficulties in assimilation. The assertion that we are losing our cultural identity here is incorrect. There are German newspapers, books, and several German theaters. The real reasons behind emigration have to do with economic enticement."

Engineer Wilhelm Kysela also knows the Federal Republic. "My mother, my sister, and my brother-in-law have been living in the FRG since 1978. I visited them in 1988. They still do not have any contact with other people. The human warmth, which is so customary here, simply does not exist in the FRG. I also think that most Germans are leaving primarily for economic reasons."

Kysela was the only one to admit that food supplies should be better in Romania and that the housing problem has still not been solved. "But we are on the right track," he notes. "There is no discrimination against Transylvania Saxons. After all, there are hardly any Germans left in Cluj-Napoca."

This is why there is no German school in the charming capital of the Hungarian part of the country; one-quarter of the 320,000 inhabitants of Cluj-Napoca belong to the Hungarian minority; but an academy here at any rate has 15 class sections with German-language instruction. And in the nearby village of Turda, where 163 Germans are still living, there is at least one German kindergarten. There is no use looking for local German-language dailies in Cluj-Napoca. The Hungarian minority is better off; it has two daily newspapers, a women's magazine and a children's magazine. The Hungarians also have a theater and an opera house.

In Sighisoara there are schools and kindergartens for the young Germans and Hungarians. "The ethnic minorities maintain 168 folklore groups in Sighisoara," asserted cultural officer Ion Ivan. "They perform on many occasions. The German groups also regularly travel to the FRG. We have had a very active cultural exchange for the past 15 years with Neu-Isenburg." Hermann Baier, the 59-year-old chairman of the district council of workers of German nationality, a member of the municipal people's council and a deputy in the district council of Mures, confirms this information. His primary occupation is mathematics and physics teacher at the German academy, high above the medieval city. The institution is named for the educator Joseph Haltrich. Baier estimated the number of Germans in Sighisoara at 3,000 and in the district of Mures at 7,000. He adds that this number is stable because nobody wants to emigrate but then he changes the topic. Baier prefers to look to the past. "Herman Oberth, the world-famous scientist, used to live here," he says to change the subject. "He was born in Sibiu. He came here when his father was a surgeon and chief physician at the Sighisoara Hospital. Oberth took his final exam at the academy here, he went to college in Germany and returned as teacher."

It is openly admitted in Oradea, in northwestern Romania, that there is no school for the German minority. "The German population segment in the city amounts to only 1 percent," we were told in the city hall. "But in the nearby village of Sankt Andreas there is a German grade school; there are 350 Germans living there. Most of them are farmers. They make the headlines every year with their record harvests."

Only 11,400 Germans are registered in Arad. Together with the Hungarians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Jews, they account for almost 20 percent of the total population of 200,000. But that is hardly taken into account in the schools. The language of the German minority is being taught only in one inner-city grade school and one 12-class school in the suburb of Neu-Arad.

Patina of the Past and Emptiness of the Present

Conditions in Timisoara, in the Banat, and in Sibiu in Transylvania are better. Timisoara has a German theater and a German school. The "Nikolaus Lenau Academy" for mathematics and physics in the capital of the Banat is attended by 2,235 students and is directed by Erika Mueller. "We have 63 classes," says the lady professor. "Five classes will take the final exam shortly and 85 percent of the students are German."

The academy, named for the poet who was born in Hungary, is not far from the dome. A renovation would not be a luxury. The school's cultural and sports activities are in better shape than its architectural structure. These efforts earned attention and honor for the school.

The institution is famous above all for its musical and ethnic costume festivals, traditional balls, success during the student olympics, the school newspaper, and the faculty choir.

The German school in Sibiu looks very plain and weathered but it has prestige and it is famous. Opposite the mathematics and physics academy stands the 14th-century Protestant city church in the old town which is rich in historical buildings; the church is a mighty structure with the patina of the past and the emptiness of the present. In front of it, your attention is drawn to the monument of Georg Daniel Teutsch. He was a school principal, a historian, chairman of the study group of Transylvania Saxons, and finally bishop of the Evangelical Provincial Church.

"The school celebrated its 600th anniversary in 1980," says Professor Hermann R. Schmidt, the principal. "Just 1 year later, your president, Karl Carstens, visited us. We have 700 girls and boys attending school here and they are being taught by 40 professors and industrial arts teachers. Instruction is given in the German language. French and English are taught as foreign languages. And 90 percent of the students are German. The children of the party bigshots are also being educated here, plus the offspring of city council members, intellectuals, doctors, and lawyers. But most of the students come from farmer and worker families."

Principal Schmidt teaches history; but in his room, a bust of Beethoven is in the place of honor, right next to a photo of President Ceausescu. "We have no disciplinary problems here," he replied. "The drug problem is unknown in Romania and the crime rate is low. Our academy is distinguished by many extracurricular activities. Olympic victors are sitting in our classrooms, a physics professor is the conductor of our wind ensemble, and a history professor conducts our chamber choir. We have a good spirit here."

Hans Wolfgang Schneider confirms this. He is the chairman of the council of German workers in the Sibiu District, a graduate of the school, a teacher of German, and deputy schoolboard member. "Professor Schmidt taught me history," he tells us. Energetically he refutes the charges made against Romania in the West. "One thing above all that is untrue is the assertion that Romanization is progressing and that the German language is no longer being taught," he grumbled. "In our district, we have German groups in 100 out of 230 kindergartens; in 200 schools in the city, we have 90 German sections. Half of our 26 academies have German classes. And in the job world, those who can cut the mustard have an opportunity for advancement, regardless of whether they are Romanians or whether they belong to a minority."

The Romanian scene is darkened by the fact that assertions and counterassertions, accusations and contradictions cannot be disentangled. The search for the truth is difficult in Transylvania and in the Banat and there are many pitfalls and one-way streets leading to the untruth.

But do not flight and emigration carry more weight than words and protestations? Would thousands of people take upon themselves the cross of isolation and persecution in Romania and of alienation and unemployment in the Federal Republic if they did not believe in a better life far away?

[29-30 Apr p 7]

["Shortages, Cold, Persecution, and Oppression"]

[Excerpt]

[Passage ommitted]

Rationing Stops at Restaurants and Hotels

Long lines of people in front of shops can be found in many villages and in all cities of Romania. People even line up in front of flower shops and a shipment of cosmetics from the West cannot be handled without a crunch and cops who try to keep order. But the longest lines form at gas stations and they not infrequently are miles long.

That is not astonishing because, after all, private car owners only get 20 or 30 liters of gasoline allocated per month. The 12 million tons of oil, that are taken out of Romania's soil each year, allegedly are not enough for a widely developed industry and to keep a couple of thousand cars moving. It often takes weeks until gas stations out in the boondocks get their shipment. And here is what that means: On Romania's rural roads you can see more horse-drawn wagons than passengercars and people line the road, trying to thumb a ride. Of course, public transportation is also subject to the laws of the war economy. Even when it rains, the women stand freezing in the grass next to the road, the men raise their arms pleadingly and even the kids try to flag passing cars down.

The shortage of gasoline, food, consumer goods and other stuff is home-made. "Export" is the word that explains the cause and "paying foreign debts" is the justification. Most foods have been rationed for many years. You get 5 pounds of flour, 6 liters of cooking oil per year, good-grade meat only before important national holidays, coffee, tea, milk, butter, rice, and chocolate are things which the average Romanian hardly remembers but he gets all the more bread, cabbage, cucumbers, onions, noodles, and preserved fruits. "That is what he lives on mainly," said a man in Brasov. "Sugar and even potatoes and fruits are rare."

Quite a few Transylvania Saxons and Swabians from the Banat are better off than the Romanians. They get food parcels from relatives and acquaintances in West Germany containing salami from Sibiu, canned meat from Timisoara, wheat flour, sugar, cocoa, butter, edible oil and spices—assuming, of course, that the parcels are not

confiscated and diverted in Bucharest and sold to countries with a strong currency, as happened most recently. The food parcel shipments trigger the envy of many Romanians and not infrequently are the cause of discrimination and chicanery against Germans. "When I went to pick up my parcel at the post office, I was insulted and they called me a fascist," complained an old lady in Sibiu. "They forgot that Romania was on Hitler's side until 1944." Another woman reported about the destruction of food by Romanian customs officers. "They took food away from visiting Germans who had brought the food along for their hosts; then the cheese and smoked sausages were cut up before their eyes and, with chlorine, made inedible.

