

WHAT WAS SOCIALISM, AND WHY DID IT FALL?

THE STARTLING DISINTEGRATION of Communist Party rule in Eastern Europe in 1989, and its somewhat lengthier unraveling in the Soviet Union between 1985 and 1991, rank among the century's most momentous occurrences. Especially because neither policy-makers nor area specialists predicted them, these events will yield much analysis after the fact, as scholars develop the hindsight necessary for understanding what they failed to grasp before. In this chapter, I aim to stimulate discussion about why Soviet-style socialism fell. Because I believe answers to the question require understanding how socialism "worked," I begin with an analysis of this and then suggest how it intersected fatefully with certain features of its world-system context.

What Was Socialism?

The socialist societies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union differed from one another in significant respects—for instance, in the intensity, span, and effectiveness of central control, in the extent of popular support or resistance, and in the degree and timing of efforts at reform. Notwithstanding these differences within "formerly existing socialism,"¹ I follow theorists such as Kornai in opting for a single analytical model of it.² The family resemblances among socialist countries were more important than their variety, for analytic purposes, much as we can best comprehend French, Japa-

This chapter was originally entitled "What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?" and was delivered as a lecture for the Center for Comparative Research in History, Society and Culture, at the University of California, Davis, in January 1993. I am grateful to those who invited me—William Hagen, G. William Skinner, and Carol A. Smith—as well as to members of the Center's seminar, for a very stimulating discussion. I also received helpful advice from Ashraf Chani.

Earlier forms of the argument appeared in "Theorizing Socialism" and in my book *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991). The underlying conceptualization was developed in 1988; after 1989 I added some thoughts on how the model might illuminate the system's collapse. Reprinted from *Contention: Debates in Society, Culture, and Science* 1, no. 3 (1993), by permission of Indiana University Press.

nese, West German, and North American societies as variants of a single capitalist system. Acknowledging, then, that my description applies more fully to certain countries and time periods than to others, I treat them all under one umbrella.

For several decades, the analysis of socialism has been an international industry, employing both Western political scientists and Eastern dissidents. Since 1989 this industry has received a massive infusion of new raw materials, as once-secret files are opened and translations appear of research by local scholars (especially Polish and Hungarian) into their own declining socialist systems.³ My taste in such theories is "indigenist": I have found most useful the analyses of East Europeans concerning the world in which they lived. The following summary owes much to that work, and it is subject to refinement and revision as new research appears.⁴ Given temporal and spatial constraints, I will compress elements of a longer discussion, emphasizing how production was organized and the consequences of this for consumption and for markets.⁵ I believe these themes afford the best entry into why Party rule crumbled much faster than anyone expected.

Production

From the earliest days of the "totalitarian" model, Americans' image of "Communism" was of an autocratic, all-powerful state inexorably imposing its harsh will on its subjects. Even after most area specialists ceased to use the term "totalitarian" in their writing, the image of totalitarian autocracy persisted with both the broader public and many politicians; indeed, it underpinned Ronald Reagan's view of the "evil empire" as late as the 1980s. Yet the image was by and large wrong. Communist Party states were not all-powerful: they were comparatively weak. Because socialism's leaders managed only partially and fitfully to win a positive and supporting attitude from their citizens—that is, to be seen as legitimate—the regimes were constantly undermined by internal resistance and hidden forms of sabotage *at all system levels*.⁶ This contributed much to their final collapse. I will describe briefly some of the elements of socialist nontotalitarianism and signal a few places where resistance lay.⁷

Socialism's fragility begins with the system of "centralized planning," which the center neither adequately planned nor controlled. Central planners would draw up a plan with quantities of everything they wanted to see produced, known as targets. They would disaggregate the plan into pieces appropriate for execution and estimate how much investment and how many raw materials were needed if managers of firms were to fill their targets. Managers learned early on, however, that not only did the targets increase annually but the materials required often did not arrive on time or in the

right amounts. So they would respond by bargaining their plan: demanding more investments and raw materials than the amounts actually necessary for their targets. Every manager, and every level of the bureaucracy, padded budgets and requests in hopes of having enough, in the actual moment of production. (A result of the bargaining process, of course, was that central planners always had faulty information about what was really required for production, and this impeded their ability to plan.) Then, if managers somehow ended up with more of some material than they needed, they hoarded it. Hoarded material had two uses: it could be kept for the next production cycle, or it could be exchanged with some other firm for something one's own firm lacked. These exchanges or barter of material were a crucial component of behavior within centralized planning.

A result of all the padding of budgets and hoarding of materials was widespread shortages, for which reason socialist economies are called economies of shortage.⁸ Shortages were sometimes relative, as when sufficient quantities of materials and labor for a given level of output actually existed, but not where and when they were needed. Sometimes shortages were absolute, since relative shortage often resulted in lowered production, or—as in Romania—since items required for production or consumption were being exported. The causes of shortage were primarily that people lower down in the planning process were asking for more materials than they required and then hoarding whatever they got. Underlying their behavior was what economists call soft budget constraints—that is, if a firm was losing money, the center would bail it out. In our own economy, with certain exceptions (such as Chrysler and the savings and loan industry), budget constraints are hard: if you cannot make ends meet, you go under. But in socialist economies, it did not matter if firms asked for extra investment or hoarded raw materials; they paid no penalty for it.

A fictitious example will help to illustrate—say, a shoe factory that makes women's shoes and boots. Central planners set the factory's targets for the year at one hundred thousand pairs of shoes and twenty thousand pairs of boots, for which they think management will need ten tons of leather, a half ton of nails, and one thousand pounds of glue. The manager calculates what he would need under ideal conditions, if his workers worked consistently during three eight-hour shifts. He adds some for wastage, knowing the workers are lazy and the machines cut badly; some for theft, since workers are always stealing nails and glue; some to trade with other firms in case he comes up short on a crucial material at a crucial moment; and some more for the fact that the tannery always delivers less than requested. The manager thus refuses the plan assigned him, saying he cannot produce that number of shoes and boots unless he gets thirteen rather than ten tons of leather, a ton rather than a half-ton of nails, and two thousand rather than one thou-

sand pounds of glue. Moreover, he says he needs two new power stitchers from Germany, without which he can produce nothing. In short, he has bargained his plan. Then when he gets some part of these goods, he stockpiles them or trades excess glue to the manager of a coat factory in exchange for some extra pigskin. If leather supplies still prove insufficient, he will make fewer boots and more shoes, or more footwear of small size, so as to use less leather; never mind if women's feet get cold in winter, or women with big feet can find nothing to wear.

With all this padding and hoarding, it is clear why shortage was endemic to socialist systems, and why the main problem for firms was not whether they could meet (or generate) demand but whether they could procure adequate supplies. So whereas the chief problem of economic actors in Western economies is to get profits by selling things, the chief problem for socialism's economic actors was to procure things. Capitalist firms compete with each other for markets in which they will make a profit; socialist firms competed to maximize their bargaining power with suppliers higher up. In our society, the problem is other sellers, and to outcompete them you have to befriend the buyer. Thus our clerks and shop owners smile and give the customer friendly service because they want business; customers can be grouchy, but it will only make the clerk try harder. In socialism, the locus of competition was elsewhere: your competitor was other buyers, other procurers; and to outcompete them you needed to befriend those higher up who supplied you. Thus in socialism it was not the clerk—the provider, or “seller”—who was friendly (they were usually grouchy) but the procurers, the customers, who sought to ingratiate themselves with smiles, bribes, or favors. The work of procuring generated whole networks of cozy relations among economic managers and their bureaucrats, clerks and their customers. We would call this corruption, but that is because getting supplies is not a problem for capitalists: the problem is getting sales. In a word, for capitalists salesmanship is at a premium; for socialist managers, the premium was on acquisitionsmanship, or procurement.

So far I have been describing the clientelism and bargaining that undercut the Party center's effective control. A similar weakness in vertical power relations emerges from the way socialist production and shortage bred workers' oppositional consciousness and resistance. Among the many things in short supply in socialist systems was labor. Managers hoarded labor, just like any other raw material, because they never knew how many workers they would need. Fifty workers working three eight-hour shifts six days a week might be enough to meet a firm's targets—if all the materials were on hand all month long. But this never happened. Many of those workers would stand idle for part of the month, and in the last ten days when most of the materials were finally on hand the firm would need 75 workers working overtime to complete the plan. The manager therefore kept 75 workers

on the books, even though most of the time he needed fewer; and since all other managers were doing the same, labor was scarce. This provided a convenient if unplanned support for the regimes' guaranteed employment.

An important result of labor's scarcity was that managers of firms had relatively little leverage over their workers. Furthermore, because supply shortages caused so much uncertainty in the production process, managers had to turn over to workers much control over this process, lest work come to a standstill.⁹ That is, structurally speaking, workers under socialism had a somewhat more powerful position relative to management than do workers in capitalism. Just as managers' bargaining with bureaucrats undercut central power, so labor's position in production undercut that of management.

More than this, the very organization of the workplace bred opposition to Party rule. Through the Party-controlled trade union and the frequent merger of Party and management functions, Party directives were continually felt in the production process—and, from workers' viewpoint, they were felt as unnecessary and disruptive. Union officials either meddled unhelpfully or contributed nothing, only to claim credit for production results that workers knew were their own. Workers participated disdainfully—as sociologist Michael Burawoy found in his studies of Hungarian factories—in Party-organized production rituals, such as work-unit competitions, voluntary workdays, and production campaigns; they resented these coerced expressions of their supposed commitment to a wonderful socialism.¹⁰ Thus instead of securing workers' consent, workplace rituals sharpened their consciousness and resistance. Against an official “cult of work” used to motivate cadres and workers toward fulfilling the plan, many workers developed an oppositional cult of nonwork, imitating the Party bosses and trying to do as little as possible for their paycheck. Cadres often found no way around this internal sabotage, which by reducing productivity deepened the problems of socialist economies to the point of crisis.

The very forms of Party rule in the workplace, then, tended to focus, politicize, and turn against it the popular discontent that capitalist societies more successfully disperse, depoliticize, and deflect. In this way, socialism produced a split between “us” and “them,” workers and Party leaders, founded on a lively consciousness that “they” are exploiting “us.” This consciousness was yet another thing that undermined socialist regimes. To phrase it in Gramscian terms, the lived experience of people in socialism precluded its utopian discourse from becoming hegemonic—precluded, that is, the softening of coercion with consent.¹¹

Ruling Communist Parties developed a variety of mechanisms to try to obscure this fact of their nature from their subjects, mechanisms designed to produce docile subject dispositions and to ensure that discontent did not become outright opposition. I will briefly discuss two of these mechanisms: the apparatus of surveillance, and redistribution of the social product.

