Regional Ostracism and Outcast State-Bonding: The Crystallization of Diplomatic Relations between Israel and Communist Romania, 1948-1989

James Gadea

Honors Thesis Submitted to the Department of History, Georgetown University
Advisor: Professor Charles King
Honors Program Chair: Professor Amy Leonard

9 May 2016
# Table of Contents

Table of Figures .......................................................................................................................... 3
Acknowledgments .......................................................................................................................... 3
Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 7

Chapter I: The Structural .......................................................................................................... 14
  History and the Progression of Time ....................................................................................... 16
  The Religious .......................................................................................................................... 23
    Jerusalem ............................................................................................................................... 23
  The Political .............................................................................................................................. 29
    Political Ostracization of Romania ..................................................................................... 29
  The Economic ........................................................................................................................... 32
  The Socio-Cultural ................................................................................................................. 34
  The Linguistic .......................................................................................................................... 36
Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 38

Chapter II: The State-Level ...................................................................................................... 41
  Small Powers and Their Foreign Policy ................................................................................ 41
    Romania, the Soviet Union, and Diplomacy with the Middle East .................................. 44
    The Nature of Arab Socialism in the Middle East within the Context of the Cold War ..... 44
    The Soviet Union and its Alliances in the Middle East ...................................................... 46
  Great Powers, Small Powers, and Alliances ........................................................................ 48
    Soviet Involvement and Romanian Abstention in the 1967 Six-Day War ...................... 49
    Communist Romania and the USSR: Independent Actors ............................................... 51

Chapter III: The Individual - Ceauşescu and His Company ..................................................... 53
  The Budding Early Years ....................................................................................................... 54
  “The Conductor” Ceauşescu and the Cult of Personality .................................................... 60
  Ceauşescu’s Foreign Policy .................................................................................................... 62
    “Horizon” ........................................................................................................................... 66
      The Middle East and Ceauşescu ....................................................................................... 70
    Ceauşescu and Israel .......................................................................................................... 73
    The USA and Ceauşescu ...................................................................................................... 78
    The Soviet Union and an Excluded Ceauşescu ................................................................ 82

Chapter IV: The Individual - Israel’s Perspective ..................................................................... 85
  Common Ground with Uncommon Friends ........................................................................ 87
  Israel the Safe Haven .............................................................................................................. 93
Economic Security ......................................................................................................................... 95
Policy of the Periphery .............................................................................................................. 98
Cold War Neutrality and Israeli Exceptionalism ................................................................. 100
Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 105
Bibliography .......................................................................................................................... 108

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Map of Middle Eastern Languages (Arab Atlas/Wikipedia) ....................................... 37
Figure 2 Slavic-Speaking Europe (Wikimedia Commons) .......................................................... 38
Figure 3 Golda Meir and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1972 (University of Wisconsin) ...................... 75
Figure 4 Golda Meir and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1972 (National Archives of Israel) ............... 91
Figure 5 Shimon Peres and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1985 (National Archives of Israel) ........... 95
Figure 6 Menachem Begin and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1977 (National Archives of Israel) ........ 98
Figure 7 Yitzhak Shamir and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1987 (National Archives of Israel) ........ 103

Acknowledgments
At Georgetown University, I have encountered the most intelligent and compassionate people I have ever known. My professors have inspired me, made me laugh, and encouraged me to pursue my intellectual passion towards completing this thesis. First off, I would like to thank and acknowledge Professor Amy Leonard for being an amazing teacher, mentor, and editor. I have loved HIST-408 and HIST-409 because of her optimism about our research and her excitement about our topics. This thesis-writing process was an extraordinary opportunity to learn from my peers about a variety of different topics: everything from the Baptists and religious freedom, to French intellectualism and the transformation of higher education after the Renaissance, to the history of privacy law, to beer manufacturers and their unique role during the Prohibition. I would like to thank Professor Charles King, my thesis advisor, who always found a better, more nuanced approach when I over-generalized. It has been an honor working with someone like yourself who is at the top of your field. It is amazing that I can go to Kramerbooks and find your new book Midnight at Pera Palace right at the front of the store. If you have not had the chance, be sure to pick up a copy at your next visit! If anyone deserves royalties for amazing writing, it is Professor King. Thank you so much for being such a great advisor. I would also like to thank Professor Dennis Deletant his great advice to me on sources for my research as well as potentially helpful rabbit-holes to investigate. I would like to thank the staff of Lauinger Library for all the books and primary sources I uncovered with your help, and I give permission to Lauinger Library to make this thesis available to the public. Hopefully, some day

At Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, I would like to thank Dr. Eliza Gheorghe, a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow in the Belfer Center’s International Security Program and Project on Managing the Atom. Dr. Gheorghe was enormously helpful in guiding my thesis through her earnest help and provision of a wealth of primary sources she herself had
discovered at the National Archives of Romania. Given my travelling constraints, these documents were some of the richest additions to my source base. This internationally aligned thesis would have been impossible without her own dedicated research on Romania and Israel.

I would like to thank Dean Zenick for being a mentor and an advocate for me since the beginning of my time at Georgetown. You have helped me get to the place where I am, and I am so grateful. I am grateful to Dean Pirrotti for being an unbelievably kind and extraordinarily helpful friend and guide during my time as an International History major in the School of Foreign Service. You have made this major something special. Throughout my time at Georgetown, I have had amazing professors who have shaped me and my time here. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn under Fr. Dennis McManus (who is the most incredible person I have ever met), Professor John Glavin (for crafting me into a better student and a better scholar through the Carroll Fellowship), Fr. Matthew Carnes (for teaching me the basics of political science), Prof. James Vreeland (for challenging me and making me do math for the first time in a long time; your Bob Marley lecture is still not forgotten) and the Krogh Honors Seminar, and Professor Anthony Arend (who is the model for what I think all good professors should be like). I would also like to thank Mrs. Carolyn Garner, my high school English teacher, who volunteered to read and edit part of my thesis. God has truly been good to me with the education He has given me.

I would especially like to thank Missy Foy and Christine Pfeil of the Georgetown Scholarship Program for giving me the opportunity to come to Georgetown in the first place. GSP means so much to me, and I hope you enjoy this thesis. It would not have possible without your support. My friends and family have also been blessings from God. I am grateful to one of my best friends, Reno Varghese, who helped edit this thesis and who has been a friend to me...
throughout my time at Georgetown. Reno is like no other person I have met in his determination and will power, and he has inspired me to be a better person than I am. I am grateful to Kevin Tian, Milos Popovic, Kevin Chen, Rachel Acree, Marshall Lifton, Cherie Chung, Sona Jain, Sarah Long, Kay-Anne Reed, and Maurice McCaulley for being such great friends since freshman year. I would like to thank Arnosh Keswani, Sam Kim, Matt Hinson, and Ethan Beaman for making sophomore year in Henle 50 so memorable. I am so grateful for my friends from my time at the University of Oxford: Janicko Dudek, Apekshya Prasai, Meera Kumar, Luke Charters-Reid, and Joseph Diwakar. I would like to especially thank Esther Sohn for being a great friend who I travelled with from the Hilltop to Oxford and back. I would also like to thank the rest of FJR 500: Ty Greenberg, Kenyon Smutherman, Alex Robledo, Christian Fernando, Zach Busch, and Francisco Gonzalez. You all have kept me up with political debates on Ted Cruz, philosophical discussions on the Catholic Church, and sometimes just completely random shenanigans. All of you have brought joy to my life.

Finally, I would like to thank my family I would like to thank my Mama, Maria Gadea, for being the single person in my life who has made the most difference. Thank you Mama for never giving up on me, and for showing me God’s love. I would like to thank my Tata, Mario Gadea, who has inspired me to be a better Christian and a better person in all aspects of my life. I have never met someone with more integrity and honesty than you. Thank you for loving me. I would like to thank Jonathan Gadea, my brother, who is so, so important to me. I have always wanted to be more like you. I am grateful to my grandparents, Erica Gadea and Dinu Gadea, for their never-ending support and for the “professorial” traits they have passed on to me. I would also like to thank my grandparents who are still in Romania: Craciun Pacurar and Rebeca Pacurar. Living with you both for a month was one of the best experiences of my life. I want to
make you both proud. Thank you to my uncle, Ioan Pacurar, for taking such good care of me while I was in Romania. I will never forget that trip. Finally, I would like to thank Stephen and Genovieva Beattie for their incessant love of humanity. The stories of Genovieva’s childhood growing up under the persecution of Ceaușescu’s regime always remind me of the power of faith. I love you all and thank you so much for helping make this thesis happen. It is a truly amazing feeling to have written something of such depth and length, and I am excited to see whether any of my family will finish reading it.

Ad maiorem Dei glorian,

James Eric Gadea
English

Oh! Rumania, Rumania, Rumania ...
Once there was a land, sweet and lovely.
Oh! Rumania, Rumania, Rumania ...
Once there was a land, sweet and fine.
To live there is a pleasure;
What your heart desires you can get;
A mamaliga, a pastrami, a karnatzl,
And a glass of wine, aha ...!

Yiddish

Ekh! Rumania, Rumania, Rumania ...
Geven amol a land a zise, a sheyne.
Ekh! Rumania, Rumania, Rumania ...
Geven amol a land a zise, a fayne.
Dort tsu voynen iz a fargenign;
Vos dos harts glust kenstu krign:
A mamaligele, a pastramele, a karnatsele,
Un a glezele vayn, aha ...

“Rumania, Rumania” by Aaron Lebedeff (1873-1960)

After the end of World War II, the international ecosystem containing the Middle East and Eastern Europe lay in shambles as the former power structures in place were uprooted, and the future of the regions was uncertain. Would the states of Eastern Europe fall to the sway of the Soviet Union? Would the former colonies of the British and French Empires remain loyal to their former colonizers? Some of the states that had formerly fought against each other would after the war become allies, and countries with long histories of sub-par repertoire would become, nominally, “brother” states. The Middle East and Eastern Europe lay directly within the valley that had been created by the increasing divide between the hills of power of Washington and Moscow. And, within this divide over the course of fifty years, two of these states, Israel and Romania, became close partners. In a most unlikely turn of events, the state that bore the responsibility for killing more Jewish people during the Holocaust than any other state except Germany, would end up supporting the Jewish State even in the face of the vitriol of the Soviet Union.

Beyond other explanations previously given for the causes of the formation of this odd couple, this thesis proposes that regional ostracism has led to “outcast” state-bonding. Romania and Israel are both unusual states when compared to other sovereignties in their sub-regions of the world. Romania is culturally unusual compared to its fellow Eastern European countries. Unlike most of its neighbors, Romania is not an ethnically-Slavic state. The Romanian people arose after the Roman Empire colonized Dacia. The Romanian language is Latin-based, not Slavic like the languages of Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and most of the other countries in Eastern Europe. Moreover, in contrast to many of its regional neighbors, Romania never felt a close tie to the regional hegemon, Russia. While other countries called Russia their “Slavic brother,” Romania never experienced this deep historic tie to Moscow. Israel, too, did not feel any deep connection with the local regional hegemon, wherever it might be (Turkey, Iran, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia).

Like Romania, Israel is also an “odd man out” in its region. It is a Jewish State surrounded by countries with Muslim majorities. The majority of its population speaks Hebrew, not Arabic, and its form of governance is democratic, unlike most countries in the region. Historically, its proportion of immigrant citizens is higher than any other country in the region. Thus, the crystallization of diplomatic relations between Romania and Israel is produced through the regional dissociation both states experienced and experience from their respective regions. “Outcast” state-bonding is the term I have developed to describe this phenomenon. As a result of their inability to work with and cooperate with states within their own regions, Israel and Romania reached out to each other in a form of solidarity. The “outcasts” have stuck together. This state-bonding occurred because of structural, state-level, and individual reasons. This
research explored how each of these explanations played a role in the blossoming of the
Romania-Israel relationship.

There are many causes beyond the mutual regional ostracization that led to closer ties
between Romania and Israel. The high-level transfer of hundreds of thousands of Jewish-
Romanian people to Israel in return for Israeli investments in Romanian industries is one of the
most well-known reasons for this unlikely diplomatic relationship. Romanian exit-visas were
traded for Israeli investment in farms and factories that allowed for the formation of an initial
utilitarian relationship between the two countries. The beneficial “trade” inspired further
communication between the two states, which eventually spurred a relationship more formed
around friendship than utilitarian goals.

Inter-state sovereignty recognition was another factor in the causal logic behind the closer
relations between Israel and Romania. Romania’s recognition of Israeli sovereignty, and the
symbolic reciprocal recognition of Israel towards Romania’s sovereignty played a role in
drawing the two countries closer together. In addition, both countries’ close relationship with the
United States, in a proxy-like relationship, also acted as a means to bring the two countries to a
common ground for negotiations and for communication.

Other explanations for this interesting diplomatic friendship include the effects of human
relationships formed between Jewish-Romanian immigrants to Israel and their former
communities in Romania. Human diplomacy, in other words, between populations from the
Motherland to the new country contributed to better diplomatic relations between Romania and
Israel. Finally, Nicolae Ceauşescu’s immense role in shaping foreign policy allowed Romania
the independence and flexibility to form relations with Israel where no other Soviet bloc country
could possibly hope to “build bridges” between parties that were so disparate.
The first section of the thesis will identify and survey the ostracism experienced by the leaders of both Israel and Romania at the individual level and the state-bonding that resulted from this. In other words, it will look at how the leaders of the states of Israel and Romania were ostracized from other leaders in their group and ask the question, why? Chapter 1 will focus on Romania’s leaders. Nicolae Ceaușescu (1918-1989) was the dictator and chief of Romania for much of the time period under study. His “sultanistic” regime created a cult of personality around the dictator that put him on the same level as a “god.” Ceaușescu ruled the country for a large portion of Romania’s Communist history, and his cult of personality and general nonchalance about breaking away from the Eastern bloc allowed him the type of flexibility that would be crucial in ensuring the ostracization of Romania’s leader. “The god-complex” gave him the power of enforcing compliance and attracting supporters to his ideas. Ceaușescu’s personality meant that he often made brash decisions and was very concerned about his ego, meaning he took actions that other leaders might have found unthinkable since he valued his perception over his relationship with Moscow. He was also inspired by a nationalistic passion for Romania and a general disregard for the Soviet Union due to Moscow’s annexation of Moldova after World War II.

The second chapter will focus its attention at the individual level as well, but this time on Israel’s leaders. These Prime Ministers of the Jewish State governed a territory surrounded by Muslims. Using personal letters and interviews, the chapter examines how Israeli Prime Ministers experienced difficulties connecting with Muslim foreign leaders. It also looks at how

---

3 Professor Charles King recommended that analyzing the relationship and fit of both the United States and the Soviet Union into this problem would give me a better understanding of the overall dynamics between these different states.
the Prime Minister’s position as the head of state was one reviled by many in the Arab world who viewed the Jewish State as a colonial product.

The third chapter examines ostracism in the international sphere at the state-level for both Romania and Israel. This chapter will examine how Romania, as a nominally Eastern Bloc country, managed to avoid fitting into the mold of most Eastern European states. In addition, it will analyze how Israel as a state stood at the center of the two super powers in the world. Was Romania’s Eastern bloc status questioned? Did its independent foreign policy preclude it from calling itself part of the Bloc? Were its friendly views of American interests antithetical to friendly relations with the Soviet Union? On the Israel side of the question, how did the U.S. connection and the Soviet Union connection affect Israel’s relations with its neighbors, and particularly with Romania? Did Israel resort to collaborating with Romania because it had no one else closer by to work with?

Chapter 4 looks at the structural issues at play in the exclusionary principles at work in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. This chapter will first look at the political issues behind the exclusion of Israel and Romania from their respective regions. With Israel, its status as a democracy among authoritarian regimes for much of the twentieth century, and for Romania, its sultanistic authoritarian regime among Party-led Communist countries created exclusionary forces that would push the states away from their neighbors and subsequently closer to each other. Economic factors will also be taken into account, including Israel’s existence as a non-oil producer among oil producers and Romania’s growth as an oil producer among non-oil producers. There are also social factors that played a role in excluding Israel and Romania from the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Israel is an immigrant society while the rest of the region is largely not. Romania had a mostly rural population of uneducated workers and it industrialized at
a slower pace than the Soviet Union. In addition to the exclusionary factors, there is a potpourri of other reasons for Israel’s and Romania’s alienation from their regions. These start out with linguistic differences that simply complicate communications between leaders and the peoples of different states. In addition, there are technological, historical, and cultural factors at play as well.

Finally, the last chapter will inspect the mechanisms by which, after feeling alienated from their “worlds,” Romania and Israel managed to draw closer to each other and bridge their differences to form a deep connection. State leaders reached out to other state leaders who were without close friends in the hopes of gaining much-needed allies. Without many allies in the region or abroad, Romania and Israel both benefitted by having each other as allies. Romania and Israel’s cultural, social, and religious differences from their regions, led the two states to the discovery that they were more similar to each other than they were to their local neighbors. The conclusion of this thesis undertakes an exploration of where the concept of regional ostracism and outcast state bonding can be applied again. It will look at the wide breadth of history to find relevant examples.
Chapter I: The Structural

The Cold War saw the development of a new cleaving bipolar order. Within this bipolar order, two unlikely states, Israel and Romania, became close partners. In a most unlikely turn of events, Romania would end up supporting the Jewish State even in the shadow of the giant superpower, the Soviet Union. In June 1948 Romania recognized the State of Israel that was created a month prior. By 1949, Romania and Israel created diplomatic missions to each other. On 17 August 1969, the Romanian and Israeli governments proceeded to raise the diplomatic relationship to the level of embassy. Today, Israel and Romania celebrate over sixty years of unbroken diplomatic relations.

At the highest level of analysis, there are structural reasons that explain how Israel and Romania both felt isolated from their respective regions. While not exclusively and utterly the same for both cases, the reasons that pushed Romania and Israel into the margins of their respective neighborhoods often overlapped. Beyond other explanations previously given in the literature about the causes for the formation of this “odd couple,” regional ostracism, for the two states, also led to a case of “outcast” state-bonding. In different ways, both Romania and Israel are both marginalized states in their sub-regions of the world. Romania’s historic animosity to

---


7 “Conversation between Nicolae Ceaușescu with Yigal Allon”, 47.

8 “Conversation between Nicolae Ceaușescu with Yigal Allon”, 47.
Russia over World War II, its non-Slavic origins, and Ceaușescu’s status as a dictator with absolute power isolated Romania from the rest of the Eastern Bloc and from the Kremlin in particular. Israel was alienated from the Middle East due its initial establishment without the approval of the Arab populations of Palestine, its Jewish religious base contrasted to the overwhelmingly Muslim Arab states, and by the various violent wars fought against it by its Arab neighbor from the War of Independence (or the *Nakba* as it is referred to by many Palestinian Arabs) to the 1967 Six-Day War.\(^9\) The Palestinian refugees who were displaced in the initial war and the millions of new Jewish immigrants who moved into what was viewed as Arab lands created a deep-rooted animosity towards the new state of Israel in many of the local non-Jewish populations.

Since its official founding on 14 May 1948, David Ben-Gurion appealed to the world’s Jewish population to immigrate. He stated in Tel Aviv that same day that the “Jewish people throughout the Diaspora… rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel\(^10\) in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.”\(^11\) Many of these incoming Jewish emigres, came from Romania establishing a tie based on immigration and population exchange that would be further strengthened as the decades of the twentieth century went by. Rabbi Moses Rosen stated at the Jewish World Congress in February 1975 that before WWII there were approximately 800,000 Jewish people in Romania.\(^12\) 380,000 left for Israel or other countries. By 1975, there were still

---


\(^10\) In Hebrew, this means the “Land of Israel.”


