

Romanian thugs trash opposition offices

by Konstantin George

On Jan. 28, one day after well over 100,000 Romanian patriots demonstrated peacefully in the capital city of Bucharest demanding the resignation of Romania's communist National Salvation Front regime, the Soviet stooges of the NSF struck back, using terror tactics borrowed from the behavior of the Romanian Communist Party during the immediate postwar years, 1945-47, against the non-Communist majority. The not-so-democratic Stalinist face of Romania's new President, Ion Iliescu, showed itself to the world, when NSF thugs invaded and ransacked the headquarters of the recently founded two largest opposition parties in the country, the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants Party.

The siege of the parties' headquarters forced the president of the National Peasants Party to leave in an armored car under military escort. "We have lost our office; General Secretary Radu Campeanu left through the window," said Felix-Fernand Petrarch of the National Liberal Party to Reuters in a telephone interview from inside the building. Foreign reporters were refused entry by people who appeared to support the NSF.

The National Liberals' insignia was torn down and replaced with posters of the NSF.

This vandalism occurred during the course of the regime's well-organized and well-funded "counter-demonstration," which brought into central Bucharest dozens of truckloads of "supporters" of the Soviet-backed regime, given the day off, with full pay, from Bucharest-area factories.

Phony vs. real revolutions

The contrast between the two demonstrations tells all concerning the difference between Romania's first—and phony—"revolution," the Army coup of Dec. 22 which replaced the despotism of the Ceausescu clan with a gang of Soviet agent Communists, committed to reestablishing a dictatorship, and the genuine second revolution—exemplified by the Jan. 28 turnout in Bucharest, which reflected the mood of the overwhelming majority of Romanians, who want to be rid of Communist despotism once and for all.

The demonstration on Sunday, Jan. 28 against the Communist Iliescu regime was very emotional, but totally peaceful. Western press reports warning of "anarchy" and "chaos" are either lies, or misinformed, taking seriously the propa-

ganda being put out by the Iliescu regime. If "chaos" occurs in Romania, it will not be because the population wants the Communists ousted from power, but because of the obstinate refusal by the Communists, a tiny power-hungry, Soviet-run minority, to surrender the reins of power.

This refusal to relinquish any real power is increasing by the day the rage of Romanians against this quisling regime. The rage is now greater than ever, after the vandalism against the opposition parties, and after the scandalous way in which Romanian Television covered the anti-Iliescu demonstration.

Romanian Television did not show the anti-Iliescu demonstration at all. Instead, it continually focused, with close-ups, on a small group that appeared "miraculously" before the cameras with pro-Iliescu and pro-NSF banners, giving the impression of a pro-Iliescu "mass" demonstration alongside that of the opposition. Romanian television broadcast what it claimed to be live coverage of Iliescu's speech to the crowd, when he appeared on a balcony. In reality, a heavily censored tape was broadcast, carefully editing out all parts where Iliescu was booed and whistled down by the crowd. For the rest of the evening, Romanian TV broadcast appeals by the NSF regime, warning the country of "the danger of chaos and anarchy," as the only alternative to NSF rule.

Bucharest was not the only scene of opposition protests that Sunday. In the city of Timisoara, near Hungary and Yugoslavia, 3,000 people held a rally calling for the Iliescu regime to resign. The protesters also demanded a return of land to the farmers.

Decrees and insults

The biased media coverage was the last straw for Romania's opposition forces, who are now insisting that the Communist Party immediately relinquish its control over the mass media. The response by the National Salvation Front was to come up with an ingenious "solution" to the problem of media partisanship. On Jan. 30, led by its director Aurel Dragas Munteanu, the entire leadership of Romanian State Television "resigned" from the NSF, and declared themselves "non-partisan," in that they are no longer formally members of a political party. Parallel with this, the NSF passed a decree declaring party membership and functions in the mass media incompatible.

In one stroke, all Romanian patriots who belong to the newly created anti-Communist parties, were banned from any access to the media.

Ion Iliescu will continue with decrees and new tricks to pull every string to stay in power. His Stalinist maneuvers, however, will not be accepted by a citizenry that wants a permanent end to the past 45 years of misery and tyranny, of Communist rule in their country. The second revolution, as the Jan. 28 demonstration showed, has declared war on Romania's would-be new dictator, "Ion-icolae Ceau-iliescu."