Surveillance and Paternalistic Redistribution

In each country, some equivalent of the KGB was instrumental in maintaining surveillance, with varying degrees of intensity and success. Particularly effective were the Secret Police in the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Romania, but networks of informers and collaborators operated to some extent in all. These formed a highly elaborate “production” system parallel to the system for producing goods—a system producing paper, which contained real and falsified histories of the people over whom the Party ruled. Let us call the immediate product “dossiers,” or “files,” though the ultimate product was political subjects and subject dispositions useful to the regime. This parallel production system was at least as important as the system for producing goods, for producers of files were much better paid than producers of goods. My image of this parallel production system comes from the memoirs of Romanian political prisoner Herbert Zilber:

The first great socialist industry was that of the production of files. . . . This new industry has an army of workers: the informers. It works with ultramodern electronic equipment (microphones, tape recorders, etc.), plus an army of typists with their typewriters. Without all this, socialism could not have survived. . . . In the socialist bloc, people and things exist only through their files. All our existence is in the hands of him who possesses files and is constituted by him who constructs them. Real people are but the reflection of their files.¹²

The work of producing files (and thereby political subjects) created an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion dividing people from one another. One never knew whom one could trust, who might be informing on one to the police about one’s attitudes toward the regime or one’s having an American to dinner. Declarations might also be false. Informers with a denunciation against someone else were never asked what might be their motive for informing; their perhaps-enviuous words entered directly into constituting another person’s file—thus another person’s sociopolitical being. Moreover, like all other parts of the bureaucracy, the police too padded their “production” figures, for the fact of an entry into the file was often more important than its veracity.¹³ The existence of this shadowy system of production could have grave effects on the people “processed” through it, and the assumption that it was omnipresent contributed much to its success, in some countries, in suppressing unwanted opposition.

If surveillance was the negative face of these regimes’ problematic legitimation, its positive face was their promises of social redistribution and welfare. At the center of both the Party’s official ideology and its efforts to secure popular support was “socialist paternalism,” which justified Party rule with the claim that the Party would take care of everyone’s needs by collecting the total social product and then making available whatever peo-

ple needed—cheap food, jobs, medical care, affordable housing, education, and so on. Party authorities claimed, as well, that they were better able to assess and fill these needs than were individuals or families, who would always tend to want more than their share. Herein lay the Party’s paternalism: it acted like a father who gives handouts to the children as he sees fit. The Benevolent Father Party educated people to express needs it would then fill, and discouraged them from taking the initiative that would enable them to fill these needs on their own. The promises—socialism’s basic social contract—did not go unnoticed, and as long as economic conditions permitted their partial fulfillment, certain socialist regimes gained legitimacy as a result. But this proved impossible to sustain.

Beyond its effects on people’s attitudes, paternalism had important consequences for the entire system of production discussed previously and for consumption; here I shift to the question of why consumption was so central in the resistance to socialism. A Party that pretends to meet its citizens’ needs through redistribution and that insists on doing so exclusively—that is, without enlisting their independent efforts—must control a tremendous fund of resources to redistribute. Nationalizing the means of production helped provide this, and so did a relentlessly “productionist” orientation, with ever-increased production plans and exhortations to greater effort.

The promise of redistribution was an additional reason, besides my earlier argument about shortages, why socialism worked differently from capitalism. Socialism’s inner drive was to accumulate not profits, like capitalist ones, but distributable resources. This is more than simply a drive for autarchy, reducing dependency on the outside: it aims to increase dependency of those within. Striving to accumulate resources for redistribution involves things for which profit is totally irrelevant. In capitalism, those who run lemonade stands endeavor to serve thirsty customers in ways that make a profit and outcompete other lemonade stand owners. In socialism, the point was not profit but the relationship between thirsty persons and the one with the lemonade—the Party center, which appropriated from producers the various ingredients (lemons, sugar, water) and then mixed the lemonade to reward them with, as it saw fit. Whether someone made a profit was irrelevant: the transaction underscored the center’s paternalistic superiority over its citizens—that is, its capacity to decide who got more lemonade and who got less.

Controlling the ingredients fortified the center’s capacity to redistribute things. But this capacity would be even greater if the center controlled not only the lemons, sugar, and water but the things they come from: the lemon trees, the ground for growing sugar beets and the factories that process them, the wells and the well-digging machinery. That is, most valuable of all to the socialist bureaucracy was to get its hands not just on resources but on resources that generated *other* usable resources, resources that were them-

selves further productive. Socialist regimes wanted not just eggs but the goose that lays them. Thus if capitalism's inner logic rests on accumulating surplus value, the inner logic of socialism was to accumulate means of production.¹⁴

The emphasis on keeping resources at the center for redistribution is one reason why items produced in socialist countries so often proved uncompetitive on the world market. Basically, most of these goods were not being made to be sold competitively: they were being either centrally accumulated or redistributed at low prices—effectively given away. Thus whether a dress was pretty and well made or ugly and missewn was irrelevant, since profit was not at issue: the dress would be “given away” at a subsidized price, not sold. In fact, the whole point was *not* to sell things: the center wanted to keep as much as possible under its control, because that was how it had redistributive power; and it wanted to give away the rest, because that was how it confirmed its legitimacy with the public. Selling things competitively was therefore beside the point. So too were ideas of “efficient” production, which for a capitalist would enhance profits by wasting less material or reducing wages. But whatever goes into calculating a profit—costs of material or labor inputs, or sales of goods—was unimportant in socialism until very late in the game. Instead, “efficiency” was understood to mean “the full use of existing resources,” “the maximization of given capacities” rather than of results, all so as to redirect resources to a goal greater than satisfying the population's needs.¹⁵ In other words, what was rational in socialism differed from capitalist rationality. Both are stupid in their own way, but differently so.

Consumption

Socialism's redistributive emphasis leads to one of the great paradoxes of a paternalist regime claiming to satisfy needs. Having constantly to amass means of production so as to enhance redistributive power caused Party leaders to prefer heavy industry (steel mills, machine construction) at the expense of consumer industry (processed foods, or shoes). After all, once a consumer got hold of something, the center no longer controlled it; central power was less served by giving things away than by producing things it could continue to control. The central fund derived more from setting up a factory to make construction equipment than from a shoe factory or a chocolate works. In short, these systems had a basic tension between what was necessary to legitimate them—redistributing things to the masses—and what was necessary to their power—accumulating things at the center. The tension was mitigated where people took pride in their economy's development (that is, building heavy industry might also bring legitimacy), but my experience is that the legitimating effects of redistribution were more important by far.

Each country addressed this tension in its own way. For example, Hungary after 1968 and Poland in the 1970s gave things away more, while Romania and Czechoslovakia accumulated things more; but the basic tension existed everywhere. The socialist social contract guaranteed people food and clothing but did not promise (as capitalist systems do) quality, ready availability, and choice. Thus the system's mode of operation tended to sacrifice consumption, in favor of production and controlling the products. This paradoxical neglect of consumption contributed to the long lines about which we heard so much (and we heard about them, of course, because we live in a system to which consumption is crucial).

In emphasizing this neglect of consumption as against building up the central resource base, I have so far been speaking of the *formally* organized economy of socialism—some call it the “first” or “official” economy. But this is not the whole story. Since the center would not supply what people needed, they struggled to do so themselves, developing in the process a huge repertoire of strategies for obtaining consumer goods and services. These strategies, called the “second” or “informal” economy, spanned a wide range from the quasi-legal to the definitely illegal.¹⁶ In most socialist countries it was not illegal to moonlight for extra pay—by doing carpentry, say—but people doing so often stole materials or illegally used tools from their workplace; or they might manipulate state goods to sell on the side. Clerks in stores might earn favors or extra money, for example, by saving scarce goods to sell to special customers, who tipped them or did some important favor in return. Also part of the second economy was the so-called “private plot” of collective farm peasants, who held it legally and in theory could do what they wanted with it—grow food for their own table or to sell in the market at state-controlled prices. But although the plot itself was legal, people obtained high outputs from it not just by virtue of hard work but also by stealing from the collective farm: fertilizer and herbicides, fodder for their pigs or cows, work time for their own weeding or harvesting, tractor time and fuel for plowing their plot, and so on. The second economy, then, which provisioned a large part of consumer needs, was parasitic upon the state economy and inseparable from it. It developed precisely because the state economy tended to ignore consumption. To grasp the interconnection of the two economies is crucial, lest one think that simply dismantling the state sector will automatically enable entrepreneurship—already present in embryo—to flourish. On the contrary: parts of the second economy will wither and die if deprived of the support of the official, state economy.

It is clear from what I have said that whereas consumption in our own society is considered primarily a socioeconomic question, the relative neglect of consumer interests in socialism made consumption deeply political. In Romania in the 1980s (an extreme case), to kill and eat your own calf was a political act, because the government prohibited killing calves: you were

supposed to sell them cheap to the state farm, for export. Romanian villagers who fed me veal (having assured themselves of my complicity) did so with special satisfaction. It was also illegal for urbanites to go and buy forty kilograms of potatoes directly from the villagers who grew potatoes on their private plot, because the authorities suspected that villagers would charge more than the state-set price, thus enriching themselves. So Romanian policemen routinely stopped cars riding low on the chassis and confiscated produce they found inside.

Consumption became politicized in yet another way: the very definition of “needs” became a matter for resistance and dispute. “Needs,” as we should know from our own experience, are not given: they are created, developed, expanded—the work especially of the advertising business. It is advertising’s job to convince us that we need things we didn’t know we needed, or that if we feel unhappy, it’s because we need something (a shrink, or a beer, or a Marlboro, or a man). Our need requires only a name, and it can be satisfied with a product or service. Naming troubled states, labeling them as needs, and finding commodities to fill them is at the heart of our economy. Socialism, by contrast, which rested not on devising infinite kinds of things to sell people but on claiming to satisfy people’s *basic* needs, had a very unadorned definition of them—in keeping with socialist egalitarianism. Indeed, some Hungarian dissidents wrote of socialism’s relationship to needs as a “dictatorship.”¹⁷ As long as the food offered was edible or the clothes available covered you and kept you warm, that should be sufficient. If you had trouble finding even these, that just meant you were not looking hard enough. No planner presumed to investigate what kinds of goods people wanted, or worked to name new needs for newly created products and newly developed markets.