Food rationing quite surprisingly stops in front of restaurants and hotels. In Bucharest, Brasov, Sibiu, Arad, Timisoara, Oradea, and Cluj-Napoca, the restaurants are jammed full at noon and in the evening—not perhaps by party bigshots and foreigners but mostly by ordinary citizens. There you can get sausage, meat and fish, potatoes, rice, vegetables and salad, the traditional plate with cucumbers and paprika, while, by way of beverages, you get the customary slivovitz, water, juices, beer and wine; for dessert, you can have pastries and fruit salad.

But there are some restrictions on the good life in the hotels and restaurants. On certain days, they only serve fish, on other days, the diners have to do without sausage and eggs. The prices are affordable and the ambience is astonishing: In the big-city restaurants, an orchestra already plays at noon while there is dancing in the evening.

Now, would a starving, freezing, and oppressed people go dancing? "That is exactly what is happening," was the reply given by a diplomat in Bucharest. "Living conditions are so tough here that the people avail themselves of the few possibilities of forgetting and taking a deep breath with the kind of intensity that astonishes outsiders. Besides, there is enough food in the restaurants, they are well heated and the dance music is more entertaining than the boring indoctrination television program at home."

Every big city has its night club. Scantily dressed girls can be seen whirling over the parquet, you can watch gypsy dances and acrobatics while hits from the West are being sung and played; of course, there is rock music to torture your ears. Prices are high and you have to pay in dollars. This actually is a measure that would have to keep the Romanians out because they are strictly forbidden to have foreign exchange. But foreigners are not alone there. "They are invited," said a hotel manager in explaining the presence of numerous Romanians in his night club. A German waiter corrected him: "They are party bigshots and government snoops. They have everything, even dollars."

The government's eagerness to get foreign exchange is also the cause of the shortages prevailing in all areas. Even a Foreign Ministry spokesman admitted that food and many other things are exported; but then he said: "Naturally not to the detriment of the population. Supplies for the people have priority. But Romania has set itself the goal of quickly paying off its foreign debts which amount to $13 billion. We will soon be debt free. Then we can import one thing or another for which we so far have not had the money. President Ceausescu announced that the living standard of the Romanians will rise as a result of the payment of our debts. We are proud of our achievements: The country has been industrialized but at the same time we have paid all our debts." Will Romania's markets soon offer oranges and bananas? Are the rooms of the people going to get warmer after the debts have been paid off? Is the lighting going to get brighter in the streets and houses? Will the hospitals at last be provided with medication, vaccines, baby food, and other vital things? Will car owners get all the gas they want after years of gasoline rationing?

Romania's war economy in the midst of peacetime has cost many human lives; thousands were driven out of the country and Romania's prestige was ruined. "Last winter, God was merciful," observed a Transylvania Saxon. "It was not as cold as during the years before."

The government is quite chintzy when it comes to allocating energy and that tortures the people as much as the food shortage. Electricity is rationed and gas and coal are in short supply. The monthly electric power allocation for a 1-room apartment is 27 kw; that is barely enough to boil two pots of water daily. The electricity can be turned on only for a few hours each day. There are strict regulations on the wattage of the light bulbs; the use of electrical small and large household appliances, such as space heaters, vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, washing machines, and refrigerators is forbidden. Electricity is also being saved out in the open. Streets and squares are less illuminated than in Central Europe during the miserable days of the blackout during World War II.

The effects of the electric power shortage are worst in the winter. The inside room temperature must not exceed 12°. Inspectors are entitled to enter apartments at any time. In the new housing developments, the government has it easy when it comes to keeping the temperature down: Tens of thousands of apartments are connected to the district heating system. All it takes to save energy is one manual movement at the central control station. And here is what that means: People sit in their apartments, wearing winter coats, cursing those responsible for this situation; the children sleep in their sweaters, wearing their caps and gloves; thousands get sick and quite a few infants do not survive the winter.

In the "Steau Hotel" in Sighisoara, I found out for myself what it means to freeze an entire evening. My room was cold and the windows did not close tightly

enough. Escaping into the bed in front of the television set is just half a solution: I did get a little bit warmer but the TV program did not help. The screen was dark long before midnight.

Only sports can persuade the Romanians to turn on national television. Is it astonishing that a video recorder should cost 30,000-50,000 lei, in other words, half as much as a car? But you can get one of those things only under the counter. Many foreigners smuggle a video recorder into the country, sell it at a high profit, and use the money to finance several weeks on the beaches of the Black Sea coast for two or even three persons. Recently, higher-income people have been putting up dish antennas to be able to look across the borders into other countries of the world, other than just the neighboring states of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Hungary; dealers from the West supply the parts and Romanians put the technical puzzle together.

Naturally, the videos also come from abroad because there are no video libraries in Romania. Swapping videos is a flourishing business and the government simply shuts its eyes. And it is wise to do so. Without movies acting as a drug, the cold sad evenings in Romania would be unbearable. Who knows whether those so tortured here might not rise up some day? And so, Romanians get together only for home movie evenings at a place of a video owner; they pay him a couple of lei and forget their harsh existence for at least a few hours.

In view of the situation in the electric power sector, the oft-repeated statement of President Nicolae Ceausescu has a rather hollow ring: "Energy is the key to the country's growth." Now the Romanians hope that the opening of a new mammoth power plant east of Arad—a gigantic dam is to hold the water of the Schnelle Kreisch River—as well as the opening of the first Romanian atomic power plant near Cernavoda, 45 km west of the Black Sea coast, will eliminate or at least mitigate the bottlenecks in power supply.

The commissioning of the atomic power plant did not come off without renewed appeals to the workers from president and party boss Ceausescu. He demanded hard work and a willingness to sacrifice, even better work organization, and compliance with currently applicable quality standards. According to a report in NEUE BANATER ZEITUNG, the workers reacted to this application of the whip with the "very rarest sentiments of love and appreciation."

The State Demands Two Children From Every Woman

When Romanians get sick, they are near death. Of course, there are more than enough doctors—in the big cities, as a rule, there is one doctor for every 350-380 inhabitants—but those doctors demand special payments in the form of cigarettes or coffee to increase their income. There is also no lack of available beds but everything else is in very short supply: bandages and cotton, medications and antibiotics, film material for X-rays, and modern technical instruments.

In Europe, the average life expectancy of the Romanians is lowest and infant mortality is highest. But there is ever so slight a ray of hope even in this said area: In the city of Oradea, the citizens are proud of the country's most modern children's hospital and in Cluj-Napoca, in a rehabilitation clinic, high above the city, many chronic patients with heart, lung, and joint troubles as well as patients with nervous and rheumatic disorders are being rehabilitated.

The clinic was opened in 1978. Its nine stories contain 500 beds; the hospital is equipped with an outpatient section, an analysis center, laboratories, radiology, logopaedia, a medical department, as well as departments for hydrotherapy and electrotherapy. "All station chiefs were trained abroad," says Professor Nicolae Andronescu. "We have 50 doctors and 135 nurses working here."

According to information supplied by the clinic's director, heart ailments, cancer, and traffic accidents are the most frequent causes of death in Romania. Regular exams intended to identify cancer early are an obligation as of the 45th year. Women are entitled to retirement pay at 57 while men are entitled at 62.

Making the rounds through the clinic, you can see women and men doing physical therapy, getting massages, and having sessions with psychologists and social workers. "In Romania, if you get sick, you usually pay neither for medications, nor for the doctor or the hospital," says Professor Andronescu. "In 1988, we treated 28,000 persons where, 68 percent of them were able to go back to work."

In socialist Romania, the interest of the state has priority over individual demands even in the field of health. The army of workers must not lose any of its required personnel strength as a result of premature wear and tear of the comrades. The regulations and prohibitions in the field of population policy back the state's primacy up also in the most intimate areas of life. To increase the country's population, the state demands that every woman of childbearing age have at least two children. Contraceptives and abortion are strictly outlawed.

The government's regulations on birth go even further: By means of forced examinations, the authorities want to prevent women from secretly taking the pill. Smuggling of and trading in birth control pills are punished as severely as dealing in drugs and bibles. Those who fail to do their duty toward the state and the party have their income reduced ; often they are transferred and placed under surveillance.