\(^12\) “Conversation between Nicolae Ceaușescu with Yigal Allon”, 47-48.
80,000 Jewish citizens in 70 different communities in Romania. This section of the thesis will explore the structural issues at play that contributed to the overall exclusion of Israel and Romania from the Middle East and Eastern Europe respectively. It will peer into the historical, political, economic, socio-cultural, and linguistic lens of analysis to divulge why over time Israel and Romania became relatively isolated from many of their neighbors.

History and the Progression of Time

It's good to be a million,
You look at them and your eyes grow moist,
Tears twinkle. And why?
For we've said it brother – statistics,
Is not always something dry...

Tom Segev, “The First Israelis”

The historical development leading up to 1948 for Israel and Romania separated the two states from the rest of their respective neighbors. Romania and Israel, since their inceptions, travelled on historical paths that have caused them to be more isolated and marginalized from their neighbors. Israel originated from the world’s oldest monotheistic religion, Judaism, and its practitioners, the Jewish tribes. No other state in the Middle East emerged from thousands of years of experience with the duality of both religion and nationhood. In the eyes of its nationalist founders, the modern state of Israel was founded as a safe-haven for Jews from around the world after millennia of persecution, slavery, genocide, and subservience under other states and empires. This narrative was passed down to many government officials and inspired decision-making at the highest-levels of the state until the modern era. No matter what one might

think of the nationalist Israeli and Zionist story, its impact was widely felt before and after the founding of Israel. After Zionism rekindled a renewed desire for a state for the Jewish people, immigration to the Holy Land surged in the late nineteenth century as Jews sought a nation-state of their own. More and more Jewish people from throughout the Diaspora began a return to their ancestral home, the land biblically promised to the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Immigration was “the concern of one and all, from the country’s leaders to the man on the street… Nevertheless, the price—political, strategic, and economic—was heavy.” This mass migration to lands populated with millions of Arabs would spur dissent, dismay, and distress from locals as well as from British officials. Narratives on the origins of Israel were not agreed on between the Palestinian Arabs and the Israeli settlers. For the Israelis, Israel was the Jewish safe-haven. Palestinian Arabs held a narrative that Israel had stolen away their inheritance and their state. The Arab states surrounding Israel agreed with the Palestinian Arab narrative, and thus the seeds of argument and war between Israel and its neighbors were planted.

The Romanian people arose after the Roman Empire colonized Dacia. The Roman influence permeated the culture of Dacia, and the language left behind after the invasion was Latin-based. Unlike their Slavic neighbors, Romanian leaders believed deeply that their history derived from Latin and French cultures.

Nonetheless, the historiography on the origins of the Romanian people developed into several schools of thought. One has been the Latinist school that has argued a direct link between

---

17 Dacia is the name used historically to roughly describe the modern-day borders of Romania.
the Romanians and the Roman colonizers over a thousand years before.\textsuperscript{19} Another school of thought has been that of synthesis; the local Dacian population, a barbaric population mixed with the Roman colonizers, and the resulting population would become the Romanian population of the modern era. The final school of thought gained ground among the most nationalistic Romanians, its name was Dacianism which held that the Romanian people were actually completely descended from the Dacians, and had no connection with the Romans who conquered what was formerly Romania.\textsuperscript{20}

Bucharest held immense pride in being called the “Paris of the Balkans.” Romania’s different historical origin from its neighbors gave it both a sense of pride due its connection with a rich and storied Roman past and a sense of being an “outsider” in its little corner of Europe. This in turn made the Romanian people fear whenever their Slavic neighbors’ power.\textsuperscript{21} In modern history, when one of the Slavic states nearby grew in power, a fellow Slavic state felt comparatively at ease with the resulting power gap out of kinship; at least this was how the Romanian state leadership perceived the power dynamics of the region.

This is not true for all of Romania’s neighbors. In the long span of history, even some of the Slavic states have taken policies to hedge against the rising dominance of Russia. The argument made in this paper is merely that Slavic states are more likely to adjust more easily and in general to be more welcoming to the increased influence of Russia than those states that are not Slavic are. Unlike the other Slavic states, Romania could not comfortably stand to see its neighbors grow in strength, because it did not have a Slavic brotherly connection with its fellow Eastern European states. Other countries in Eastern Europe, such as Hungary, do not have Slavic

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{19} Lucian Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness} (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 88.
\textsuperscript{20} Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness}, 99.
\textsuperscript{21} Jelavich, \textit{Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State}, 289.
origins, and like Romania have also felt ostracized by increased Slavic influence, further supporting the argument non-Slavic states have been more isolated in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{22}

In addition, both states draw their origins from eras much further back than their reformation in modernity. Other than the fact that the Romans invaded Dacia, much of Romania’s past has been murky due to a dark millennium with no records from the year 274 AD to 1274 AD (when the first mention of the mythical Romanian Bogdan Dragos appears).\textsuperscript{23} Israel, as previously mentioned, simply did not exist as a state for thousands of years. The Jewish people were scattered all over the world after the fall of the Second Temple in Jerusalem under the Romans in 70 AD. As a diaspora, the Jewish people migrated across the globe until Zionism attracted many Jewish survivors of pogroms and other travesties in Eastern Europe back to the land they had always called home. With Theodor Herzl’s movement encouraging the Jewish people to create their own state, forging nation and state together began to seem feasible in the Ottoman controlled Palestine. Jewish immigrants from Europe, many who came from Romania, began to move to the area. Its diasporic past, essentially a history of movement across the globe with a careful and dedicated cultural memory, sets the history of the people that founded the State of Israel apart from every other history in the Middle East.

In the Romanian nationalist narrative, from the early origins of the Romanian people in Dacia, to its modern existence as a nation-state, much is cloudy, mysterious, and unusual. Dacia would rid itself of its Roman colonizers soon after it was conquered, but it would never lose the resulting cultural imprint that the Romans left upon the local Dacians. A Romanian state reappeared as a politically defined entity in the medieval period, when Romanian kingdoms arose in the region of Dacia from the mountain peoples of the Carpathians who finally began

\textsuperscript{22} Jelavich, \textit{Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State}, 289.
\textsuperscript{23} Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness}, 47.
entering the plains of modern-day Romania. These kingdoms, Wallachia, Transylvania, and Moldova, were the new “Romanian” kingdoms, made up of ethnic Romanians, and were united in the 19th century under the modern nation-state political system as Romania. Unlike many Eastern European states, Romania does not have a contiguous history. For centuries its story and even its existence is lost at worst or at best hazy and unclear. These nationalist historical narratives provide a basis for how state leaders orient themselves within their regions. Whether correct history or not, these interpretations of the past shaped how both Israel and Romania viewed themselves. Both states would come to the conclusion that they arose from exceptional circumstances, and this would play a role in their bravely creative approaches to world politics.

The modern era of history for both Israel and Romania are also fascinating case studies of unusual country-region dynamics. The modern establishment of Israel was the culmination of the Zionist movement. After its first few hours as an official state, the first Arab-Israeli war began on May 15, 1949, “under the pretext that the events in Palestine (proclamation of independence of Israel) threatened the security of the neighboring Arab countries.”24 From Israel’s founding onwards, the Arab community in the Middle East was markedly biased and opposed to the continued existence of the state. The Arab League armies made up of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq began an invasion of Israeli territory to repel what they saw as an incursion on Arab land.25 Ever since then, Israel’s relationship with its neighbors has been marked by at best, strained relations, and at worst, out-right war. Nevertheless with Romania, it cultivated an odd friendship over the course of its history, with Israeli Ambassador Yosef Govrin recognizing that there was a “unique weight carried by Romania in Israel’s foreign policy during the absence of

25 Boștinaru, România-Israel: 50 De Ani De Relații Diplomatice, 6.
diplomatic relations between Israel and the East European States.”26 Israel’s modern history is defined by its astonishing ability to adapt to its constraining environment by looking outwards, both abroad and into the future for help and inspiration. Israeli foreign policy, in particular, placed an emphasis on cultivating friendships with countries no one else would think of to make up for its isolation in its own region.

For Romania, modern history has left behind a legacy of unusual interactions with the power-players of Eastern Europe and abroad. No country in the Eastern bloc, other than Albania, ever careened off of the Soviet agenda in such a way as Romania without facing an invasion from Moscow. Romania, time after time, disobeyed Moscow’s desires when establishing its foreign policy and domestic policy. On June 9, 1967, at a meeting in Moscow, the Socialist Republic of Romania, alongside the various Communist parties of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, German Democratic Republic, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, People’s Republic of Poland, and the People’s Republic of Hungary met with the Soviet Union to discuss the Six-Day War.27 At the meeting, a declaration was written that blamed and condemned Israel for the “aggression” and summarily ended all diplomatic relations with Israel.28 Romania refused to sign and was the only member of the Communist bloc to not cut-off ties with Israel.29 Rather, it further improved diplomatic relations.30 At another meeting of Communist countries, Romania requested the removal of all Soviet spies from Socialist countries, which incited Khrushchev to call the Romanian delegates, including

28 “Telegram of the Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv to Petru Burlacu...”, 212-213.
President Gheorghiu-Dej, “bastards.” In modern history, Romania side-stepped Soviet authorities to ascertain its own course, and while much of this was a result of its leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, its historical differences from the Soviet Union and fellow Eastern European countries created an auxiliary divide between any potential diplomatic resolutions between Bucharest and Moscow.

Freidrich Engels would write his own opinion about the historical path of the Romanians in Eastern Europe. To Engels, Romania was on a path to irrelevancy. In 1849, Engels wrote in his “The Magyar Struggle”:

The year 1848 first of all brought with it the most terrible chaos for Austria by setting free for a short time all these different nationalities which, owing to Metternich, had hitherto been enslaving one another. The Germans, Magyars, Czechs, Poles, Moravians, Slovaks, Croats, Ruthenians, Rumanians, Illyrians and Serbs came into conflict with one another… Among all the large and small nations of Austria, only three standard-bearers of progress took an active part in history, and still retain their vitality — the Germans, the Poles and the Magyars. Hence they are now revolutionary. All the other large and small nationalities and peoples are destined to perish before long in the revolutionary world storm. For that reason they are now counter-revolutionary.

Romania’s perceived lack of agency and its failure to be an early adopter of Communist ideology made Engels deem the country, alongside many others, as counter-revolutionary. Singling out Romania, Moscow retained this same attitude for the second half of the twentieth century, albeit somewhat secretly, towards Bucharest. It very well could be that many of the Soviet failures in

---


32 Romania, in the eyes of Engels was an irrelevant country that had always been shaped by history, rather than shaping history. Engels saw three states as autonomous and capable of agency in Eastern Europe; Germany, Poland, and Hungary.

controlling Romanian governmental actions arose from a misjudgment of Bucharest’s ability to take its fates into its own hands.

The Religious

Religious differences between state and region have also been extremely important in isolating Romania and Israel. Crucially important for Israel, as the only Jewish nation surrounded by Muslim ones, religion isolated Israel from its neighbors. In addition, the city of Jerusalem, a holy site for three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is one of the most important pilgrimage locations for Muslims. As a result, with Israel’s creation and seizure of Jerusalem in 1967, the Muslim world grew further incensed. While religious differences play a role in Romania’s case as well, for Israel understanding its regional ostracization is impossible without looking specifically at the religious differences between Israel and the rest of the Middle East. As a Jewish settler society, Israel’s existence among Muslim majority states was perceived as an unjust encroachment on traditionally Arab lands. To further understand exactly what kind of role religion has played in the history of conflict with Israel, this research will shortly delve into the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem provides a perfect setting for uncovering the volatility of the region as well as the security struggles in place for Israel.

Jerusalem

Few cities in the history of the world have been so shaped by war as the City of Peace. Jerusalem’s thousands of years of existence have seen numerous powers take control of the city.

---

34 Mosheh Amirav. *Jerusalem Syndrome: The Palestinian-Israeli Battle for the Holy City*. Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2009. 193; Mosheh Amirav’s background in the subject of Jerusalem is personal, professional, and academic. He teaches a Master’s course at Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Amirav, ix). Amirav worked with the Mayor of Jerusalem in city planning and blueprint efforts, and he acted as peace-maker at the Camp David summit (Amirav, ix). His book explores the history of conflict and division in Jerusalem and why the city is still so divided today using a rich source collection from interviews with policy makers, a wealth of research papers, and government documents (Amirav, ix). He combines his personal experiences as a paratrooper in the Six Days War with deep academic research to make for a stirring account of the global intersection of Jerusalem and its relationship with war that is both informative while also emotionally compelling. For further information, explore
from the Assyrians to the Umayyads to the Ottomans to the British, each shaping the physical and spatial nature through their seizure of the Holy City. Over 40 nations have conquered Jerusalem over the course of its history, each leaving a delicate and sometimes not so delicate imprint on the fabric of the city. Jerusalem has always been a microcosm of Israel as a whole. Threatened on all sides with no natural resources, Jerusalem and the greater Israel it represents have always taken creative approaches to solving problems. Israeli foreign policy and history cannot be properly understood without first understanding the City of David’s past. Jerusalem’s tumultuous past led the modern Israeli government to look for allies wherever it could.

The reiterating conflicts experienced over the city strained the tenuous relationships formed between groups in Jerusalem. Dumper describes modern Jerusalem as a “many-bordered city” where the borders between various groups have come to define the urban landscape, with divisions increasing. Given that Jerusalem’s history is so replete with wars that can be analyzed, the research in this section will focus specifically on how topography, ancient history, World War I, the Six-Day War, and modern-day terror have shaped the social and spatial landscape of Jerusalem and inspired government policies that put an immense value on security.

Throughout all of these conflicts, the unique position of Jerusalem has made the city a very resource-bare asset, chased often for its religious importance, but never for any material wealth. Mick Dumper states rather comically that, “geographically and economically, the growth

---

35 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 193.
and importance of Jerusalem just does not make sense.”
Jerusalem is positioned “on a barren mountain range with access restricted on the west by deep-sided valleys and on the east by a precipitous desert escarpment.” Local springs and wells are limited and can only provide a small amount of the total needed to sustain the modern size of Jerusalem. Armies that fought in Jerusalem had to deal with limited resources and a barren landscape. Looking specifically at the ancient history of Jerusalem, we learn that much of it is populated with the stories of conquerors who waged wars that would leave the city with a legacy of foreign influence. Powers fought for control of the spiritual sites in the city, and their efforts required a massive loss of life and resources in the process.

In 1860, Herman Melville wrote, “Jerusalem is besieged by an army of the dead. I wander among the tombstones until I begin to think myself possessed.” The deaths of thousands and thousands have added up in the numerous conflicts that have taken place in the City of Peace. In 702 BC, the Assyrians conquered the Kingdom of Israel and exiled the Jewish people. Later on in 587 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians fought one of the most violent battles in Jerusalem’s history, destroying “its ramparts… and the Jewish Temple.” The rebuilt Temple was destroyed again by the Roman Emperor Titus’s forces who decided to “raze the city,” and decades later Emperor Hadrian thoroughly destroyed the remnants of the Old City by plowing the ground under Jerusalem. The Crusaders conquered the city, and established the

37 Mick Dumper. “Jerusalem: Then and Now,” Middle East Report, Volume 23 (May/June 1993). Dumper’s research article covers the historical development of the modern Jerusalem and the effects of empires on the present day situation of the city. Dumper is a Professor of Middle East Politics at the University of Exeter (MER Website). His article was extremely helpful in the insights it took from urban planning of the city and how it was affected by the wars Jerusalem experienced over the course of its history. None of this explanation is necessary.
38 Dumper, “Jerusalem: Then and Now.”
39 Dumper, “Jerusalem: Then and Now.”
40 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 193.
41 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 195.
42 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 195.
43 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 196.
Kingdom of Jerusalem, which sparked a cultural exchange and rivalry between the Europeans
and the Islamic world, although the Crusaders’ impact on the city itself would be rather minute.44
According to Dumper, the Crusades did not leave much of a European imprint on the city, but
rather would repave45 the city for its reception of Islamic renaissance.46 Salah al-Din would push
out the Crusaders in 1187, and the expulsion would lead to an “unprecedented and unsurpassed
architectural flowering.”47 The Mamluk officials who ruled:

Built residences and mausolea there, and patronized juridical schools and Sufi convents.
The tall, graceful buildings with ornamental stone-worked facades lining the roads and
alleyways to the Haram al-Sharif compound have left a firm Islamic imprint on the
character of the Old City to this day. In the middle of the sixteenth century, following
their conquest of greater Syria from the Mamluks, the Ottoman authorities rebuilt the
city’s walls that still stand today.48

When the Ottoman Empire took over the city, it “allowed both the churches and European
consuls to exert leverage over the city’s governors to permit a dramatic increase in new
construction for housing pilgrims, clergy and monastic orders.”49 The architectural foundation of
city changed again.

The departure of the Egyptian army from Jerusalem in 1840 would leave a vacuum that
would open it to Western influences for the first time since the Crusades.50 World War I would
be key to crystallizing the “function and influence of support networks.”51 The Jewish

45 Dumper, “Jerusalem: Then and Now,” Middle East Report, Volume 23 (May/June 1993); “The political conquest
of the city in 638 AD by Arab Muslims” from the Crusader state would change the nature of the city and the
Crusader impact on Jerusalem became “completely eclipsed by an intellectual and cultural Islamic renaissance”
(Dumper 1993).
50 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 35.
51 Abigail Jacobson. “A City Living through Crisis: Jerusalem during World War I,” British Journal of Middle
Eastern Studies 36:1 (2009): 91. Abigail Jacobson is a historian at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel
(Jacobson, 73). She analyzes the lives and times of society in Jerusalem in World War I and specifically how the
war changed the fabric of the city (Jacobson, 73). Her research specifically explores how World War I ended.
community and municipal networks acted as the predecessors and embryos “of future political developments, both within the local arena of the city, but also in the larger context of Palestine.” In other words, dealing with the lack of food and resources due to World War I helped create the institutions that would later create the structures for the Israeli state. Jacobson explains that, in essence, “the challenge of the war years… the hardships that the war imposed… also strengthened the local Zionist foundation, and allowed it to create alliances of new sorts.” Relief from the Anglo-Palestine Bank helped the Jewish population survive the war. The Joint Distribution Committee organized shipments of food and money from the United States, which would increase the support the Israeli Jewish community had on the ground in World War I. In April 1915, the Committee would send 900 tons of food on the ship *Voulcan*. The city’s prominent position at the intersection of many religious and cultural identities led to its use as a symbol of movements that would shape the city’s twentieth century history, both Zionism and Palestinian nationalism: “[Jerusalem] served as a junction for the empire and the local society, as well as a meeting point for civilians, soldiers and governmental officials during and following the war. It hence constituted a borderline between ethnicities, nationalities, cultures and periods.”

With the 1948 War of Independence, Israel gained its statehood and captured the western part of Jerusalem. The War of Independence would leave Jerusalem split in half, with the eastern portion under the control of the Jordanian government. Again borders became prominent in the identity of Jerusalem. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert explain that in the case of a city like

52 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 91.
53 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 91.
54 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 91.
55 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 82.
56 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 82.
57 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 75.
Jerusalem, its experience can reveal more about the wider conflicts, and the authors “suggest that social historians should focus on cities (mainly capital cities) as the ‘nerve centers’ of the war.”  

Jerusalem was most definitely a nerve center of conflict in the twentieth century. After the Six-Day War, Israel gained all of the holy sites of Jerusalem and began an internal debate as to who should administer those sites. Dumper states that “On June 10, 1967, within days of the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, Israeli authorities flattened an area between the Western Wall and the Jewish Quarter known as the harat al-magharib, or Moroccan Quarter, and forced the Palestinian inhabitants to leave.” According to him, this was done with the goal of potentially rebuilding the Old Temple. With the capture of the eastern part of the city, Israel had completed its goal of reuniting the Western Wall into the fold of Israeli control. However, the seizure would complicate their relationships in a variety of ways, particularly by sparking disagreement and enflaming hatred among groups of Palestinians.