At the same time, however, regime policies paradoxically made consumption a problem. Even as the regimes prevented people from consuming by not making goods available, they insisted that under socialism, the standard of living would constantly improve. This stimulated consumer appetites, perhaps with an eye to fostering increased effort and tying people into the system. Moreover, socialist ideology presented consumption as a “right.” The system’s organization exacerbated consumer desire further by frustrating it and thereby making it the focus of effort, resistance, and discontent. Anthropologist John Borneman sees in the relation between desire and goods a major contrast between capitalism and socialism. Capitalism, he says, repeatedly renders desire concrete and specific, and offers specific—if ever-changing—goods to satisfy it. Socialism, in contrast, aroused desire *without* focalizing it, and kept it alive by deprivation.¹⁸

As people became increasingly alienated from socialism and critical of its achievements, then, the politicization of consumption also made them challenge official definitions of their needs. They did so not just by creating a

second economy to grow food or make clothes or work after hours but also, sometimes, by public protest. Poland’s Communist leaders fell to such protest at least twice, in 1970 and in 1980, when Polish workers insisted on having more food than government price increases would permit them. Less immediately disruptive were forms of protest in which people used consumption styles to forge resistant social identities. The black markets in Western goods that sprang up everywhere enabled alienated consumers to express their contempt for their governments through the kinds of things they chose to buy. You could spend an entire month’s salary on a pair of blue jeans, for instance, but it was worth it: wearing them signified that you could get something the system said you didn’t need and shouldn’t have. Thus consumption goods and objects conferred an identity that set you off from socialism, enabling you to differentiate yourself as an individual in the face of relentless pressures to homogenize everyone’s capacities and tastes into an undifferentiated collectivity. Acquiring objects became a way of constituting your selfhood against a deeply unpopular regime.

Bureaucratic Factionalism and Markets

Before turning to why these systems fell, I wish to address one more issue: politicking in the Party bureaucracy. Although this took different and specific forms in the different countries, it is important to mention the issue, for socialism’s collapse owed much to shifts in the balance among factions that emerged within the Party apparatus. Even before 1989, researchers were pointing to several forms of intra-Party division. Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis, writing specifically of the moment of transition, speaks of three factions—the globalists, the populists, and the middle-level bureaucracy; others, writing more generally, distinguish between “strategic” and “operative” elites, the state bureaucracy and the “global monopoly,” the bureaucracy and the Party elite, “in-house” and “out-of-house” Party workers, and so forth.¹⁹ One way of thinking about these various divisions is that they distinguish ownership from management, or the people who oversaw the paperwork of administration from those “out in the field,” intervening in actual social life.²⁰ We might then look for conflicting tendencies based in the different interests of these groups—such as conflicts between the central “owners” or paperworkers, on one hand, who might persist in policies that accumulated means of production without concern for things like productivity and output, and the bureaucratic managers of the allocative process or its fieldworkers, on the other, who *had* to be concerned with such things. Although the power of the system itself rested on continued accumulation, such tendencies if unchecked could obstruct the work of those who had actually to deliver resources or redistribute them. Without actual investments and hard material resources, lower-level units could not produce the

means of production upon which both bureaucracy and center relied. If productive activity were so stifled by “overadministration” that nothing got produced, this would jeopardize the redistributive bureaucracy’s power and prestige.

Thus when central accumulation of means of production began to threaten the capacity of lower-level units to produce; when persistent imbalances between investment in heavy industry and in light industry, between allocations for investment and for consumption, and so on, diminished the stock of distributable goods; and when the center’s attempts to keep enterprises from meddling with surplus appropriation obstructed the process of production itself—this is when pressure arose for a shift of emphasis. The pressure was partly from those in the wider society to whom not enough was being allocated and partly from bureaucrats themselves whose prestige and, increasingly, prospects of retaining power depended on having more goods to allocate. One then heard of decentralization, of the rate of growth, of productivity—in a word, of matters of output, rather than the inputs that lay at the core of bureaucratic performance. This is generally referred to as the language of “reform.”

For those groups who became concerned with questions of output and productivity, the solutions almost always involved introducing mechanisms such as profitability criteria and freer markets. This meant, however, introducing a subordinate rationality discrepant with the system’s inner logic and thereby threatening continued Party rule. Market forces create problems for socialism in part for reasons treated implicitly or explicitly above in contrasting capitalism’s demand-constrained economies with socialism’s economy of shortage (its lack of interest, for example, in the salability of its products). But more broadly, markets create problems because they move goods horizontally rather than vertically toward the center, as all redistributive systems require. Markets also presuppose that individual interest and the “invisible hand,” rather than the guiding hand of the Party, secure the common good.²¹ Because these horizontal movements and individualizing premises subverted socialism’s hierarchical organization, market mechanisms had been suppressed. Reformers introducing them were opening Pandora’s box.

Why Did It Fall?

My discussion of socialism’s workings already points to several reasons for its collapse; I might now address the question more comprehensively. To do this requires, in my view, linking the properties of its internal organization (discussed above) with properties of its external environment, as well as with shorter-term “event history.” This means examining the specific conjuncture of two systems—“capitalist” and “socialist,” to use ideal types—one encompassing the other.²²

In event-history terms, the proximate cause of the fall of East European and Soviet socialism was an act of the Hungarian government: its dismantling of the barbed wire between Hungary and Austria, on the eve of a visit by President George Bush, and its later renouncing the treaty with the GDR that would have prevented East German emigration through Hungary. This culmination of Hungary’s long-term strategy of opening up to the West gave an unexpected opportunity for some East German tourists to extend their Hungarian vacations into West Germany; the end result, given that Gorbachev refused to bolster the East German government with Soviet troops in this crisis, was to bring down the Berlin Wall. To understand the conjuncture in which Hungary could open its borders and Gorbachev could refuse Honecker his troops requires setting in motion the static model I have given above and placing it in its international context. This includes asking how socialism’s encounter with a changing world capitalism produced or aggravated factional divisions within Communist Parties.

International Solutions to Internal Problems

My discussion of socialism indicated several points of tension in its workings that affected the system’s capacity for extended reproduction. Throughout their existence, these regimes sought to manage such tensions in different ways, ranging from Hungary’s major market reforms in the 1960s to Romania’s rejection of reform and its heightened coercive extraction. In all cases, managing these tensions involved decisions that to a greater or lesser degree opened socialist political economies to Western capital. The impetus for this opening—critical to socialism’s demise—came chiefly from within, as Party leaders attempted to solve their structural problems without major structural reform. Their attitude in doing so was reminiscent of a “plunder mentality” that sees the external environment as a source of booty to be used as needed in maintaining one’s own system, without thought for the cost. This attitude was visible in the tendency of socialist governments to treat foreign trade as a residual sector, used to supplement budgets without being made an integral part of them.²³ Because of how this opportunistic recourse to the external environment brought socialism into tighter relationship with capitalism, it had fateful consequences.

The critical intersection occurred not in 1989 or 1987 but in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when global capitalism entered the cyclical crisis from which it is still struggling to extricate itself. Among capitalists’ possible responses to the crisis (devaluation, structural reorganization, etc.), an early one was to lend abroad; facilitating this option were the massive quantities of petrodollars that were invested in Western banks, following changes in OPEC policy in 1973. By lending, Western countries enabled the recipients to purchase capital equipment or to build long-term infrastructure, thereby expanding the overseas markets for Western products.²⁴

The loans became available just at the moment when all across the socialist bloc, the first significant round of structural reforms had been proposed, halfheartedly implemented, and, because profitability and market criteria fit so poorly with the rationale of socialism, largely abandoned. Reluctance to proceed with reforms owed much, as well, to Czechoslovakia's Prague Spring, from which the Party apparatus all across the region had been able to see the dangers that reform posed for its monopoly on power. Instead of reforming the system from within, then, most Party leaderships opted to meet their problems by a greater articulation with the surrounding economy: importing Western capital and using it to buy advanced technology (or, as in Poland, to subsidize consumption), in hopes of improving economic performance. Borrowing thus became a substitute for extensive internal changes that would have jeopardized the Party's monopoly over society and subverted the inner mechanisms of socialism. In this way, the internal cycles of two contrasting systems suddenly meshed.

The intent, as with all the international borrowing of the period, was to pay off the loans by exporting manufactured goods into the world market. By the mid-1970s it was clear, however, that the world market could not absorb sufficient amounts of socialism's products to enable repayment, and at the same time, rising interest rates added staggeringly to the debt service. With the 1979–80 decision of the Western banking establishment not to lend more money to socialist countries, the latter were thrown into complete disarray. I have already mentioned several features that made socialist economies inapt competitors in the international export market. The "plunder" stance toward external economies, the system's fundamental organization against notions of salability of its products, the shortage economy's premium on acquisitionsmanship rather than on salesmanship, the neglect of consumption and of producing to satisfy consumer needs with diverse high-quality products—all this meant that an adequate response to the hard-currency crisis would have catastrophic effects on socialism's inner mechanisms. To this was added the fact that socialist economies were "outdated": as Jowitt put it, "After 70 years of murderous effort, the Soviet Union had created a German industry of the 1880s in the 1980s."²⁵

In these circumstances, the balance of power tilted toward the faction within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that had long argued for structural reforms, the introduction of market mechanisms, and profit incentives, even at the cost of the Party's "leading role." The choice, as Gorbachev and his faction saw it, was to try to preserve either the Soviet Union and its empire (by reforms that would increase its economic performance and political legitimacy) or collective property and the Party monopoly. Gorbachev was ready to sacrifice the latter to save the former but ended by losing both.

While Western attention was riveted on the speeches of policy-makers in

the Kremlin, the more significant aspects of reform, however, were in the often-unauthorized behavior of bureaucrats who were busily creating new property forms on their own. Staniszkis describes the growth of what she calls "political capitalism," as bureaucrats spontaneously created their own profit-based companies from within the state economic bureaucracy. Significantly for my argument that socialism's articulation with world capitalism was crucial to its fall, the examples she singles out to illustrate these trends are all at the interface of socialist economies with the outside world—in particular, new companies mediating the export trade and state procurement of Western computers.²⁶ In fact, she sees as critical the factional split between the groups who managed socialism's interface with the outside world (such as those in foreign policy, counterintelligence, and foreign trade) and those who managed it internally (such as the Party's middle-level executive apparatus and the KGB).²⁷ Forms of privatization already taking place as early as 1987 in Poland and similar processes as early as 1984 in Hungary²⁸ show the emerging contours of what Staniszkis sees as the reformists' goal: a dual economy. One part of this economy was to be centrally administered, as before, and the other part was to be reformed through market/profit mechanisms and selective privatization of state property. The two were to coexist symbiotically.²⁹

These forms of "political capitalism" arose in part by economic managers' exploiting the shortages endemic to socialism—shortages now aggravated to crisis proportions. In the new hope of making a profit, "political capitalists" (I call them "entrepratchiks") were willing to put into circulation reserves known only to them—which they would otherwise have hoarded—thus alleviating shortages, to their own gain. As a result, even antireformist Soviet and Polish bureaucrats found themselves acquiescing in entrepratchiks' activities, without which, in Staniszkis's words, "the official structure of the economic administration was absolutely unsteerable."³⁰ Contributing to their tolerance was rampant bureaucratic anarchy, a loss of control by those higher up, rooted in the "inability of superiors to supply their subordinates (managers of lower level) with the means to construct a strategy of survival."³¹ Because superiors could no longer guarantee deliveries and investments, they were forced to accept whatever solutions enterprising subordinates could devise—even at the cost of illicit profits from state reserves. Entrepratchiks soon began to regard the state's accumulations much as Preobrazhensky had once urged Soviet leaders to regard agriculture: as a source of primitive accumulation. They came to find increasingly attractive the idea of further "privatization," so important to Western lenders.

