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**Abstract**

The first phase of Romania's communization—the ascent of the Communist Party to power—took place between 1944 (when it gained a toehold in government coalitions) and 1948, by which time it had fully consolidated its position over other political formations, thanks to the Soviet Army, and could begin implementing its agenda. Near the top of the list was collectivization of agriculture—a mammoth task, given that over 75% of the entire population was employed in that sector. To accomplish this, Party leaders developed a number of technologies, including propaganda, food requisitions, various methods of "persuasion," fomenting class warfare, and outright brutality. All of them were highly labor-intensive, requiring Party cadres to interact closely with individuals and households in Romania's many rural settlements. They required, in brief, a sizable and well-trained apparatus of cadres.

In this paper I discuss some of the characteristics of these cadres and the problem of their abuses of power as they sought to force peasants into the collectives. I discuss these abuses without offering extensive documentation, of which a great deal exists, but take them as given. I offer some reasons why I believe they were so common, suggesting how this relates to the nature of power in the communist Party-state, and I propose some of the social considerations that mitigated their occurrence. Overall, my aim is to open up the world of Party cadres, a world that has not been much explored.