

## **The Impact of Hungarian Revolution of 1956 on Romanian Political ‘Establishment’**

CARMEN RIJNOVEANU

Scientific researcher, Institute for Political Studies of Defense and Military History

From the beginning it should be said that in 1956 Romanian communist leadership faced with key-major challenges whose consequences reshaped the whole policy promoted by Romania at internal as well as international level. Romanian leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej correctly understood that both the destalinization process initiated by the new Soviet leader N. Khrushchev and the impact of Hungarian anti-communist movement could turn into an open threat against his own political power. This insecurity was basically the engine driving his strategy towards both issues and motivating further on the rethinking of his policy at international level, with a special focus on the relation with USSR.

The paper will start with an overview on the main characteristics of the Romania's political situation in the context of 1956 Hungarian crisis as a general background for understanding the further actions taken by the Romanian leadership in relation to this event. It will then look at Bucharest's general approach towards the political developments from the neighbor country with a special focus on the way in which Communist Romania has been involved and the

major actions undertaken in this regard. At the end, I intend to draw up a general perspective on the main consequences/implications these events had upon the future evolution of Romania's position within Warsaw Pact and in relation to the Soviet Union.

### ***Background for Romania's involvement***

The position adopted by Romania towards the events breaking out in Central Europe (Poland and Hungary) in 1956 should be understood and explained in the context of the new political developments instrumented by Moscow in the early 1956.

Following the Second World War, Romania was included within the Soviet sphere of supremacy, reality which marked the country's history for about 50 years. Therefore, the policy of Romanian communist regime complied with the international political realities having as the main directions the subordination to Moscow and the obedience to the Kremlin decisions. Through its allegiance to COMECON (set up in 1949) and Warsaw Pact (created in 1955), Moscow's domination became absolute. Besides, the Soviet troops deployed on Romanian soil and the presence of the Soviet counselors within all state institutions put a strong pressure on Romanian leadership. These were the major trends characterizing Romania's policy in the aftermath of 1956 Communist crisis.

Another event which strongly influenced the position adopted towards the Hungarian affair was linked to the changes emerged at the top level of the Soviet leadership after Stalin's death. It was the Twenty-Second Congress of Soviet Communist Party (February 1956), which launched a strong wave of transformations within the communist world- the so called "destalinization process". The principles stated in Khrushchev's secret speech have been perceived by the Romanian leader, Gh. Dej (considered an exponent of Stalinist political

course), as a direct challenge to his own political power.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, as an answer to the new Moscow's political approach, he expressed his firm resistance to the process of destalinization and made clear that this process has been already completed in Romania and there is no other need for political changes.<sup>2</sup> Further on, Dej backing by the Party members managing to enforce his own control of the Party and to bind it more closely to his person. Therefore, unlike Hungary and Poland, where the implications of destalinization process took the shape of strong reforming actions which, at the end, put into discussion the existence of the communist rule, as it was the case of Hungary, in Romania it looked very solid and secure, completely subordinated to Moscow. But, despite his apparent success in strengthening his authority, Gh. Dej felt directly threaten by Khrushchev's new political course aiming at removing from power the old pro-Stalinist leaders from the satellite states. Being aware and frightened as well that the Kremlin master could have attempted to replace him with an anti-Stalinist leader, Gh. Dej's main concern was to convince Khrushchev that he is a faithful and trustworthy ally. The Hungarian crisis provided him such an opportunity. So, in Dej's case, the fears that he could be removed from power and the desire to prove that he deserves Soviet credit, provided another valuable explanation for his further reactions towards Hungarian events.

Gh. Dej's stance has been determined not only by the obedience towards Moscow but also by a convergence of interests with the Soviet leadership. There were other two main concerns at the time. On one hand, a successful revolt in Budapest against Communist rule might spread to the two million strong Hungarian community in Transylvania which consequently could have called forth similar anti-Communist movements in Romania. On the other hand, Bucharest

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<sup>1</sup> His fear dramatically increased once Khrushchev accepted the replacement of Stalinist Polish and Hungarian leaders with newly rehabilitated communist party figures.