The City of Jerusalem has arguably seen more war over the course of its 5000 year history than any other city in the world. More than 200 battles have been fought in Jerusalem, and each of these flash points changed the path the city would take. Jerusalem’s “character is increasingly overlaid by contrived architectural renovation and Western concepts of public and private space.” There is less interspersion of the populations as a result. War and conflict has shaped Jerusalem’s history, by reiterating the ancient city and formalizing new governances and societies in the city. Jerusalem, while the City of Peace, has been re-defined over and over by the wars that have taken place within its borders.

---

58 Jacobson, “A City Living through Crisis”, 74.
59 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 167.
60 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 193.
61 Amirav, Jerusalem Syndrome, 193.
The Political

Placed amid a vast range of authoritarian regimes, Israel felt dissociated from the Middle East during the Cold War due to its democratic form of governance. Israel was also set apart due to the nuances of its political birth. It was a state founded by the coalescing efforts of the international Jewish community, the support of the Great Powers including Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, and the Zionist movement, which encouraged immigrants from all over the world to return to the ancestral home of the Jewish people. These factors all would give it a difficult time acclimating to the region.

As a result, Israel took practical steps to make up for what it lacked in local allies: “Supported by NATO powers and the worldwide Jewry, Israel strengthens its diplomatic relations with all the countries around the world to counter the isolation created by the Arabs in the region. Israel has relations with all countries in Europe, except for Spain, Portugal and Albania, and almost all of them to the level of embassy. The same can be said about the two Americas.”63 This quote is found in a general report from the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania. The Romanian government here clearly has identified that Israel bonds with countries all around the globe in order to “counter” regional isolation from the Arab states.

Political Ostracization of Romania

Romania too, felt politically distant from its neighbors. Unlike many of its regional neighbors, Romania never felt a close tie to the regional hegemon, Russia. While other countries called Russia their “Slavic brother,” Romania never experienced this deep historic tie to

Moscow. It also was one of the few truly authoritarian regime among Party-led Communist countries, with Nicolae Ceaușescu leading a government built around a cult of personality and leader worship, and run using fear, torture, imprisonment, and toxic surveillance.64 A similar environment existed under Tito’s Yugoslavia, which as a member of the non-alignment movement, was also regionally ostracized by the Bloc. Scholar Larry Watts proposed a bold theory that the Soviet Union was actively harassing Romania through a variety of national security instruments, including shutting off communication between the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic and Romania and providing disinformation through the Warsaw Pact.65 Watts explains, “by the time of its 1989 revolution Romania had been the target of hostile Soviet and Warsaw Pact disinformation and ‘active measures’ operations for more than two decades.” 66 Romania’s familial connection to Moldova, once one of the three Romanian kingdoms, bothered the Soviet Union. Moscow surreptitiously attempted to sabotage the Romanian government’s plans in order to ensure that its economy would never reach a level wherein it might be attractive for Moldova to rejoin the Romania. These types of operations revealed just how strained the relationship between Bucharest and Moscow truly was.

Bucharest openly pushed back against the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia by aiding Prague.67 With this decision, Ceaușescu was now only allies with the Soviet Union in name. This elaborate charade was carried on for decades to the collapse of Communist Romania. President Ceaușescu told his Political Executive Committee on 17 December 1989:

---

64 My mother, Maria Gadea, was almost kicked out of her high school because she had been caught at a Bible study in the city. One of her teachers intervened to let her stay long enough to graduate. My grandfather, Dinu Gadea, spent several months in prison under Ceaușescu’s regime for printing posters that demanded freedoms of religion, press, and speech. Neighbors would fear each other because of the threat of the Securitate, or the Secret Police, who were taught to be locals paid by the government to spy on the goings-on of each village.


I have also given the order to interrupt all tourist activity. Not a single foreign tourist should be allowed in, because all have become espionage agents. Likewise, the small cross-border traffic should be shut down immediately... No one should be allowed in from the socialist countries, aside from Korea, China and Cuba. Because none of the neighboring socialist countries can be trusted. Those from neighboring socialist countries are sent here as agents. We are shutting down all tourist activity. A state of emergency is declared for all counties. The units of the Military, of the Ministry of Interior, of the State Security are in a state of emergency. 68

Ceaușescu clearly had problems with eastern Bloc countries, as well. Even as the Cold War came to a close, Ceaușescu made clear that he still saw the Soviet Union as a threat to his power. He feared were the Soviet Union might try to overthrow him and place a Soviet-approved leader in his place like what had been done in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. His precautions were not entirely misplaced. The KGB instructions given to operatives in Romania in 1982 stated that, “Romania was [to be] ‘worked’ as an enemy state, an approach that was not only perpetuated but accentuated after Mikhail Gorbachev came to the leadership.” 69 Romania, during the whole course of the Cold War, was never comfortable with its own positioning within the region politically. On 31 December 1960, the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv sent a general report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania on the domestic and foreign policy of Israel. 70 This report announced that, “Israel strengthens its diplomatic relations with all the countries around the world to counter the isolation created by the Arabs in the region.” 71 It seems that there is a diminishing marginal utility of allies for most states in the international system. Much like the

68 “Transcript of the Meeting of the Political Executive Committee of the R.C.P. C.C.,” December 17, 1989, Archives of the Commission and of the Civilian and Military Courts (Translation from Romanian: Arhivele Comisi și instanțelor military și civil), Senate Archives, Inventory 004, Folder 1, p. 20. ANR, fond CC al PCR, Sectia Cancelarie, Folder 338/1989; Source from the research of academic Larry Watts.

69 Serviciul Roman de Informatii (SRI: Romanian Intelligence Service), Punct de vedere preliminara al Serviciul Roman de Informatii privind evenimentele din decembrie 1989 [Preliminary Point of View of the Romanian Intelligence Service Regarding the Events of December 1989], November 1990, Bucharest, Senate Archive, Inventory 0003, File no. 5, p. 27. Source from the research of academic Larry Watts.


71 “General report of the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv…”, 127.
economic principal of diminishing marginal utility of capital or labor, for every additional ally a state gains, the next ally gained is slightly less useful than the one previously gained, all else and all states being equal. States with fewer allies more desperately need each additional ally. Thus, politically isolated, Israel and Romania more desperately needed each other.

The Economic

Economic factors also segregated Romania and Israel from their respective regions. Israel was a country with almost no oil among some of the world’s biggest oil producers. Romania, on the other hand, was an oil-producer among countries that did not produce oil. During World War II, Hitler was wary of Soviet power in the vicinity of Ploesti oil fields, as those fields provided Nazi Germany with 58% of its total oil imports in 1940. They were Europe’s largest source of petroleum production outside of the Soviet Union, and were incredibly important in both World Wars. Thus, the oil imbalance between Israel and Romania’s allowed the states to partner through trade of fossil fuels. To resolve these imbalances, Romania “arranged to have Iranian crude oil delivered to its tankers through the Israeli pipeline running from Eilat (in the Gulf of Aqaba) to the Mediterranean,” as it required even more oil than it already produced.

According to a general report of the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania in 1960, Israel stood out economically from its fellow Middle Eastern countries because it could attend meetings of NATO, discuss Free Trade Areas, and other common economic interests shared by Israel’s foreign policy and the West’s foreign

---

72 If the next ally a state might gain is a superpower, then of course states will surely desire the help of that superpower like the United States even more than the last ally, if the last ally was Bhutan or East Timor or Belize. This theory speaks in hypotheticals that might apply where potential allies are all relatively equally desirable. Special thanks to Matthew Quallen for this analogy.


Clearly, Israel’s connection to the West made up a bulk of its trade. In addition, investments poured in from the West to Israel, while most Middle Eastern countries did not see anywhere near as much investment arriving from Washington or Europe. In 1960, a general report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania on the domestic and foreign policy of Israel, the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv stated:

Israel’s economic dependence on international capital [foreign direct investment] is widening every year in increasing proportions. Foreign capital investments increased by 400% compared to the past, being strongly supported by Israel Treasury. Industrial Investment Centre approved recently private foreign investment worth 83 million $, plus 45 million Israeli £, plus 81.7 million Israeli £ loan granted to these companies by the state. To bring in foreign capital, the government grants advantages competing only with those of the colonial countries. This year, the Ministers of Finance, Industry, Commerce and Development carried out long tours abroad to bring in foreign capital to Israel. Israel continues its policy of selling its industrial businesses that bring advantages to the foreign capital. Now, there are sold to the phosphate companies from the Dead Sea.

Israel desired foreign direct investment just like Romania did. Both states attempted to attract investments from each other though Romania was more successful in bringing in foreign capital from Israel than vice versa. The report continues and states that Israel’s relationship to Romania is integral to its ability to counter Arab prejudices towards its economy:

To this, we should add that Israel is interested to maintain cordial political relations with P.R.R, which will serve as a counterweight to the Arab hatred. Also, P.R.R represents a good market for Israeli products and, at the same time, a source of raw materials. For all these reasons, Israel is working to improve the political, economic and cultural relations with our country.

Both Israel and Romania experienced unique economic situations that made them operate differently than their fellow neighbors. In the case of Israel, firstly, it was its influx of investment

---


77 “General report of the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv…”, 125.

78 “General report of the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv…”, 135.
and trade from the West. In both Romania and Israel’s case, this unusual economic position was also a result of the oil imbalances both countries experienced. While it is true that Israel was just as interested in any other country with oil, it had a limited scope in pursuing fossil fuels due to the fact that many of its oil-rich neighbors were antagonistic to the existence of the state.

**The Socio-Cultural**

Socio-cultural issues also affected the dissociation experienced by Romania and Israel. Broadly speaking, Israel was an immigrant society, in contrast to much of the rest of the Middle East. In 1947, only 6% of the total Jewish population worldwide, resided in the land that became Israel in 1949.\(^79\) This Jewish population was less than half of the total population in the area.\(^80\) However, by 2007, the State of Israel counted 5.5 million Jewish people, 41% of the world’s Jewish population.\(^81\) With 400,000 of those Jewish immigrants coming from Romania, it is possible that some of the bonding that occurred between the two states existed through some kind of familial duty to one another. Israeli Ambassador Yosef Govrin explains, “It is possible that the friendly attitude the Romanian authorities displayed toward us was based on admiration for our achievements… in spite of security problems surrounded by enemies, and despite all the efforts by the USSR and her satellites to denigrate Israel and blacken her image among communist countries, the non-aligned nations and those Arab states that aspired to remove Israel from the world map.”\(^82\) Govrin’s quote reveals the perception among some in Israel that Romania bonded with Israel due to the respect it had for Israel’s achievements. As a successful

---

80 Cohen, “Migration Patterns to and from Israel,” 116.  
81 Cohen, “Migration Patterns to and from Israel,” 116.  
state experiment, Israel’s advances in technology, ability to defend itself, and a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation were all traits that Romania admired.

Romania stands out culturally among its fellow Eastern European countries. Unlike most of its neighbors, Romania is not an ethnically-Slavic state and the Romanian people are not the descendants of proto-Slavic people like the Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, and other Eastern European ethnicities are. During the Cold War, Romania had a largely rural population of uneducated workers in contrast to the broader region that was largely industrialized. This highly uneducated population is illustrated best by the population of immigrants that left for Israel. Their schooling was some of the lowest of any Jewish population to enter the State of Israel; however, the schooling years of the new arrivals did increase over time, as Romania began loosening restrictions on the immigration of more educated Jewish people in the country as the decades went on:

Their mean years of schooling increased from 9.7 for the cohort arriving during the late 1950s, to 13.8 for the cohort of the late 1960s… in the case of Romanian immigrants, however, available evidence suggests that the negative selectivity… was imposed, in part, by the Romanian government that forbade educated Jews from leaving, preferring to free Rumania of older, unhealthy and unskilled Jews. The Romanian authorities, like several other Eastern European countries demanded a fee for allowing Jews to emigrate. Romanian authorities tried to keep well-educated Jewish citizens from emigrating, and so the Romanian population that was most free to leave was often the most uneducated as well. It is ironic that Israel would have to be “friends” with a country that did not desire to let its Jewish

---

83 For Romania, Moldova might be brought up as a counter-example by some of an Eastern European state with a similar culture. Indeed, Moldova does have a similar culture and history that is intricately connected with that of Romania; however, since Moldova arose from Romania and since it became a modern state only after the U.S.S.R. fell apart, this thesis will treat it as a part of the ancient three unique regions that first made the modern Romania: Moldova, Wallachia, and Transylvania.

84 Cohen, “Migration Patterns to and from Israel,” 116.
population emigrate. The nature of the Romania-Israel bond revealed just how drastically Israel desired allies.

Another factor that created a dissociation broadly for Israel from the rest of the Middle East, was the culture of unease about geopolitics. Through his propagandistic radio station, “The Voice of the Arabs,” President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt repeatedly “beamed” across the Middle East his speeches about pan-Arabism and the need to eliminate the “Israeli wedge dividing the Arab world, and the righting of what he called – the “greatest international crime” in history – the creation of Israel.”

Daniel Yergin explains that in modern day, Israel still hears these same battle cries against it: “Certainly, the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran inevitably caused deep apprehension in Israel when the Iranian president repeatedly threatened [to] ‘eliminate this disgraceful stain from the Islamic world’ and declared that Israel ‘must be wiped off the map.’”

Israel has always felt secluded from the region as a result of its unease over the geopolitical situation in the region. Israel has experienced continued calls for their own utter destruction. As a result it is shaped by these experiences, and often describes itself as “surrounded by enemies.”

The Linguistic

There are linguistic reasons that have caused Israel and Romania to become dissociated from their regions. The Jewish State (where Modern Hebrew is mostly spoken) is surrounded by countries where Arabic predominates: Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. As can be seen in Figure 1., much of the Middle East speaks Arabic. The majority of Israel’s population speaks Hebrew (although Israel does have a sizable population that does speak Arabic, and Arabic is an official language alongside both Hebrew and English). Hebrew is a resuscitated tongue. For the last

85 Yergin, The Prize, 463.
86 Yergin, The Prize, 768.
thousand years it was exclusively a language of ceremony and ritual. Its comeback story is completely unique in the world. With the dedication of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Hebrew was revived as the language of the new Jewish State.

![Map of Middle Eastern Languages](ArabAtlas/Wikipedia)

_The Romanian language is Latin-based. It is the only major Romance language to exist among a multitude of Slavic-speaking countries as can be seen in Figure 1. Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and most of the other countries in Eastern Europe speak Slavic languages. Romania and Moldova both speak Romanian, an island of the Romance languages among Slavic languages. While language was not necessarily a major factor in the ostracizing of Romania or Israel, it did play a role in the dissociation, detachment, and alienation both states felt from their regions. This was particularly the case for Romania, where the Soviet Union during the Cold War had achieved superpower status, making its language, Russian, the premier choice for diplomacy and higher-level government discussions. With linguistic differences from their respective regions,
Romania and Israel both soon discovered their cultures again put up walls between them and their local neighbors.

Figure 2 Slavic-Speaking Europe (Wikimedia Commons)

Conclusion
On 14 February, 1969, at a meeting between Eliezer Doron, the Minister of the State of Israel to Bucharest, and the Romanian First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Macovescu, the State of Romania’s true intentions in its proximity to Israel were made known.\(^{87}\)

Deputy Minister Macovescu told Minister Doron the following:

I would like to say that Romania does not regard the policy toward Israel through the eyes of the Arabs, but evaluates its relations with the Arab countries and with Israel in relation to its interests. Imagine that Arab countries would begin to sever the relations with us. This act would be detrimental to our country, as, for example, the volume of trade with Israel is much lower than the one with the Arab countries. Romania’s policy is not sentimental, but one based on principles, and when we stand for a position of principle, we face all the risks.\(^{88}\)

Romania valued all of its allies. The government had a desire to keep those associations strong in the long-run, especially with the Arab countries due to their robust trade relations. It was not afraid to leverage the fact that it was risking its friendships with Arab states by aligning and cooperating with the State of Israel.

The regions of the Middle East and Eastern Europe differ in religion (majority Eastern Orthodox Christianity versus majority Islam), ethnic make-up (largely Slavic versus Arab, Turkic, and Berber), economic breakdown (agricultural and manufacturing versus natural resources), political climate (transitional democracies versus a mix of new democracies, monarchies, theocracies, military dictatorships, and terroristic governance), social standards (increasingly Western versus Muslim), and language (largely Slavic versus Semitic and Turkic languages). Upon closer inspection, the two regions’ immediate visceral differences give way to historical similarities and interactions. From the impact of Ottoman administration, to the non-


\(^{88}\) “Conversation Transcript of George Macovescu…”, 289.
alignment movement in the Cold War, to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Russian invasion of Georgia, and the more recent Russian support of Assad in Syria, few regions have been so inextricably connected as the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Within these two regions’ midst, however, these two countries stand-out. Romania is a country made-up of ethnic Romanians who speak a Romance language. The majority of their neighbors speak Slavic languages and commune together as part of the Slavic brotherhood. Israel is ethnically and religiously Jewish and its citizens speak Hebrew. Their neighbors speak Arabic and practice Islam. Both states are clearly isolated in these time periods. But was regional ostracization the precipitating factor in the two countries getting together? More direct evidence can be found from the actors themselves, and those sources can be found in both Israeli and Romanian archives. Two isolated states, for varying similar and dissimilar reasons, reached out to each other and formed an incredibly special bond.

Thus, the regional dissociation both states experienced and experience from their respective regions, in ways that are historical, political, economic, socio-cultural, and linguistic created the perfect environment and conditions for the crystallization of diplomatic relations between Romania and Israel. Through “outcast” state-bonding, academia and the world at-large can better describe this phenomenon. As a result of their inability to work with and cooperate with states within their own regions, Israel and Romania have reached out to each other in a form of solidarity. The “outcasts” have stuck together.
Chapter II: The State-Level

Small Powers and Their Foreign Policy

Of course, it was much more complex than simple personal cockiness that allowed Ceauşescu’s breaks from Soviet foreign policy. It was also a part of a rational and unique plan to gain benefits for himself by appealing to American interests and feeding off of both super powers at the same time. Robert Rothstein explains that for small powers in the midst of an anarchic world order every decision is made with the utmost precision.\(^89\) Rothstein writes:

> The margin of error is small or nonexistent: to choose incorrectly may end the possibility of free choice. A lapse in vigilance can be fatal. Procrastination or “muddling through” appear to be ruled out. Security requires one to act as if all changes may be threatening, even if an artful and deliberate policy of procrastination seems the wisest course.\(^90\)

Every decision for a small power like Romania was made with the utmost tact and vigilance to ensure it was not reciprocated with a heavy rebuke from either the United States or the Soviet Union. “Neutrality and nonalignment” are the virtues sought by most small powers’ foreign policies.\(^91\) Ceauşescu’s Romania sought similar virtues in its foreign policy. Rothstein explains an occasional characteristic of small powers’ decision making in foreign policy:

> Small powers, insofar as they have a choice, may prefer to gamble on a less powerful ally or on a combination of lesser states. This qualification obtains even more acutely if the Small Power seeks primarily political goals from the alliance, or if it does not perceive the Great Power threat\(^92\) as immediate for example, to earn political capital, the Small Power may prefer a weaker, but more distant, ally to a powerful neighbor. The latter offers military advantages, if only in being accessible, but political disadvantages in terms of intervention and accusations of dependency.\(^93\)

---

92 In this case, the Soviet Union was the Great Power threat to Ceauşescu and Romania.
In Romania’s case, this “weaker, but more distant, ally” would be the new State of Israel during the Cold War. Although the status of “ally” would not be applicable occasionally throughout their history together, the countries were never enemies, and they maintained close contact and diplomatic relations from the beginning of Israel’s statehood.