But an unwanted pregnancy will cause a Romanian woman insurmountable difficulties: Either she has to give birth to the unwanted child or she has to turn herself over to strangers. Countless pregnant women suffer serious health damage during abortions conducted by "female angelmakers"; many even die. One of them, barely 22 years old, left a letter behind. Here is what it said: "I would rather die than give this state a new life."

Naturally, there are also people in Romania who benefit from the shortages and misery of others; they are the blackmarketeers. On the black market you can get everything. You pay with foreign currency, with coffee, and above all with cigarettes. The "Kent" brand is the yardstick for everything. For a couple of packs or one or two smokes, you can get nonessential foods, meat, videos, gasoline, treatment from a doctor, privileges in dealing with the authorities, and you can even get love. Of course, prostitution is officially outlawed but it has not been abolished. Even the state engages in trade with consumer goods which are not available to the ordinary Romanian. In the hotel shops for foreigners you can get gourmet foods, all kinds of alcoholic beverages, coffee, cigarettes, leather goods, textiles, souvenirs, and many other things. The government's eagerness to get foreign exchange goes so far that even picture postcards are obtainable only here.

Nevertheless, Romania is not a land of hopelessness. In Sibiu, you can see good cheer and even high jinks in the biggest hotel during a wedding. The festivities began at noon and by the evening quite a few of the guests are well pickled, and many are boisterous. And in a soccer stadium, the 30,000 spectators certainly do not give the impression of being oppressed and gagged. They sing, they cheer and they shout—just like the fans in the German economic wonderland.

There is joy, hubbub, and good cheer also in a crowded restaurant in Sibiu. Many young couples and 30 graduates of the Military Academy are having fun with beer, wine, and dancing. There is no shortage of partners for the future officers to dance with. Several tables are occupied by local girls. The members of the band get many requests and the waiters are kept running with ever new orders.

On the next day, jazz resounds through the hotel. The concert in the building's biggest auditorium is sold out and the staircase is full of nonpaying music fans. Romania's pop idol Gil Dobrica has been performing in Timisoara for many weeks in a place that is overcrowded every night. This 64-year-old man cheers the people up with his songs; he helps them forget their misery and poverty and he enables them to have a little confidence and hope. Ceausescu should give him a medal.

But medals are harder to get in Bucharest than punishment. Criticism on account of supply bottlenecks, energy saving measures, expensive and useless construction projects—for example, steel smelters, monumental government buildings, or the Danube-Black Sea Canal—is punished relentlessly. The people are threatened with having to change jobs, with being exiled into the sticks, and with being thrown into prison.

Yes, the state even metes out punishment to quite a few people who leave it. Embittered, a Transylvania family told me what happened to it as they left Romania. "We saved for 25 years and we kept buying stones and lumber for the house," said the 55-year-old family head. "I was a bulldozer driver and I was getting good money. Finally, we built a house with four rooms, a kitchen with a baking oven, next to it a stable plus a big shed. Fathers, brothers, neighbors, and friends helped. But when we left, we were not allowed to sell the house and we were not even allowed to give it to the sister-in-law. We also had to leave the entire inventory behind. The Romanian state is now the owner. The value is 300,000 lei. That is how much a well-paid Romanian makes in 8 years. But we are not complaining. We are happy that we were able to get out. We want to begin a new and better life in Germany."

[3 May p 9]

["Mercilessness in the Job World"]

[Text]

Efficiency, a Readiness To Sacrifice, and Silence Are Demanded

In the job world of the exploited people between the Black Sea and Hungary, between the Danube and the USSR, there is talk about "getting going in the pursuit of new goals" and "attainment of long-range goals." The newspapers remind the masses of the virtues and the means for the 100th time and in all possible variations, in other words, the things that are to lead to the goal, such as selfless hard work and readiness to sacrifice, a sense of responsibility and initiative, exemplary work results and technical creativity, a determination to modernize and to develop socialist consciousness.

Government television is also used to get the people to move toward new goals. Documentaries praise work for the fatherland, Ceausescu's revolutionary work and action programs are explained, and pride in being a citizen of socialist Romania is talked up for hours on end. An entire program is devoted to a dynamic, efficient, and revolutionary work style.

Television programs and newspaper articles with this kind of content only embitter the workers in view of many long years of hardships, misery, and cold. But the leadership is undeterred as it beats the drums for the blossoming of the socialist economy and as it appeals to the worker. The worker is to think and plan and act, he is to learn how to master new technologies, how to expand automation, how to reduce the consumption of raw materials, work materials, fuel, and energy, and how

to modernize the entire production process. He is to do top-quality work and evenings and on free weekends he is to participate in meetings devoted to an exchange of experience and advanced education—and he is to keep silent.

The state and the party often like to stress the humane character of the Romanian job world but thousands of workers are dissatisfied and indignant over the demands and the mercilessness at construction sites and factories, in agriculture and in the coal mines. The Transylvania Saxon Emil Jancu Budac, 40, openly complained about chicanery and the fact that the worker has no rights. Promptly, the electrician from Sibiu had to pay the price for that as he went to bat for other workers in a leather factory.

"Because the plant personnel failed to meet the quota, the only nonworking Saturday in the month was dropped," he says. "We drafted a written complaint. All workers signed it. Because I was the ring leader, I got a visit from the secret police and then I was transferred to a poultry farm. Everyday, I had to travel to work for a distance of 30 km and repeatedly I only got a part of the specified wages—with the explanation that the little roosters were always underweight. But the truth is that this was due to the fact that there was not enough protein in the fodder."

Budac contacted a newspaper, got nowhere, and again had to pack up and go. This time he wound up in a construction enterprise. "In a God-forsaken area with poor housing facilities," Budac railed. "The billets were so dirty that the people living in them got scabies."

Romania's ambitious industrialization program is being celebrated by the leadership in Bucharest after its almost complete implementation as a huge national achievement; but the "heroes of labor" and the "trailblazers of a better future," who created this industrialization through hard work, sacrifice, and not infrequently their health, curse it. "What did the individual get out of all this?" asked a 45-year-old former miner rather bitterly. "The 46-hour-week, three Saturdays on the job, and plan quotas that are almost impossible to fulfill. On the other hand, we did get enough wages but our apartments are cold, the shops are empty, and there is no chance of ever getting a car."

Militiamen Make Three Times as Much as Truck Drivers

The minimum and maximum incomes are fixed by law: 2,000 and 12,000 lei, which, when converted, comes to 400 or 2,400 marks; right now, it takes 5 lei to get 1 mark. "The average income has risen to 3,200 lei," we were told by Nicolae Beuran, chairman of the Executive Council of Cluj-Napoca. "A skilled construction worker makes 4,000, an engineer makes 4,000-5,000, and a college professor earns 5,500-8,000." When questioned, he told us how much he was making: "As mayor and local party secretary, I earn 8,000 lei." He had nothing to say about the wages of others. Could certain pay scales reveal too much? A truck driver, for example, gets only 2,500 lei per month but the work of a militiaman is rewarded with 7,000 lei.

Because apartment rents and living costs are at least partly affordable, the mass of the Romanians, in contrast to many other Western Europeans, do not complain about their income levels but they do criticize the fact that there are quite a few things they cannot buy for their hard-earned money or that they can get it only after standing in long lines for a long time. For example, the rent for a 3-room apartment is 500; 1 kg of meat costs 80; a man's shirt costs 130; shoes 300; a windbreaker 300-400; 1 kg sugar 15; one egg, 1 liter of gasoline, and 1 kg of tomatoes 10, each; 1 pack of Romanian cigarettes 10-20; half a pound of butter 11; a cake of soap 8; 1 kg of bread 4-6; a bus ticket 4 lei and a daily newspaper 1 leu. Most of the families moreover have at least two incomes; at any rate, 40 percent of all workers are women.

The state shamelessly exploits the relatively favorable financial situation of the Romanians. If they do not meet the plan quotas, money is deducted from their wages and they have to put in unpaid additional workshifts on free Saturdays. But the ability of the Romanians to suffer is not unlimited—and that is something the party and the management of the "Red Flag" Truck Factory and the "Tractorul" Tractor Factory in Brasov had to find out for themselves during the November 1987 demonstrations; the looting, acts of violence, and storming of the city hall in this big Transylvanian city by the angry workers.