<sup>2</sup> In 1952, the pro-Stalinist group made of Ana Pauker, Teohari Georgescu and Vasile Luca had been removed from power.

leadership was getting worried when the main leaders of Hungarian uprising claimed to parts of Romanian territory, namely Transylvania. In this context, Janos Kadar, the future communist leader, asked to Valter Roman, then Romanian envoy in Budapest: “Give autonomy to Transylvania”.<sup>3</sup> Such a position undoubtedly played an important role in motivating Bucharest’s further reactions. Romanian leadership was afraid that by promoting such ideas and requirements, the Hungarian revolution could have turned into a real threat against Romania’s own national security.

These are few of the arguments justifying Romania’s position and reaction during 1956 crisis whose consequences marked further on the future political course adopted by Bucharest starting with mid-60s when the complete obedience towards Moscow turned into an open clash between Moscow and Bucharest (within the limits and constraints imposed by the political realities existed at the time).

### *Reactions at internal level*

The revolt in Hungary started on October 23 with a massive demonstration during which a Program with requests known as “the 14<sup>th</sup> points” has been presented. The effects were soon felt in Romania. On October 27, large demonstrations organized by students simultaneously took place in Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi and Timisoara. Although most of the requests asked for improved living standards and the abolishment of Russian language in schools, the messages sent by the participants took an “anti-state and anti-Soviet” character.

These developments inside the country along with the radicalization of the Hungarian movement prompted the Bucharest decision-makers to keep a watchful

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<sup>3</sup> This confession has been made by Valter Roman during the meeting of the Politburo of RWP, see *Central Historical National Archive* ( hereafter C.H.N.A), Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 171/1956, Stenographic Transcript of the meeting of the Politburo of CC of RWP during which Aurel Malnasan and Valter Roman informed about the Hungarian situation, November 02, 1956, f. 11.

eye to the public state of mind. The Party and State leadership's major concern was to stifle any anticommunist expression based on Hungarian model likely to jeopardize the security of the regime and of its leaders.

On October 26, 1956 the Politburo of the RWP approved an ample program of measures aiming at preventing "the spread of counterrevolution" across Romania and consolidating the regime's authority. The measures taken followed a likely well-organized plan, combining repressive and control measures with those aiming at improving living standards through foods delivery, payment of salaries, etc. On October 29, the government had announced that the minimum wage would be raised. Simultaneously, all sources of information have been put under strict political control and censored (namely personal correspondence, newspapers, radio stations, etc.). Ample actions of manipulation and disinformation have been instrumented by the party and state institutions. Consecutively, repressive measures have been taken, thousands of arrests were made, and the Ministry of Interior was in charge of preparing lists with all suspects or possible "hostile persons" to be put under close observation.<sup>4</sup>

At the operational level, all forces belonging to the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and Securitatea have been put in alert. On October 24, 1956, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party decided that Securitatea forces to take over larger responsibilities. Thus, they took over the control on the main Party's headquarters and state institutions and enhanced the guard and control measures at the Hungarian border<sup>5</sup>. (where forces belonging to Ministry of Interior and Securitatea have been deployed).

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<sup>4</sup> *C.H.N.A.*, Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 170/1956, Protocol no. 55 of the meeting of Politburo of CC of RWP during which the Hungarian situation has been discussed as well as the measures going to be taken by Romania, October 26, 1956, f.1-5

<sup>5</sup> *C.H.N.A.*, Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 169/1956, Protocol no. 54 of the meeting of Politburo of CC of RWP during which the Hungarian situation has been discussed, October 24, 1956, p.76.

Further on, through the Decision no. 317 of Politburo of the CC of the RWP of October 30, 1956, a General Commandment led by Emil Bodnaras and made of Nicolae Ceausescu, Alexandru Draghici and Leontin Salajan has been established. As Commandment's Chief of General Staff was appointed general-lieutenant Ion Tutoveanu.<sup>6</sup> The General Commandment was in charge of taking "any measure" deemed necessary for maintaining the internal stability and order including "the use of military force" if necessary.<sup>7</sup> Defense and Interior Ministries have been subordinated to the new established body and thus the Party's control became complete.

Simultaneously, on 30 October, Timisoara, Oradea and Iasi regions were placed under military rule as Soviet troops were brought in across the Romanian border in the east and concentrated on the frontier with Hungary in the west.

Yet, the real impact of these movements organized within the main university centers was quite low. Two possible explanations could be mentioned: on one hand, the lack of a real force able to unify the anti-Soviet and anti-communist feelings of the population. Due to this lack of popular cohesion, the echoes of the 1956 events were quite low across Romania and restricted to some categories, namely intellectuals or students. Basically, Romanian intelligentsia did not succeed to gain a coherent position and the students' revolts remained only spontaneous actions without practical results. No less true that the punitive measures taken by the political leadership hampered any possible revolt and significantly reduced the possible impact of the Hungarian revolutionary influences across the country.