In 1969, Valeriu Georgescu, Romanian envoy to Israel, sent a telegram to Petru Burclacu, the Romanian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, detailing an updated status on bilateral relations between Jerusalem and Bucharest. Georgescu explained the advantages and disadvantages of raising the level of representation between the states. Moscow and Washington, according to the political calculus of Georgescu, would be forced to work with countries that maintained positive relations with both the Arab states and Israel, giving Romania a special “in” with the four Great Powers (the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the United States, and France).

Raising diplomatic relations, Georgescu realized, would be interpreted more negatively by the Soviet Union. Georgescu writes that increasing the representation of diplomatic legations “would gain extra prestige and weight to the Arab leaders because they will no longer be under the false impression that maintaining the current level is due to the concern of not damaging the relations with them.” In other words, Romanian diplomats believed that by increasing their representation in Israel, Arab leaders would perceive Bucharest as “more” honest brokers, truly friends to both sides in the Middle East conflict. Georgescu also brought up that in talking to the Relations Director of the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry, A. Dagan, it became clear that

95 “Telegram of Valeriu Georgescu…”, 305-306.
96 “Telegram of Valeriu Georgescu…”, 306.
97 “Telegram of Valeriu Georgescu…”, 306.
98 “Telegram of Valeriu Georgescu…”, 306.
immigration expedition was a fundamental foreign policy goal. Georgescu writes that Dagan’s explanation was that “for Israel this matter [immigration] is as critical and acute as the problem of security and defence [and] that the specific promises made by Minister E. Doron during recent discussions held with the highest figures of state’s leadership, to be as soon as possible implemented, in the sense of increasing the number of Jewish families from Romania to Israel.”

To Israel, immigration was always a security issue. Government policy viewed the continual influx of immigrants as necessary for the survival of Israel as a country.

Israel’s search for friends abroad and its commitment to those few states that did recognize it did not go unnoticed. Romanian President Ceaușescu was prone to pop up in Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) top-secret reports as his dictatorial activities took him around the world at a domineering pace. One such CIA bulletin on 3 December 1973 found that President Ceaușescu made an overnight stop in Algiers on his way to visit to the United States in order to give an explanation to the Algerian government about “why Romania refused the Arabs’ request to break relations with Israel.” According to that same report, the emissaries of Ceaușescu received “cool” receptions throughout their various visits to Arab capitals. Nevertheless, the dictator of Romania refused to break ties with the State of Israel under Golda Meir. In fact, one of Ceaușescu’s new foreign policy initiatives was aimed at starting peace talks between Israel and Egypt. Premier Golda Meir’s planned visit to Romania was speculated about in the Chicago Tribune, on April 19, 1972, with the news sparking debate about the meaning of the first visit to

---

99 “Telegram of Valeriu Georgescu…”, 306.
100 “Telegram of Valeriu Georgescu…”, 306.
a Communist country by an Israeli premier. Continuous communication between Bucharest and Jerusalem opened up channels that would later be used by Ceaușescu to attempt peacemaking efforts abroad.

**Romania, the Soviet Union, and Diplomacy with the Middle East**

“Is social justice of Russian origin, of Marxist blood; or is it the natural object of a human instinct, as old as human life and consciousness themselves... such people consider every word for equality or justice a breath drawn straight from the lungs of Karl Marx or a verse from the Communist Manifest,” wrote Khalid Muhammad Khalid in 1950; Khalid was a Cold War era activist and writer on the nature of socialism in the Arab world. At the center of the uncertainty and controversy during the Cold War was the political situation within the Middle East. Both the United States and the USSR, sought to leverage perceived cultural similarities with potential allies in the regions that they considered strategic; hence consolidating control in the Middle East was of paramount consideration in the achievement of the superpowers’ geopolitical goals. Khalid’s remarks brilliantly reveal the unjust misattribution of Arab Socialism during the Cold War as “Communist Ideology” and the distrust many political entities such as the United States displayed towards it.

**The Nature of Arab Socialism in the Middle East within the Context of the Cold War**

The Quran establishes firmly within Islam that one of the chief functions of religion is facilitating the aid of the sick, the poor, and the less well-off. Consequently, Arab Socialism is

---

104 “Golda Meir to Visit Romania.” Chicago Tribune (Chicago, IL), April 19, 1972.
a movement, both nationalistic and religious in origins that existed long before Marx’s doctrines became prominent in the Western world; Arab Socialism is thus an undertaking that is firmly intertwined in the cultural and religious fabric of the Arab world. However, its instrumental politicization, particularly during the Cold War, led to nervousness on the part of the United States and its allies as well as interest from the part of the USSR.

Writers such as Al Qahira felt at odds with the intrusive intervention of these so-called superpowers in the Middle East. Public disposition and political will at the time deemed that the East and West were encroaching on the autonomy of the Middle East “behind the back of the people”; the East and West both appeared to be treacherously scheming to benefit at the expense of the Middle East. Certainly there is a definite level of agreement between Western and Eastern Socialism on issues such as pure capitalism, which Arab Socialism viewed as the unequal distribution of wealth and the unmerited influence of the wealthy and rich; however, Arab Socialism does not approach anything near as extreme as the Communism practiced in the Soviet Union or in Romania.

Regardless, the Soviet Union, in particular, placed a great emphasis on what it perceived to be ideological similarities, leading to its involvement in the political landscape of the Middle East; one of its first outreaches to the Arab world was the funding of the Aswan Dam after the planned American loan failed. In November of 1957, the Soviet Union offered Egypt 700 million rubles for various industrial investments and in 1958, 400 million more rubles were

---

111 Agwani, *Communism in the Arab East*, 203
112 Agwani, *Communism in the Arab East*, 203
113 Salama and Ahmed, *Arab Socialism*, 75.
114 Agwani, *Communism in the Arab East*, 211.
offered to bring about the first phase of construction for the Aswan Dam; Soviet support a means of achieving Egypt’s independence from the West.\textsuperscript{115}

Yemen, Syria, and Iraq all later received funding from the USSR; according to one estimate, around a quarter of Soviet economic aid from 1954 to 1961 was given to Arab countries in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{116} However, the interest of the USSR does not mean that the perceived ideological similarities were as real as the Soviet Union thought. Arab Socialism was not a belief that fell under any “Bloc,” since it was rooted in nationalist ideals; in other words, it had little concern for international issues, but rather placed importance on the health of the nation as a whole.\textsuperscript{117}

In fact, there were a variety of conflicts within the Middle East between true Communist factions and their Socialist opponents, such as those of the Syrian Communist Party, under Khalid Bagdash and the infighting between various factions under Abdel-Karim Kassem in Iraq.\textsuperscript{118} In the Arab world at least, the “godless and materialistic” nature of Communism made it a policy that could not be assimilated into the Muslim world at large; it is nevertheless the case that the Soviet Union sought to capitalize on the apparent socio-cultural resemblances in certain Middle Eastern countries, leading to its further falling out with the country of Israel (unlike Romania) and its support for Arab military plans in the 1967 Six-Day War.\textsuperscript{119}

The Soviet Union and its Alliances in the Middle East

The Soviet exportation of Communism, the USSR’s desire to lead its Bloc, and Moscow’s protection of its foreign interests all were motivations for a robust Soviet foreign

\textsuperscript{115} Agwani, \textit{Communism in the Arab East}, 211.
\textsuperscript{116} Agwani, \textit{Communism in the Arab East}, 211-212
\textsuperscript{117} Salama and Ahmed, \textit{Arab Socialism}, 69.
\textsuperscript{118} Salama and Ahmed, \textit{Arab Socialism}, 22.
\textsuperscript{119} Salama and Ahmed, \textit{Arab Socialism}, 22.
policy that encouraged relatively risky missions abroad. Understanding the Soviet role in the Middle East is crucial to understanding the Israeli-Romanian relationship. Bringing fringe states back into the fold was the objective of Moscow, but the Soviet Union only succeeded as far as those countries let them. Similarly, bringing back fringe Communist states into the fold was part of an overarching exportation of communism. The Soviet Union supported, albeit with weak results, national liberation movements in Africa that they thought were developing in a way that would give them new pro-Soviet allies.\textsuperscript{120} Exportation of communism failed again in the Arab states, where the Soviet Union secretly encouraged capitalistic socialism in order to protect its other interests in the region. The Soviet Union’s often encouraged market socialism to ‘progressive’ Arab countries rather than local Communist parties to protect Soviet investments from being expropriated by a potentially successful movement.\textsuperscript{121} Thus, Moscow’s modus operandi in the Middle East consisted of an economic strategy that was at its core hypocritical to the founding creed of the Soviet Union. Capitalism in the Middle East ensured that Soviet foreign investments would not be seized by Marxist activists.

In 1964, while in Egypt, Nikita Khrushchev attended the dedication of the Aswan High Dam.\textsuperscript{122} The moment was at the time an opportunity of immense importance to Nasser. However, attempts to develop a socialist relationship were nevertheless strained as disagreements arose between Nasser and Khrushchev over aid, weapons, and the “peaceful coexistence” of Egypt within its corner of the world.\textsuperscript{123} At home, Khrushchev was mocked by Dmitri Polyansky “for decorating a president who ‘drove Communists into concentration camps’

\textsuperscript{121}Jahn. \textit{Soviet Foreign Policy}, 38.
\textsuperscript{123}Taubman. \textit{Khrushchev}, 610.
and who acted as if socialism’s founder were Muhammad, not Marx.”

Within the Arab States, socialist parties were favored over the actual communist parties. Exportation of communism was presented as the objective of Soviet foreign policy, but in reality, Soviet foreign actions were dictated by balance of power decisions, in-politics (at-home and abroad) and economic choices (at-home and abroad).

Both Egypt and Yugoslavia were members of the Non-Alignment movement, and the Soviet Union’s relationship with these countries was similar in many ways. Rapprochement with Yugoslavia went hand in hand with the larger Soviet foreign policy objective of assuming total recognition of the supremacy of the Soviet Union as the legitimate “leader of the ‘socialist world’” from other Communist states. The Sino-Soviet split encouraged Moscow to shore up support in other Communist countries out of fear of losing more allies. To Moscow’s dismay, in 1964, Romania rejected Soviet policies on the “division of labor” for COMECON and publicly denied “the existence of ‘parent’ and ‘son’ parties.” Romania also progressed with its own foreign policy course that was largely antithetical with that of the Soviet Union in the Middle East and elsewhere abroad. Khrushchev still dealt with the lingeringly powerful Stalinist interpretation of global politics which stated rather simply that Communism was a “one size fits all” policy. Romania begged to differ.

Great Powers, Small Powers, and Alliances

124 Taubman. Khrushchev, 610.
After looking through this lens, understanding the context of the contentious issue of socialism in the region reveals a rich backdrop for Romanian-Israeli exchanges. The interactions of two Communist Bloc countries, the USSR and Romania, with Israel uncovers a strange disparity in the nature of their differing positions within the Communist alliance. Solving this conundrum involves understanding how both of these countries reacted to various events and conflicts taking place in the Middle East. Both were allies but they diverged greatly in terms of Middle Eastern political views and perspective. Through an analysis of the backing and political maneuvers of the 1967 War, Jewish emigration from the bloc to Israel, and the varying levels of cooperation of Romania and the USSR with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the conflicting relationships help reveal that there is a fundamental divide between the nature of these two Communist countries based on their economic positions within the Bloc, their political leadership and structure, and their diplomatic perspective. The strange overlap between these two alien worlds: the Communist Eastern Bloc and the diverse culturally significant region of the Middle East, provides an intensely intricate corridor of history ripe for further exploration.

Soviet Involvement and Romanian Abstention in the 1967 Six-Day War

On 24 October 1966, Ambassador Katz of Israel concluded in Moscow that, “...a change for the worse occurred in the USSR’s attitude to Israel – a deliberate political change for the worse. The gravity of the problem demands... a kind of ‘Searching Reappraisal.’”\(^{129}\) A new shift had occurred in the Soviet outlook towards Israel.\(^{130}\) The document that best reveals the Soviet perspective on the Six-Day War through the Soviets’ eyes is General Secretary Brezhnev’s

\(^{129}\) Ginor and Remez. *Foxbats over Dimona*, 67.

\(^{130}\) Ginor and Remez. *Foxbats over Dimona*, 67.
speech to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. Given on the 20th of June, 1967, Brezhnev outlines the situation, ten days after the ending of the war, to the Central Committee of the USSR.

Specifically, Brezhnev begins by giving a detailed description of the reasoning behind the USSR’s support of the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Syria, and other Arab countries. Brezhnev writes that the USSR saw the Israeli show of force as a challenge to the “general direction of political development in Middle Eastern countries.” Furthermore, he explains that the Soviet Union chose to help the Arab allies because they “have chosen the path to Socialist progress and could exert great influence upon other Arab countries, many Afro-Asian nations, and the entire national liberation movement.” The speech clarifies why the USSR feared the possible suppression of socialism within the Arab governments, and therefore viewed the Israeli confrontation as an attack on Arab Socialism.

The Soviets had received intelligence that the Israelis were amassing troops at the Syrian border. This key detail then thrust the Soviets into backing the war, seeing the conflict as the opportunity to strengthen their relationships with their Arab allies, and also to weaken America’s ally, Israel. The Soviets, as Brezhnev explains, supplied the armed forces of the UAR, Syria, Algeria, and Iraq with technologically advanced weaponry, produced and supplied by other Eastern Bloc countries. Brezhnev says that “on favorable terms and reduced prices” the USSR

---

133 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
137 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
provided: “aircraft, tanks, firearms, mine-throwers, AA guns, ground-to-air missiles, military vessels and other modern weapon systems.” In addition, the Soviets helped train certain military leaders as well.

One of the most essential parts of this speech to the Central Committee is its description of the secretive meeting of the other Eastern Bloc heads of state on the 9th of June. There it was decided that a special statement would be drafted iterating the support of the Eastern Bloc for the Arab nations and condemning the attacks of Israel. The communiqué demanded that Israel cease its offensive military attacks immediately as well as required that Israel then withdraw back to the 1949 armistice line. Interestingly, Brezhnev articulated that, “One should regret the fact that Romanian leaders, who took part in this gathering, declined to sign the communiqué….” Romania once again acted independently of Moscow in the arena of foreign policy.

Communist Romania and the USSR: Independent Actors

The ideologically similar countries of the USSR and Romania both purported to be “chips of the old Bloc”; however, through an investigation of their treatment of Israel and the PLO during the Cold War, fundamental differences are exposed. The political independence of Ceauşescu, meant that Romania was willing to disagree with the USSR in order to further its own interests towards autonomy. Romania was an economically struggling country, accepting a under-the-table exchange system with Israel (something the USSR could not negotiate), while

---

139 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
140 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
142 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
143 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
144 “On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East,” June 20, 1967.
the USSR was thriving and sought to further its power base, best seen through its military support of Arab Socialism during the Six-Day War. Romania was a small, fraught state and sought to keep allies on all sides; the USSR was the head of the Bloc and therefore had no visible need to act as a mediator. Essentially, the USSR and Romania chose to approach the Israeli situation based on their own effective needs as countries: explaining the discrepancy between their individual handling of Middle Eastern politics during the Cold War.

Chapter III: The Individual - Ceauşescu and His Company

We share common beliefs. We believe in strong national sovereignty. We believe in preserving the independence of our nations and also of our people. We believe in the importance of honoring territorial integrity throughout the world. We believe in equality among nations in bilateral dealings, one with another, and also in international councils. We believe in the right of every country to be free from interference in its own internal affairs by another country. And we believe that world peace can come—which we both devoutly hope to see—through mutual respect, even among those who have some differences between us.

President Jimmy Carter on Ceauşescu (1978) 147

I had met (and liked) the attractive and energetic president of Rumania Nicolae Ceauşescu, in 1970 and I admired him for not giving way to Arab pressure and for managing to retain diplomatic links with us as well as with the Arab states.

Prime Minister Golda Meir on Ceauşescu (1975) 148

From its inception, the development of the Israeli-Romanian diplomatic relationship progresses non-linearly through the decades. Its history does not follow a path that can be “graphed out” on the basis of any diplomatic “equation.” 149 Rather, the outlook of greater global affairs, unexpected interventions from abroad, and most prominently and precociously, the histories, psyches, and personalities of the leaders of both states always played an enormous role in creating the common ground that would lead them to form the strong bond they have in the twenty-first century. The diplomatic relationship is “gardening, not architecture.” 150

---


149 Any attempt to graph out diplomatic relations between states would be as fruitful as attempting to map out friendships between a close pair of colleagues. Relationships are difficult to illustrate on a 2D graph, and there has been and will not be any kind of “friendship graph” to describe to us the ebb and flow of diplomacy. Quantitative methods can be very useful, in many arenas, but with complex, dynamic, and immeasurable concepts like diplomatic relationships a holistic analysis based on a variety of lenses is the best method for coming to further conclusions about the subject.

150 Musician Brian Eno and painter Peter Schmidt created a deck of cards with thought-provoking phrases called “Oblique Strategies” for artists facing creative challenges, and one of their turns of phrase is “gardening, not architecture.” This deck of cards was designed to be used in brainstorming sessions for artists; artists pull out a card, read it, and then become hopefully inspired by their card’s verbiage in their creative efforts. Michael Hendrix. “Creative Leadership Is Gardening, Not Architecture.” Metropolis. March 8, 2013. Accessed February 27, 2016.
relationships are cultivated, not built. This truth applies as much in the case of Romania and Israel as it does elsewhere in the world.

Previous research on alliances and small states has focused on the nature and characteristics of such groupings with a limited number of scholarly works on their origins.¹⁵¹ This research seeks to delve into the specific origins of the relationships between a subgroup of small states called “outcast states” by looking at regional ostracizing as a portion of the causal logic explaining these states’ bonding. This chapter will dissect the role of the individual in this causal logic. In addition, the research will delve into the connections and rendezvous that formed between Ceauşescu and his predecessors and the various Israeli Prime Ministers in order to gauge just how much of this cultivated friendship emerged through Israel and Romania’s mutually ostracized positions and how much materialized through other sources.