In the meantime, things are quiet again in this gigantic factory. The ring leaders have disappeared—nobody in Brasov to this very day knows where they were taken. And nobody dares ask whether they are still alive. But foreign visitors are again being received in the tractor factory.

The general manager has a handshake like a blacksmith. Comrade Octavian Capitanu could very well be a blacksmith; he is that tall, broad-shouldered, and powerful. Wearing a sweater and a leather jacket he receives his guest, briefly touches the visor of his cap, and blasts away with statistics and facts. "We are building 65,000 tractors per year," said the former rugby player. "We turn them out in 100 types and 300 variations. The plant, Romania's biggest, includes five divisions, two assembly shops, a stadium, a house of culture, a school and research complex, and a separate school from the University of Brasov. The whole thing covers an area of 170 hectares."

He tells you how many people the plant employs only after you ask him a specific question: "We have 20,000, including 8,000 women."

Then he talks about other things and he reminds us that Romania's first aircraft factory had stood in this same place. Finally, Capitanu tells us what the export quota is: "We are sending 85 percent of our output abroad. Our customers are partners in 80 countries, including the United States, many countries in Africa, Australia, and New Zealand."

Why does he not talk about his female and male workers? In response to the question as to the mood in the plant, this engineer shoots back at you: "Right now we have no problems." Instead of talking about the bloody uprising of the workers in his plant 16 months ago, he stands up and says rather laconically: "We really should visit our model exhibit."

There you can see more than two dozen models of tractors for every possible purpose and for the most varied countries and weather conditions. "So far, we have made 1 million tractors here," the general manager lets us know. "We build tractors with wheels and tractors with tracks." He has something to say about every model but he does not give us an opportunity to ask any questions. Do inquiries about the consequences of the November 1987 events make him uncomfortable? Or did the notorious Securitate [secret police] spread the veil of forgetfulness over all this?

Taking pictures is forbidden in the entire work compound. The short distances from the lobby to the model exhibit and back are covered in a car; the actual workshops are closed as far as the visitor is concerned; he does not get to see any workers. At any rate, Capitanu provides information in response to harmless questions. "We work 46 hours per week," he says rather tersely. "A worker on the assembly line makes about 4,000 lei per month. That is 800 more than Romania's average working wage. We only have a few robots here. We feed 8,000 persons per shift in our dining room."

People were more open in the "Red Star" textile factory in downtown Sibiu. The plant employs 3,200 workers; 82 percent of them are women; a 53-year-old German is the boss.

The plant turns out ready-made clothing for men and women, says Manager Joan Gindila in German. He regularly takes business trips to a good customer in Herne, in Westphalia, and is proud that the factory can pick 62 percent of its apprentices from among high school graduates with final exam certificate. The plant also produces for export to earn foreign exchange—but Manager Gindila does not want to reveal to us how much. At any rate, he lets us know that many of his products are being shipped to West Germany: "Above all casual clothing, trousers and overcoats."

The textile plant also works two shifts of 46 hours per week. The workers are off one Saturday per month; they are paid piece-work wages. "The average wage is 2,800 lei," says Gindila. "A good piece-worker can make as much as 4,500-5,000 lei per month. The piece-work rates are tailored to the performance capacity of normal people. But, of course, nobody is allowed to goof off."

An 8-hour shift is interrupted twice: there is a 15-minute meal break and a 10-minute break for physical exercise. The silence in all divisions is quite striking. The people work with maximum concentration. Without ever looking up, women are cutting material; in the next room, the individual pieces are being sewed together with old machines; and the ironing is done in other rooms. While the outside temperatures are approximately down to zero [Centigrade], there is almost tropical moist heat inside. The faces of many women are red and quite a few are dripping with perspiration.

The factory has entered into lifetime employment contracts with one-third of the personnel force. "After training, every worker must decide whether he wants to sign a time contract or a life contract," says Gindila. "Women thus commit themselves to the plant up to the age of 55 and men up to the age of 60."

This is not serfdom, Gindila argues defensively. "After all, firings cannot be ruled out. Instead, there are quite a few advantages for those who have signed lifetime contracts," he maintains. "Before they sign the contract, they are subjected to a technical and character examination. Many married couples, entire families and, in some cases, families with three generations, have signed lifetime contracts. They get factory apartments assigned and they are invited to low-cost trips abroad as well as cheap vacations."

Right next to the factory, 82 plant personnel and their families are housed in a 6-story building. Manager Gindila can drop in on all of them at any time; he has a passkey to open the doors. He does not bother to ring the bell. It is Saturday afternoon, in other words, no work. In one apartment, he startles a couple out of a deep sleep; in another, we surprise the apartment owner in shirt and shorts. The apartments consist of three rooms, kitchen, hall, bath, and balcony. They cover about 65 square meters, they are well furnished, and they are equipped with stove heat. Some of the bathrooms also have a washing machine; every living room has a television set. Upon being urged by Manager Gindila, the apartment dweller, who has gotten fully dressed in the meantime, shows off his latest haul: a video recorder. He even has several video cassettes.

There are no parking spaces for the building's inhabitants and there is certainly no underground garage. "That is not necessary. Only two families have a car in this entire building," says a lady apartment dweller. "After all, we only have a short way to go to work." In point of fact, however, the "short way to the job" is an important basic principle of the socialist city builders. In all of the big cities, the new residential developments, which have been built over the past 30 years, are located directly in front of the factory gates.

Criticism and questions as to the disregard for the quality of life are countered by responsible officials with this argument: "The workers love to live near their place of work." In reality, the city builders were guided by just one idea in their planning: efficiency at any cost. Quality of life and recreation in the woods, far from the factory chimneys and the production noise, are subordinated to cost and energy savings through a minimum of public means of transportation. In addition, there is the time factor as well as the concentration and the resultant easier surveillance of the masses in a narrow area.

In view of the low level of motor transport and the resultant low level of mobility of the people in Romania, the desire for a short distance to the job even turns out to be quite credible. A car is and remains just a dream for the overwhelming majority of the Romanian workers: a modest little car, such as, a Dacia 1300, costs 70,000 lei, and that translates into 22 average monthly paychecks; in West Germany, a comparable car can be bought for five average monthly paychecks.

Production for Exports Lets Meat Combine Flourish

In Orastie, 95 km west of Sibiu, Hartmut I. Probsdorfer does not have to worry about how his workers would get to the factory. The factory, which he has been managing for the past 30 years, is located smack in the middle of this small provincial city, surrounded by apartment houses and grass areas. Only a few cars are parked in front of the factory gates although 3,025 people work here.

Probsdorfer, who is 59 years old, is a Transylvanian Saxon. "My family has been living here for generations," he tells us. "The factory was founded in 1922 and was nationalized in 1948. When I took over the management in 1958, we had 160 people working here. About 40 years ago, the factory was worth 2 million lei; today, the buildings, machinery, installations, and other facilities are worth 250 million. The West has no such huge fur processing plant."

Probsdorfer is proud of his life's work. "Everyday we process 20,000 different animal skins. The basic raw material is sheepskins. In 1958, the value of our output came to 10.5 million lei; our current annual output is worth 1.5 billion. Most of it is exported. Italy is our main customer."

To avoid a flood of statistics and further emphasis on efficiency and successful export transactions, I welcomed the suggestion to walk through the factory. On the way, Probsdorfer's huge Great Dane kept hopping around him. In the exhibit room, Probsdorfer's niece had half a dozen models showy fur jackets and fur coats—accompanied by brisk disco music and words of praise from the boss.

The factory is half a family enterprise. Probsdorfer's son is also a member of the work force. He is an engineer and has written a scientific study on differences in the nature of sheep furs, winning a prize in a nationwide professional competition; after that, he expanded the output assortment in his father's plant. Proudly, the elder Probsdorfer praises him: "And he definitely improved the quality of our many fur products."

Initial impressions are rather sobering in the production divisions. Here it turns out that the "family enterprise" is a production facility full of severity and harshness. The highest maxim of the socialist job world applies here without restriction: efficiency. Platoons of women, wearing blue smocks, work themselves to the bone in the tailoring shop, the sewing division, and the shipping department. They barely dare look up, the quiet in the rooms is depressing, and the work pace is fast.

