

MARTOR



Title: "Subjective timeline of the '90s"

Author: Petre Popovăț

How to cite this article: Popovăț, Petre. 2005. "Subjective timeline of the '90s". *Martor* 10: 7-11.

Published by: *Editura MARTOR* (MARTOR Publishing House), *Muzeul Țăranului Român* (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant)

URL: <http://martor.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro/archive/martor-10-2005/>

Martor (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant Anthropology Review) is a peer-reviewed academic journal established in 1996, with a focus on cultural and visual anthropology, ethnology, museum studies and the dialogue among these disciplines. *Martor* review is published by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant. Its aim is to provide, as widely as possible, a rich content at the highest academic and editorial standards for scientific, educational and (in)formational goals. Any use aside from these purposes and without mentioning the source of the article(s) is prohibited and will be considered an infringement of copyright.

Martor (Revue d'Anthropologie du Musée du Paysan Roumain) est un journal académique en système *peer-review* fondé en 1996, qui se concentre sur l'anthropologie visuelle et culturelle, l'ethnologie, la muséologie et sur le dialogue entre ces disciplines. La revue *Martor* est publiée par le Musée du Paysan Roumain. Son aspiration est de généraliser l'accès vers un riche contenu au plus haut niveau du point de vue académique et éditorial pour des objectifs scientifiques, éducatifs et informationnels. Toute utilisation au-delà de ces buts et sans mentionner la source des articles est interdite et sera considérée une violation des droits de l'auteur.

Subjective timeline of the '90's*

Petre Popovăț

*For Romania,
the '90's began in December 1989.*

December 16, 1989 The 1989 Revolution starts in Timișoara. The spark of the revolt is the eviction of the protestant pastor Lászlo Tökés. In the beginning, a few hundred parishers protest in front of his house. The revolt expands in the entire city.

December 17 Protesters are shot at. There are many dead and wounded.

December 21 In Bucharest, Ceaușescu organizes a “denunciation” rally against the “hooligans” in Timișoara. The rally turns against him. Many participants shout out “Down with Ceaușescu!”, “Down with the Communism!” A barricade is set up in the University Square, in the night of 21/22 December. The Army and the secret police (Securitate), drive tanks into the crowd, leaving many dead and wounded.

December 22 Protests continue. Hundreds

of thousands gather in the city center. At 12.06 Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu run away with a chopper from the roof of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party headquarters. The building is occupied by the demonstrators. So is the national public television. A new body is created – the National Salvation Front (FSN) - in order to fill the power vacuum. The declared purpose of FSN is to “bring democracy, liberty and dignity to the Romanian people”. The head of this body is Ion Iliescu, former high-ranking activist of the Romanian Communist Party, fallen off the graces of Ceaușescu. In the '80's, due to his “gorbatchevian” orientation, he is considered to be an alternative to the dictator. As dusk settles, the “terrorists”, left unidentified to this day, start shooting at the peaceful demonstrators. Many die and are wounded.

25 December After a show trial, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu are sentenced to death and executed.

26 December Petre Roman is appointed prime-minister.

* The material is almost exclusively realized by putting together data from the following books: Domnița Ștefănescu, *Five years in the history of Romania*, Edit. Mașina de Scris, Buc., 1995; Domnița Ștefănescu, *Two years in the History of Romania*, Edit. Mașina de Scris, Buc., 1998; Emilian M. Dobrescu, *Românografia, bilanț și perspective*, Edit. Compania, Buc., 2000

1990

Between **the 8th and the 28th of January**, twenty political parties are founded. Their number will go up.

January 28 The National Peasant Christian Democrat Party (PNTCD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL) protest against the decision of FSN to run into the elections. FSN is supported by the workers and miners in the mining area Jiu Valley. Armed with clubs and other specific weapons they came for the first time to Bucharest. The slogan “Death to the intellectuals!” is heard for the first time.

January 29 FSN supporters assault the headquarters of some opposition parties.