The Budding Early Years

David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the creation of the state of Israel on 14 May, 1948, and Romania’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ana Pauker recognized the new Jewish state on 11 June of the same year.¹⁵² In the Israeli war of independence, the Soviet Union and Romania collaborated to assist Israel by supplying the Zionist cause with Romanian oil.¹⁵³ The oil shipments fueled the revolutionary cause at its most critical state. In June of 1949, Romanian

diplomats arrived in Israel to establish a consulate, only the fifth state to do so after the United States, the Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain.\footnote{Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 39.}

The relationship at first followed the ideological stances of Russia, which though positive in their inception were also volatily linked to Stalin.\footnote{Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 40-41.} Before World War II, approximately one million Jewish people lived in Romania.\footnote{Funderburk, \textit{Pinstripes and Reds}, 90.} After the Holocaust in Romania, that number of men, women, and children had been reduced by half.\footnote{Funderburk, \textit{Pinstripes and Reds}, 90.} The Jewish population in Romania desired to flee the country as the society that the war left behind did not significantly change its hateful perceptions about Jewish civilization. Many of these aspiring emigres sought to return to the land of their ancestors. When Stalin grew angry at the rising tide of what he deemed to be “Jewish nationalism” within the Soviet Union, the early Romanian-Israeli relationship became strained.\footnote{Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 41.} The Soviet Union had at first supported Israel’s creation under the impression that it would serve as part of the “anti-imperialist front.”\footnote{Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 40.} With the Soviet Union’s change of heart, Romania followed suit and the government of Bucharest punished the Zionist cause within its borders by refusing to let Jewish-Romanians leave the country. Massive numbers of Romanians desired to leave the country after the end of World War II, and the role of individuals in both the private and the public sectors would be instrumental in creating and sustaining this exchange.\footnote{Ion Mihai Pacepa, \textit{Red Horizons: The True Story of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescus’ Crimes, Lifestyle, and Corruption} (Washington, D.C: Regnery Gateway, 1990), 73.} In the years following the Bloc’s policy shift, many Jewish Romanians found themselves in prison simply for applying to immigrate to Israel.\footnote{Nicholas Dima, \textit{Journey to Freedom} (Washington, D.C: Selous Foundation Press, 1990), 241.}
Romania’s oil production, formerly one of the highest in the world, was debilitated by World War II and the damage done by American-led bombing of Romanian oil fields; at the end of the conflict, the Soviet Union took most of the industrial equipment that had survived.\textsuperscript{162} Knowing that Romanians desperately lacked equipment, Ephraim Illin, an Israeli business man, organized transactions around that particular Romanian national need and helped grant around 100,000 Romanian Jews exit-visas in the process.\textsuperscript{163} Illin succeeded by supplying a massive amount of oil-drilling equipment to be used to rebuild the Romanian oil industry, and in return Romania granted visas for those Jewish Romanians desiring to leave Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{164} American Ambassador to Bucharest, David Funderburk explained that even with the mass emigration of the Jewish population from Romania, anti-Semitic sentiment did not disappear from the country (even up until the present day): “Despite declining numbers [of Jewish people], there were periodic reports of anti-Semitic publications in Romania… Similarly, there were reports of desecration of Jewish cemeteries and more recently the destruction of synagogues.”\textsuperscript{165}

Accordingly, while the Romanian government had first been wary of allowing the Jewish Romanian population to leave, it soon came around when it found an opportunity to rid itself of the Jewish demographic while also making a profit. At the time, the Romanian foreign intelligence service was known as \textit{Departmentul de Informatii Externe} (the Department of External Information, DIE), and Ion Pacepa worked there as the director and, in that capacity, also as a security advisor to the President of Romania. The DIE at the time was a Romanian version of the Central Intelligence Agency, and it conducted intelligence gathering efforts and

\textsuperscript{162} Ioanid. \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 64-65.
\textsuperscript{163} Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 63-67.
\textsuperscript{164} Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 63-67.
covert operations abroad. Pacepa provided a rich background and context for his experiences with the Communist regime and its foreign policy in an autobiography discussing his career, his conversations, and his eventual defection to the United States.\footnote{Pacepa, Red Horizons, 3.}

While his perspective is inevitably skewed due to his departure from Romania as a defector, his overall portrayal of the administration is an accurate depiction based on the available evidence from other first-hand accounts of the Ceauşescu period.\footnote{See the scholarship of Dennis Deletant and Radu Ioanid.} In addition, as a defector, Pacepa had no motivation to lie about government programs or specific foreign policy approaches that the regime took, especially since after Ceauşescu’s regime had collapsed, his former colleagues were free to speak candidly about the regime potentially rebuking him if he painted them in the wrong light. On the other hand, it is true that after the collapse of the government in 1989, Pacepa would have had a difficult time finding anyone in Romania who would dare say something positive about Ceauşescu due to the success of the Revolution. An analysis of Pacepa’s motivations, done with a nuanced understanding of where and when he wrote about the Romanian government, renders his personal accounts of meetings with Ceauşescu and other head policy chiefs valuable. Overall his exploration of the conversations between parties, his reporting on Ceauşescu’s foreign policy platforms, and his understanding of Romanian political motivations come from a well of deep-rooted personal experiences as an official advisor to the President and an acting director of the DIE. Perspectives like Pacepa’s are rare to find and thus serve this research with an inside look into the foreign policy establishment under Ceauşescu.

Pacepa told a fascinating story about the DIE that took place in the 1950s. Henry Jacober, a DIE agent who did business with Romania, proposed a plan to the DIE after the Israeli foreign
intelligence service had contacted him about any potential cooperation: He suggested a secret operation to reimburse Romania for every Jewish Romanian that was allowed to emigrate. According to Pacepa, Jacober successfully negotiated an arrangement where Romania allowed 500 Jewish families to leave for Israel. In return, Israel built Romania an automated chicken farm for free. Romania’s leader at the time, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej allowed the experimental proposal to move forward, and he found the newly built chicken farm so satisfactory that he ordered five more upon visiting Israel’s production in the small Romanian village of Peris. Each of the new chicken farms was to be built in exchange for a number of Jewish Romanians. Jacober financed chicken farms, cattle farms, sheep farms, turkey farms, pig farms, and he equipped each with highly advanced automated equipment. In exchange, the Romanian government continued granting exit visas to Romanian Jews. During the rule of Gheorghiu-Dej in Romania, the exports from newly built Israeli farms would bring in $8 million to $10 million a year for the Romanian government.

The new exchange caught on fast and by the end of 1964, the Romanian Ministry of Interior, whose tasks also surprisingly included operating the Israeli-built chicken farms, became Romania’s single largest meat producer. The Israeli-built farms were operated through prisoner labor provided by the political detainees of the Romanian Communist Party; when these farms would need additional staff, Gheorghiu-Dej liked to say, “If you cannot find the people you need in the jails, just arrest the ones you need and then use them.” These policies would carry over into the rest of the twentieth century.

168 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 73.
169 Ioanid. The Ransom of the Jews, 91.
170 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 73.
171 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 74.
Jacober found even more creative ways to leverage Romania’s desire to expand its agricultural base. The Romanian DIE demanded “the best breeds of animals” for its farms.\textsuperscript{172} One thing led to another, and the Romanian secret intelligence involved itself in a seven-year heist literally involving government pork. Pacepa explains that at the time, Danish \textit{Landrace} pigs were a prized strain that Denmark bred for export, and Jacober helped DIE smuggle piglets out of Denmark, across Europe, and into Romania where they would be used to improve the quality of national pork production. Thousands upon thousands of piglets in Denmark were anesthetized and surreptitiously transported in diplomatic vehicles to Romania. Truth is truly “stranger than fiction” in the world of Romanian foreign affairs. Jacober transported piglets into Romania, and in exchange the government transported human beings out of it.

In 1966, Israel supported the election of Corneliu Manescu as the new United Nations General Assembly chairman, and Romania positively reciprocated that service by reaffirming their earlier views on Israel’s right to exist.\textsuperscript{173} Romanian Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer stated on 29 July 1967 in a Dutch paper \textit{Haagse Post}:

Like the Dutch leaders, we feel that no state should be threatened with destruction just because it was created in a somewhat exceptional manner… That state has been founded and the people have installed themselves in the country… We are of the opinion that there is a certain amount of logic in the viewpoint that the Israeli troops cannot be withdrawn without guarantees. Ten years ago the Israelis faced the same situation. They were told to withdraw, and they did so. Ten years afterward the same condition is being raised, and at the present time I feel that the Israelis should at least receive some kind of guarantee to ensure that the same thing does not happen again in ten years’ time.\textsuperscript{174}

Before Ceauşescu’s rise to power, Romania’s relationship with Israel fell in line with that of the Soviet Union, that is until it became increasingly clear that there was indeed a profit to be made for Bucharest in maintaining a relationship with the government of Israel. When that profitable

\textsuperscript{172} Pacepa, \textit{Red Horizons}, 74.
\textsuperscript{173} Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 105-106.
\textsuperscript{174} Ioanid, \textit{The Ransom of the Jews}, 105-106.
relationship became clear to Romanian rulers, Bucharest began stepping out of line with the Soviet Union out of its own self-interests. The Soviet Union furtively tried to exploit Romania’s unique relationship with Israel to gain intelligence about the situation in the Middle East, but in general they publicly rebuked Romania for its independent foreign policy. Romania took a calculated risk when stepping out of the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. The government officials believed there was an opportunity with Israel, and they bet that it would be worth the risks the Soviets posed.

“The Conducator” Ceaușescu and the Cult of Personality

Nicolae Ceaușescu was born on the 26th of January, 1918, in a small village in Romania called Scornicești. He shared his name with two of his other brothers because his father, Andruta, was an alcoholic who got so drunk at his boys’ births that when asked to name his third son, the name of the previous two, Nicolae, was the only name he could come up with. A product of Romania’s impoverished economy and poor education system, Ceaușescu nonetheless experienced a remarkably rapid rise in power after being favored by Moscow as a potential new leader of Romania. His decades in power defined much of the arc of Romania’s modern history, as his totalitarian regime and cult of personality completely changed the lives of most Romanians. Ceaușescu’s personality led to brash decisions and inflated concern for his ego, expanding the range of possibilities for the future to whatever inflated his own view of himself. Ceaușescu dictated the actions of his state with a belief that he was “god-like” in his authority, and the government-approved cultural practices of religious persecution reflected the dictator’s

176 Behr, *Kiss the Hand You Cannot Bite*, 47.
skewed beliefs. Ceaușescu’s “god-complex” affected his decision-making at every turn. He believed his ideas were perfect, and this belief made compliance with Moscow impossible, as over time differences inevitably arose between the iron heads of both states. Among the Communist Bloc countries, Ceaușescu was the only leader after 1953 who arose to power without the recommendation of Moscow. Ceaușescu rose to power in 1965, becoming the General Secretary of the Communist Party due to the national decision of the Romanian government. The Romanian government proclaimed an independent outlook for the state in the April 1964 Declaration of the Romanian Laborers’ Party, and Ceaușescu used this Declaration as a license for acting against the wishes of Moscow. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Ceaușescu avoided falling subject to Moscow by “winning over” Washington. The essential premise of Western foreign policy towards Romania was the identification of Ceaușescu with the national independence the country displayed.

The cult of personality around Ceaușescu and his autonomy in making decisions based on his own interests causes Communist Romania to be classified under the umbrella of sultanistic regimes. According to Linz and Stepan, “sultanism” is defined as the “style of domination and regime rulership that is, as Weber says, an extreme form of patrimonialism.” In sultanism, the needs of the individual ruler overstep the needs of the state and working for the government is equal to working for the dictator: “the private and the public are fused… there is

---

179 Câmpeanu, Ceaușescu: The Countdown, 17.
180 Câmpeanu, Ceaușescu: The Countdown, 17.
181 Câmpeanu, Ceaușescu: The Countdown, 17.
182 Câmpeanu, Ceaușescu: The Countdown, 17.
183 Linz and Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition, 163.
no distinction between a state career and personal service to the ruler, and, most of all, the ruler acts only according to his own unchecked discretion, with no larger impersonal goals.”

Ceaușescu’s leadership was defined by its “highly personalistic and arbitrary” nature. Like other sultanistic regimes, Ceaușescu was “unencumbered in ideology” and his followers were compliant with his requests out of “intense fear and personal regards… [while their] position derives from their purely personal submission to the ruler.” Ceaușescu ruled for a large portion of Communist Romania’s history, and his carefully crafted cult of personality and his general nonchalance with breaking away from the Eastern bloc’s policies allowed him the type of flexibility that would be crucial in ensuring that a closer relationship could develop with Israel. In Romania, he gained loyal supporters who fought for his ideas and were summarily promoted in the government. These supporters created a core group that would give Ceaușescu the power to continue his draconian policies. Among his peers, Ceaușescu was ostracized by the leaders of regional states. Romania had the poorest population in Europe outside of Albania under Ceaușescu because of his forced industrialization which also advocated reduced consumption. Few countries nearby saw much profit from expanding relations with a country that was as poor as Romania was at the time. With few allies and fewer friends, Ceaușescu desperately needed support, and he sought it in other countries that were also the “odd man out” in their respective regions.

Ceaușescu’s Foreign Policy

---

Ceaușescu was a film buff, maintaining a projection room in each of his residences. He particularly enjoyed movies about Napoleon and American police. He loved watching Kojak, and he stated that in the American police thrillers, “They shoot first and ask questions later.” Romania’s diplomatic technique also often involved a method taken from American television police shows: playing “bad cop, good cop.” In 1967, for example, Ceaușescu put on the mantle of the “bad cop” in his rapport with the U.S.S.R. He attempted to secure Moscow’s attention through his recognition of West Germany, refusal to cut ties with Israel following the Six-Day War, and denouncement of Soviet attempts to change Romanian party leadership. Ceaușescu’s denouncement of the Soviet Union’s policies on May 7, 1967, were followed the next day by Gheorghe Maurer; the premier, reaffirmed the “strength” of the Romanian-Soviet bond with a public statement attempting to dull the sharper, more pointed verbiage of the Romanian head of state. These rapid-fire policy shifts caught other states off-guard and gave Ceaușescu time to formulate more nuanced policy answers for the foreign affairs he dealt with. Ceaușescu shot first and asked questions later. His foreign policy mirrored the police movies and shows he watched from America by showcasing a real-life, state-level case of a “rogue agent.”

Ceaușescu explained at report to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party at the Ninth Congress that Romania took a unique policy in befriending other states: “We have had talks, mutual visits and exchanges of experience with the communist and workers’ parties of all the socialist countries and with numerous parties of the capitalist countries. The

---

189 Napoleon was Ceaușescu’s personal hero; Pacepa, *Red Horizons*, 13.
meetings and the exchanges of views have contributed to better mutual acquaintance and to the strengthening of our fraternal unity.” In the same speech to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), Ceaușescu also addressed the fact that increasingly, the Soviet-Romanian tie was strained. Ceaușescu reaffirms his dedication to Marxism-Leninism and the international communist movement by stating, “The Romanian Communist Party… will militate untiringly in the future as well to make its contribution to the defence and the strengthening of the unity of the communist and workers’ parties, of the cohesion of the countries of the world socialist system, on behalf of the fundamental interests of our great cause – the victory of socialism and peace throughout the world!” While Ceaușescu experimented with new potential partner states around the world, he maintained relations with Moscow, knowing the limits of his autonomy.

In a message addressed to the participants of the World Conference on World Peace on 21 July 1971, Ceaușescu stated that “The Socialist republic of Romania is actively militating on the international arena for the promotion of peaceful coexistence for the placing of inter-state relations on the basis of the fundamental principles of international law,” and furthermore he elaborated that international law required “the observance by all states and towards all states of national sovereignty and independence, equality of rights, non-interference in domestic affairs, non-resortion to force or the threat with force, and mutual advantage.” Ceaușescu went to many conferences such as the World Conference on World Peace to establish his own

personality and to create more publicity for his peacemaking panache as well advocating for the sovereignty of all states.

Beyond World Conferences on World Peace, how did Romania’s dictator build bridges with the West and Israel despite his own rather unorthodox foreign policy decisions? U.S. Ambassador to Romania Funderburk believed that Ceaușescu studied the West carefully and presented a version of himself that would appeal to them:

Part of Ceaușescu’s success with Westerners no doubt has come because he has studied the psychology of his adversaries and has appeared to them to be different from other communist leaders. That has been part of Ceaușescu’s game plan from the beginning. Some Westerner observers have referred to a wit and charm that has enabled him to score points with his American discussants. Evidently this refers to the periodic quips he makes to contradict his counterpart during the conversation or to interjected retorts which he obviously considers humorous.198

Throughout his interactions with the rest of the world, many state heads would comment on the likability of Ceaușescu. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir said she admired the Romanian leader for his independence and willingness to stand up to the Soviet Union, while still maintaining relations with Israel and the Arab states.199 Ceaușescu had long envisioned himself as a broker of peace, and he steadfastly tried to get the rest of the world to buy into that vision. The truth about his foreign policy goals was more concealed. Aurel Braun explains that Romania’s foreign policy directed by Ceaușescu stressed that nationalistic need to maintain “the right to decide with whom Romania should not establish or maintain relations, or… the right to join various international organizations, or… the sole right to determine participation in military maneuvers and moves with the Soviet bloc.”200 Through Ceaușescu’s adamant “opposition to supranational planning… Romania struck at the political-ideological cohesiveness of the Soviet bloc.”201 The

---

bloc was not really a bloc given that the Romania under Ceauşescu was opposed to trading in any of its sovereign rights. The Soviet Union worked throughout the decades of Ceauşescu’s rule to ensure that the rebellious quasi-member state, Romania, would never go too far away from its Big Brother. Towards the end of Communist rule, the Soviet leadership privately had all but given up on Romania. Romania went rogue.

“Horizon”

Ceauşescu established a secret operation that would be the hallmark of his foreign policy in a speech to the DIE on February 22, 1972; that same evening, he personally took control of DIE and its conduct.202 At the meeting in front of the DIE’s board of directors, Ceauşescu founded the “Horizon” operation, stating:

Our experience shows that today the West is commendably eager to encourage the slightest sign of independence with the Soviet bloc. Let’s take advantage of their eagerness…. We must make cleverness our national trait… Stop showing a sullen, frowning face and clenched fist to the West. Start making it feel compassion for us, and you’ll see how fast western boycotts change into magnanimity.203

At that same vital meeting, Ceauşescu elaborated on his plan to influence the way the West looked at Romania by plucking the strings of American hearts.204 He stated, “Let’s present Romania as a Latin island in the Slavic sea… Our millennia-old traditions of independence are now up against Moscow’s political centrism… A pawn between two superpowers.”205 The plan was built on stressing Bucharest’s estrangement from Moscow as the center of Romania’s public relations with the West. “Horizon” made it look as if Romania were a reed in the wind, a lone wolf, a rogue state breaking free from Big Brother; when in reality, the truth was much more complex. Ceauşescu’s foreign policy plan in “Horizon” was to surreptitiously gain influence in

202 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 8.
203 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 8.
204 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 8.
205 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 8.
the West by leveraging his increasingly strained relationship with Moscow, and the strategy for the most part worked. The United States government largely bought into Ceauşescu’s disregard for the Soviet Union and the nationalistic charade. It was a charade in so that Romania was dependent on the Soviet Union for most of its trade and economic power. Without the Soviet Union’s support and market integration, Romania’s Ceauşescu regime could not have possibly stayed in power. Ceauşescu thus walked on an international tightrope strung between the Soviet Union on one side and the United States on the other. His acrobatic feats of diplomacy could be most aptly put as precarious.

Ceauşescu gave an interview to the Dutch newspaper group, the “Brabant Peers” on 3 March 1982.206 Again as part of his “Horizon” plan, he portrayed his foreign policy goals as completely in touch with Western political goals. In the interview, Ceauşescu said, “We are determined to make new and sustained efforts for the achievement of security in Europe, for the development of cooperation in the Balkans, for the settlement of disputes between various states like those in the Middle East, in Africa and other regions – through peaceful negotiations.” In an ironic moment, Ceauşescu continued the interview by stating that peaceful negotiation was the path to improving the wellbeing of the world: “We proceed from the fact that this is the only way that would allow peoples to concentrate their efforts toward their socio-economic development, and for achieving an accelerated progress in increasing their material and spiritual welfare.” The Romanian church experienced the worst persecution under Ceauşescu it had faced in its entire history. This period was lachrymose and somber as the faith communities of Romania faced every sort of punishment and rebuke from the state. Ceauşescu reiterated the right of every

---

country to have national sovereignty, stating, “It is the right of each… people to live in peace, to develop independently… without any interference from others. This represents… the will of the peoples in the world and we will join them to secure the freedom and independence of each nation!”

As Romania entered into its Communist period under the influence of the Marxism-Leninism, it increasingly began to implement policies that targeted religious groups, a large majority of these being Christians. Robert Royal, author on Romanian religious persecution, writes that, “the Romanian government was soon persecuting all religious groups: Jews, Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants.” Romanian government used a variety of tactics, to establish an entire bureaucracy to discourage believers from practicing their faith. This system worked carefully with the secret police of Romania, the Securitate, in order to collect as much information as possible on religious agents in the country.