A list with the names of all 60 division personnel is on the bulletin board. Numbers provide information on success and failure in the effort to generate as little waste as possible during the cutting phase but at the same time to cut a large number of individual parts for the clothing items. All data are recorded carefully and visible to all; after all, the name of the game is meeting the plan quota, maximizing exports, paying foreign debts, and even winning a small wage hike for those who help the plant win praise and fame through heroic hard work on the job.

The construction workers in the Banat earned glory for their "outstanding performances" and the "fast work pace" during the last year of the 5-year plan; but now they have become the target of criticism. The party bosses reprimand them for the backlog in the housing construction program and deficiencies in construction work are even punished with penalties. The fact that this can above all be blamed on inadequate work organization and spotty supply with construction materials is mentioned only in passing; memories of the previously awarded title of "heroes of socialist labor" are pushed out of the way. Finally, the "heroes" were urged in public at last to get their act together again.

In agriculture, cooperative farmers, farm laborers, and officials responsible for mechanization are under pressure like all the other workers of Romania. Here, for example, it was possible to increase the harvest yield of wheat thanks to mechanization alone over the past 23 years from 2.5 to 5 tons per hectare. But the party is never satisfied. Now, the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Romania has demanded that every effort be made in terms of equipment and personnel to complete the spring planting on schedule and with the proper quality, if necessary, to work even at night and constantly to test on the spot how the individual work phases are being accomplished out in the fields. "Speed up the planting," was the front-page headline of the German-language newspaper NEUER WEG on 7 March. The goal of this drive was clearly outlined: A

record harvest was to be brought in this year. Does this mean that the Romanians will then be better supplied and that there will be less shortages or is the export quota to be increased even more?

Evidence of the fact that meat and sausage are being kept from the people because of exports is supplied by the fact that a huge combine in Timisoara, the capital of the Banat, is doing extremely well. The "Timis Meat Industry" includes slaughterhouses, a deep-freeze plant, and a canning plant. The latter is located at the edge of the downtown area of Romania's second-largest city.

Seven gentlemen in white smocks welcome me in front of the administration building of the factory and Emil Ganga, manager and doctor of veterinary medicine, briefs me on the enterprise in a small conference room. It has been in existence for 20 years, it has gone through several structural changes and modernizations, and it is of course working efficiently.

"For years, we have been supplying the EC market and Sweden and a short time ago we began shipping to the United States," Ganga said quite openly. Then he added quickly: "We export only 25 percent of our output; 320 workers turn out 35-40 tons of sausage products of all kinds per day. During each shift, we slaughter either 1,000 hogs and 120 head of cattle or 1,000 sheep and the same number of cattle. They are being mechanically processed on the assembly lines."

The products taste wonderfully well; Banat liver sausage and franks are particularly good. Proudly, without any scruples, Ganga tells me: "Even companies in the FRG want and get our products." How many Romanians, suffering from shortages and hunger, could be supplied with the output of this factory alone?

Romania's young people are also hungry. Still, they have to put in labor service even on Sunday. This is a duty and if you do not turn up you jeopardize your job future. It was cloudy and foggy in Oradea on 12 March. Along the Schnelle Kreisch River, a man with a powerful voice commands a group of youngsters as they clean up trails, grass areas, and the river embankment. His shouting can even be heard on the balcony of a hotel on the other side of the river. There is one word that keeps coming back and that is "Angajament." It means hard work and readiness.

[5 May p 8]

["Church and Home as Last Refuge"]

[Text]

We Are Living Neither in Heaven nor in Hell

Two women are kneeling on the carpeted floor of the Orthodox Cathedral of Cluj-Napoca amid a sea of burning candles, their hands in prayer, their heads leaning back, their gaze directed into infinity. New scene: Evening Mass is being celebrated in the Catholic cathedral of Timisoara, the capital of the Banat in the middle of the week. The 250-year-old Baroque church is well attended, someone is playing the organ, the faithful are praying fervently, a young priest is delivering the sermon in the Romanian language so intently that even a believer not familiar with the language is deeply moved.

The misery of the people keeps filling Romania's churches—Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic churches. This is where they find consolation and pity, the feeling of being deserted vanishes, and they regain their confidence. Where do Romania's atheists seek their refuge and where do they find new courage?

Romania's Catholic Church has managed to assert itself in the Diaspora down through the centuries and for more than 40 years in the communist state. There are 1.5 million faithful living in 6 dioceses but in the Banat, 30 out of 150 priestly positions are vacant. "We have a priest shortage," complains Vicar-General Dr Ferdinand Cziza of the Timisoara diocese, "Our diocese also includes the 300,000 Catholics of Arad."

His church was erected on swampy ground. Thanks to deep concrete pilings it has been able to defy many storms. It is said that more mortar was used below ground than above the surface. During the 1788-89 Turkish War, this house of worship was used as a salt depot; in 1849, cannonballs fired by insurrectionists hit the building. The church stood fast and the many people who had fled into it for protection managed to survive.

After viewing this beautiful house of worship of the Banat Swabians, we continued our chat in the nearby parish house. The clergyman tells us that the free practice of religion is guaranteed. Religious instruction is being given in the various parishes, quite freely and unhindered. "Between 80 and 90 percent of the Catholics participate in church life in the villages, often even more," the vicar-general says. "In the city, participation is at a level of only 10-12 percent. But we have to cope with that. Did the Savior not say to St. Peter that he must be a fisherman of human beings?"

A Catholic priest in Romania could not become a member of the Communist Party for two reasons: the Communist Party of Romania does not admit any priests and the Church forbids the priests to join the party. "The reasons for our attitude are simple," says Cziza. "Communist ideology is materialistic and atheistic. And who can serve two masters simultaneously? The priest lies either to the Communist Party or to the Church."

The tall vicar-general is older than the Romanian national state. He was born in 1915 in Steierdorf, the grandson of a master metalworker from Czechoslovakia; the national state was not born until 1918. "Steierdorf is 120 km away from here," the 73-year-old man says.

"Only I and a sister in Lower Saxony are alive out of our entire family. I visit her every other year. I would never want to leave Romania entirely."

Relations between the Church and the communist state are relaxed, negotiations are being conducted objectively and correctly, Cziza observes. By the way, the Church is not cooperating with the party but with the competent government agencies. At this time, a separate department is responsible for all church affairs. "In the past we have had quite a few disputes," the clergyman recalls. "But in the modern state Christianity cannot exist in the Catacombs. The profession of the faith is vital and differences are the logical consequence of this. In general, we are on good terms with the Romanian state. In the old days, Rome deplored this now and then. I had to justify my position and I was met with understanding and approval and was appointed prelate."

Half of the Community Lost in 15 Years

The Church gets only a small subsidy from the state and it is not allowed to collect any church taxes. "We ourselves must pay for the upkeep of the churches and everything else," the prelate complains. "We live on voluntary donations. This is why I have urged the priests to ask the faithful to donate 10 lei each month. Thank God, we do have believers who remember us in their wills."

This year, Ferdinand Cziza celebrates his golden anniversary as priest. He shares a heavy fate with his fellow countrymen. But it does not get him down. Head held high, he strides through the parish house and points to a photo. It shows him with Pope John Paul II. His eyes sparkle, especially as he presents an old concern of his. During his anniversary year, Cziza would like to start the internal and external renovation of the dome. "God will help us," he says. "For the citizens of seven nations, the dome is a center and a meeting place. Romanians, Germans, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Croats, Czechs, and Slovaks live together here in peace. Naturally, we in Romania are not living in heaven, nor do we live in hell, as they say in the West. Admittedly, you have to make do as best you can. But nobody is starving, nobody is freezing. I know this part of this country, I have been living here for 38 years."

So, why do so many Swabians from the Banat submit emigration applications? Are they being disadvantaged or perhaps even discriminated against? Is the German identity threatened? The 39-year-old priest Nikolaus Reinholz, who is present during this conversation, pulls out his ballpoint pen, and Cziza takes a breath quite audibly and replies: "The war got many people to emigrate. The watchword here was family reunification. Today it is probably West German prosperity that attracts many."

At the end, he invites me to attend evening Mass. But he rejected a money donation for church renovation. "Romanians are not allowed to accept any money from foreigners," he remarks by way of apology. "But I suggest that you support the church with a couple of gasoline coupons. In return, I will have the organ played for you alone during evening Mass."