February 9 As a consequence of many anti-communist dissidents leaving the FSN Council, the Provisory Council of National Unity (CPUN) is established.

February 15 The Romanian Peasant’s Museum is created by government ordinance no. 130. Painter Horia Bernea is appointed director.

February 28 During ample street protests against FSN and the former apparatchiks and secret police officers leading it, miners come for the second time to Bucharest to intervene.

March 15-20 Violent confrontations between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians in Tg. Mureș?

March 24 The Romanian Information Service (SRI) is founded and replaces the former “Securitate” secret police.

April 22 University Square is occupied by anti-FSN forces who believe that FSN is just a successor of the Romanian Communist Party. The protest will establish a record of length (53 days in a row). Ion Iliescu calls the protesters

“hooligans”. The insult is turned into a title of honor. University Square is called “Hooligania”. The protesters wear badges on which it is written “hooligan”. The balcony of the University is open. People make speeches, sing and shout out slogans. University Square is declared “Communism-Free Zone”. The leader of the movement is Marian Munteanu, president of the Students’ League.

May 20 Parliamentary and presidential elections, validating the victory of FSN and Ion Iliescu.

June 13 Order forces attack the hunger-strikers who had put up their protest tents in the University Square. People are arrested. College students are beaten up. Confrontations with the police forces take place. State institutions are set on fire.

June 14-15 A new coming of the miners (“mineriada”) led by their union leader, Miron Cozma. All the persons present in the University Square, even passers-by with an “intellectual look” (i.e. beard, glasses) are savagely beaten up. 185 persons are arrested and 560 wounded. The City Health Department acknowledges six dead. In reality there were more. On the 29th of June, unidentified bodies taken from the Forensic Science Institute are buried.

August 24-25 On the walls of the Architecture Faculty from the University Square one can read “Square Tien An Men II”.

November 6 The Civic Alliance is founded.

December 25 Former King Michael I is not allowed to enter the country. A wave of protests follows the decision of the authorities.

1991

January 23 Land Law is adopted, allowing the restitution of farming land expropriated from the peasants and given to the Soviet-style agricultural cooperatives.

February 6 Romania agrees with the dismantling of the military structures of the Warsaw Pact.

April 4-6 Iliescu and Gorbachev sign the Romania-URSS Treaty.

July 20 Greater Romania Party (PRM) is founded. It is an extremist, nationalist, anti-Hungarian and anti-Semitic party led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor.

July 30. Privatization Law is adopted.

September 25-28 A new "mineriada" led by Miron Cozma leads to the toppling of the executive. Acts of violence and vandalism take place. The result: three dead and 455 wounded. The miners ask (with no result) for the resignation of President Iliescu.

1 October Theodor Stolojan becomes the new prime-minister.

The Parliament adopts the Constitution adopted by the **8th of December** referendum.

1992

March 27-29 FSN splits in two between the supporters of Petre Roman and those of Ion Iliescu. The latter forms the Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN), registered on the 29th of April.

April 25-27 King Michael I and other members of the Romanian royal family manage to come to Romania on Easter. In Bucharest they are greeted by almost one million enthusiastic persons.

September 27 Parliamentary and presiden-

tial elections validate the victory of FDSN and (in the second round) Ion Iliescu.

November 4 Nicolae Văcăroiu is appointed prime-minister.

1993

February 1 Romania signs in Brussels the Europe Agreements; May – the implementation of the commercial provisions within the European Agreement has been initiated, through an Interim Agreement.

September 28 Romania becomes a member of the Council of Europe.

1994

May 17 President Iliescu signs the European Convention on Human Rights.

May 21 World Bank and G-24 (The Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development) give Romania loans of over 1 billion US dollars.

May 23 PNȚCD reacts to a statement made by Ion Iliescu. He stated that adopting the land law is the greatest mistake of the past four years.

May 24 Opposition representatives condemn the statements of Ion Iliescu who criticized the judges who ruled in favor of the former owners of nationalized buildings.