It is possible (though unlikely) that socialist regimes would not have collapsed if their hard-currency crisis and the consequent intersection with capitalism had occurred at a different point in capitalism's cyclicity. The specifics of capitalism's own crisis management, however, proved unman-

ageable for socialist systems. Without wanting to present recent capitalism's "flexible specialization" as either unitary or fully dominant (its forms differ from place to place, and it coexists with other socioeconomic forms), I find in the literature about it a number of characteristics even more inimical to socialism than was the earlier "Fordist" variant, which Soviet production partly imitated. These characteristics include: small-batch production; just-in-time inventory; an accelerated pace of innovation; tremendous reductions in the turnover time of capital via automation and electronics; a much-increased turnover time in consumption, as well, with a concomitant rise in techniques of need-creation and an increased emphasis on the production of events rather than goods; coordination of the economy by finance capital; instantaneous access to accurate information and analysis; and an overall decentralization that increases managerial control (at the expense of higher-level bodies) over labor.³²

How is socialism to mesh with this?—socialism with its emphasis on large-scale heroic production of means of production, its resources frozen by hoarding—no just-in-time here!—its lack of a systemic impetus toward innovation, the irrelevance to it of notions like "turnover time," its neglect of consumption and its flat-footed definition of "needs," its constipated and secretive flows of information (except for rumors!) in which the center could have no confidence, and the perpetual struggle to retain central control over all phases of the production process? Thus, I submit, it is not simply socialism's embrace with capitalism that brought about its fall but the fact that it happened to embrace a capitalism of a newly "flexible" sort. David Harvey's schematic comparison of "Fordist modernity" with "flexible post-modernity" clarifies things further: socialist systems have much more in common with his "Fordist" column than with his "flexible" one.³³

Let me add one more thought linking the era of flexible specialization with socialism's collapse. Increasing numbers of scholars note that accompanying the change in capitalism is a change in the nature of state power: specifically, a number of the state's functions are being undermined.³⁴ The international weapons trade has made a mockery of the state's monopoly on the means of violence. The extraordinary mobility of capital means that as it moves from areas of higher to areas of lower taxation, many states lose some of their revenue and industrial base, and this constrains their ability to attract capital or shape its flows. Capital flight can now discipline all nation-state governments.³⁵ The coordination of global capitalism by finance capital places a premium on capital mobility, to which rigid state boundaries are an obstacle. And the new computerized possibilities for speculative trading have generated strong pressures to release the capital immobilized in state structures and institutions by diminishing their extent.³⁶

This has two consequences for the collapse of socialism. First, groups

inside socialist countries whose structural situation facilitated their fuller participation in the global economy now had reasons to expand their state's receptivity to capital—that is, to promote reform. Second, the control that socialist states exerted over capital flows into their countries may have made them special targets for international financial interests, eager to increase their opportunities by undermining socialist states. These internal and international groups each found their chance in the interest of the other. It is in any case clear from the politics of international lending agencies that they aim to reduce the power of socialist states, for they insist upon privatization of state property—the basis of these states' power and revenue. Privatization is pushed even in the face of some economists' objections that "too much effort is being invested in privatization, and too little in creating and fostering the development of new private firms"—whose entry privatization may actually impede.³⁷

No Time for Socialism

Rather than explore further how flexible specialization compelled changes in socialism, I wish to summarize my argument by linking it to notions of time. Time, as anthropologists have shown, is a fundamental dimension of human affairs, taking different forms in different kinds of society. The Western notion of a linear, irreversible time consisting of equivalent and divisible units, for instance, is but one possible way of conceptualizing time and living it. A given cultural construction of time ramifies throughout its social order. Its calendars, schedules, and rhythms establish the very grounds of daily life (which is why elites, especially revolutionary ones, often manipulate them), undergird power and inequality, and affect how people make themselves as social beings.

Capitalism exists only as a function of time—and of a specific conception of it. Efforts to increase profits by increasing the velocity of capital circulation are at its very heart. Thus each major reorganization of capitalism has entailed, in Harvey's terms, "time-space compression": a shrinking of the time horizons of private and public decision-making, whose consequences encompass ever-wider spaces owing to changed communications and transport technology.³⁸ The basic logic of socialism, by contrast, placed no premium on increasing turnover time and capital circulation. Although the rhetoric of Stalinism emphasized socialism as a highly dynamic system, for the most part Soviet leaders acted as if time were on their side. (When Khrushchev said, "We will bury you," he was not too specific about the date.) Indeed, I have argued that in 1980s Romania, far from being speeded up, time was being gradually slowed down, flattened, immobilized, and rendered nonlinear.³⁹

Like the reorganization of capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century, the present reorganization entails a time-space compression, which we all feel as a mammoth speedup. Yet the socialism with which it intersected had no such time-compressing dynamic. In this light, the significance of Gorbachev's perestroika was its recognition that socialism's temporality was unsustainable in a capitalist world. Perestroika reversed Soviet ideas as to whose time-definition and rhythms were dominant and where dynamism lay: no longer within the socialist system but outside it, in the West. Gorbachev's rhetoric from the mid-1980s is full of words about time: the Soviet Union needs to "catch up," to "accelerate" its development, to shed its "sluggishness" and "inertia" and leave behind the "era of stagnation." For him, change has suddenly become an "urgent" necessity.

[By] the latter half of the seventies . . . the country began to lose momentum. . . . Elements of stagnation . . . began to appear. . . . A kind of "braking mechanism" affect[ed] social and economic development. . . . The inertia of extensive economic development was leading to an economic deadlock and stagnation.⁴⁰

These are the words of a man snatched by the compression of space and time.

Even as he spoke, new time/space-compressing technologies were wreaking havoc on the possible rhythms of his and other leaders' control of politics, as Radio Free Europe made their words at once domestic *and* international. Soviet leaders could no longer create room for themselves by saying one thing for domestic consumption and something else for the outside world: they were now prisoners of simultaneity. The role of Western information technology in undermining socialism was evident in the spread of Solidarity's strikes in 1980, news of which was telephoned out to the West and rebroadcast instantly into Poland via Radio Free Europe and the BBC, mobilizing millions of Poles against their Party. The revolutions of 1989 were mediated similarly.

I am suggesting, then, that the collapse of socialism came in part from the massive rupture produced by its collision with capitalism's speedup. If so, it would be especially useful to know something more about the life-experience of those people who worked at the interface of these two temporal systems and could not help realizing how different was capitalism's time from their own. Bureaucrats under pressure to increase foreign trade and foreign revenues, or importers of computer equipment, would have discovered that failure to adapt to alien notions of increased turnover time could cost them hard currency. They would have directly experienced time-annihilating Western technologies, which effected a banking transaction in milliseconds as opposed to the paper-laden hours and days needed by their own financial system. Did the rise of "profitability" criteria in the command economy owe something to such people's dual placement? Did they come to

experience differently their sense of themselves as agents? My point, in short, is that the fall of socialism lies not simply in the intersection of two systems' temporal cycles but rather in the collision of two differently constituted temporal orders, together with the notions of person and activity proper to them.

If socialist economies had not opened themselves to capital import and to debt servicing, perhaps their collision with capitalist speedup would have been less jarring—or would at least have occurred on more equal terms. But the capitalist definition of time prevailed, as socialist debtors bowed to its dictates (even while postponing them), thereby aggravating factional conflicts within the elite. Because its leaders accepted Western temporal hegemony, socialism's messianic time proved apocalyptic. The irony is that had debtor regimes refused the definitions imposed from without—had they united to default simultaneously on their Western loans (which in 1981 stood at over \$90 billion⁴¹)—they might well have brought down the world financial system and realized Khrushchev's threatening prophecy overnight. That this did not happen shows how vital a thing was capitalists' monopoly on the definition of social reality.

What Comes Next?

The outcome of the confluence between socialist and capitalist systemic crises is far more complicated than "capitalism triumphant," however. Ken Jowitt captures this with an unexpected metaphor, that of biological extinction and its attendant erasure of formerly existing boundaries among forms of life. In his brilliant essay "The Leninist Extinction," he pursues the metaphor's implications as follows:

[One feature] of mass extinctions . . . is that they typically affect more than one species. In this respect, the collapse of European Leninism may be seen more as a political volcano than as an asteroid. A volcano's eruption initially affects a circumscribed area (in this case limited to Leninist regimes), but, depending on its force, the effects gradually but dramatically become global. The Leninist volcano of 1989 will have a comparable effect on liberal and "Third World" biota around the globe.⁴²

After describing the new regime "species" that have emerged with changed forms of government in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and elsewhere, as well as other new forms of political life arising out of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, he ponders the larger question of the end of the Cold War:

For half a century we have thought in terms of East and West, and now there is no East as such. The primary axis of international politics has "disappeared." Thermonuclear Russia hasn't, but the Soviet Union/Empire most certainly has.

Its "extinction" radically revises the framework within which the West, the United States itself, the Third World, and the countries of Eastern Europe, the former Russian Empire, and many nations in Asia have bounded and defined themselves.

The Leninist Extinction will force the United States [not to mention all those others] to reexamine the meaning of its national identity.⁴³

What the Leninist Extinction confronts us with, then, is a conceptual vacuum. Jowitt concludes by invoking the biblical story of Genesis ("the world was without form, and void"), whose theme is bounding and naming new entities, as the "narrative" most appropriate to the immediate future.

