

Quake Rocks Romania; Toll Feared High

Temblor Registers 7.2 and Shakes Buildings From Russia to Italy

From Times Wire Services

A massive earthquake rocked Romania on Friday night, shaking buildings from Moscow to Rome.

Radio Bucharest said the quake caused great loss of life and heavy damage.

"The situation is terrible here," an operator of the Bucharest telephone exchange reported. "We know nothing for sure but we have heard that there are many dead."

Unofficial reports put the death toll into the hundreds, but the reports could not be verified.

The quake's epicenter was reported to be about 65 miles north of the Romanian capital. One report said the quake measured 7.2 on the Richter scale and another 7.5.

A U.S. Embassy official in Bucharest said that at least 10 buildings in the Romanian capital were destroyed.

"Quite a few buildings have been badly damaged," the official told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"The earth started shaking at about 9:30 p.m.," he said. "Walls were shaking and people fled into the streets. The tremors lasted between 30 seconds and one minute."

He said all the U.S. Embassy staff, about 60 families, were safe.

"I can't believe this happened," said Rodica Kessler, a telephone operator who walked through the devastated area. "A lot of buildings don't exist now."

"I saw hands, I saw legs, I saw heads. I saw very many parts of bodies behind the buildings that are down now."

Miss Kessler said, "We have many, many buildings, many blocks down."

"Many people, I think that some hundreds, all the people are dead. I think 200 on one block of apartments."

President Nicolae Ceaucescu, who was on a state visit to Nigeria, issued a decree mobilizing all state resources for rescue operations, including the dispatch of water, bread and basic foods to the affected area, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported.

The decree described the situation in the capital as "grave" and said there were "human losses and considerable material damage."

Radio Bucharest was quoted by Yugoslavia's Radio Belgrade as saying the Romanian army had moved in to provide water and electric power interrupted by the quake, and Roma-

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nian ham operators were reported relaying messages.

A spokesman for Austria's Central Institute for Meteorology and Geo-dynamics in Vienna said the quake also probably caused widespread damage in Romania's Transylvanian Alps.

All telex and telephone connections with Romania were interrupted and all calls—including official ones—were canceled for the night, the Vienna telephone exchange said.

Tremors were felt in the Soviet Union, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Austria, northern Greece and central Italy. No damage was reported immediately from those countries.

Julius Drimmel, a seismologist in Vienna, said the quake measured 7.5 on the Richter scale and was believed centered in the Transylvanian Alps. The Alps link with the Carpathians to form a mountainous semicircle through the center of Romania.

The U.S. National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo., said the quake was centered about 65 miles north of Bucharest and registered 7.2

Radio Bucharest was off the air for about 1½ hours after the quake struck, a spokesman for Radio Free Europe said in Munich, West Germany.

Several people were reported injured in Yugoslavia, at least one of them seriously, the official Yugoslav news



agency Tanjug reported from Belgrade. It said 17 persons requested medical assistance in Kragujevac, a city south of Belgrade, and all the injured had been hospitalized but were all out of danger.

Yugoslavian officials said tremors cracked walls in old buildings and sent people fleeing into the streets in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. No serious damage was reported in Yugoslavia but many people stayed for several hours in the cold

streets after the tremor.

The Hungarian news agency MTI said "residents of multi-story houses ran into the streets" and factory work came to a standstill in cities near the Romanian border in eastern and southern Hungary.

Tanjug reported from the Bulgarian capital of Sofia that the quake sent residents fleeing into streets and parks. The tremor caused no major damage in central Bulgaria but electric power and telephone connections were occasionally interrupted in some areas, Tanjug said.

Tremors in Moscow caused curtains to sway and pictures on walls to shake.

The Italian seismological center in Rome said the quake shook the Italian capital, Naples and the whole of central Italy.

Romanian Recovery From Quake Slows

Economic Growth Rises but Debris From Tremor Remains

BY MURRAY SEEGER
Times Staff Writer

BUCHAREST, Romania—After months of enthusiastic hard work, the process of restoring earthquake-battered Bucharest has slowed perceptibly.

Thousands of construction men were hammering, painting and plastering recently along Magheru Blvd., the showplace north-south artery

that was heavily damaged by the tremor last March 14.

But just off the boulevard, and in older neighborhoods, the remains of smashed buildings were still surrounded by rubble. Smaller structures were shored up with pine beams.

"In some ways, the earthquake was good," a Communist Party member observed. "For weeks everyone worked very hard to clean up the city

and get things going. Now that spirit seems to be fading, and we are back to normal."

The Communist Party Central Committee acknowledged as much when it extended the deadline for cleanup work from the end of October until the end of December.

Just after the quake, before the full extent of the damage was known, the party had ordered that building re-

pairs be completed by May.

"We now know that this was the most severe earthquake ever to hit our country," a government official said. "Everyone has been taken care of now. Everyone who needed one has a room, at least."

The nation's industrial economy has apparently recovered quickly from the quake. For the first nine months of the year, economic growth has been calculated at 11.5% instead of the 10.7% called for in the five-year plan that runs through 1980.

President Nicolae Ceausescu, who is also the Communist Party leader, said the higher performance rate would now be the norm for the econ-

omy and the bonus of production would pay for the increases in wages and consumer goods that were promised last spring.

The country now expects to build 1 million housing units during the planning period, an increase of more than 200,000 over the original scheme.