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<sup>6</sup> *C.H.N.A.*, Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 124/ 1956, Protocol no. 58 of the meeting of the Politburo of CC of RWP which discussed the measures to be taken in Romania in the context of Hungarian events, October 30, 1956, f. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*

### ***Practical involvement***

It is worth to mention that Romania was the Soviet Union's most active ally during the Hungarian crisis. Its support for the Soviet Union went beyond the political arena into the domain of practical assistance and open encouragement.

Simultaneously with the measures taken at internal level, Romanian leadership adopted a proactive approach towards Hungarian uprising. Being aware from the very beginning of the developments in Hungary and their possible impact, Romanian leaders closely watched the internal evolutions from the neighbor country. Therefore, during this period, two emissaries have been sent to Budapest, namely Aurel Malnasan, deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, former ambassador in Hungary between 1949 and 1952, and Valter Roman. They were in charge with sending daily informative notes and reports on the developments. Also, the Romanian ambassadors in Warsaw, Marin F. Ionescu, and in Budapest, Ion Popescu-Puturi, made daily reports (often several times a day) on the situation in two states, on the purposes of the movement, the stand taken by various groupings, the battles waged in Budapest. Despite the volume of information sent daily to Bucharest, Aurel Malnaseanu, in his first informative note sent to Bucharest noticed that "now the general situation is worst than I expected to be".<sup>8</sup> So, the reports sent from Budapest convinced the Politburo that the breaking out of a similar revolt in Romania must be avoided by all means and this should be its major priority. Therefore, Gh. Dej came to the conclusion that crushing down the revolt from Hungary is an issue of vital interest and accordingly, he took a firm position in supporting Moscow's actions against Hungarian uprising.

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<sup>8</sup> *Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (hereafter A.M.F.A.), Fond Budapesta, File no. 34/1956, Telegram no. 124/ 30 October 1956, Budapest to MFA, ff. 141-142

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1956, N. Khrushchev paid a secret visit to Bucharest to discuss the Hungarian crisis with the Romanian and the Czechoslovak leaders (by then visiting Romania). According to some Western reports, the Soviet leader demanded that Romanian troops to be used to crush the Budapest revolt, but Romanian side expressed its reluctance in playing such a role arguing that such a decision would highly antagonized the large Hungarian minority.<sup>9</sup> According to other sources, namely Khrushchev's *Testimonies*, it was Dej who first expressed his willingness to provide military assistance to the Soviets in case of a military operation. The existed documents come to support the later assertion. Taking about the Hungarian situation during the Politburo's meeting taking place on December 01, 1956, Gheorghiu Dej stated that: "From the very beginning we thought that is necessary, it is an international duty, to help the Hungarian people to overthrow the reactionary forces from Hungary...In the context of the situation emerging in Hungary, our party could not hang out. From the very beginning it took a firm position in supporting both: the crushing down of the counterrevolution and the Soviet military intervention..."<sup>10</sup>

There is no doubt that the Romanian leadership pushed for a firm military intervention against Imre Nagy's government and the Soviet troops based in Romania have been among the first to cross the Hungarian border on 26 October to reinforce the Soviet presence in Hungary.

Furthermore, immediately after the second Soviet intervention in Hungary, Romanian leadership was the first who proclaimed, in a message sent on November 05, its solidarity with the new government led by Janos Kadar.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Romania, 1948-1989. An historical overview*, in *Romania and the Warsaw Pact: 1955-1989*, Working Paper no.43, W. Wilson International Center for Scholars, p.11

<sup>10</sup> C.H.N.A., Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 174/1956, Stenographic transcript of the meeting of Politburo of CC of RWP regarding Romania's position towards the events in Hungary, December 01, 1956, f. 1-2

<sup>11</sup> Corneliu Mihai Lungu, Mihai Retegan, 1956. *Explozia. Perceptii romane, iugoslave si sovietice asupra evenimentelor din Polonia si Ungaria (1956. Explosion. Romanian, Yugoslavian and Soviet Perceptions on the events from Poland and Hungary)*, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic, Bucharest, 1996, pp. 216-218.