In my view, not only is Jowitt absolutely right but one could go even further. It is not just new political identities, including our own, that we will have the task of bounding and naming—a task which, if the example of Bosnia is any indication, is of awesome magnitude. It is also the entire conceptual arsenal through which Western institutions and social science disciplines have been defined in this century. As one reads scholarship on the postsocialist processes of "privatization," the creation of "property rights," the development of "democracy" or "civil society" or "constitutions"—in short, the proposed building of a "liberal state"—profound confusion sets in. One begins to see that these terms do not label useful concepts: they are elements in a massive political and ideological upheaval that is by no means restricted to the "East."

If this is true, then everything we know is up for grabs, and "what comes next" is anyone's guess.

2

THE "ETATIZATION" OF TIME IN CEAUȘESCU'S ROMANIA

THAT THE NATURE of time differs in different social orders has been a staple of anthropological analysis at least since Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer and Leach's classic paper on the symbolic representation of time.¹ Accordingly, anthropologists have catalogued the variant organizations of time in other cultures; they have also examined what happens when the bearers of non-Western or noncapitalist temporalities confront the new organizations of time brought to them by capitalist commodity production.² Such treatments of time as a social construction do not always make explicit, however, the political context within which time is experienced and the politics through which it is culturally "made." That is, to see time as culturally variable, with different conceptions of it functionally fitted to one or another social environment, is only part of the story. These conceptions themselves are forged through conflicts that involve, on one hand, social actors who seek to create or impose new temporal disciplines—either as elements of new productive arrangements or as the projects of revolutionary political regimes—and, on the other, the persons subjected to these transformative projects. In a word, the social construction of time must be seen as a political process.

In this chapter I explore temporal politics through an example in which regime policies created struggles over time, as people were subjected to and resisted new temporal organizations. The example is Romania of the 1980s,

This chapter was first prepared for a meeting of the American Ethnological Society in March 1989—thus before the end of Party rule—and revised slightly thereafter. I had not conducted fieldwork explicitly on the subject of time but marshaled ethnographic data from various field trips on other topics (pursued chiefly before the collapse of socialism, plus a brief visit in 1990) to make the argument. I am much indebted to Ashraf Ghani for extensive discussions that led me to frame this chapter as I have and for suggesting many of its central ideas. Thanks also to Pavel Campeanu, Gail Kligman, and Henry Rutz for comments on an earlier version. Three research grants from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) supported my fieldwork in 1984–85, 1987, and 1988, which produced the data I report here.

The volume in which this chapter was initially published had made the relation between "structure" and "intention" its organizing theme, hence the centrality of these notions here. Reprinted from *The Politics of Time*, ed. Henry Rutz, American Ethnological Society Monograph Series no. 4 (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1992), by permission of the American Anthropological Association. Not for further reproduction.

prior to the violent overthrow of Communist Party leader Nicolae Ceaușescu in December 1989.³ Both directly, through policies expressly aimed at the marking of time, and indirectly, through policies aimed at solving other problems but implicating people's use of time, the Romanian Party leadership gradually expropriated Romanians of much of their control over time. I call this process "etatization," a term borrowed from Romanian writer Norman Manea, who uses the word *etatizare* (literally, "the process of statizing") to describe the fate of people's private time in his native country.⁴ While some might wish to render this as "*nationalization*," I prefer the more cumbersome "etatization" because in Romania the "state" and the "nation" have not necessarily been isomorphic: the activities of the state-occupying regime have often been at odds with what some would see as the interests of other inhabitants, the nation or "people." Although I will not make this distinction the basis of my argument,⁵ one might phrase the struggle over time in Romania as, precisely, a struggle between "etatization" and "nationalization"—that is, a struggle between the state and the people for claims upon time.

I concentrate here on the "etatization" part of this struggle: the ways in which the Romanian state seized time from the purposes many Romanians wanted to pursue. There are a number of means through which time can be seized—rituals, calendars, decrees (such as curfews), workday schedules, and so on. My discussion focuses on the vehicle through which these devices organize time: the body, site of many possible uses of time, only some of which can be actualized. To phrase it differently, I treat time as a medium of activity that is lodged in and manifested through human bodies; that is, I emphasize not alternative *representations* of time but alternative *utilizations* of it. While acknowledging time's cultural element, I presuppose that there is an irreducible durative aspect in the passage of time no matter how it is constructed. Thus at a given level of technology, an individual can accomplish only so much in the space between successive midnights. If political decisions force more activity onto individuals within this space without increasing their technical capacities, then certain purposes or projects will go unrealized, and this prospect may provoke resistance. While my premise may seem a failure to problematize time as a cultural construct, I hold that, to the contrary, struggles over time *are* what construct it culturally, producing and altering its meanings as groups contend over them.

To "mark time" in a particular way is to propose a particular use or deployment of bodies that subtracts them from other possible uses. Alternative deployments of bodies in time reveal for us the seizure of time by power, which I will illustrate with some ways in which the Romanian state seized time by compelling people's bodies into particular activities.⁶ Bodies subjected to such seizure had a few options, in response. They could voluntarily acquiesce in it, acknowledging the state's right to make this claim and ac-

cepting the hegemonic order within which it was exercised. They could acquiesce in form only, compelled to do so by the way in which time was seized and alternative uses precluded, but not necessarily agreeing with the claim made on them. Or they could resist the seizure of time, seeking to withdraw themselves for purposes other than those proposed from above. Many Romanians in Ceaușescu's era chose the second and third options. Whenever possible, they preferred to use their bodies in time toward reproducing households and local relations rather than toward promoting the power of the Romanian state and its ruling Communist Party.

In my examples, I distinguish loosely between the fates of time-invested bodies in urban and in rural settings, without further specifying their class situation. I also consider how time is related to the sense of self. Because social senses of self are intricately bound up with temporal investments in certain kinds of activity, incursions upon these activities have consequences for how the self is conceived and experienced. Therefore, I also describe briefly how the state's seizure of time encroached upon people's self-conceptions.

The Forms and Mechanisms of Etatization: Intention and Structure

I organize my argument in terms of the relation between structure and intention, viewing the etatization of time in Romania as the joint result of intentional projects of state-makers, unintended consequences of actions aimed at other problems, and structural properties of Romanian socialism as a social order *sui generis*. For my ethnographic examples to make sense, I should first characterize Romanian socialism in the decade of the 1980s, in terms of both the projects its leaders pursued and the inner logic of the social order itself, an inner logic only partly related to the leaders' intentional projects.⁷ The tendencies I discuss antedated the 1980s but became especially visible then, as economic crisis sharpened their contours.

To a greater degree than in any other East European state, coercion combined with attempts at ideological persuasion were the basis of rule in Ceaușescu's Romania. This distinguished that regime from others in the region, in which material incentives generally played a greater role. The most extreme contrast in the bloc was between the virtual police state of Romania and relatively liberal Hungary, with its low level of police control and its high standard of living. Because the Ceaușescu leadership determined to reduce noxious "foreign interference" by repaying the foreign debt ahead of schedule, it imposed increasingly severe austerity measures beginning in 1980. These included massive exports of foodstuffs and other necessities, and significant reductions of imported goods and fuel, to slow the

drain of hard currency. Expecting popular opposition, the regime intensified its apparatus of surveillance and repression. Persons who raised a protest were expelled or isolated by round-the-clock police watch; strikes or riots were put down by force; increasing numbers of persons were drawn into the net of collaboration, reporting to the Secret Police on the activities of their friends and associates. Under these circumstances, resistance tended to take covert forms,⁸ such as theft of public property, laxity in work discipline, and constant complaining within one's intimate circle.

The exercise of coercion accompanied concerted efforts to raise popular consciousness in support of Party rule. Under Ceaușescu, activists strove to create a "new socialist man," a clearly intentional project that involved wholly new ways of constituting the person. Some of this, as I will show, was to be accomplished through new temporal markings. Another element of persuasion under Ceaușescu involved overt nationalism, partially (though far from wholly) explainable as an explicit quest for legitimacy.⁹ National heroes were exalted, workers' energies were coaxed forth in the name of industrialization as a national goal, national enemies were built up in more or less veiled ways to mobilize the Romanian populace behind its Party's protective front. Previously inculcated national sentiments made this a lively field of activity, although not one of uniform agreement.

The intentions and projects of Romania's Communist Party leadership moved in sometimes coordinate, sometimes contradictory relation with a set of systemic tendencies that were not consciously planned. These tendencies resulted from the overall organization of socialism's political economy, with its collective rather than private ownership of the means of production, its central allocations, and its centralized management of productive activity. Basic to the workings of socialist firms, as described in chapter 1, were "soft budget constraints": firms that did poorly would be bailed out, and financial penalties for what capitalists would see as "irrational" and "inefficient" behavior (excess inventory, overemployment, overinvestment) were minimal.¹⁰ In consequence, they did not develop the internal disciplinary mechanisms more often found in capitalist ones. Firms learned to hoard materials and labor, overstating both their material requirements for production and their investment needs. Thus these systems had expansionist tendencies that were not just inherent in growth-oriented central plans but were also generated *from below*. Hoarding made for unpredictable deliveries of inputs, which caused irregular production rhythms, with periods of slackness giving way to periods of frantic activity ("storming") when a delivery of materials finally enabled effort toward meeting production goals.

Central decisions together with hierarchical interactions between planners and producing firms, then, resulted in "economies of shortage" that generated "scarcity" in Romania, a scarcity primarily of supplies rather than of demand (the scarcity central to capitalism).¹¹ Time was implicated in such

scarcity in several ways, but particularly as the medium through which labor would act in production to make up for the nonoptimal distribution of the other productive resources. Once enough materials were brought together to produce something, the task of the authorities was to seize enough labor time from workers to make up for earlier periods of shortage-enforced idleness. But precisely those periods of enforced idleness motivated the authorities to further seizures of time, for "idle" time might be deployed toward other objectives, and power might be served by interfering with them.¹²

Two examples will show how the Romanian Party seized time in order to increase the production of goods within the system of shortage I have described. The examples come from the period 1984–88, a period in which relative shortage was greatly exacerbated by massive exports of foodstuffs and reduced imports of fuel. Thus the "normal" systemic shortage was conjoined with explicit policies that worsened it.

One villager who commuted daily by train to an urban factory job complained to me of the irregularity of his work time. On some days he would hang around the factory doing very little, on others he would commute two hours to work only to be sent home owing to insufficient electricity; on still others he was required to work overtime, for which he was not paid. He would pay himself for the overtime by cutting work to help his mother plow, sow, weed, or harvest on the private plot they held as members of the collective farm. For such work, the mother would withdraw her labor time from the collective, whose requirements she had filled by bailing and stacking hay during the winter months, when her household economy could better tolerate her absence. Mother and son together produced enough food on their private plot to maintain four or five pigs, a number of sheep, and a good standard of living for their three-person household.