The prelate keeps his word. Quite a few of the faithful were surprised and many started whispering among each other. Most of them had come directly from the job. Timisoara, which is what the city is called today, is an industrial center with machine-building, construction, electrical, and auto industry facilities that set the tone here. But there is also a 270-year-old beer brewery, a hat factory, a welding institute, a medical institute, a university, a German state theater, a music academy with Europe's best acoustics—according to Yehudi Menuhin—as well as a courthouse with 365 rooms and an Orthodox cathedral with an 84-m-tall tower containing 7 bells, rising high above the sea of houses in Timisoara.

In Sighisoara, in Transylvania, the spire of the old monastery church and the present-day Protestant municipal church towers over the environment even more so. The church stands halfway up between the so-called new city along the Kleine Kockel River and the medieval part of the city; it was built on a rise in the terrain. August Schuller, the highest-ranking Protestant clergyman in the region—his official territory extends to the border with the Soviet Union—introduced us to his church: "This is where a Dominican monastery used to stand. The Gothic church, with its three naves, was mentioned in documents for the first time in 1298. In 1676, Sighisoara was destroyed by fire. The church's roof fell in but the house of worship was repaired. The interior furnishings go back to the time after the fire. The baptismal font dates back to the year 1440. And we have 39 old, valuable carpets from Anatolia which add beauty to the church. Only Brasov has more carpets of that kind. Some of them go back to the 16th century. The altar is the work of a master from Czechoslovakia. It is 300 years old. The organ also goes back to 1680. The paintings were done in 1800. They point to the places where the guild masters had settled down at that time."

The organ was also played in the Protestant part of Transylvania and then Schuller commented on the current situation of the Protestant Church in Transylvania: "The state does not interfere with the practice of religion. The faithful have it easy but their clergymen do not yet have it easy. Church attendance is good although in the city it is more difficult to reach the faithful than it is in the country. We therefore extended the duration of catechumens instruction to 4 years. This year, 21 girls and 19 boys will be confirmed. We work very actively among the youth. Female aides hold children's services for children in grades 1 to 4. All of this is financed through donations and voluntary contributions. Two-thirds of my salary, which comes to 3,300 lei—that would be about 650 marks—is provided by the church community and one-third by Sighisoara."

Was the cultural official thus right when he said that Sighisoara is "the oldest cultural city far and wide?" Indeed, in addition to this city, which is so rich in historical buildings, there are, apart from big bakeries, dairies, and agricultural cooperatives, also 195 shops, a 690-bed hospital plus a house of culture, a library that is 300 years old, 2 museums, 12 elementary and junior high schools, as well as 4 industrial academies with 3,000 spaces for the training of skilled workers. The breakdown of religious affiliation is also interesting: 18,000 inhabitants are Romanian-Orthodox, 2,000 are Catholic, 4,000 are Protestant, and 19,000 are atheists.

Reverend Schuller, who is 49 years old, a minister and doctor of theology, is a descendant of Transylvania Saxons from the area around Medias who have been settled here for a long time. Schuller complains: "I have 118 clergymen in my official district and 31 of them have submitted an application for emigration. They cannot be replaced. But we do need ministers. The Sibiu Theological Institute however graduates only five or six priests each year. I have been here for the past 15 years. During that time I lost half of my congregation."

What causes clergymen to emigrated? Schuller replied rather tersely: "Family reunification." That is all he wants to say concerning emigration. In the end, he at least mentions the reason for his reluctance to speak out: "Last year, Albert Klein, bishop of the Protestant Church in Transylvania, commented on this issue in an interview with a German newspaper. His remarks were misinterpreted."

Watchdogs of the People Must Not Be Mute

Bishop Klein has also been keeping his counsel since then. He allegedly expressed consternation concerning Bonn's intention to pay Bucharest 1.4 billion marks for 180,000 Transylvania Saxons and Swabians from the Banat who were willing to emigrate and he remarked that he did not consider that this ransom deal was desirable. To ensure the preservation of the German ethnic group and its Lutheran Church, it has the historical mission of sticking it out and to save the ethnic group and the church so that it will survive through this temporary crisis—Klein reportedly added.

Protests and counterprotests did not fail to materialize. Bishop Klein denied the newspaper report; but, in the association organ of the Transylvania Saxons in Munich, his demands and arguments were castigated by powerful vociferous men. In the meantime, things have calmed down. Klein is silent, Schuller does the same thing, and emigration continues.

But 20 regional deacons and priests from Transylvania have now broken their silence and recalled the letter that had been sent last summer to the European Parliament as well as all the Protestant bishops in Europe—convinced that the clergy must not remain silent and inactive in view of the worries and concerns of the faithful, unless the clergy wants to take upon itself the reproach of the prophets to the effect that "the guardians of the people are nothing but mute dogs."

This letter sounds far more pessimistic than the situation report given us by Pastor Schuller. It addresses the priest shortage and the inadequate capacity of the old churches that cannot accommodate enough faithful, the lack of houses of worship in the new city sections, and the inadequacies of the licensed improvised chapels in residential apartments. It also deplores the lack of bibles, prayer books, religious tracts, and books along with the impossibility of satisfying the religious needs of the young believers through reading because these young people have been unable to learn how to read and write their mother tongue.

"Dissatisfaction and offense also results from the practice of having everybody, who professes his faith openly and practices it, has to expect disadvantages and discrimination in scientific occupations, in public life, or in his artistic career," it says furthermore in the letter. "The seriousness of the situation is illustrated by the fact that many seek their career abroad, albeit by legitimate means. But many others also remain away, over there, without a permit; they accept the risk of being strangers and they leave family, homeland, occupation, and hometown behind."

Hometown and apartment are the last refuge of those who continue to stick it out—although they are by no means beyond the reach of government observation and inspection in their apartments. Over the past several decades, hundreds of thousands of apartments were built in the country's big cities—mostly in monstrous concrete fortresses in front of factory gates, mines, and auto plants at the outskirts of the city. Regardless of whether you are looking at Brasov or Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca or Arad, Timisoara or Oradea—thousands of people have been squeezed together in a narrow space everywhere; over the past 30 years, 65 percent of the urban population moved into new apartments with low rents and modest amenities.

In Arad, two-thirds of all households have been placed in new apartments. Recently, even the modernization of inferior apartments has been getting attention. Poorly built houses were torn down in several city sections. "They were put up during a time when everybody was happy to have a roof over his head," said Arad Mayor Gheorghe Oancea. "Today, the construction work is being done more carefully."

In Oradea, 73 percent of all apartments were built over the past 20 years. The average living space per person is 12.2 square meters. Most of the apartments have a bathroom and a balcony; more recently, they have been connected to district heating plants on a preferential basis. "The Romanians are discovering additional needs," said Georghe Groza, chairman of the Executive Council and party secretary of Oradea. "They demand

improvements in the quality of life and they ask for apartments with amenities. We are experiencing a time of major change, that is, a switch from a quantitative to a qualitative housing supply."

The people in the Cluj-Napoca City Hall are also proud of their achievements in housing construction. Mayor Nicolae Beuran came up with a rather positive overall review: "Over the past 20 years, we built 70,000 apartments here. Now every inhabitant has an apartment. Our goal for 1995 is 1.2 rooms and 14.0 square meters per person."

Apartment purchasing and ownership are also possible in Romania. There are long-term government loans. "Everybody can become an apartment owner," says Mayor Beuran. "A single individual can purchase a 2-room apartment, a childless couple can get a 4-room apartment. If the apartment turns out to be too small later on, it can be sold and a bigger one can be purchased. The government always helps out with low-interest loans."

Beuran did not supply any statistics on apartment prices. A young working mother of two children who owns an apartment however revealed this to us: "My husband and I got financial support from our parents. That is how we were able to purchase an apartment with four rooms, two baths, kitchen, and toilet in a beautiful and comfortable, 4-story housing development downtown for a price tag of 190,000 lei which translates into 38,000 marks. The residential section is located above the city and the infrastructure is good. We are happy."

[Box, p 8]

The Pariah Engages in Anti-Sovietism

One commentator called Romania "Europe's pariah" while another one referred to it as the "Stalinist outsider." In recent years, Ceausescu has steered the country into the political desert and has turned it into Europe's most unpopular state. He looks down upon "perestroyka" and "glasnost." But just 10 years ago, the West praised, cuddled, and supported Romania because of its independent attitude and because of its policy which was independent of Moscow.