One of the most famous and significant Romanian-Jewish activists was the Protestant pastor Richard Wurmbrand, who wrote the book, *Tortured for Christ*, about his experiences of being tormented by the Securitate while in prison. Richard Wurmbrand came from a Jewish family and later converted to Christianity. After doing so, he became a vocal supporter of active Christianity in Romania, and the Romanian government took notice. The government threatened him, and eventually imprisoned him from 1948 to 1956. While imprisoned, Wurmbrand was beaten, tortured, and starved. The Communist regime felt threatened by Wurmbrand because he argued that Communism and Christ were incompatible.

---

Kept in prison and tortured more, he was eventually allowed to go to the United States, where he testified in front of Congress that the Romanian religious persecution required the action of the United States.\footnote{U.S. Congress Senate Committee on the Judiciary, “Communist Exploitation of Religion”, 6 May 1966, 1-2.} At his Congressional hearing, Wurmbrand took off his shirt and on his back the deep scars of whippings and painful cuts became visible to the Congressmen and Congresswomen present. Wurmbrand stated that his persecution did not succeed in extinguishing his faith. Rather, it had actually strengthened Wurmbrand’s personal trust in God:

I have seen Christians in Communist prisons with fifty pounds of chains on their feet, tortured with red-hot iron pokers, in whose throats spoonfuls of salt had been forced, being kept afterward without water, starving, whipped, suffering from cold—and praying with fervor for the Communists. This is humanly inexplicable! It is the love of Christ, which was poured out in our hearts.\footnote{Richard Wurmbrand, \textit{Tortured for Christ} (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Book, 1998), 55.}

Wurmbrand saw within his faith in Jesus Christ, the ability to conquer the worst aggressions of the Communist party. It is within this insurmountable defense, that Ceauşescu saw the threat. Wurmbrand could not be moved. His faith was reason enough for him to bear all the various tortures the government prepared for him. In other words, the idea that one man would be tortured to the point of death for his faith in Christ led Ceauşescu to see these faithful people as threats to his legitimacy and his claim to absolute power.

Ceauşescu’s approach to foreign affairs was immensely hypocritical. While Ceauşescu stated that nations around the world deserved the right to be independent and not fear interference from external sources, at home, he intervened in the daily lives of thousands of Romanians through the state security apparatus. The United States and other states initially bought this face, but Wurmbrand and others began sowing doubts about whether or not it was worthwhile engaging with the Romanian dictator. Ceauşescu put on one face to the rest of the world and another at home. Abroad, he was the champion of peace and freedom and self-
determination. In his own country, he was a proponent of discord between church and state, suppression of religious, political, and speech freedoms, and dependency of rural populations on the Communist government. His bipolar policies attempted to attract allies abroad, while eliminating enemies at home.

The Middle East and Ceaușescu

According to his security advisor and General Ion Mihai Pacepa, Ceaușescu’s favorite slogan was: “Oil, Jews, and Germans are our most important export commodities.” This was not always Ceaușescu’s view. In 1965, when Ceaușescu took power as the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, the dictator called the farm-for-visa program “outrageous” and halted the operations out of a belief that the Jewish population was too valuable to the Romanian economy to be let free; however, two years later, Yitzhak Yesahanu, a Romanian with an Israeli passport, and Gheorghe Marcu, Romania’s point person for the former international exchange, established a secretive new connection: this time it would be the case that the departing Jewish Romanians were traded for hard currency. In 1978, Romania granted exit visas at a cost ranging from $2,000 to $250,000 per person depending on the “age, education, profession, employment, and family status, for each Jew allowed to emigrate.” Ceaușescu was encouraged by the money that was being raked in through the secret deal, hundreds of millions of dollars in fact; as a result, he began another top-secret operation, this time selling exit visas for the million-strong population of ethnic Germans who called Romania home.

---

214 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 73.
215 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 75.
216 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 75.
217 Erica Gadea née Hoffman, my grandmother is among the ethnic German-Romanian population that was not bought by Germany’s government. She immigrated to the United States in 1985.
218 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 76.
On 27 October 1972, Ceaușescu gave a toast at a dinner by the Great Duke Jean De Luxembourg in honor of the Romanian President and his wife. He outlined the way he wanted the rest of the world to look at Romania. It was his description of Romanian foreign policy, but it more accurately described what he wanted Romanian foreign policy to be perceived as. “We conduct a consistent policy of peace and we develop our relations with all the countries of the world,” stated Ceaușescu “We proceed from the principle that peoples should engage in relations of cooperation, that disputes must be settled through negotiations, and not through the use of force.” Here Ceaușescu’s own cravings for the status of peacemaker were clear. Boldly, with disregard for the mass religious and political persecution going on in his own country, Ceaușescu continued, “There should be a guarantee for the right of each people to be the master of its own fate, and to organize its life in accordance with its will and aspirations.”

Ceaușescu stood for almost anything but individual religious freedom in his own country. Two shipments of Bibles in 1972 and 1981, about 20,000 books, that had been sent by the World Reformed Alliance to Protestant denominations in Romania as part of discussions over Most Favored Nation (MFN) status the country would be cut up and turned into toilet paper. According to Ceaușescu, “Equality of rights, respect for national sovereignty and independence, non-interference in domestic affairs” acted as the “principles which applied into practice can secure cooperation and peace in the world.” Ceaușescu spoke hypocritically, as he was prone to do so often, on the nature of freedom and liberty within his own country. In post-Holocaust

---

220 Ceaușescu, Speeches, 44-45.
221 Ceaușescu, Speeches, 44-45.
222 Funderburk, Pinstripes and Reds, 85.
223 Ceaușescu, Speeches, 44-45.
Romania, the Communist government methodically and cruelly harassed its religious citizens.\textsuperscript{224} The general persecution of the religious was rampant throughout Romania and was a manifestation of Ceauşescu’s underlying control complex.\textsuperscript{225} The need to be in control and to be worshipped energized the Romanian leader.\textsuperscript{226} Genovieva Beattie was a young girl in Romania during the period that Ceauşescu was in control; during her time in Romania, she was not allowed to go to school anymore after she revealed her Christian faith.\textsuperscript{227} Beattie said that the Romanian government essentially replaced God with Ceauşescu; thus, the Communist school teachers did such things as forcing children to sing songs of praise to the dictator and bow to Ceauşescu’s train as it passed by their district.\textsuperscript{228} Behind the closed doors of his state, Ceauşescu demanded intense and pervasive control over his subjects.

Romania’s history with the Jewish minority was also not without stain. Romania did not grant citizenship to its Jewish population until World War I.\textsuperscript{229} At the same time, when the Communists took power in Romania, many Jewish-Romanians rose in the ranks and as a result the Jews were held responsible for the installation of communism.\textsuperscript{230} Historian Iosif Dragan states that this myth of a Jewish communist revolution became embedded in the Romanian consciousness: “With the support of the Soviet army, Party activists were brought in under new, Romanianized names, people like Ana Rabinovici-Pauker, Leonte Rautu (Rotmann), Mihail Roller, Silviu Brucan, Teohari Georgescu, Laszlo Lukacs (Vasile Luca) and the Bulgarian Borila… the leadership of the Party was monopolized by allogenic elements.”\textsuperscript{231} In the 1950s as

\textsuperscript{224} “Genovieva Beattie on Romanian Religious Persecution.” Interview by James Gadea. 12 Aug. 2013.
\textsuperscript{225} “Genovieva Beattie on Romanian Religious Persecution.” Interview by James Gadea. 12 Aug. 2013.
\textsuperscript{226} “Genovieva Beattie on Romanian Religious Persecution.” Interview by James Gadea. 12 Aug. 2013.
\textsuperscript{227} “Genovieva Beattie on Romanian Religious Persecution.” Interview by James Gadea. 12 Aug. 2013.
\textsuperscript{228} “Genovieva Beattie on Romanian Religious Persecution.” Interview by James Gadea. 12 Aug. 2013.
\textsuperscript{229} Lucian Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness} (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 171.
\textsuperscript{230} Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness}, 172.
\textsuperscript{231} Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness}, 172.
Gheorghiu-Dej was leading the new Communist Party, he was the only Romanian in the Secretariat; the other three were minorities: Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Teohari Georgescu. Because of the position of a few Jewish leaders in the Communist Party, the State overlooked the anti-Semitism left within its borders.

On 28 September 1982, Ceaușescu gave a speech at a popular rally in the municipality of Sfîntu Gheorghe (Saint George). Ceaușescu stated with nationalistic pride, “Romania stands firmly for the settlement of all conflicts and disputes between States exclusively by peaceful means of negotiations. I would mention, in this respect, first of all the issues of the Middle East.” Ceaușescu proudly continued his praise of Romanian peacemaking:

We consider that every effort needs being made for ensuring a global, lasting peace, for the settlement of the issue of the Palestinian people on the basis of its right to self-determination and to the creation of its own independent State, and for securing the sovereignty and independence of all the countries in that region. We consider that the other conflicts ought to be settled in the same spirit, including the issues of South-East Asia. Romania is actively supporting the settlement, through negotiations, of the problem of Kampuchea, on the basis of national reconciliation and the securing of the independence, neutrality and of a non-aligned status to this country.

Ceaușescu painted a portrait of himself as a masterful balancer of the needs of both the Israelis and the Palestinians. He sought to spin himself as a peacemaker who healed conflicted regions and also won Nobel prizes in the process.

Ceaușescu and Israel

Israeli Prime Ministers, based on personal letters and interviews, encountered complications and challenges connecting with Muslim foreign leaders of Arab and other Middle Eastern countries. The Israeli Prime Minister’s position as the leader of the State was one reviled.

232 Boia, History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness, 173.
234 Ceaușescu, Speeches, 157-158.
235 Ceaușescu, Speeches, 157-158.
by many in the Arab world who viewed the Jewish State as a colonial product. One of Ceaușescu’s chief foreign policy goals was to make as many strategic partnerships as possible in order to bridge the gap between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Pacepa believed that Ceaușescu had an obsession with winning the Nobel Peace Prize, and his goal was to serve as the mediator in the Middle East in order to be rewarded by the international community with the honor.236

After the Six Days’ War in 1967, Nicolae Ceaușescu refused to sign various anti-Israel statements of communist leaders, and even though the Soviet Union pressured him, he would not dissolve diplomatic relations with Israel.237 Prime Minister Golda Meir explains the relationship:

We had very good relations with Rumania. It was the only East European country that hadn’t severed diplomatic relations with us after the Six-Day War and that consistently refused to take part in the Soviet Union’s vicious anti-Israel propaganda campaign or join in the Soviet bloc’s denunciations of our “aggression.” We had entered into mutually profitable trade agreement with the Rumanians, exchanged art exhibitions, musicians, choirs and theatrical groups, and there was some immigration from Rumania.238

American Ambassador Funderburk reiterated the unique relationship that Romania had with Israel: “Israel was also permitted to have an embassy in Bucharest, which served in fact as a benefit for Moscow which did not have one.”239 Moscow spied on the Romanians, and thus gained intelligence and kept tabs on the Israelis.

---

236 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 95.
238 Meir, My Life, 400.
239 Funderburk, Pinstripes and Reds, 85.
In the same way that Ceaușescu approached Israel out of selfish reasons, he also became close with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). In October of 1972, Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO and his trusted advisor and right-hand man, Hani el-Hassan, who had planned the September 5, 1972 massacre of eleven Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games, visited Romania for the first time. Ceaușescu had wanted to meet both in order to make Arafat accept two United Nations resolutions, 242 and 338, which recognized the existence of the State of Israel. Ceaușescu hoped that by convincing Arafat to recognize Israel, he could become the

---


241 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 16.

242 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 14.
“mediator” between Carter, Sadat, and Begin. After the 1972 meeting with the PLO, Romania’s intelligence network would provide the PLO with a stockade of spy gear from eavesdropping equipment to secret writing materials to burst transmitters. In return, the Palestinians were supposed to cooperate with Ceaușescu’s self-aggrandizing peace plans.

On Friday, May 5th of 1972, Ion Mihai Pacepa, became the acting chief of the DIE. The Israeli Prime Minister’s visit to Romania in that year was designed as a chance for Ceaușescu to get Egyptian President Sadat and the Israelis to speak; in Bucharest, Meir was supposed to visit the Chorale Synagogue and attend the services there, when Pacepa received a telegram from Beirut that revealed a plot was in progress to assassinate Meir; four Arabs had entered Romania with the design to kill the Prime Minister on her way to the synagogue service of May 5. DIE’s anti-terrorist unit was utilized to find the assassins and it intercepted the four would-be assassins near the synagogue where they were carrying submachine guns and hand grenades. Ceaușescu feared that news of the attempt would compromise future negotiations’ chances of occurring in Bucharest, so they were secretly flown out of the country. Although no news stories made it in the paper, the DIE became disgruntled after the affair for not having been properly thanked. Months later, DIE identified that one of the Arabs was actually Abu Daoud, the same leader of a group that tried to kill Golda Meir and had previously led another terrorist attack on the Israeli Olympic team in Munich. The Romanian intelligence community realized at this point that the PLO was willing to go to extremes in order to accomplish their objectives, while at the same time they realized that the PLO simply did not care about

243 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 14.
244 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 16.
245 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 95.
246 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 16, 94-96.
247 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 95-96.
248 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 96.
Romanian policy goals. What was most important for the PLO was achieving independence.

After the foiled Golda Meir assassination, DIE began to favor working with the Israelis over the Palestinians, but the Romanian government kept both channels open anyway to give themselves the most flexibility to negotiate peace between the Middle Eastern parties.

In April 1978, Nicolae Ceaușescu met with the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Dayan.\textsuperscript{249} At the time the Israeli army had invaded South Lebanon after the PLO hijacked a bus and caused a massacre of Israeli civilians.\textsuperscript{250} Israel was occupying territory there until the United Nations came to reestablish order in the region. In the conversation between Ceaușescu and Dayan, it is clear that Romania desired to strong-arm Israel into pulling out its troops from Lebanon. After Ceaușescu requested the withdrawal the conversation took a sharp turn:

\begin{quote}
Ceaușescu: Let’s hope that this will be realized as soon as possible.
Dayan: God make it so.
Ceaușescu: Here you need to act with more meaning Israel, because until God there is a long road.
Dayan: I have an Arab neighbor, a very smart Bedouin and he tells me that it is the government’s duty to correct the mistakes made by God. God makes many mistakes, but the government needs to right them.
Ceaușescu: And this even more, Israel needs to right the wrongs that are its own.\textsuperscript{251}
\end{quote}

In this conversation, the complete complexity of the calculating counterpoints on both sides is made clear. Ceaușescu tries to impose his desires onto Israel by making them do what he wants them to do, remove troops from Lebanon. In the interview, Dayan bestows much praise on Ceaușescu and in the section analyzed above, Dayan attempts to connect with Ceaușescu over a


\textsuperscript{250} “Reception of Nicolae Ceaușescu…”, 3-4 April 1978, 9.

\textsuperscript{251} “Reception of Nicolae Ceaușescu…”, 3-4 April 1978, 9.
world-view of what the government ought to do. Dayan, in other words, tries to find common
ground with Ceauşescu over their mutual belief that government needed to play a big role in
people’s lives.

On the 37th anniversary of Kristallnacht, November 10, 1975, the United Nations General
Assembly adopted a resolution that equated Zionism with racism. Romania refused to vote in
the affirmative, unlike the Soviet Union, the Eastern bloc, or the Arab states of the Middle
East. It continued to support Israel in the United Nations, while also leaving the door open for
peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Again, Romania made it clear to the rest of the
world, that it viewed Israel differently than its other fellow states viewed Israel. Through a
special relationship cultivated over decades, Romania and Israel forged a connection that could
not be swayed by the peer pressure

The USA and Ceauşescu

In 1987, Senator Vance Hartke of Indiana (1959-1977) wrote that the closer one
examined Romania and its leader, the further “one realizes the importance of the role that has
been played and is still being played by Romania in the international arena, beginning with her
original and independent foreign policy, that is consistently being dedicated to understanding
among nations.” Senator Hartke also wrote, “These facts have been acknowledged, actually by
all American administrations, from Richard Nixon onwards, being the main ingredient
strengthening the relations between our two countries.” The United States government, in
other words, viewed the rebellious Romania as a unique candidate for closer relations with

---

252 “Reception of Nicolae Ceauşescu…”, 3-4 April 1978, 9.
256 Ed. Van Kloberg, An Independent Foreign Policy for Peace and Cooperation, 9.
Washington (and subsequently weakened relations with Moscow). At the same time, Ceaușescu “needed the United States in his struggle for independence from the Soviet Union; he viewed Israel as the key that would unlock the American vault of support.”

Ceaușescu believed that befriending Israel would bring him further success with the United States.

David Funderburk, the former American ambassador to Romania from 1981-1985 believed that Ceaușescu and President Nixon hit-it-off because of some common characteristics, mainly both were power-hungry. Quoted in Ioanid, Funderburk states that both leaders experienced “a fixation on power – its acquisition and retention.” According to Funderburk, after the Presidential visit to Romania and his conversations with the wily Ceaușescu, “Nixon and Kissinger apparently became convinced that Ceaușescu could be trusted and was a bona fide maverick. Thus they could use him. In reality he has used them.” Nixon would not be the last President to misjudge Ceaușescu.

On April 12, 1978, President Nicolae Ceaușescu and President Jimmy Carter found themselves at the world’s most famous residence, The White House. It was the fourth visit of Ceaușescu to the United States. Ceaușescu spoke at a Welcoming Ceremony on the South Lawn after being welcomed by President Jimmy Carter. President Carter introduced the dictator of the Eastern European country heaping piles of praise upon the Ceaușescu regime and its policies:

It's also of great benefit to me as President to have a chance to consult with a national and an international leader like our guest today. Their influence as Romanian leaders throughout the international world is exceptional. Because of the strong commitments of the President and the independence of the people, Romania has been able to serve as a

---

257 Pacepa, Red Horizons, 108.
258 Ioanid, The Ransom of the Jews, 149.
259 Ioanid, The Ransom of the Jews, 150.
260 Ioanid, The Ransom of the Jews, 150.
bridge among nations with highly divergent views and interests and among leaders who 
would find it difficult under some circumstances to negotiate directly with each other.²⁶²

President Carter, like many in the Western world, bought into the public diplomatic efforts of
Ceauşescu. Ceauşescu’s apparent independence from the Soviet Union inevitably associated
Bucharest as a whole with a freer government. Ceauşescu stood apart from Moscow, but that did
not mean that he was any more committed to liberty and freedom at home than the Soviet Union
was. Human rights violations and vast ideological differences between the United States and
Romania were overlooked for Romania’s commitment to peacemaking efforts. Carter related to
the Romanian President due to their mutual desire to be peacemakers. In his speech, Carter stated
one of Ceauşescu’s recent achievements was “arranging the historic visit of President Sadat of
Egypt to the capital of Israel in Jerusalem. Both of those countries have found in Romania an
avenue of communication and understanding that's been very valuable to them, to the Middle
East, and to world peace.”²⁶³

Ceauşescu’s willingness to cross the Iron Wall of Europe and to speak with the other
countries of the world, even those diametrically different than Bucharest, struck the Carter
Administration. Probably the most unfortunate part of Carter’s speech came at the an end of his
introduction, where he admired Ceauşescu’s goal of improving human rights and freedom, which
many a Romanian person of the time would immediately disavow. Carter stated, “We believe in
enhancing human rights. We believe that we should enhance, as independent nations, the
freedom of our own people…”²⁶⁴ Romania’s public support for state-level and individual rights
was done in tandem with severe repression of human rights within the country.

