

LBRIS | Marius Mioc

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The Anticommunist Romanian Revolution of 1989

(Written for people with little knowledge
about Romania)



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Romania is a country with 22 million inhabitants, located in South-eastern Europe.

The Romanian nation was formed after the conquest of the Dacian tribes¹ by the Roman Empire during Emperor Trajan (101-106 AD)².

The ruling of Rome in the North of the Danube, a territory that is part of present Romania, lasted until 271 AD, when Emperor Aurelian ordered the retreat of the Roman army. A small part of the present Romanian territory, Dobrogea (Dobruja), which lies in the South of the Danube, remained part of the Roman Empire for a longer time.

During the Roman domination, colonists from all over the Empire came to (present) Romania. Latin was assimilated also by the Dacians.

Saint Apostle Andrew brought Christianity to Romania. Romania remained outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire, but was in close contact with it. Today Orthodox Christianity is the religion of 95% of the ethnic Romanians.

¹ As the ancient Greek historian Herodot says, the Dacians were "the most brave and courageous of all Thracians".

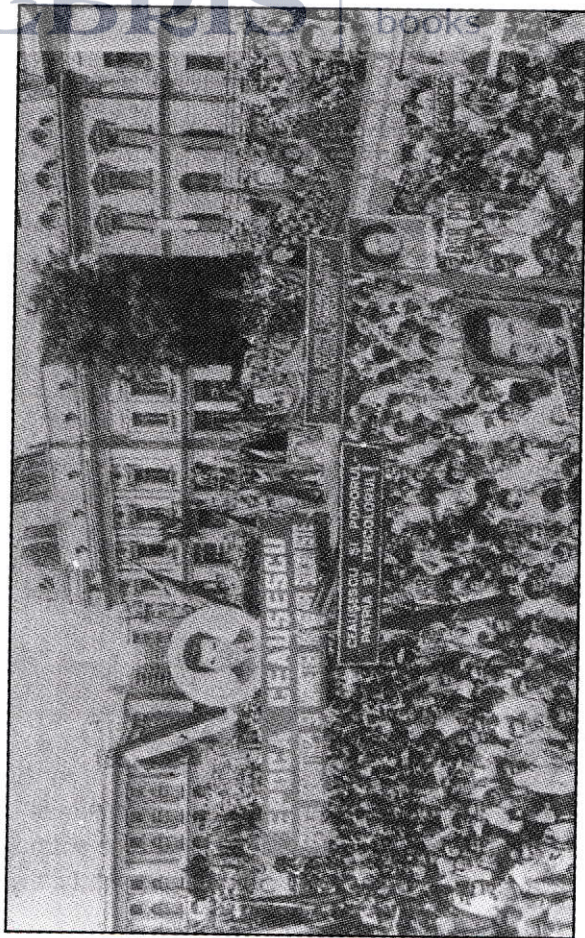
² To celebrate the victory in the Dacians wars, Emperor Trajan ordered a column to be built in Rome. This column has lasted until today.

What made thousands of Romanians risk their lives in 1989 in their fight against the communist regime? In order to understand this, a short presentation of the life in Romania in the period preceding the Revolution is necessary.

Political freedom was not allowed in Romania during the communist regime. Neither was freedom for press or speech. The television programme lasted only two hours every day and was full of political propaganda. The personality cult of president Ceausescu was omnipresent. The TV and radio programmes and the newspapers were full of comments about how good president Ceausescu was, what a genius he was, how the entire world spun around him and how the entire Romanian people loved their president. This kind of propaganda was present even in schools, where children learnt songs that glorified president Ceausescu.

The cultural life was strangled by the political regime.

It was almost impossible to find a good thing to see on TV. The censorship was present even in music. The communist authorities rejected different kinds of music (rock, for example), not necessarily for political reasons; they just did not like them. Consequently, they were very rare in TV or radio programmes.



A meeting organised by the communist authorities. The participants were carrying portraits of Ceausescu and his wife.