Beginning in about 1983, however, the state sought ways to move some of this "private" product into state warehouses rather than peasant cellars. At first, villagers were given a list of items and amounts—a pig, some chickens, one hundred kilograms of potatoes, and so on—that they were required to contract to the state from their plot, in exchange for a minimal payment. When this proved inadequate, each rural family was told not just how much of various goods to *contract* but exactly how much of each to *plant* on the private plot. Upon delivery of the contracted amounts, the family would receive coupons entitling them to buy bread at the village store; without the coupon they could get no bread. Because private plots were too small to grow cereals, purchased bread was most villagers' only option. The new contract requirements therefore effectively seized the labor time that had been given over to household production for household consumption; it added the products of that labor time to the meager output of state and collective farms. In this way, the authorities recouped a portion of the enforced idleness of their factory worker, as well.

Comparable seizures of time were also found in village households whose adults all commuted to work in the city. Such commuter households were assigned a quota of agricultural production alongside their regular jobs; failure to meet the quota might mean confiscation of their private plot. Because the private plot guaranteeing them something to eat was the main reason these workers had not moved to the city altogether, the sanction was an effective one: without the plot, household consumption would suffer. To keep their plot, commuters now had to pay a substantial "tribute" in extra work. Both these examples rest, of course, on the much earlier decision by the Party to collectivize land, enabling later seizures of the labor time embodied in rural folk.

These examples show rural households compelled into the state's definition of their use of time. The source of compulsion in both instances was the state's leverage with respect to household consumption, which villagers wished to protect. To these specific instances one could add many other ways in which central planning, shortage, and export combined to reduce individuals' control over their schedules to a bare minimum. Zerubavel, in a discussion of scheduling control, observes that "every scheduling process implies a combination of personal and environmental elements, the proportion between which is very significant sociologically."¹³ Using the examples he adduces (from North American society), over what sorts of items had Romanians lost scheduling control by the late 1980s?

Urban dwellers could generally choose the time when they would use the bathroom, but their choice of when to flush or wash up was constrained by whether or not the public water supply had been turned off. Buckets of water stored in apartments might compensate, but not for bathing, which (if one wanted one's water hot) depended on having gas to heat the water. People could not choose the time when they would heat water or cook their meals, since the gas was generally turned off at precisely the times of normal use, so as to prevent excess consumption. Urban housewives often arose at 4:00 a.m. to cook, that being the only time they could light the stove. Unless one walked, no one could choose when to arrive at work, since public transportation was wholly unreliable (owing to measures to conserve use of gasoline), and the ration of gasoline for private cars was so derisory that cars did not provide an alternative for daily movement.

Although the natural environment usually controls when farmers must sow their crop, Romanian farmers were not permitted to plant by the timing optimal for nature: if tractors received no fuel allotment, there might be no planting until well into November or June. Village women lost control over when they would iron or do the laundry, for fuel conservation measures included turning off the electricity delivered to rural areas for large portions of each day—generally according to an unannounced schedule. Village women who commuted to urban jobs often found that there was no electric-

ity when they returned home, and they were obliged to do the washing by hand. Electricity outages also prevented villagers from choosing when they would watch the two hours of television to which Romanian air time had been reduced. The state infringed even upon the most intimate decisions concerning when to make love, for the official desire for (and shortage of) more numerous laboring bodies led to a pro-natalist policy that prohibited all forms of contraception as well as abortion. This forced the "scheduling" of intimacy back onto the rhythms of nature.

To Zerubavel's strategic question, then, concerning who is authorized to schedule parts of the time of other people, we can reply that in Ceaușescu's Romania, national and local political authorities scheduled (or, better said, precluded the scheduling of) an extraordinary amount of others' time. Behind these appropriations of scheduling lay political decisions about how to manage austerity so as to repay the foreign debt. It is impossible to prove that an additional conscious intention was to deprive the populace of control over its schedules, but this was indeed an effect of the policies pursued.

Many of the regime's seizures of time were explicitly aimed at increasing production; yet these and other policies also had the effect, whether consciously intended or not, of producing not *goods* for the state but *subjection* to it. To clarify this I must introduce another structural element of Romania's redistributive economy. Redistribution, Eric Wolf reminds us, is less a type of society than a class of strategies implemented through various means.¹⁴ Redistributors must accumulate things to redistribute, which form their "funds of power." A redistributive system delivers power into the hands of those persons or bureaucratic segments that dispose of large pools of resources to allocate. From the highest levels of the planning apparatus on down, therefore, actors strive to bring as many resources as possible under their control.

In socialist redistribution, it was generally the Party and state apparatuses that disposed of the greatest means for redistribution. The practices of socialist bureaucrats thus tended to augment the resources under the global disposition of the apparatus of power, a tendency Fehér, Heller, and Márkus see as the basic "law of motion" of socialist societies.¹⁵ Particularly important, in their analysis, was that resources not fall out of central control into consumption but expand the basis of production for the apparatus. In other words, these systems accumulated *means of production*, above all.¹⁶ Competitive processes within socialism's all-encompassing bureaucracy thus made inputs count more than production or outputs.¹⁷ Inputs, however, might be both absolute and relative—relative, that is, to the resources commanded by other actors. To the extent that the resources of other actors could be incapacitated, the pool at the center would be enhanced. Jan Gross, from whom I draw this proposition, argues that Stalin's "spoiler state" produced its power by incapacitating those actual or potential loci of power that

were independent of the state-sponsored organization. This regime's power came from ensuring that no one else could get things done or associate together for other purposes.¹⁸

This relative conception of power seems to me to illuminate a number of seizures of time in Ceaușescu's Romania. Their immediate "cause" was, again, a shortage economy strained to the utmost by austerity measures and exports; the effect was an astounding immobilization of bodies that stopped the time contained in them, rendered them impotent, and subtracted them from other activities by filling up all their time with a few basic activities, such as essential provisioning and elementary movements to and from work. My examples show us how shortages of certain items were converted into a seizure of citizens' time, but rarely for producing goods that might *alleviate* shortage. These seizures instead produced incapacity, and therefore enhanced power.

The most obvious example, all too often signaled in the Western press, was the immobilization of bodies in food lines. I see this as a state-imposed seizure of time because it was precisely the state-directed export of foodstuffs, alongside the state-supported crisis in agriculture, that raised to epic proportions in Romania a phenomenon also present in several other socialist countries. More generally, it was socialist policy to suppress the market mechanism (which, in Western economies, eliminates lines by differentiating people's ability to pay). Urban in its habitat, the food line seized and flattened the time of all urbanites except those having access to special stores (the Party elite and Secret Police). Meat, eggs, flour, oil, butter, sugar, and bread were rationed in most Romanian cities; they arrived unreliably and required an interminable wait when they did. During the 1980s other food items, such as potatoes and vegetables, came to be in shorter supply than usual, as well. Depending on one's occupation, some of the time immobilized by provisioning might be subtracted from one's job—office clerks, for example, were notorious for being absent from their desks when food hit the local store—but people like schoolteachers or factory workers had to add onto already-long working days the two or three hours required to get something to eat.

In a brilliant discussion of socialism's queues (of which the food line is the prototype), Campeanu offers additional insights through which we can tie the immobilization of bodies in food lines to the enhancement of central power.¹⁹ Queues, he suggests, function as agents of accumulation. They do this, first, by reducing the opportunity for money to be spent; this forces accumulation on a populace that would spend but is not permitted to. Moreover, by rationing consumption, queues prevent resources from being drawn out of the central fund of use values administered by the state, which (according to the argument of Fehér et al. mentioned earlier) would reduce the reserves that form the basis of its control. Queues thus maintain the

center's fund of power. Second, Campeanu argues, queues serve the larger processes of central accumulation through the unequal exchange that is their essence. The state is entitled to buy labor at its nominal price, but labor must buy the goods necessary for its reproduction at their nominal prices *plus* "prices" attached to time spent in line and to good or bad luck (i.e., being served before supplies run out). Thus the value of the labor force becomes paradoxically inferior to the value of the goods necessary to it, as waiting drives up the cost of consuming without affecting the price labor must be paid in the form of a wage. In other words, by making consumption too costly, queues enable a transfer of resources into accumulation. This forced accumulation is achieved by converting some of the "price" into waiting time²⁰—that is, by disabling consumption as consumers' bodies are immobilized in lines.

Was there not some "cost" to the state, as well as to consumers, of immobilizing people in food lines? It must be remembered that socialist systems did not rest on the extraction of profits based in workers' labor time (a process quintessentially rooted *in time*). "Time wasted," for a capitalist, is profit lost. In socialist systems, which accumulated not profits but means of production, "time wasted" did not have this same significance. Time spent standing in lines was not a cost to the socialist state. This same time spent in a general strike, however, would have been costly indeed, for it would have revealed basic disagreement with the Party's definition of "the general welfare" and would thereby have undermined that central pillar of the Party's legitimacy—its claim to special knowledge of how society should be managed.²¹

Still other seizures of time derived from official priorities in allocating fuel, already alluded to. Some of the petroleum produced in or imported by Romania was exported for hard currency; beginning in 1984, this was facilitated by prohibiting the use of private cars for most of the winter. The remaining gasoline was preferentially allocated, first, to the chemical industry and other major industrial production; then to transporting goods destined for export; after that, to peak periods in agriculture; and only last to public transportation. Villagers who had to take a bus to town or to the train might wait for hours in the cold, or end by walking six to eight kilometers to the train station; residents of urban centers formed gigantic swarms at infrequently served bus stops; many urbanites preferred to walk long distances to work rather than be trampled in the melee. Vastly curtailed train schedules immobilized people for hours on end as they waited for connections. Trains were so crowded that most people had to stand, making it impossible to use the time to read or work (the more so because trains were unlighted after dark). No one has attempted to calculate the amount of time seized by the state-produced fuel shortage. Among friends with whom I discussed it, anywhere from one to four hours had been added on to the

work day, hours that could be put to no other purpose (except, for some, to the exercise of walking).

The fuel shortage was converted into an additional "time tax" for residents of villages: it increased their labor. Labor-intensive agricultural production returned to replace mechanized agriculture, as tractors and harvesters were sidelined by insufficient fuel.²² Tractor drivers sought to conserve their tiny fuel allotments by making the furrow shallow rather than deep and by increasing the spaces between rows. This produced more weeds as well as an inferior crop yield. Exports of petroleum reduced production of herbicides, which meant that the bountiful weed harvest had to be weeded by hand. The greater demand for labor in villages was part of the motive for taxing commuters with farm work, as mentioned earlier; added to the effects of reduced electricity upon the work of both urban and rural women, it greatly lengthened the working day for all.