²⁶² “Visit of President Nicolae Ceauşescu of Romania Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony", April 12, 1978.
²⁶³ “Visit of President Nicolae Ceauşescu of Romania Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony", April 12, 1978.
²⁶⁴ “Visit of President Nicolae Ceauşescu of Romania Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony", April 12, 1978.
Ceaușescu’s response to President Carter’s introduction was in kind, describing Romanian foreign policy and the need for further future cooperation. Ceaușescu stated:

It is true, as you mentioned, sir, that our two countries have different social systems. But I believe that in the world of today this should not be an obstacle in the way of more active cooperation… based on mutual respect of each country's independence and sovereignty, renunciation of the use or threat of force, and mutually advantageous cooperation…

Ceaușescu cultivated a persona and aura around being a “peacemaker.” He strongly desired to be recognized as such by the world community. Continuing his speech at the White House, he stated, “It is now necessary for all countries, irrespective of their size… to take action and to uphold the principles of peaceful coexistence… based on equal rights and mutual respect, and to ensure to each nation the right to develop in freedom without any outside interference…”

Romania, regardless of its small stature among the great powers of the time was still to play a role in the international community in Ceaușescu’s eyes. Finally, Ceaușescu’s speech reached the subject of Israel:

It is also true that no effort should be spared in order to bring peace to the Middle East, leading to the withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied as a result of 1967 war, the settlement of the Palestinian question, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and by guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty, and integrity of all the states in the area, which should establish their relations on the principles of good neighborly relations and cooperation…

Ceaușescu finished his speech (given in Romanian and translated for the English-speaking audience), by stressing the mutual interests of the United States and Romania. These, in the ironic words of the iron-fisted Ceaușescu included “meeting the aim of a better world, a world

---

266 “Visit of President Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony”, April 12, 1978.
268 “Visit of President Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony”, April 12, 1978.
with more justice, in which each and every people should be able to dedicate their efforts to their happiness, to their well-being, to their freedom.”269

The Soviet Union and an Excluded Ceauşescu

The carapace of Nicolae Ceauşescu’s foreign policy, his tough posturing against the Soviet Union, hid underneath it a subtler desire to be appreciated by the rest of the world. Robert Rothstein explains that “small Power… may very well be extremely useful instruments if the goal involves maintaining the status quo and controlling or removing local grievances without Great Power intervention.”270 Following the Soviet-led intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Ceauşescu spoke to a crowd of 100,000 Romanians saying, “We have decided today to form armed Patriotic Guards, made up of workers, peasants, intellectuals, all defenders of our Socialist native land… We answer all; the whole Romanian people will not permit anyone to tread on the territory of our native land.”271 The Warsaw Pact had invaded to curtail the reforms of the Prague Spring, and Romania was one of two countries to refuse to participate in the invasion, the other country being Albania. Ceauşescu reiterated his strong personal belief that Romania ought to stay independent of the Moscow.

Pacepa, with an insider’s perspective while in Bucharest, explains the relationship between Brezhnev and Ceauşescu:

Both terribly vindictive by nature, Leonid Brezhnev and Nicole Ceauşescu had long ago begun hating each other. In 1953, Brezhnev became a two-star general and the deputy head of the Red Army’s Political Department. Up until a year before that he had been the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldavia, a formerly Romanian region that the Soviets had occupied at the end of World War II. He was therefore considered an expert in Romanian matters and given the assignment of supervising the political indoctrination of the Romanian army. Brezhnev’s sharp criticisms of the Romanian military deeply wounded Ceauşescu … also a two-star

269 “Visit of President Nicolae Ceauşescu of Romania Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony”, April 12, 1978.
270 Rothstein, Alliances and Small Powers, 175.
271 Braun, Romanian foreign policy since 1965, 21-22.
general and responsible for the political departments of the Romanian military and security forces. Ceauşescu could not forgive him for this… Ceauşescu [challenged Brezhnev over the deportation of] more than one million Romanians to Siberia.\textsuperscript{272}

Ceauşescu’s inflated ego could not handle the criticisms of Brezhnev, and so the Soviet-Romanian relationship began its further deterioration. The remnants of the Soviet Union, modern Russia, experienced a relationship diluted beyond recognition from the former era.

Ceauşescu’s ego was so overblown that he could not accept to be directed by an outside power, rather he had to construct his own policy. And his policy, through “Horizon” was to overstate his own marginalization in order to gain the sympathy of the United States as well as their help. In an interview granted to Selim El-Lozi, the Editor-in-Chief of the Beirut “Al-Hawadess” Review, Ceauşescu was questioned about Romania’s independent policies and on its status in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Ceauşescu is quested by El-Lozi about whether national independence of a socialist country is contrary to the principle of the internationalism of the Communist movement. Ceauşescu responded, “There is no contradiction, but, on the contrary, there is a close dialectical unity between national independence and the principles of internationalism; they condition each other,” and continuing he stated, “I should say that the more socialist countries develop and the better living conditions they secure for the respective peoples, the more respect there is for the independence and sovereignty of each country, the more powerfully do the internationalist principles operate, the stronger grows their solidarity and cooperation in all spheres of activity.”\textsuperscript{273} Ceauşescu summed up his views about

\textsuperscript{272} Pacepa, \textit{Red Horizons}, 26-27.
the relationship of Moscow and Bucharest: “Therefore independence does not mean separatism, 
but on the contrary, it means many-sided cooperation in all domains of activity.”\textsuperscript{274}

\textsuperscript{274}“Interview granted to Selim El-Lozi.” 20 September 1971.
Chapter IV: The Individual - Israel’s Perspective

“It matters not what the Goyim\textsuperscript{275} say, but what the Jews do.”

- Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion

*Our habit of constantly and zealously answering to any rabble has already done us a lot of harm and will do much more... We do not have to apologize for anything. We are a people as all other peoples; we do not have any intentions to be better than the rest. We do not have to account to anybody, we are not to sit for anybody's examination and nobody is old enough to call on us to answer. We came before them and will leave after them. We are what we are, we are good for ourselves, we will not change, nor do we want to.*

- Zionist Leader Ze’ev Jabotinsky\textsuperscript{276}

For Israel, *realpolitik*, pragmatism, and resourcefulness cemented the diplomatic ties Jerusalem built with states around the world.\textsuperscript{277} Throughout the twentieth century, Israel’s experience in the international community saw it building bridges to states with attitudes that were anything from boisterous to bickering to bizarre. If a state was willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Jewish state, it was likely that Israel would be willing to work with that state. There were a number of unusual countries among the states that Israel struck up strategic partnerships with. Iran, Turkey, Ethiopia, and Romania all established strong ties with the Jewish state.\textsuperscript{278} In particular, Romania was a unique case where Israel’s disposition in matters of foreign relations led to a blossoming friendship that defied conventional wisdom about the nature of international allies. The Prime Ministers of Israel from the state’s birth to 1989 were almost exclusively from Eastern Europe. As a result, their individual backgrounds oriented them in a way that acknowledged the potential utility of connecting with Eastern Europe. Analyzing the motivations of the Israeli leaders who played a role in foreign policy in the twentieth century

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{275} Goy or its plural, goyim, is a colloquial word for a Gentile.
\item \textsuperscript{276} Kai Bird. *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956-1978* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 350.
\item \textsuperscript{277} Howard A. Patten. *Israel and the Cold War: Diplomacy, Strategy and the Policy of the Periphery at the United Nations* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 164.
\item \textsuperscript{278} Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 164.
\end{itemize}
provided a rich source base where-in this research can come to a more intimate understanding of how exactly the mechanism for the “outcast-state” bonding between Romania and Israel operated.

Yosef Govrin observed diplomatic relations with the Jewish state first-hand as the Ambassador of Israel to Romania during the last four years of Ceauşescu’s rule. Govrin describes Ceauşescu as a “unique phenomenon.” Govrin believed that the Romanian dictator also needed to be deeply analyzed in order to fully understand the nuances and complexities of Israeli-Romanian diplomatic relations. Israeli foreign policy based its decision-making on a careful analysis of the factors, events, and personalities the state interacted with, including the examination and study of the Romanian Communist dictator.

Before serving as Ambassador, Govrin was the director of the East European Department of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). As the director, Govrin met most of the Romanian officials in charge of Romanian-Israeli relations, building an extensive network he leveraged throughout his time as Ambassador. Govrin is just one of the countless individuals who served Israel in its diplomatic efforts with Romania as they developed. Govrin, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs played an immense role in the history of Israel, but his role and impact paled in comparison to all the Israeli Prime Ministers who would lead the Jewish State through its first decades. In the breakdown of the dynamics and causes for the formation of the relationship between Israel and Romania, examining the individual uncovers a wealth of

---

280 Govrin. *Israeli-Romanian Relations*, 1.
281 Govrin. *Israeli-Romanian Relations*, 1.
282 Govrin. *Israeli-Romanian Relations*, 17.
283 Govrin. *Israeli-Romanian Relations*, 17.
information about the motivations, human relationships, and personalities behind this unique case of outcast states bonding diplomatically.

**Common Ground with Uncommon Friends**

At the opening of the Knesset's spring session, on 6 May 1963, Ben-Gurion explained the unique position of Israel in the world.\(^{284}\) He described the feelings of entrapment the Israeli leadership felt about their geographical position in the world: “But on all her land borders Israel is surrounded by Arab States: Egypt in the south; Jordan in the east - only a few metres from Israel’s capital and in some places only fifteen or twenty kilometres from Israel's Mediterranean shores; Syria and Lebanon in the north. And now, on April 7, 1963, a treaty for a federation of Egypt, Syria and Iraq was signed in Cairo.”\(^{285}\) According to Ben-Gurion the treaty’s goal for the new union was “the establishment of a military unity… capable of liberating the Arab Homeland from the dangers of Zionism.”\(^{286}\) Ben-Gurion explained that the creation of this new military entity was “the first time that the destruction of Israel is laid down in a constitutional document of three Arab States as one of the principal aims, and perhaps the principal aim, of the unification of Arab armies.”\(^{287}\) The new federation rallied around the planned destruction of Israel, and it was a clear sign to the Israeli government that in their vicinity, few states would open up to work with them.

---


Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, as the first steward of the dream of Theodor Herzl, of the dream of generation after generation of Jewish people around the world, knew how much rested on his protection of the Jewish state in its precipitous position: “Israel realizes that her fate is interwoven with the fate of all mankind, and her peace depends on the peace of the world…” Without collaboration and alliances, Israel knew it would have to constantly stay at war. Ben-Gurion explained that “no man of conscience” could possibly “ignore the special position in which Israel is situated, a position to which there is no parallel in any other country in the world: a threat from all her neighbours by land, in south, east and north, to destroy her and wipe her off the face of the earth.” Herzl had uttered, “It is no dream, if you will it” about his state-building efforts and indeed, a state for the Jewish people came about. Zionism succeeded, but the surrounding Middle Eastern countries were furious. In addition to enflaming state-level anger, the displaced population from the war would rally against Israel and would demand a state of their own. The Palestinian Arabs largely became refugees after 1948. Their impoverished and destitute status after Israel’s creation embedded anger and hostility against Israel in the population.

Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion was optimistic about the future of the State of Israel. He stated in that same 1963 Knesset speech: “I believe with implicit faith that -the day will come when true peace will reign between Israel and her neighbours, but until that day we must ward off the danger of the war that the Arab rulers are planning against Israel.” Peace would come, according to Ben-Gurion, but Israel would be prepared, one-way or the other. And how would

288 Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) was the founder of Zionism in the latter half of the 1800s. A former journalist, Herzl’s Zionism was a movement that advocated for the creation of a state for the Jewish nation based on the idea that the Jewish people would not be protected in any other country.
Israel prepare for the worst-case scenario? Two methods: first, the creation of a strong military, and second, gaining as much aid, whether moral, political, economic, military, or other, as possible. For Ben-Gurion, foreign policy plans to deal with the potential threats identified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included two tools for making a positive impact, one that would increase internal strength, and the second that would increase external threat. Ben-Gurion reiterated that the keys to preserving Israeli independence were “the strengthening of the deterrent power of the Israel Defence Forces; and the obtaining of all possible moral and political aid on the international scene.”

Ben-Gurion sought aid abroad from wherever he could find it, and this policy would be carried forward by many other Prime Ministers.

Indeed, Ben-Gurion’s foreign policy outlook was shaped tremendously by the threats he received from nearby states in that capacity. For this reason, he personally put Israel’s security at the highest of his priorities. Ben-Gurion states in 1963:

> Israel is the only country in the world all of whose neighbours proclaim night and day that they are determined to destroy it - and the early days of our renewed independence bear witness that these are not mere words. Hence our principal concern is security, although our daily efforts are dedicated to the ingathering of exiles, the absorption of the immigrants, the fructification and population of the wasteland, the development of agriculture, industry and transport, the fostering of education, science, literature and art, and the creation of new social patterns founded on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual aid and the love of our fellow-men, as enjoined in the State Education Law.

Beyond the expansion, beautification, soil fertilization, and immigration, the daily experiences of Israel, the long-term vision, at least the long-term vision held by Ben-Gurion was one of “freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual aid and the love of our fellow-men.”

In regards to the perilous position of the new state, Golda Meir felt that Israel was deeply marginalized from the Middle East. Ostracized by the other Muslim states of the region, Israel

---

was desperate for allies and willing to search for friends far away. Based on the animosity in the United Nations in the years of 1957-1958, Golda Meir expressed her feelings about the international outlook of Israel in her biography:

We have no family here. No one who shares our religion, our language or our past. The rest of the world seems to be grouped into blocs that have sprung up because geography and history have combined to give common interests to their peoples. But our neighbors – and natural allies – don’t want to have anything to do with us, and we really belong nowhere and to no one, except to ourselves.295

One of the areas where Israel looked for allies was the African continent. Israel’s Africa Policy recognized the emerging African states and aided their development efforts in order to gain these states’ “appreciation and benevolence.”296 “The architect of Israel’s Africa Policy,” then Minister Golda Meir, explained Israel’s policies towards the continent as a matter of similar circumstances and shared histories: “Like them, we had shaken off foreign rule; like them, we had had to learn for ourselves how to reclaim the land, how to increase the yields of our crops, how to irrigate, how to raise poultry, how to live together and how to defend ourselves.”297 Prime Minister Meir stated about Israel’s early days that, “Independence had come to us as, it was coming to Africa, not served up on a silver platter but after years of struggle, and we had had to learn-partly through our own mistakes – the high cost of self-determination.”298

With that political calculus on their mind, Israeli leaders, particularly Meir, tried to find common ground with uncommon friends, including Romania. Golda Meir was an iron-willed female head of state with an immense respect for those states in whom she also saw a similar pioneering spirit. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Corneliu Manescu, and the Ambassador of Israel in Romania, Rafael Benshalom met on September 11th, 1969 to discuss the

296 Patten. Israel and the Cold War, 28.
297 Patten. Israel and the Cold War, 30.
298 Patten. Israel and the Cold War, 30.
progress of bilateral relations between their countries.299 “The Israeli Ambassador expressed the greetings of Abba Eban, Israel’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as “the feelings of joy, appreciation and gratitude” that Israel felt towards Romania as a result of Bucharest lifting the diplomatic representation to the level of embassy.300 Ambassador Benshalom explained that the new embassy-level representation will “not only lead to the consolidation of the relations between the two countries, but also increase Romania’s prestige in the world.”301

![Image of Golda Meir and Nicolae Ceaușescu, 1972](https://Ceaușescunicolae.wordpress.com/2013/02/08/nicolae-ceaușescu-a-intermediat-negocierile-intre-israel-si-egipt-confirma-documente-israeliene/)

*Figure 4 Golda Meir and Nicolae Ceaușescu, 1972 (National Archives of Israel)*


300 “Conversation Transcript of Corneliu Manescu…”, 317.

301 “Conversation Transcript of Corneliu Manescu…”, 317.

Yigal Allon spoke in 1975 with Ceauşescu about negotiations between Israel and Egypt. Allon tried convincing Ceauşescu that Israel’s position in the Middle East was dangerous and was unlike most states: “Sure, no country cannot be defeated but we are the single country that cannot permit itself to be defeated because in our case we’re not talking about just entering under domination or a change under another regime but the physical destruction of our population.” Then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yigal Allon (under Yitzhak Rabin) spoke to Ceauşescu about the Middle Eastern peace process, explaining on May 29th, 1975 that:

Peace and collaboration between Israel and each of the Arab states represents the major national objective of Israeli politics immediately after the war of 1967, of Six Days, when the whole world was very enchanted by the war’s results, I informed the Arab leaders that Israel desires to begin negotiations immediately, offering at the same time, very generous concessions in the territorial problems. The received response was very simple. The conference of Khartoum took place at the highest level that formed the position of “The Three No’s”: No negotiation, no recognition, no peace.

Working within the context of the “Three No’s,” Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was very disillusioned with the possibility of peace between Israel and the Arab states. After Israel’s victory in the Six Days War of 1967, Rabin had hoped to capitalize on that success in negotiating a lasting peace. The responses Rabin received from other Arab leaders created a cadre of high-

---

303 Allon was born on 10 October 1918, and he fought in the 1948-1949 war at the beginning of Israel’s creation. After studying philosophy and history at the University of Oxford, Allon returned to Israel to work in the government. In 1961, he became the Minister of Labor, and during the 1967 Six Day War, he joined the Consultative Military Committee under Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. In 1968, he was named the Vice Premier (Vice Prime Minister) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was known for his supporting the view that compromise could solve the problems related to the Israeli-Arab conflicts; “Conversation between Nicolae Ceauşescu with Yigal Allon, Vice Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel” (Translated from Romanian - Convorbirii tovarasului Nicolae Ceauşescu cu Yigal Allon, vice prim-ministru si ministrul afacerilor externe al Israelului). May 29, 1975. Romania. National Archives of Romania (Arhivele Nationale). C.C. al P.C.R. – Section on Foreign Relations (Sectia Relatii Externe). Packet 78/1975. 45.

304 “Conversation between Nicolae Ceauşescu with Yigal Allon”, May 29, 1975, 45.

305 “Conversation between Nicolae Ceauşescu with Yigal Allon”, May 29, 1975, 24.

306 “Conversation between Nicolae Ceauşescu with Yigal Allon”, May 29, 1975, 8-9.
level Israeli government officials who became pessimistic about the hopes for diplomacy in terms of the Middle Eastern conflict. Again, the failure of making friends locally forced Israel to look further abroad for its allies.

Israel the Safe Haven

Israel was and is a democracy but the prime ministers in its history have held enormous sway over the foreign policy decisions of the state. Prime Ministers like Israel’s first, Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) did not do everything single-handedly, but their perspectives directed the state policies of Israel. Ben-Gurion and the other Prime Ministers were not dictators of their countries so their policies could not be implemented freely without any kind of David Ben-Gurion was Israel’s first Prime Minister, and his foreign policy outlook was crafted from his own experiences and interactions with the World Wars, the Holocaust, and his Jewish heritage. In February of 1959, Ben-Gurion stated, the “most important event that has occurred in the last two years (1957-1958) has been the growth of Aliya [Jewish emigration] from eastern Europe, in 1957 from one country [Poland] and in 1958 from another country [Romania].” For Ben-Gurion, immigration was a fundamental aspect of preserving the future safety of the Jewish state, by providing a constant supply of new Jewish minds who reinvigorated the fabric of the country through new innovation and initiative. Ben-Gurion explains his views on immigration, explaining that: “Aliya from that other country [Romania] is growing larger and larger and it is to be hoped, to the best of our knowledge, not in thousands but in tens of thousands, and may reach even larger numbers.”