Romania's anti-Sovietism is old. Bessarabia and Russia's push into the west triggered a dispute already during the last century. "During the war, Prime Minister, Conducator, and military dictator Jon Antonescu pursued close political and military cooperation with Germany," says Constantin Girbea, head of the Department of German-Language Countries in the Romanian Foreign Ministry. "The consequences of this are now history."

In point of fact, Antonescu, after Germany invaded Russia in 1941, also declared war upon this communist world power. When the Red Army during its advance to the West was only 200 km away from Romania's border, Antonescu switched sides on 23 August 1944. After that he was ousted, sentenced to death by a Romanian people's court, and executed in 1946. Before that, Romania liberated itself and recovered Northern Transylvania which had been occupied by Hungary. But the Soviets marched into Romania just the same in September 1945. They stayed there until 1958.

Romania's anti-Sovietism did sprout some blossoms thereafter. In 1956, this Balkan state pilloried the Soviet intervention in Budapest and even mobilized the army; it maintained diplomatic relations with Israel against Moscow's desires beyond 1967 and again remained on the sidelines in 1968 when the Warsaw Pact states invaded Prague.

In 1979, Romania along with the entire world protested the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and then, along with the UN majority, kept demanding the departure of the aggressor. The attack upon Afghanistan would have negative consequences for socialism, Bucharest predicted already in 1980. In 1984, Romania rejected a boycott of the Olympic Games in the United States. Its athletes in the end turned out to be the only ones from the East bloc in Los Angeles. In between, Romania once again bolted from the ranks of the East Bloc countries when it was the first communist country to enter into a trade agreement with the EC. And who still remembers that it was likewise Romania which was the first country between the Iron Curtain to recognize the Federal Republic?

Romania does not have any feelings of sympathy toward Moscow. The country has no reason to have such feelings: It was neither liberated nor spared by the Soviet Union. On the contrary: At the end of the war, Romania lost to this world power half of the Moldavian region, Moscow made the country one of the loser states, and demanded reparations amounting to several billions of dollars.

Bucharest also still harbors resentment against Hungary. The Romanians have not forgotten the occupation of Transylvania. Says Girbea: "The fact that the Soviets were forced to withdraw 10 divisions from Romania precisely because of the uprising in Hungary in 1956 is something that is considered an irony of history to this very day. From there it was only a short hop and a skip to the complete evacuation of Romania by the Soviets. But the current campaign against Romania springs from Hungary."

[6 May p 6]

["Gigantic Buildings Going Up in Bucharest—Ceausescu Builds Monuments to Himself"]

[Text]

Triumphal Gesture, Turned to Stone, Running Through Bucharest

Construction cranes reaching skyward. Steel monsters moving earth and sand. Columns of trucks, stirring up clouds of dust. Armies of workers, lowering pipes into

the ground, hoisting loads high up; trees being uprooted and planted again in the same place. Specialists can be seen clambering all over the new apartment buildings, covering the stone monuments to the leaders of state and party with bright sandstone plates and dark marble. Gentlemen wearing good suits can be seen striding through this hustle and bustle, holding blueprints in their hands, their faces serious and determined.

Bucharest has been one huge construction site for many years. Socialist ambition began to be translated into action early during the 1960's. The attractiveness and quaintness of this junior Paris were over and done with: Bulldozers turned entire sections of town into piles of rubble. Relentlessness was the order of the day against historical buildings, churches, and other undesirable evidence of a better past and this undertaking was justified with terms such as "progress" and "urban construction requirements."

This "progress" was manifested 30 years [as published] later in the form of half a million new apartments, kindergartens and schools, hospitals and cultural centers. New palatial office buildings, headquarters of international corporations and banks, symbols and witnesses of a blooming economy—these you look for in vain. And the capital is not in good shape either when it comes to hotels: the "Intercontinental" has long ago ceased being a maiden; the pomp and circumstance of the "Bucharesti" and the "Plaza Athenee" have paled into socialist everyday routine. Where once upon a time the rich and the mighty, the men and women of the world and the beautiful people from all the world used to have their rendezvous, there are businessmen and journalists, African socialists and South American revolutionaries plus Romanian blackmarketeers and informers coming and going now.

"The bombing raids during the war and the 1977 earthquake heavily damaged and decimated Bucharest's housing inventory," says chief architect Paul Focsa in an effort to apologize for the destructive vehemence and subsequent reconstruction orgies of the state. "In addition you have the fact that Bucharest grew from an area of 60 square kilometers and 750,000 inhabitants at the end of the war to 220 square kilometers and 2.2 million inhabitants. This is due to heavy industrialization as well as the incorporation of numerous suburbs."

In giving the new capital its new architectural face, Bucharest's architects borrowed from the builders of the Champs Elysees in Paris. New and imposing boulevards now radiate from the old town to the outskirts. Entire sections of town were uglified and devastated by blacktop clearings as wide as military drillfields and as long as runways for jumbo jets.

"The increase in auto traffic called for wider traffic arteries," the 59-year-old Focsa said in explaining the monstrous operations performed on the historical part of the city. "In Bucharest we have 400,000 private cars today, in other words, one for every five inhabitants. But we have preserved the historical treasures and the old buildings. Entire sections were not changed downtown."

That is nothing but euphemism! The truth is that a large part of the old town fell victim to the wrecker's ball and bulldozers. Thousands of inhabitants had to move out and many historical buildings and quite a few old churches were not spared by this destructive radical approach. Only later on, after worldwide protests, at least the houses of worship were treated gently; they were placed on technically complicated foundations and—naturally before hundreds of television and photo cameras—they were moved from their old places in the limelight back into the stage scenery of socialist urban construction.

Even greater structural changes were made along the outskirts of the city. New residential developments with tall, impersonal high-rise apartments and modern amenities sprang up. By 1990, a construction program involving another 70,000 apartments is to be completed. Said Focsa: "Our goal is: secure jobs, modern apartments, social facilities."

Bucharest's gigantic construction undertaking is already celebrating triumphs at three showcase points: in the suburbs, downtown above-ground, and during the construction of the subway from North to South and from East to West, below ground. Thousands of apartments were built in the vicinity of big industrial parks. Real satellite cities thus sprang up: in the north, right next to aircraft factories and production facilities for television sets; in the east, next to electronics companies as well as heavy industry and machine-building industry establishments; in the south, along with chemical and pharmaceutical plants, machine-tool factories and the atomic industry. But the mightiest, most expensive, and most ambitious construction projects were the result neither of social, nor of traffic engineering considerations. Through the erection of the "House of the Republic" and the "Victory of Socialism" Boulevard, as well as the construction of a subway, president and party boss Nicolae Ceausescu wants to build monuments for himself already during his lifetime.

"The need for auditoriums, museums, and 40,000 new apartments in the inner city led to the decision to build a real center for the agencies of the government and the party as well as for the population," chief architect Focsa said in defending this mammoth project in the very heart of the city. "The population is waiting anxiously for its completion."

The Romanian miracle did indeed impress the world but critical comments are more numerous than words of praise. The little Dimbovita Stream, which used to divide the city and which produced a horrible stench, was improved by means of a river control project, it was graded and tamed with steel and concrete. In some sections, it runs below ground. From the "House of the

Republic," which houses the Council of State, the Cabinet, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania, as well as a cultural center with three auditoriums and a capacity of thousands, one can neither see nor smell the little Dimbovita River. Said Focsa about the "House of the Republic": "We are proud of it. It is just about to be completed."

Compared to Romania's structural elephantiasis, East Berlin's showcase buildings look puny. The 3.5-km-long and 92-m-wide "Victory of Socialism" Boulevard runs from the "House of the Republic" through Bucharest like a triumphal gesture turned to stone. The boulevard of records is flanked by 9-story apartment houses made of bright artificial stone; the promised 40,000 apartments with all amenities for ordinary comrades however are still waiting for the party bigshots and other privileged individuals to move in. They can pay higher rents.