It is obvious that Khrushchev welcome Dej's actions during the Hungarian crisis as he asked to the Romanian leader to go to Budapest for helping the new Hungarian government to reorganize the Communist Party. On 21 November, a delegation made of Gh. Dej and E. Bodnaras paid a secret visit to Hungary. According to the existed records, during this visit two important issues have been touched upon: to help with the reorganization of the Hungarian security service, the AVH, and to solve Imre Nagy's case. Thus, several hundred Securitatea agents of Transylvanian Hungarian background were sent to Budapest and Bodnaras's extended stay in the Hungarian capital indicates that he was closely involved in this operation.<sup>12</sup>

As about Imre Nagy's affair, based on the existed available documentary evidences, one can say that it was Romanian leadership which took the initiative of bringing Nagy and his group to Romania and therefore bringing its contribution to the "stabilization efforts" made by the new Hungarian government led by Janos Kadar.<sup>13</sup> Dej confessed during the meeting of the Politburo of December 01, 1956, that he first approached J. Kadar concerning Nagy's group trying to convince him to bring it to Romania where it would be well protected and in safe hands.<sup>14</sup> Simultaneously, secret discussions between Romanian and Yugoslavian representatives took place, but no common agreed solution has been reached. Despite these documentary evidences it is unlikely that Gh. Dej was able to take such a decision on his account alone. This was to be another message sent to Khrushchev in order to gain more credibility and implicitly the Soviet support for his leadership.

Beyond these controversies, it is no less true that after Gheorghiu Dej's visit in Hungary on November 21, 1956 and his meeting with J. Kadar, the new

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<sup>12</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Romania Under Communist Rule*, Civic Academy Foundation, Bucharest, 1998, p. 132

<sup>13</sup> *C.H.N.A.*, Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 174/1956, Stenographic transcript of the meeting of Politburo of CC of RWP regarding Romania's position towards the events in Hungary, December 01, 1956, f. 3.

First Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, Nagy was abducted by KGB officers and flown to Bucharest where he was granted what the Romanian Foreign Minister Grigore Preoteasa termed “asylum”.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the role played by Romania concerning this affair still remained a controversial issue since the available documents are not clearly showing the way the leadership of the Romanian Workers’ Party became involved in this affair.

There is another hypothesis regarding Romania’s involvement in the Hungarian crisis, still not clearly confirmed by the existed documentary evidences. Previous to the second Soviet military intervention, Romanian leadership took some initiatives perceived as an attempt of playing a role of “mediator” or more appropriate to offer what in diplomatic terms is called “good offices” for solving the crisis. Such an initiative was the decision of sending a delegation of RWP made of Aurel Malnasan and Valter Roman to Budapest with the mission of establishing contacts with Imre Nagy and his government.<sup>16</sup> On November 02, 1956, they presented during the meeting of Politburo of CC of RWP an informative report on their activities, revealing that such contacts have been set up, stating that: “Nagy recognized that he had been already informed about the mission we have to accomplished namely to provide him support, and therefore he expressed his gratitude to Romanian Party’s leadership for that assistance”.<sup>17</sup> They gave no other detail on the content of the discussions taking place on that occasion and this affair still remained a debatable issue.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, f.4

<sup>15</sup> In fact, he was held, along with other members of his government, in a *Securitate* safe house in a locality just north of Bucharest, where their interrogation was coordinated by Boris Shumilin, chief KGB adviser “for counter-revolutionary affairs” in Dennis Deletant, *Romania, 1948-1989. An historical overview*, in *Romania and the Warsaw Pact: 1955-1989*, Working Paper nr. 43, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, p. 12

<sup>16</sup> *C.H.N.A.*, Fond Cc of the RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 171/1956, Stenographic transcript of the meeting of Politburo of CC of RWP in which Aurel Malnasan and Valter Roman informed about the Hungarian situation, 2 November 1956, f. 2-16

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, 13

Nevertheless, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1956, the head of Hungarian government asked Aurel Malnasan, deputy of Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs to sent to Bucharest his expressed desire that the Romanian Workers Party to accept to play a role of mediator in Hungarian-Soviet conflict.<sup>18</sup>

The lack of information does not allow us to draw up a concluding assessment on the Romanian initiative in this regard and therefore important questions still remained: did Romania intend to play such a role and if yes, did it aim to assume by itself or was it another Soviet attempt of using the satellites as a channel of communication between Moscow and Budapest?

