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RÎMANIA KEIZAI TAISEI NO KENKYÛ [The Economic System of Socialist Romania] 1944-1989. by Akira Uegaki, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1995, ii + 256 pp.

This book is the first in the world that treats with the Romanian economic development from the birth of the communist regime to its fall in 1989. Although the fall of the communist regime in Romania has usually been attributed to Ceausescu's peculiar character, the author intends to claim that Ceausescu himself followed the economic aims that the Romanian communist party had consistently pursued since the end of the second world war.

At first, two premises should be noted. First, Romania has been a "small country" in the sense that Romania must choose her policies with the world economic and political conditions being given, and that the policies chosen could not influence these conditions. Second, the starting point of Romanian economic development after the first world war was the lowest of not so much developed Central and Eastern European countries, and the Romanian leaders, including Ceausescu, wished to develop the Romanian economy as soon as possible.

After liberation from the Nazi-German indirect occupation on August 23, 1944, development of the Romanian economy resumed under the huge influence of the Soviet Union. But to put Romania under the Soviet influence did not necessarily mean the beginning of sovietization of the economic system in Romania. After the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in 1947, the Soviet Union began to demand the Eastern European countries to imitate the Soviet political and economic system. Romania also embarked on sovietization of her economic system in the spheres of social values, economic system and ways of motivation.

Romania had walked her own way of industrialization since Khrushchev began to insist upon the socialist division of labor in the COMECON system. Romanian leaders resisted the Khrushchev's way because it would keep Romania a country supplying oil and gas to the other COMECON countries, and limit the possibility of development of Romanian industries other than the chemical industry. Especially, in 1970's, Romania approached the western world by becoming a member country of GATT, IMF and the World Bank, and promulgating the Joint Venture Act. And in those days, to enlarge export of products produced by using imported new technology, Romania borrowed a huge sum of credit from these international organizations and western private banks. This ambitious industrialization policy was caused by, before everything, the leaders' desire of being recognized as an industrialized country.

But these efforts ended up in failure. Romania faced rescheduling of the foreign debt in 1982, 1983 and 1986, making Ceausescu choose a policy of prompt repayment of all credit. This policy put the Romanian people in extreme distress, causing the fall of the Ceausescu regime in 1989.

The book reviewed here has some outstanding features which may be summarized as follows.

First, as was mentioned at the beginning, the work is the first in the world that treats with the Romanian economic development from the beginning of the communist

regime to its fall, though in 1970's some distinguished works summarized the Romanian economic development till that time.

Second, not only in the sense that Ceausescu's peculiar personal character the author seeks the cause of selection of the policies and of the fall of the communist regime. He seeks the cause in a propensity of Romanian leaders toward hastening her economic development with a desire of being recognized as an industrialized country. And he concluded that they could choose the policy from her standpoint as a "small country."

Third, the author examines volumes of materials concerning the Romanian economy and politics in English, Russian and Japanese languages as well as in Romanian. And owing to avoiding the one-sided viewpoint from Romanian sources, he succeeds in reaching such a fair conclusion.

In spite of his admirable results and viewpoints, there seem to be several points to be questioned.

First, the author defines 1944 as the beginning year of the communist regime. But, between 1944 and 1947, in the parliament existed parties both for and against the Soviet communist regime, and even the King Mihai was still in Romania, although the influence of the Soviet Union was too great to be ignored. So we think that it is not correct to consider creation of absolute power of the Soviet Union over Romania as identical with establishment of the communist regime.

Second, the author describes in detail the sovietization process in the spheres of social values, economic system and ways of motivation after the beginning of the cold war. If he added a comparison with these systems of other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, readers could catch more concrete image of the Romanian socialist system, and understand more easily the peculiarity (or similarity) of the development of the Romanian economy.

Third, Romania's approach to the western world in 1970's resulted in insolvency of the foreign debt in the beginning of 1980's. But similar situations have occurred in Asian, South American and even some Eastern European countries. We don't think the author gives sufficient explanation of why Romania has selected the policy of prompt repayment of all the foreign debt.

Having said so, however, I have no objection to the outstanding features of the work. The author's serious work is the successful result of the study of former socialist countries in general. And it has and will deepen the study of Romanian economy not only in Japan but in the world.

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