In front of the pompous building fronts, craftsmen laid patterns of red and gray paving stones for the wide sidewalks and service roads. In the middle of this screaming example of socialist modesty, countless fountains will attract attention in the summer with their water display; the green leaves on 12 rows of trees will tone down the gray shades of concrete and stone and this magnificent layout is to be illuminated from tall lamp posts. The Boulevard—which, according to estimates by foreign experts, including the new buildings, had a price tag of $1 billion on it—is lined by the "House of Science, Culture, and Education," the National Library, several theaters, and the "Unira" department store with a sales surface of 72,000 square meters. And here is yet another superlative: The "Unira" department store is ten times bigger than Bucharest's second-largest department store. A street branches off downhill, from the "Victory of Socialism" Boulevard, to the Parliament Building and to the seat of the patriarch of Romania's Orthodox Church.

But Bucharest is erecting not only monuments in order to eternally remind everybody of Nicolae Ceausescu. They even built something for the population: the 15-lake area north of the city, covering a total water surface of 1,600 hectares, was turned into a huge and by now very popular closed-in recreation area; the Dimbovita was dammed up to form a lake; and a new lake, named after a former nobleman, was made in the south of the city.

Tens of thousands of workers were mobilized to build expensive showcase projects in Bucharest but the upkeep and care of streets and squares, sidewalks and streetcar tracks, apartment houses and hotels were neglected. The streets are full of potholes, there is rubble on quite a few squares, on many sidewalks you sink into the muck when it rains, and the streetcars rattle along on poorly supported and worn-out rails, wobbling through the capital.

Streets and squares are dangerous traps because of inadequate lighting especially at night. But this peacetime blackout also has its good sides: at least at night, you do not see the run-down condition of many apartment houses and office buildings. At every step, the observer gets negative impressions of Bucharest's downtown section. Everywhere there is a lack of paint, even minor building repairs are not done, there is indifference toward the decay of good buildings and the functional inefficiency and ineffectiveness of many things.

The expensive mammoth structures in the heart of Bucharest are considered to be Ceausescu monuments but the new subway is his pet project. "There were blueprints for a subway even back during the 1920's, chief planner Tiberiu Moldovan said in defending the project. "Construction was begun in 1975; the first section was placed in operation in 1979. Today, 50 subway kilometers with 32 stations are in operation. A 9-km section will be turned over to the subway in August 1989 and plans call for additional segments in all directions of the compass. The suburbs, with their huge residential quarters, will move closer to the inner city."

The subway is not only the Ceausescu's favorite; it is also the pride of its builders, of the relatives of the top leadership, and even the man in the street. A train consists of six cars with a capacity of 1,800 passengers. "One million people use the subway daily," boasts engineer Moldovan. "But that accounts for only 50 percent of all public transportation users. Comrade Ceausescu strongly promoted the construction of the subway but he established one condition: The project should be accomplished without foreign participation. This condition was met. Not a single foreigner participated in the construction job—not even during the erection of a complicated, computer-controlled central monitoring facility. Even the original cooperation with the Soviet Union was abandoned. It was too expensive. One centimeter of subway cost 4,000 lei or 800 marks. To my knowledge, there were no serious accidents or even dead during the construction work."

The subway is important in terms of transportation and it is also socially justified in a society that has few private cars. "For 2 lei you can travel on the entire line net," Moldovan says proudly. "That amounts to about 40 pfennigs. Every Romanian can afford to ride the subway." Indeed, there is a big crush on the platforms and in the cars. Platforms and subway cars are colorless and plain-looking; ticket machines and escalators are still working; inside the cars, instead of a babble of voices and lots of laughter, there is silence, as almost everywhere in Romania. Only the train conductor's voice now and then interrupts this oppressive atmosphere. Why are the people silent? A diplomat answered the question: "Because nobody trusts anybody else."

[Box, p 6]

Shots, Dead People, and Pretty Words at the Border

It is only 60 km from Timisoara to the Romanian-Yugoslav border. No sight or sound of any human beings long before you get to the turnpikes at Moravita. All is quiet on

the roads. Only now and then do you see a horse-drawn wagon, very rarely a car. The few trucks and passenger cars belong to the army or the border police.

The area crawls with uniforms and weapons. But at the border crossing point, Anca Timofte, the lady manager of the tourist office in the Timis District and the city of Timisoara, can work undisturbed in her little office. Not a single passenger car has for quite some time approached the border station from Belgrade which is 90 km away. Customs office chief Joan Panajtescu is also having a quiet Saturday morning.

Are things always as quiet as this around here? Panajtescu shakes his head. "No, normally there is lots going on here," he says. "And everybody who wants to come in is checked out very strictly. We are above all looking for weapons, explosives, drugs, and instruments of terrorism ." But Panajtescu has nothing to say at all about the fact that incoming tourists carrying food, consumer goods, textiles, and household appliances for relatives and acquaintances in Transylvania and in the Banat must declare those items, pay duty on them, and in most cases, unload them and spread them out.

Right now, there is some kind of activity at the border crossing point only at a construction site. A restaurant and a shopping center are to be opened for the first time here by way of inaugurating the travel season. Even the chief of the border police stationed here has time to chat with curious foreigners.

"I have never heard anything about anybody shooting at escapees," says Captain Nicolae Pertza, after he got permission from higher up by phone to give information to a reporter from the FRG. "All is quite here. We have no escapees here."

Customs office boss Panajtescu, Captain Pertza, and Anca Timofte even allow themselves to be photographed. Patrolling border policemen carrying Soviet submachine-guns, East German binoculars, and Romanian fur caps however take cover as we approach with the camera.

Suddenly, Captain Pertza is in a hurry to get back to his office. Any fleeing Romanians, by any chance? "Never heard of it." Shots, dead people? Captain Pertza looks over to the lamps and searchlights and then he waves airily: "At most, we have some weapons and drug smuggling here." He sidesteps other questions: "I am not competent to answer that."

But two Transylvania Saxons know more. They escaped to freedom across the Romanian-Yugoslav border 40 km to the South; they are Emil Jancu Budac, 40, and Guenther Foelger, 19. "Together with two other men, I started toward the border on a 200-km trek through the Southern Carpathians and the Banat Mountains," Bancu reports. "We were lucky, we encountered neither informers, nor soldiers. In the Yugoslav town of Bela Crkva, we turned ourselves in to the authorities."

Both men agreed in telling us that the border was well guarded in the sector involved. There are numerous informers on the Romanian side. "At first they offer to help the refugees," Budac complained. "But when the time is right they betray the refugees to the army or the border police to get a bonus of 600 lei. That comes to about 120 marks. That is how much a Romanian workers makes in a week."

Anybody who manages to elude the snoops is not infrequently picked up by the dogs of the Romanian border police and the police officers fire upon any refugees without warning. Budac reported that there has been talk to the effect that 400 people have been shot along the border. "In Yugoslavia, they even speak of terror," Budac continues to report. "But they obviously do not follow up on the information supplied by the refugees."

Budac and Foelger furthermore reproach the Yugoslav government. "Refugees from Romania are housed in camps after they arrive in Yugoslavia; they are forced to do heavy labor and they are sent back to their country if they are Romanians. But the Yugoslav newspaper BORBA stated that refugees from Romania would be safe in Yugoslavia. So, their number went up. They walked into a terrible trap. It is said that Romania reciprocates for the extradition of refugees by sending freightcars full of salt."

According to Budac and Foelger, Transylvania Saxons and Swabians from the Banat are referred to the German embassy in Belgrade where they are given a passport as well as a small loan for the trip to West Germany. "But they do not get by without 15 days in prison," says Budac. "Anybody who enters Yugoslavia illegally is quickly sentenced to 2 weeks in jail."

In Yugoslavia, the two refugees also became familiar with the UN camp Padinska Skela. Budac estimates the camp's capacity at 400 persons. "Approximately 90 percent of them come from Romania," he reports. "They cite dissatisfaction with political conditions, disregard for human rights, hunger, shortages, poverty, and oppression as reasons for escape."

In prison and in camp, Budac heard about quite a few human destinies. Surprisingly many people escaped for religious reasons, he tells us. Among the Protestants, despair moreover is so great that half of the minister positions are vacant. The Catholics particularly have complained about the lack of bibles. None of them have been printed for many years and bible imports are strictly outlawed. A bible in your hand baggage is almost as serious and as dangerous as drugs or pornographic material. A refugee was persecuted because he had passed on something that Protestant Bishop Klein had said. Here is what Klein said: "The Christian Church of Romania has survived the Tartars; it will also survive the Ceausescu regime."