A recent visitor saw little evidence of this heady economic drive in Bucharest. The streets were crowded with shoppers, and the cafes were filled with men and women relaxing over Turkish coffee, wine or beer. The weather was warm, and people waited patiently at outdoor stands to buy

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fat sausages and locally bottled orange drinks.

On St. Dimitri's Day, thousands of men and women stood in line for hours to have flowers blessed or to receive holy candles or holy water at the Romanian Orthodox Cathedral in South Bucharest.

Many of the worshipers who could not crowd into the small cathedral, were able to see the new patriarch, Justin Moisescu, who was elected in June, as he walked across the courtyard to his residence and stood on the

porch to bless the crowd.

Like his predecessor, Justin Marina, who died in March at the age of 76, Justin Moisescu is considered friendly to the Communist regime and to Ceausescu personally.

The Romanian Communists harassed the church and its adherents a few years ago more than they do now.

The open markets were filled with fresh vegetables from a bumper harvest. Every other pedestrian seemed to be eating an apple.

In the stalls there were lemons

from Israel—a sign of Romania's unique position as the only Soviet bloc country to have relations with the Jewish state. And there was cocoa from China, another indication of Ceausescu's independent foreign policy, which has close ties with Peking while maintaining good relations with Moscow.

In the meat shops, supplies were better than they were two years ago, when floods devastated many farm areas.

Unlike other European countries, Romania still has the 48-hour work-

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week. Plans to reduce it this year were postponed by the earthquake.

The delayed introduction of a shorter workweek is one of the bitter pills that Romanians have had to swallow since the earthquake. There is also the expectation in most factories that workers will have to give the state one Sunday a month without pay to make up for the tremor's economic costs.

In addition, after the announcement that higher-than-expected wage increases would be paid, the government changed the rules for pensions, so that most persons will have to work longer before retiring and then receive smaller payments than they expected.

An estimated 10,000 construction workers were brought into Bucharest

from the provinces after the quake to help with the cleanup and restoration work. Other workers have been transferred from less essential occupations to industrial jobs.

Although Romanians have been considered among the most docile of East Europeans—they have never carried out protests to compare with those in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany—violence did break out in June at the Aug. 23 Stadium.

The nation's movie and theater industries had scheduled a benefit show to raise money for earthquake victims and apparently tickets were sold beyond the stadium's capacity of 70,000 seats.

A melee developed between young people and police. At least four died.

Some Western residents have put the death toll at 10. Teen-agers reportedly tore a national flag and burned a portrait of Ceausescu.

The incident was serious enough for the official government news agency, Agerpress, to issue a report and for the Communist bosses to fire two top-ranking city officials and the municipal police chief.

Meanwhile, the government has stuck to its statement that 1,570 persons died as a result of the earthquake, but unofficial estimates are much higher.

"They counted as dead only those who were officially identified, a journalist said. "No one believes that figure."

Street estimates of the toll start at
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3,000 and go as high as 10,000. Many argue that the rapid cleanup campaign resulted in bodies being buried in basements as buildings sites were cleared.

About 33,000 apartments were destroyed by the quake, which ruined 32 buildings with its first shock. Another 900 buildings had to be demolished as the result of later inspections. While the toll was still rising, government officials called a halt and insisted that more structures could be repaired. More than 1,800 buildings had to be evacuated for repairs.

Many victims were housed temporarily in resort hotels on the Black Sea. Those who could prove they had lost all their possessions were given modest gifts of clothing and furniture.

"Most of the buildings that collapsed were built between the two world wars, when there were lower standards of honesty in construction and building codes were completely lacking," a city official said. "The large majority of newer buildings behaved very well. Only sections of two buildings built in the last 25 years collapsed."

The country's transportation system, already notoriously inefficient, was severely damaged. A new computer center, valued at \$2 billion, which was about to start running the

country's railroads, was destroyed.

Bucharest was in the process of building a new underground transit system, but that has been delayed by a massive cave-in. Apparently, the city will continue to operate indefinitely with some of Europe's most overcrowded buses and trolleys.

The quake struck a relatively small area of the country, the southeast corner, but it is the most heavily industrialized region. Bucharest itself is home for 8% of the country's 21.6 million residents.

Ceausescu has followed a policy of concentrating more and more political and economic power in the capital, despite its vulnerability.

His National Policy calls for steady, heavy investment of one-third of national income into new industry in order to continue the historic transformation of Romania from a predominantly agricultural nation into an industrial one.

While Ceausescu has been successful in starting this transition, and making living standards higher than ever before, the country still lags far behind the leaders in the Eastern Communist bloc, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Romania's living scale ranks just above Albania's, which is at the bottom of the European ladder.

Many Western experts believe that

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the regime has not granted the public sufficient material incentives to stimulate the kind of economic efficiency needed to maintain the country's persistent high growth rates and rebuild from the earthquake at the same time.

While more resources have been made available for raising living standards faster than originally planned, Ceausescu has also stepped up the tone and content of nationalistic and Communist exhortations in an attempt to inspire the population. The party Central Committee and rubber-stamp Parliament recently approved two new elements in that policy.

The words of the Romanian national anthem were changed to praise the people's "fighting traditions in defense of the country's liberty and independence." Praise for the "liberators" from the Soviet Union was dropped.

Henceforth Romanians, who are ordinarily among the more courteous people in the Communist world, will call each other "Comrade" at their places of work and in doing business with the government.

In ordinary contacts, individuals are to refer to each other as "Citizen" instead of Mr., Miss or Mrs. In print, those who had been called wage-earners or employes will be "working people" or "working personnel."