Although the austerity measures responsible for these conversions of shortage into a "time tax" were not entirely the state's "fault," the peremptoriness with which they were executed lends credence to the notion that power was constituting itself through the effects of austerity. An exchange in the correspondence column of an urban newspaper illustrates this nicely:

[Query from a reader]: "For some time now, tickets are no longer being sold in advance for long-distance bus trips out of Iași. Why is this?"

[Reply]: "As the Bus Company director informs us, new dispositions from the Ministry of Transport stipulate that tickets should not be sold in advance, and for this reason the bus ticket bureau has gone out of service."²³

As an answer to the question "why," the response leaves something to be desired, showing just how uninterested the authorities were in justifying the seizure of time. The distribution of time implied in the exchange was this: persons wanting to take a bus to another city would get up hours in advance of the scheduled departure (for one could never be sure how many others would be wanting to travel on the same day) and go stand in line before the booth that would open for ticket sales just prior to the departure hour. As usually happened in Romania, friends of the ticket-seller would have gotten tickets ahead, meaning that even those whose position in the line might lead them to think there were enough seats left for them could be disappointed, returning home empty-handed many hours later.

As this example shows particularly well, such seizures of time did more than simply immobilize bodies for hours, destroying their capacity for alternative uses of time. Also destroyed was all possibility for lower-level initiative and planning.²⁴ This was surely an advantage to those central planners for whom initiatives from below were always inconvenient; one cannot easily imagine such destruction of initiative, however, as the conscious motivation of the policy. The central appropriation of planning and initiative was furthered by a monopoly over knowledge that might have allowed people to use

their time "rationally"—that is, otherwise. Not knowing when the bus might come, when cars might be allowed to circulate again, when the exam for medical specializations would be given, or when food would appear in stores, bodies were transfixed, suspended in a void that obviated all projects and plans but the most flexible and spontaneous.

The preceding examples illustrate how a shortage of resources, especially fuel, was converted into a seizure of time that immobilized it for any other use. I would add to these an additional set of examples in which the "time tax" exacted of people came not from conversions of shortage but from the simple display of power, which was by that very fact further enhanced. In a modest form, this was what happened in most of the interminable Party or workplace meetings that occupied much time for persons in virtually every setting; because meetings also sometimes accomplished organizational business, however, I do not count them. I refer, rather, to displays such as the mobilization of bodies from schools and factories to line the route, chanting and waving, whenever Romanian president Nicolae Ceaușescu took a trip or received a foreign guest. Delays in the hour of arrival seized more of the waiting crowd's time. (It was not just Ceaușescu who was greeted by the appropriation of bodies and the time they contained: so also were other "important" figures, including even the writer of these lines, who as part of a group of Honored Guests helped to appropriate the entire afternoon of a welcoming committee of schoolchildren.²⁵) Every year on 23 August, Romania's national "independence" day, hundreds of thousands of people were massed as early as 6:00 A.M. for parades that actually began around 10:00 or 11:00. Because experience proved that parades could turn into riots, as of about 1987 these crowds were massed somewhat later, in closely guarded stadiums—to which, of course, they walked. There they witnessed precision drills, whose preparation had required many hours from those who performed them.

Here, then, is the ultimate "etatization" of time, seized by power for the celebration of itself. Tens of thousands of Romanians waited, daily, in contexts in which they could do nothing else: time that might have gone to counterhegemonic purposes had been expropriated.²⁶ Schwartz calls this "ritual waiting," whose cause is not scarcity in the time of someone being awaited. Ritual waiting serves, rather, to underscore the social distance between those who wait and whoever is responsible for the waiting.²⁷

The various seizures of time in Romania were not distributed evenly across the landscape, for it was urbanites who waited the most: for transport, for food, for parades, for visiting dignitaries, for light, for hot water, for cooking gas. Villagers waited for buses and trains and light, but rarely for preorganized demonstrations, parades, or Honored Guests; their "time tax" came in the form of ever-greater claims upon their labor. The persons most removed from such encroachment were uncollectivized peasants living in the hills and not commuting to city jobs. Perhaps not surprisingly, these people

were prime targets of Ceaușescu's infamous "settlement systematization" plan, which, by destroying their individual houses and settling them in apartment buildings, would bring them more fully under control, more vulnerable to seizure of their time.

What does all this suggest about the relation between intentionality and structure, and between "system logic" and contradiction, in the etatization of time? Without the possibility of interviewing high Party officials, one cannot say how many of the effects I have mentioned were consciously planned as such by Party leaders. I find it difficult to believe, however, that the austerity program behind so much of the etatization of time was intended to produce subjection: it was intended first of all to pay off foreign creditors. That its consequences for subjection may have been perceived (and even desired) is very possible. Those consequences emerged, however, as side-effects of other policies carried out within a system governed by tendencies peculiar to it (the dynamics of a shortage economy based on centralized bureaucratic allocations).

This is nonetheless not to say that "system logic" is inexorable, or that the effects to which I have pointed were characteristic of socialism everywhere. Specific policies of specific leaderships made a difference, setting up contradictory tendencies and exacerbating them. So did the environmental conditions peculiar to one or another socialist country. The command structure of socialism in East Germany, for example, was similar to that of Romania; yet its proximity to West Germany required East German leaders to maintain a standard of living closer to that of the West, which, together with subtle investment flows from West Germans, resulted in productivity and consumption higher than Romania's. The "economic crisis" that so exacerbated Romania's shortage came in part from the leadership's desire to pay off the foreign debt, instead of rescheduling it as did leaders in Poland. Romania in the 1980s gives us an excellent example of the extremes to which political decisions could push the "logic" of socialism, producing a form of gridlock rather than processes analyzable as somehow functionally "rational."²⁸ This extreme case reveals potentials not generally evident, through which we can improve our grasp of sociopolitical processes under socialism and their relation to time.

Spheres of Encroachment and Resistance

What was the Romanian state seizing time *from*? What activities was it incapacitating, whether by intention or by chance? To what other uses did people continue to put the reduced time left to them? To ask this question is also to ask where struggles against etatization were most evident—that is, where it issued in resistance to the state's encroachment. I will mention three areas

particularly assaulted by the etatization of time: independent earnings, household consumption, and sociability. Each of these also constituted a focus of resistant deployment of time, resistances that—given the degree of coercion mobilized against them—were nearly invisible but nonetheless real.²⁹

The widespread shortages of virtually everything, coupled with cleverly disguised reductions on incomes in people's regular jobs, pushed everyone into secondary and often illegal forms of earning (particularly lucrative for the consumer services rationed by queues). For example, waiters or clerks in food stores were in great demand as sources of food. They filched meat, potatoes, bread, and other items from their restaurants or shops, selling them at exorbitant prices to people who might have been so foolish as to invite an American, say, to dinner. (These practices naturally reduced the food available in shops and restaurants.) Gas-station attendants, in exchange for a huge tip, some Kent cigarettes, or a kilogram of pork, would sometimes put extra gas into the tank. Ticket-sellers at the railway station, if properly rewarded, might "find" tickets for crowded trains. People with cars would hang around hotels to provide black-market taxi service at twice the normal fare (demand for them was high, since the fuel allotments to regular taxis were so small that they were rarely to be found when needed). Drivers for the forestry service ripped off truckloads of wood to sell to peasant villagers and American anthropologists.

The sources of secondary income were legion, but the state's seizure of time pushed them in the direction of "hit-and-run" strategies requiring little time and few formal skills, rather than the moonlighting, spare-time sewing, extended house building,³⁰ and other sources of skilled earning for which people no longer had enough time. It was difficult for a schoolteacher to find a few extra hours for tutoring after she had stood in several lines and walked to and from work, or for a secretary to take home the professor's manuscript to type for extra pay. In consequence, Romanians built up their unofficial earnings not as much from parallel *productive* endeavors as from *scavenging*.³¹ The authorities did everything in their power to punish behaviors like those I have mentioned, for outside earnings not only diminished the state's revenues but also mitigated people's utter dependence on their state wage, reducing the state's leverage over them.³²

Examples of outside earnings merge directly into the second locus of struggle between a time-seizing state and resistant households. The forms of the state's seizure of time encroached particularly on the consumption standards of households, whose members reacted by trying to seize some of it back in one way or another. Theft from the harvests of the collective farm was one prime instance. Another was ever-more-sophisticated ways of killing calves at birth or shortly thereafter; this relieved the villager of the obligation to sacrifice milk to the calf and to produce six months' worth of fodder

for it, as the state insisted, and also (though this was not the first aim) afforded the household an illegal taste of veal. (The killing had to be sophisticated because all such deaths had to be vet-certified as "natural" if one were to avoid a heavy fine.)

The extent to which foodstuffs—repositories of the time and labor of village peasants and commuters—focused the struggle over time was brought home to me in October of 1988, as I drove into the village of my 1984 fieldwork to pay a visit. Both early in the day when I arrived and late at night when I left, local authorities were out in the fields with those workers they had managed to round up for the potato and corn harvests, and the streets were crawling with policemen shining powerful flashlights on every vehicle that might divert corn or potatoes into some storehouse other than that of the collective farm. Whether on that night or on some other, numerous villagers would "recover" sacks of corn and potatoes from the collective farm, thereby recouping some of what they had been obligated to contract from their private plots. This enabled them and their urban relatives to eat better than they "ought" to. It also enabled a few other urbanites to avoid standing in food lines in October for the winter's supply of potatoes because—using the extra gas they had bribed from the gas-station attendant—they would drive their cars directly to a village and pay five times the market price to buy forty kilograms of potatoes from some peasant. The practice naturally furthered urban food shortages and was one reason why policemen randomly stopped cars to spot-check for transport of food, which they would confiscate. Such events further illustrate my claim that the apparatus of coercion was central to Ceaușescu's regime and to its capacity to seize time.

In addition to the state's seizure of time from secondary earnings and from household consumption, state policies threatened a third area: sociability, or the reproduction of local social relations. It was one thing to struggle for the resources necessary to maintaining one's household; to find enough food to entertain friends and relatives, however, was something else. In urban centers the decrease in socializing (upon which many people remarked to me spontaneously) was the direct result of unavailable food and drink. In villages, somewhat better provisioned with these items, incursions on sociability came from state attempts to mobilize village labor on Sundays and holidays and from strict rationing of certain substances essential to providing hospitality: sugar, butter, and flour. Romanian villagers mark Christmas, Easter, Sundays, saints' days, and a variety of other occasions with visiting sustained by cakes and wine or brandy (sugar is essential to making all these, butter and flour to making the cakes). The various seizures of villagers' time lengthened the hours that women had to spend providing these items of hospitality; rationing lengthened the time for procuring the ingredients;

being mobilized to weed on Sunday reduced the time for visiting; and exhaustion from the various taxes on time often reduced villagers' interest in socializing. In both urban and rural contexts, then, for different reasons, human connections were beginning to suffer from the etatization of time.