### ***The impact on Romanian political establishment***

Both destalinization process initiated by the Soviet leader N. Khrushchev and the Hungarian uprising of October-November 1956 had a double-oriented impact on Romanian political “establishment”.

At internal level, the effects of Hungarian uprising played a catalyst role justifying the hard Soviet line adopted by the Romanian leader Gh. Dej after 1956. Two major concerns guided his political actions. Firstly, the fear of revolutionary and anti-communist movements/ feelings breaking out in Romania based on Hungarian model which might put the regime in jeopardy. Secondly, the fear that, under the impact of destalinization process, he could be removed from power and replaced by a new anti-Stalinist leader. Therefore, the Romanian leader sought solutions likely to enhance his own political power through imposing his firm control over both the Party/state and society and to subordinate them to his own unique authority. One can say that, ironically, by the time of destalinization, Dej launched a policy of re-Stalinization at all levels of the Party and society.

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<sup>18</sup> Constantin Olteanu, Alesandru Dutu and Constantin Antip, *Romania and the Warsaw Pact. History, Testimonies, Documents, Chronology*, Pro Historia, Bucharest, 2005, p. 53

Consequently, a new wave of repressive actions has been launched both against society and Party's leadership serving perfectly to enhance the regime's control by terror.

At society level, Romanian leadership mapped out a well organized plan, based on terror and repressive measures, in order to annihilate the capacity of the society to act against the communist regime. The existed records provide a general image on the size of the repressive actions taken against those participating in the actions organized in support of the Hungarian revolution. There were 88 persons arrested, investigated and judged, among them they were 80 students, 3 teachers, 3 high school scholars and 3 workers.<sup>19</sup> The persons arrested were the victims of oppressive and long investigations coordinated by the Direction of Penal Investigation belonging to Securitatea. The Military Court pronounced sentences for crimes 'against state security' lasting from 3 months to imprisonment up to 20 years of hard prisons.

Based on Securitatea apparatus and using Communist propaganda instruments, Romanian leadership succeeded to impose a complete control over society and to annihilate any possible anti-communist movements. A high attention has been paid to the students since their attitudes during the Hungarian uprising was a matter of a great concern for the political leadership. As a result, the control over the students has been increased and in 1957 the Union of Students Associations has been established as an instrument of the Party's domination.

Moreover, thousands of people were banned from their homes, dismissed from their jobs, or placed under police supervision.

The same approach has been pursued for gaining the absolute control over the Party and consequently, a new wave of repressions affected the highest levels of the Communist Party. The methods used to eliminate opposition throughout the

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country, and to ensure its subservience to the regime came to be used by Dej in his struggle for power in and over the Party. The meetings of the RWP taking place between June 28-29, 1957 and July 1-3, 1957 were tactfully used by Dej for replacing his major rivals, namely Miron Constantinescu and Iosif Chisinevski who previously asked for the need of implementing moderate liberalization measures based on the new Soviet political course of destalinization. A year later, during the Politburo's meeting of June 9-13, 1958, other high figures of the Party have been removed. Following the same scenario as in 1957, the so-called "Doncea group" has been eliminated being denounced of anti-party attitudes, revisionism, factionist actions and anarchical conceptions. Moreover, between 1956 –1958, thousands of Party's members became the victims of terror measures. The meetings of the RWP of 1957 and 1958 and the way in which they have been instrumented provided to Dej the absolute control of the Party and imposed Dej's unique domination over the one-party/state and over the whole society.

Simultaneously with the increasing the control over the society, Dej fostered a genuine strategy in order to gain public support and to develop a sense of identity between population and communist values. Firstly, there were taken measures aiming at improving the living standards of the population. Therefore, a plan of measures was adopted including improvement of supplies of population, a new wage-system, abrogation of the compulsory quota, increased fund allotted to the consumer good sector, etc.

Secondly, Dej initiated a political doctrine based on the re-assessment of the national values and the development of the national communism. Being aware of the strong anti-Soviet feelings of the population, he tried to use them in his own benefit and to bind the national intelligentsia close to his policy. The key concepts of sovereignty, national interests, territorial integrity, autonomy, were to provide

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<sup>19</sup> Cristian Troncota, "Proportiile represiunii comuniste (1956-1964)" (The size of Communist repressive actions: 1956-1964) in *Dosarele Istoriei*, no.1/1996, p. 55

him the necessary background in order to build bridges between Party's elite and population and to provide him a sense of legitimacy: the image of a leader able to defend the national and security interests of the country.