307 Govrin, Israeli-Soviet Relations, 133-134.
308 Govrin, Israeli-Soviet Relations, 133-134.
Israel’s early relationship to Romania consisted principally of an intense dependence and appreciation for the influx of Romanian Jews. Ben-Gurion, deeply understanding the extent of the horrors of the Holocaust, knew that his state was viewed by these thousands of immigrants as the footing for their post-war existence. In the eyes of Ben-Gurion, without Israel, the remnants of the Jewish communities of Europe were doomed. Ben-Gurion viewed Romania as a place where the Jewish population was condemned, unless they escaped; he explained that “although in these countries there is equality of rights, the Jews, however, like Jews in all these countries, are destined for destruction and their sole hope is to immigrate to Israel. It is not the hope of a few, or of tens of thousands, but the hope of hundreds of thousands, and perhaps one could say without exaggeration, the hope of millions.”

For Ben-Gurion, immigration was a means of saving the Jewish population from fates that he felt were predetermined in Eastern Europe. Correctly or incorrectly, Ben-Gurion believed that if the Jewish population stayed in the countries they had lived in so far, they would be slowly smothered by the ever present blaze of proliferating anti-Semitism.

Then Director General of the Israeli Defense Ministry, Shimon Peres stated at the end of January, 1959, that “Aliya is improving the security situation in Israel, is helping deter the Arab states from aggression, and is helping turn Israel into an active political factor capable of self-creativity… if Israel were to attain 3-4 million citizens and could mobilize a big army, no Arab state would dare to attack Israel.”

One of Shimon Peres’s strongest beliefs was his faith that the key to unlocking new reservoirs of strength for Israel lay in the influxes of immigrants to Israel from Eastern Europe, particularly Romania. For Peres, bringing in new Jewish populations gave Israel a fighting chance at survival in a region that was bent on destroying it. Ensuring a

---

positive relationship with Romania was one way of guaranteeing a constant immigration pool for Israel to draw from.

![Image: Shimon Peres and Nicolae Ceaușescu, 1985 (National Archives of Israel)](image)

*Figure 5 Shimon Peres and Nicolae Ceaușescu, 1985 (National Archives of Israel)*\(^{311}\)

**Economic Security**

Concurrently, in the Ben-Gurion years, bilateral trade helped cement the relationships between Israel and many other states, in particular Turkey.\(^{312}\) From the years 1946-1949, Israel was Turkey’s third largest export market.\(^ {313}\) His outlook on building new connections, both economic and diplomatic, emphasized thinking outside the box of conventional partners. Surrounded by an Arab and Muslim region that thought Israel was an illegitimate state that

---


\(^{312}\) Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 22.

\(^{313}\) Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 22.
needed to be returned to its former inhabitants, the government did not have any immediate neighbors it could easily partner with. Israel had been uniquely formed by the United Nations and the United Kingdom, and its founding was possibly the most controversial event in the modern history of the Middle East. At its birth in 1948, the neighboring Arab states were so outraged at the formation of what they viewed as essentially a new Crusader colony, that they collectively attacked Israel to destroy the new state. Their efforts were in vain due to the highly trained and well-prepared Zionist militias who had anticipated such an attack. In its victorious War of Independence, the rest of the Middle East saw tragedy, calling Israel’s creation, the Nakba, or the catastrophe. Because of its unique founding, Israel did not have the luxury to pick and choose whom to trade with like other states in the Middle East. Rather, every opportunity for new trade was viewed with immense promise and hopes. He explained that for Israel, “There is an essential need for Jerusalem to nurture other pre-existing, perhaps moribund ties, such as those with Ethiopia, and to attempt to forge fresh alliances with the non-Arab/Muslim, indigenous elements of the region, as prescribed by the Policy of the Periphery.”

Ben-Gurion’s Policy of the Periphery was an intriguing strategy to open up pathways towards the creation of new allies by targeting states that were not Arab nor Muslim (Romania) and native populations (the Kurds).

Under the leadership of Levi Eshkol (1963-1969), Israel’s government placed a special bounty on protecting Israeli interests abroad. A sanitized copy (declassified in part) of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Daily Briefing from 15 October, 1967, revealed that Israel was very serious about ensuring it went toe-to-toe with its attackers, reciprocating every assault in some

---

314 Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 165.
capacity.\textsuperscript{315} In that 1967 briefing, the collected American intelligence reveals that Israel’s shelling of two Egyptian oil refineries as a response to the sinking of the Israeli destroyer, \textit{Eilat}, was the first counter-strike by Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{316} These two refineries produced two-thirds of the country’s oil supply (114,000 barrels per day in October of 1967) at the Suez Canal, and Israel hoped to force Egypt’s hand in purchasing oil from abroad, which would eventually wreak damage to the economy through foreign indebtedness.\textsuperscript{317} The Israeli government was serious in protecting its interests and making sure its allies were \textit{compensated well}, and its enemies were \textit{struck justly}. Romania’s decision to continue diplomatic relations with Israel after the Six Days War was a surprise for Moscow.\textsuperscript{318} Perhaps, it was just not such a big surprise for Israel, who rewarded its friends and punished its enemies, as Romania would have known by this point in time (after 20 years of mutually beneficial diplomatic relations).

Under the premiership of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, the Israeli-Romanian leadership continued to develop. On the 17\textsuperscript{th} of September, 1979, the Government of the State of Israel signed an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation with the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania.\textsuperscript{319} The agreement begins:

\begin{quote}
Animated by the desire to promote friendly relations and to increase cultural cooperation between the peoples of the two countries; Desiring to further the mutual knowledge of the results achieved by both peoples in the development of education, science, culture, arts, medical care, press, radio and television, sports and tourism; Have decided to conclude the present Agreement, on the basis of the principles of national sovereignty and independence, non-interference in internal affairs, equality of rights and mutual benefit.\textsuperscript{320}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{316} United States. Central Intelligence Agency. President’s Daily Briefing. October 25, 1967.
  \item \textsuperscript{317} United States. Central Intelligence Agency. President’s Daily Briefing. October 25, 1967.
  \item \textsuperscript{318} Ginor and Remez. Foxbats over Dimona, 199.
  \item \textsuperscript{320} “Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation…”, September 17, 1979. 1-2.
\end{itemize}
The agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation was a huge step for Romania as it allowed it access to a variety of resources from Israel that it had been previously locked-out from. In the late 1970s, Romania and Israel’s commitment to expanding their mutually beneficial interactions is made clear yet again in Prime Minister Begin’s era.

![Image of Menachem Begin and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1977](National Archives of Israel)

**Figure 6 Menachem Begin and Nicolae Ceauşescu, 1977 (National Archives of Israel)**

**Policy of the Periphery**

The Policy of the Periphery was state policy institutionalized under Ben-Gurion in the mid-1950s. As the impressively creative plan was put into effect, the first Prime Minister worried over the instability of some of the distant countries Israel was attempting to get closer with. He

---

“expressed particular concern over possible Communist subversion in Iran, the threat to Ethiopia’s independence by Eritrea and moves by Nasser on black Africa.” According to Patten, Potential allies were few and far between. When the possibility arose that Israel could acquire a new friend, Ben-Gurion looked at the moment as a critical juncture full of prospective benefits for the health of Israel. To the Prime Minister, even sub-groups within states could serve as potential allies to the state of Israel: “the Jewish state sought to pursue ties with non-Arab ethnic minorities within Arab countries. As a result, links with the… Iraqi Kurds, the Lebanese and Syrian Druze and the Maronite Christian community in Lebanon were developed at various stages.”

Ben-Gurion stated on the 6th of May 1963, that, “There are two non-Arab Moslem States in the Middle East - Iran and Turkey… and Israel maintains relations of friendship and cooperation with both these countries. There is an ancient Christian State - Ethiopia - with which Israel also maintains close and friendly relations.” Israel was pursuing allies because it could really use every friend it could get in its battle for survival.

The Policy of the Periphery disrupted the existing balance of power by creating a ring of friendly states that surrounded the unfriendly states Israel was next to. In other words, Ben-Gurion’s Policy of the Periphery changed the mental schema of other world leaders by illustrating that the Middle East was a more complex and diverse region than many gave it credit for. Reuven Shiloah, who was the first director-general of Mossad (the Israeli intelligence agency) developed the idea for the Policy in 1931 while working in Kurdistan for the Jewish Agency and seeing the strength and vibrant life of minority populations in the Middle East and

---

322 Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 2.
323 Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 2.
325 Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 2.
Shiloah realized that there were “significant benefits in forging covert links with non-Arab peoples.” Romania and Israel forged just such a link with each other that would provide significant benefits to both states.

**Cold War Neutrality and Israeli Exceptionalism**

On April 14th, 1949, during the conclusion of her time as the Israeli Minister to the USSR, Golda Meir commented to the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Vishinsky that Israel was determined to remain neutral in the coming Cold War. “We are determined to lead a neutral foreign policy, to not be driven by any bloc nor to join any group of countries aimed against this or any other world factor, not against the Soviet Union, especially… We decided to maintain neutrality, this is the will and aim of all responsible factors who are leading our State…” Golda Meir established a precedence of Israeli “neutrality” that would become a key aspect of Israel’s foreign policy. While Israel was never totally neutral, as a state it always attempted to leverage its position between the Great Powers to maximize its security.

Why choose to not follow either of the great superpowers at its founding? Israel needed all the allies it could receive in order to continue existing, and the Israeli leadership did not want to risk alienating either of the super powers by siding one way or another until it was absolutely necessary to make that decision. Golda Meir explained that she would “safeguard our [Israel’s] independence and not to allow any military bases on our territory to England or any other party… We shall not deviate from our Foreign Policy principles, which are: the non-adherence to

---

326 Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 2.
327 Patten. *Israel and the Cold War*, 2.
any organization oriented against the Soviet Union whose friendship with us is in our basic
interest…” As the decades passed, it became clear to the State of Israel that a side had to be
chosen eventually, particularly when the Soviet Union supplied the Arab states with most of their
arms; however, at the time, Israel attempted to stretch out its arm to Moscow. Golda Meir said to
Moscow, “We have a coalitionary government, and although there are workers’ parties outside
this coalition, the majority of workers are represented in the government whose aim is to build
Israel as a Socialist State.” While government officials like Meir identified with Socialism, the
similarities between the kibbutzim of Israel and the collectives of the Soviet Union were not
enough to bridge the gap of other political differences between the USSR and Israel.

Under Prime Minister Shamir’s leadership, Israel stayed attentive at the rapidly declining
state of Ceauşescu’s regime in Romania. On 15 July 1988, Israel’s Minister of Trade and
Industry at the time, Ariel Sharon and Ambassador Yosef Govrin spoke with Romania’s Foreign
Minister, Stefan Andrei about the recent renouncement by Bucharest of Most Favored Nation
(MFN) status. At these Bucharest talks, Foreign Minister Andrei stated:

And how did the USA reward Romania?… when Romania did not break its relations with
Israel, despite the economic boycott that Arab states imposed on Romania; or for its
support for a solution to the problem of Vietnam; or for its urging the superpowers to
start negotiating on disarmament; or for criticizing the USSR due to its invasion of
Afghanistan? It is not correct to say that Romania renounced its MFN status of its own
free will? It was forced to do so. Why? Because it could no longer stand the hostile
campaign waged against it in Congress in an attempt to interfere in Romania’s domestic
affairs. Independence has its cost. The loss as a result of relinquishing MFN status is the
price Romania has to pay for its independence.

Romania’s Foreign Minister acutely believed that the friendship Bucharest had shown
Washington had gone unreciprocated. Foreign Minister Andrei’s laundry list of critical moments

---

331 Govrin. Israeli-Soviet Relations, xxviii.
332 Govrin. Israeli-Romanian Relations at the End of the Ceauşescu Era, 99.
333 Govrin. Israeli-Romanian Relations at the End of the Ceauşescu Era, 99-100.
where Bucharest stood by Washington, revealed just how deeply incensed the Romanian leadership felt after this relationship began to deteriorate. It seemed to the government of Bucharest, that the United States’ new attitude adjustment was alarmingly and auspiciously arbitrary. Romanian Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu and the Secretary of State Dean Rusk established an agreement in 1963 between Bucharest and Washington that would keep Romania out of any future Cuban missile crisis.\textsuperscript{334} Dean Rusk would later tell his aide, Raymond Garthoff that:

\begin{quote}
The Romanian government wanted the United States to understand that Romania would remain neutral in any conflict generated by such actions as the Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba, and sought assurances that in the event of hostilities arising from such a situation, the United States would not strike Romania on the mistaken assumption that it would be allied with the Soviet Union in such a war.\textsuperscript{335}
\end{quote}

Romania desired a non-alignment that was similar to the same non-alignment that Israel had first sought earlier in its existence.

\textsuperscript{334} Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez. \textit{Foxbats over Dimona: The Soviets’ Nuclear Gamble in the Six-Day War} (New Haven: Yale UP, 2007), 199.
\textsuperscript{335} Ginor and Remez, \textit{Foxbats over Dimona}, 199.
In the end, Israel’s perspective on the Israeli-Romanian relationship was colored by its own tempestuous position in the Middle East as well as the uniquely difficult history of persecution that had faced the Jewish people prior to the establishment of the Jewish State. Looking specifically at all the Prime Ministers that would come to lead the State of Israel from its founding to the year of 1989 (the year Ceaușescu’s regime fell) reveals just how diverse yet oftentimes similar, Israeli-Romanian perspectives and planning were. Under Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, foreign policy decision-making was based on improving the military at-home, gaining diplomatic, military, and moral aid from abroad, and numerically improving a steady immigration influx into Israel. Another of Ben-Gurion’s policies that would stay relevant throughout our conversation over Romani and Israel, is the Israeli Policy of the Periphery. By

---

targeting new potential partners in unlikely places, Israel could gain much needed aid and allies.

Their orientation to the world, was shaped and molded by their collective experiences and belief systems, deeply influenced by an understanding of Israel as an “outcast state” and a marginalized member of the Middle East.
Conclusion

People talk of “social outcasts.” The words apparently denote the miserable losers of the world, the vicious ones, but I feel as though I have been a “social outcast” from the moment I was born. If ever I meet someone society has designated as an outcast, I invariably feel affection for him, an emotion which carries me away in melting tenderness.

— Osamu Dazai, *No Longer Human* 337

Imagine children running around on a playground. One of the kids is called names for his lisp, and he ends up sitting alone on the far side of the basketball court, dejected and despondent over his peers’ taunting. Another kid, punished for his bright red hair, is made fun of thoroughly by most everybody at the elementary school. Over the next few minutes after both boys have been separated from the main group, the kid with the lisp and the red-headed boy move towards each other and begin talking, bonding over their mutual isolation, their mutual exclusion, and their mutual marginalization from the joys of regular play. Two outcast elements in a social network have bonded.

In a similar way, this thesis posits that states that are regionally ostracized, are more likely to bond with states that are also similarly marginalized. Looking at Romania and Israel as a prime example, this thesis uncovers extensive evidence in favor of this phenomenon’s application at the state level. Ostracism is defined by psychologist Kipling Williams as “any act or acts of ignoring and excluding of an individual or groups by an individual or group.” 338 In both Communist Romania and Israel’s case, ostracism has occurred at the state level. During the Communist era, Romania was isolated from the Soviet Union and excluded from major decision-making at the COMECON. For Israel, its Jewish settler society origins alienated the entire Arab world. Israel’s relationships with much of the world have been strained since the birth of the

state. Indeed, many states have never had diplomatic relations with Israel at all. In Israel’s vicinity within the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, UAE, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Algeria, Lebanon, Bahrain, and Kuwait have all never had diplomatic relations with Jerusalem. Israel’s foreign policy has been shaped by its environment. With few countries that can serve as partners nearby, Israel implemented the Policy of the Periphery under Golda Meir, targeting states that are on “the fringe” around the world with the hopes of mutually benefitting from their partnership.

Searching where else this model can be applied, examples from throughout history and around the world are found where ostracized states have grown closer together to other states far away who are also out of favor in their regions. Before and during World War II, Germany, Italy, and Japan were all regionally ostracized states. While these fascist countries shared commonalities over their systems of government and world-views, their bond was also one of necessity. Few states sided with them in their own regions, and in their desire to build empires isolated them from the world order that was led by the older imperial powers. They shared similarities, but they became allies out of necessity.

In today’s world, North Korea, Cuba, and Pakistan come to mind. All three countries share a mix of nuclear and conventional weaponry with each other. North Korea is isolated due to its dictatorial Communist regime, Cuba is isolated for its Communist political system, and Pakistan is isolated for its alleged aiding of terrorist networks. All three have found each other after being “booted off the playground.” Regional ostracism has helped create outcast-state bonding again.

The Middle Eastern-Eastern European political “ecosystem” has been at odds with itself for centuries. Powers have attempted influencing each other with varying levels of success, and
the struggle for domination has slipped back and forth in favor of either side. Whether it is the Ottoman Empire spreading its reach all the way to Vienna, the Soviet Union seeking allies for its Bloc, Islamist groups finding refuge in Serbia, Chechnya, and Albania, or Russia befriending Syria and Iran, the regions have shared a relationship in a way that has affected the political, social, and historical landscape of both of their existences. This contentious relationship has shaped the regions to their respective cultural cores.

With the newscasts of today filled with news about violent Chechnyan groups, the Iranian nuclear program, and the Syrian revolution, it is clear that analyzing the historical political, social, and religious battles of influence in the ecosystem that is compromised of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, can provide much needed insight on the current unfolding scenes in the regions. The security issues occurring in this region are ever present, and historical context provides a window into the future of the regions as a whole. This politically charged regional tension needs to be studied in a historical context complemented by analyzing the diplomatic relationships within the microcosm of the international arena that is Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Studying this area brings us a better understanding of the living and breathing organism that is the Eastern Europe-Middle East matrix, a medium full of political, military, and societal factors always moving and changing. Regional ostracism and outcast-state bonding have played a role in the relationship between Israel and Romania, and therefore the subject deserves further studies in different contexts.

Bibliography

Primary Sources


UWM Manuscript Collection 21 Box 7 Folder 4. Date Digitized: 2004/01/27. Archives.

http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/ref/collection/pgm/id/48


Central Intelligence Agency Records Search Tool, United States National Archives and Records Administration Library, College Park, MD.

Cold War International History Project, Virtual Archive, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.

Confidential Print: Middle East, 1839-1969. Archives Direct from the National Archives, UK.

Online.


“Golda Meir to Visit Romania.” Chicago Tribune, April 19, 1972.


Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Records and Historical Documents, Israel Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Jerusalem, Israel.
The Library of Congress - African and Middle Eastern Division - Hebraic Section.
“On Soviet Policy Following the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East” June 20, 1967, History
and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN) KC PZPR
2632. Obtained by Krzysztof Persak and translated by Gennady Pasechnik.
Sharett, Moshe. P.D. (Personal Diary) in Israel Government Yearbook. Vol. 6.1612 (Tel-Aviv,
United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (Partition Plan). Israeli Ministry of Foreign
Affairs. 29 November 1947.
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/un%20general%20assembl
y%20resolution%20181.aspx>.
<http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1699355/1973-12-
03.pdf>.
74082.pdf>.

Secondary Sources

Allen, Robert Loring. Middle Eastern Economic Relations with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe,
Print.
Jacobson, Abigail. “A City Living through Crisis: Jerusalem during World War I,” British
Klein, Menachem. “When the 1967 War and the 1977 Peace Visited My Home in
60-63.
Babeș, Adina. “Aliyah of Romanian Jews – Socio-Statistical Facts (Historical Approach).” Sfera
Babeș, Adina. “Primii Israelieni De Origine Romana (Translation: The First Israelis of Romanian
Barṭal, Yiśra’el, Antony Polonsky, and Scott Ury. Jews and Their Neighbours in Eastern Europe
Bines, Carol. Din istoria imigrărilor în Israel 1882-1995 (Translated: From the History of