This tendency was significant for a number of reasons, not least the attenuation of social ties that might be mobilized in overt resistance to the regime. The chaos during and after Ceaușescu's overthrow gave indirect witness to the social disorganization his rule had produced. I wish to focus, however, on the implications of attenuated sociability for people's self-conceptions. This will enable me to discuss more broadly the ways in which the appropriations of time inherent in the state's projects were gradually eroding older conceptions of the person. Through these examples we can see how attention to temporality reveals links between state power and the constitution of self.

The State and the Self

I understand the "self" as an ideological construct whereby individuals are situationally linked to their social environments through normative statements setting them off *as* individuals from the world around them; thus understood, individuals are the sites of many possible selves, anchored differently in different situations. The self has been an object of intense interest for the organizations individuals inhabit, such as states and religions. Historically, the attempt to redefine the self in ways suitable for one organization—such as the state—and detrimental to another—such as the church—has been a locus of major social contention. Temporality can be deeply implicated in definitions and redefinitions of the self, as selves become defined or redefined in part through temporal patterns that mark them as persons of a particular kind.

For example, the periodicities of the major religions distinguish different kinds of persons.³³ A person is marked as Protestant by attending weekly church services on Sunday and by observing certain religious festivals, such as Christmas or Easter; a person is marked as Roman Catholic, in contrast, by attending mass not only on Sundays (if not, indeed, daily) but also on the holy days of obligation (All Souls Day, feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, etc.), more numerous than the holy days of Protestants. A person is marked as Orthodox by these rhythms of worship and also by the observance of myriad saints' days (which some Catholics also observe, but in smaller number). A person is marked as Muslim by multiple prayer rituals within each day, by religious festivals different from those of Christians, by special observance of Fridays rather than Sundays, and by the pilgrimage,

which gives a distinctive rhythm to an Islamic life.³⁴ Jews, meanwhile, have long differed from both Christians and Muslims by special observance of Saturdays, as well as by a wholly different set of periodicities and sacred days.³⁵

In seeking to create the new socialist man, the Romanian state moved to establish new temporal punctuations that would alter the sense of personal identity tied to the ritual markings of the week, the year, and larger periods. In contrast with the religious rhythms just mentioned, the identity of the new socialist man was to be marked by *nonobservance* of a fixed holy day, his day(s) of leisure distributed at random across the week.³⁶ Party meetings scattered irregularly throughout the week also marked socialist man as *arhythmic*, within short periodicities. Over longer ones, his annual cycle was to be punctuated not by religious festivals but by secular ones—for example, New Year's, May Day, Women's Day³⁷—and, increasingly, by national ones—Romanian independence day, the four hundredth anniversary of the enthronement of this or that prince, the birthday of this or that Romanian hero. Many of these latter observances, however, unlike those of religious calendars, differed from one year to the next: this year the two hundredth anniversary of the enthronement of Prince X, next year the four hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Hero Y. The *arhythmia* of these ritual temporalities echoed that of socialist production patterns, with their unpredictable alterations of slackness and “storming” to fill production quotas. If, as Zerubavel suggests, one effect of temporal regularity is to create the background expectancies upon which our sense of the “normal” is erected,³⁸ a possible consequence of socialism's *arhythmia* would have been to keep people permanently off balance, to undermine the sense of a “normal” order and to institute *uncertainty* as the rule.

The new periodicities aimed to supplant older ones that marked persons as Romanian Orthodox. This was met, however, by resistant self-conceptions, particularly over the suppression of religious holidays and, in the villages, over the Party's attempt to extract work on Sundays. Christmas was a major battleground, as factory directors announced that workers absent on Christmas day would not receive their annual bonus, while workers pulled strings to get formal medical statements that they had been absent for “illness.” Peasants, harangued to present themselves for Sunday work, would hide if they saw their brigade-leader coming; or they would show up at the farm, having arranged to be called home for some “emergency” after half an hour. A similar tug-of-war took place between villagers and local Party officials whenever one of the many Orthodox saints' days fell on a normal workday. The Party defined this time as suitable for labor; villagers and the priest, by contrast, defined it as “dangerous,” insisting that work done on such days would bear no fruit or even bring disaster. Behind these different interpreta-

tions lay something deeper, however: the definition of the self as secular member of a broad social(ist) collectivity, or as Romanian Orthodox member of a narrow household one.

In the context of variant self-conceptions, the erosion of sociability discussed earlier was very significant. Sociable gatherings would have cemented close solidary networks that might resist both the officially emphasized large-scale collectivism and the creeping atomization that regime policies produced. That is, sociability served to reproduce groupings intermediate between individuals and the social whole. The *etatization* of time prevented this, just as many other aspects of Party policy eroded the space intermediate between individuals and the state. In so doing, it incapacitated a major part of Romanians' conception of self, for in their view, to be Romanian—to be a person—is to offer hospitality.³⁹ If one does not have the wherewithal to do this, one is diminished as a human being. Some anecdotal evidence will support this claim. First, one hapless host upon whom a friend thrust me unannounced was complaining that it was impossible to entertain one's friends any more because one had nothing to offer them. To my matter-of-fact suggestion that maybe the food crisis would detach the idea of sociability from the offering of food, he stared at me open-mouthed, in shock. “Then we would be like Germans!” he said, “a people with a completely different nature!” This gentleman's self-conception was not unique; I encountered it often in my initial fieldwork in a German-Romanian village, where the offering of food was a principal indicator by which Romanians thought themselves distinct from Germans.⁴⁰ Second, like this man but in more exaggerated form, others upon whom I chanced without invitation presented their “paltry” offerings of food with a self-abasement I found unbearable.

Such instances brought home to me in a very direct way how shortages of food, the diminution of time that was associated with them, and the other “time taxes” that made provisioning so difficult had assaulted many people's self-image. The erosion of sociability meant more than the decline of a certain social order, marked by social observance of particular ritual occasions that reproduced solidarity among friends and family: it meant the erosion of their very conception of themselves as human beings.

Reports of friends suggested an additional assault on self-conception from the state's seizures of time. In one report, a friend had heard that eggs were to be distributed for unused ration coupons. Having a hungry eighteen-year-old son, she thought that by waiting at the store with a jar she might be able to get a few broken eggs without a ration card. She explained her idea to the clerk, who found one broken egg; after an hour another broken egg appeared. Another hour turned up no broken eggs, and customers had stopped coming. My friend approached the clerk in the now-empty store, suggesting

that she simply break another couple of eggs and that would be the end of it. The suggestion evoked loud and anxious protests: what would happen if someone reported her, and so on. At length the clerk "found" one more broken egg, bringing the yield for two hours' waiting to three broken eggs. As my friend left the store, she burst into tears, feeling—in her words—utterly humiliated. The experience of humiliation, of a destruction of dignity, was common for those who had waited for hours to accomplish (or fail to accomplish) some basic task. Being immobilized for some meager return, during which time one could not do anything else one might find rewarding, was the ultimate experience of impotence. It created the power sought by the regime, as people were prevented from experiencing themselves as efficacious.

Such seizures of time were therefore crucial in the expropriation of initiative mentioned earlier; they were basic to producing subjects who would not see themselves as independent agents. They contributed to the "passive nature" by which many observers, including Romanians themselves, explained the lack of overt resistance to the Ceaușescu regime, as well as to the feeling many expressed to me that Communist rule was "ruining Romanians' character." The etatization of time shows how intricate—and how intricately temporal—were the links between sweeping state policies and people's sense of self, the latter being eroded by and defended from forces both intentional and systemic.

Finally, these links between the self and the etatization of time help us to understand better the regime's profound lack of legitimacy, amply illustrated in the manifestations of public hatred that accompanied the overthrow of Ceaușescu. These links become more perceptible if we define time in terms of bodies, as I have done here. By insinuating itself and its temporalities into people's projects and impeding those projects through the medium of people's very bodies, this regime reproduced every day people's alienation from it.⁴¹ By stripping individuals of the resources necessary for creating and articulating social selves, it confronted them repeatedly with their failures of self-realization. As their bodies were forced to make histories not of their choosing and their selves became increasingly fractured, they experienced daily the illegitimacy of the state to whose purposes their bodies were bent.

Perhaps the contrasting trajectories of regime and social body from which these alienations emerged helps to explain the contrast between two different expressions of time, which increasingly characterized the pronouncements of regime and citizens during the 1980s. Pronouncements emanating from the top of society became more and more messianic, invoking amid images of ever-greater grandeur the radiant future whose perfect realization was just at hand; farmers and factory workers, meanwhile, increasingly in-

voked the Apocalypse.⁴² For the Party leadership, time was in a process of culminating, of becoming *for all time*. For everyone else, however, time was running out. In December of 1989, it finally did—for the leadership, as well.

The preceding discussion suggests that the etatization of time in socialist Romania was quite a different matter from seizures of time at one or another stage in the development of capitalism. Although some of the time seized in Romania was put to the production of goods, much of it went instead to displaying power, to producing subjection, to *depriving* bodies of activity that might produce goods. Early capitalism seized the rhythms of the body and the working day, and it transformed them; it stretched out into a linear progression of equivalent daily units what had once been the repetitive annual cycles of an agrarian order.⁴³ The state in Ceaușescu's Romania seized time differently. First, it generated an arhythmia of unpunctuated and irregular now-frenetic, now-idle work, a spastically unpredictable time that made all planning by average citizens impossible. Second, within this arhythmia, it flattened time out in an experience of endless waiting.⁴⁴ Campeanu expresses this admirably: "Becoming is replaced by unending repetition. Eviscerated of its substance, history itself becomes atemporal. Perpetual movement gives way to perpetual immobility. . . . History . . . loses the quality of duration."⁴⁵ The loss of the durative element in time is wonderfully captured in the following Romanian joke: "What do we celebrate on 8 May 1821? One hundred years until the founding of the Romanian Communist Party."

"Capitalist" time must be rendered progressive and linear so that it can be forever speeded up—as Harvey puts it, "The circulation of capital makes time the fundamental dimension of human existence."⁴⁶ Time in Ceaușescu's Romania, by contrast, stood still, the medium for producing not profits but subjection, for immobilizing persons in the Party's grip. The overthrow of this regime reopens Romania to the temporal movements of commodity production, consumption, time-based work discipline, and initiating selves.