June 20 Nationalized Building Law is adopted, without solving the issue of restitution of the buildings nationalized by the communist regime to the former owners.

August 11 The "Caritas Scandal" bursts out. Caritas was a pyramid scheme. The owners stated that they were a charitable association which

took money from people and gave it back 8 times more in a few months. Many citizens were at a loss. One million complaints were filled against the 600 such “charity associations”.

September 13 Bucharest Court of Law decides the freeing of the former members of the Political Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party who were still incarcerated.

October 7 Former King Michael I and his wife Anna are stopped on the Otopeni Airport and forbidden to enter the country. According to an official press-release, “The Executive does not consider appropriate their presence in Romania”.

1995

January 13 Emil Constantinescu announces his intention to run for president of the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR) and, in the future, for President of Romania.

January 21-22 The 4th Congress of the International Association of the Former Political prisoners and Victims of Communism takes place in Budapest. Constantin Ticu Dumitrescu, Romanian former political prisoner is elected president of this body.

February 11 The European Agreement with Romania, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Slovakia enters into force. Romania may now officially apply for EU membership.

March 31 Dumitru Iuga, President of the Free Union from Broadcast Public Television is on his 13th day of hunger strike, protesting against the attempts of the power to control the editorial policy of public TV station.

Airplane accident: TAROM 310 Muntania Airbus aircraft crashes near Bucharest. There are 59 victims.

May 8 By the grave of Nicolae Ceaușescu, a group of nostalgic *aficionados* of the Communist regime celebrates the founding of the Romanian Communist Party.

June 12 Ion Iliescu explains on the public TV station that he had no connection with the KGB.

August 26 Prime-Minister Nicolae Văcăroiu affirms that 60% of the state budget is money coming from fiscal evasion.

October 6 Corneliu Coposu, President of PNTCD and leader of the Opposition, is decorated with the Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor Medal.

November 11 Corneliu Coposu passes away. King Michael I is not allowed to participate at the funeral.

1996

February 17 Tennis player Ilie Năstase announces he will run for mayor of Bucharest from the part of PDSR (former FDSN).

May 18 After only three years from its inaugurations, the Romanian Peasant’s Museum receives from EMYA (European Museum of the Year Award) the award for best museum of the year.

June 16 Victor Ciorbea, former union leader, is elected mayor of Bucharest.

August 28 For the 3rd time Iliescu decides to run for President. The Constitution of Romania only allows for two presidential terms.

September 4 Emil Constantinescu, from the part of CDR, decides to run for President.

September 16 The Hungary – Romania

Neighbourhood Treaty is signed.

September 18 The Lower Chamber votes for the amendment of the Criminal Code. According to article 200, homosexuality is punished with prison from six months to three years.

November 3 CDR comes in first in the parliamentary elections.

November 17 In the second round of Presidential elections, Emil Constantinescu is elected President of Romania.

November 20 Victor Ciorbea is appointed prime-minister.

1997

February 3 Former King Michael I is allowed to return to Romania "without any pre-conditions".

July 14 Bill Clinton's visit to Bucharest.

August 19 By governmental ordinance the miners who will become unemployed due to the restructuring of the field will get up to 20 compensatory salaries. First strikes in the world asking for unemployment take place (80,000 requests of being let go).

1998

January 23 Extreme weather affects the country.

July 6 Romanian education system is in shock: one out of three candidates did not pass the high-school final exam (Baccalaureate).

1999

January 18 The fifth „mineriada” begins.

January 20 The miners outnumber the police forces, surrounding and disarming them.

January 22 Prime-Minister Radu Vasile and the leader of the miners, Miron Cosma, meet for negotiations in Cozia.

February 15 The Supreme Court of Justice sentences Miron Cosma at 18 years in prison.

May 7-9 Pope John Paul II comes to Romania.

August 11 Total solar eclipse.

December 31, 22.00 hrs Most of Romanians prepare to party. Year 2000 begins in 2 hours.

Translated by Cora Moțoc