This was just another way used by Dej for increasing the regime's popularity. "National communism" will gain momentum in the following years, especially after 1964. No less true, these developments provided the background for the subsequent openings in the relationship with the soviet Union.

As of the second level of analysis, the 1956 developments in Poland and Hungary simultaneously with the challenge posed by Khrushchev's speech on destalinization highly marked the future Romania's political thinking toward the Soviet Union both events being used by Gh. Dej to launch a dynamic foreign policy.

Both crisis of 1956, from Hungary and Poland, were a lesson well learned by the Romanian leader. On one hand, the Hungarian "solution" was as a warning signal of how far one should go and the fear that Romanian leadership could have the same fate as Nagy group marked its actions in the following years. On the other hand, the Polish "solution" show that between some limits, a less conformist regime could be accepted.<sup>20</sup> Basically, the Soviet Union established its minimum requirements for the East European allies: upholding the leading role of the communist party in society and remaining a member of the Warsaw Pact. These two conditions ensured that Eastern Europe would remain a buffer zone for the Soviet Union.

These political circumstances and the obsession of preserving his political power are relevant for understanding the new Dej's political thinking towards Kremlin. He was aware of his own vulnerability in relation to Moscow meaning that he could be removed by Moscow anytime, as well as the lack of any Soviet

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<sup>20</sup> Dan Catanus, *Between Beijing and Moscow. Romania and the Sino-Soviet Conflict*, vol. I, 1957-1965, National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, Bucharest, 2004, p. 10

support guaranteeing his political survival. He came to an astonishing conclusion, namely the need of reshaping the nature of the Romanian-Soviet relations in order to avoid an increased Moscow's control over the country and to decrease the Soviets pressures over his leadership. The idea of getting distance towards Moscow seemed to the Romanian leader as a possible option guaranteeing his own political survival. Being aware of the risks such an approach could entail, he followed a very cautiously strategy and therefore the rift with Moscow was produced gradually with fluctuations on its development.

Immediately after the Hungarian events, Dej carefully went behind the political line imposed by Kremlin paying attention not to challenge Moscow and to comply with the Soviet requirements. His attitude along with the firm measures taken at internal level for imposing the Party's control over the country convinced the Soviet leader N. Khrushchev of Dej's capability to guard the communist system in Romania.

Khrushchev's confidence allowed to Dej to made the first steps in order to soften up the Soviet control. A first achievement in this regard was the Soviet decision to withdraw the troops from Romania in 1958. Once the main tool of pressure has been removed, along with the abolishment of the SOVROMS and the retreat of the Soviet counselors, Romania began an internal process of detachment from USSR without changing the very nature of the regime itself. Initially restrained to the economic level, the policy of detachment has been publicly expressed in 1964, once the April Declaration has been issued, document which became the basic foundation the whole policy of the Bucharest communist regime has been based upon until 1989.

### *Conclusions*

To conclude, one can say that the Hungarian uprising marked a turning point in the further evolution of Romanian political “establishment”. Yet, the major effects of the 1956 crisis cannot be analyzed separately of the “wave shocks” provoked by Khrushchev’s secret speech on destalinization.

Dej’s fear that he could lose the power was in fact the engine motivating his behavior towards the Hungarian crisis. Willing to prove his commitment towards Soviet policy, worried about his own political future and facing a tense situation inside the party, Romanian leader Gh. Dej had no other alternative than to follow the Soviet line. Also, the fear of revanchism, along with ideological reasons, guided the decisions of the Romanian leaders to support the Soviet intervention against the revolution.

In the same time, the rapidity and radicalism of the Hungarian uprising had placed Dej in a very complex situation. He became aware more than ever that the political survival of the Bucharest regime and its leaders was dependent upon Moscow’s support.<sup>21</sup> An important consequence of this insecurity was Romania’s decision to launch a dynamic foreign policy through adopting a challenging position towards Moscow and playing the card of “independence” as the only valuable solution of preserving its political power.

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<sup>21</sup> Mihail E. Ionescu, *The Communist Romania’s Course within the Warsaw Treaty. Introduction* in Mihail E. Ionescu and Dennis Deletant, *Romania and the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1989. Selected Documents*, Editura Politeia-SNSPA, Bucharest, 2004