

The mad man of Romania

After witnessing the sweeping changes happen all around them, the East German government has finally decided to get with the program, by removing the stodgy Erik Honnecker—who had stood in the way of reforms for years—for a more (hopefully) moderate leader, Egon Krenz.

Although the Eastern Bloc leader, in terms of economics, for years, East Germany has slipped. Store shelves are now empty, and many East Germans have been voting with their feet—the latest exodus is testimony to that—since there are no free elections, by leaving their homeland for the West or more liberal Eastern Bloc countries, such as Hungary.

So much incredible change is taking place in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary. The latter two nations have essentially dumped the communist party. Now there is hope for East Germany.

Unfortunately, there is one Warsaw Pact nation for which Stalinism still seems to be in fash-

ion: Romania. Under the "leadership" of a man named Nicolae Ceausescu, this country now has a serious food shortage, and is considered to have one of the most repressive regimes in the world.

Typewriters must be registered with the government, and the only literature that can be found anywhere in the country are works by the "Danube of Thought," Ceausescu, and his wife Elena, who is nothing less than the second in command of the country.

Some of Ceausescu's ideas are downright insane. One of them is razing all the charming peasant villages in the countryside and turning them into cold, concrete "agro-industrial centers," and assimilating Romania's huge Hungarian minority population into the centers.

Downtown Budapest, once thought of as the Paris of the East, has been virtually destroyed, and put in its place is a huge, white marble palace for Ceausescu and his wife to reside in. Meanwhile, the standard of living for Romani-

ans dips ever lower, and the government continues to fabricate statistics, claiming living standards are higher than ever before.

Life in Romania wasn't always so miserable. At one time, the eclectic Ceausescu allowed many freedoms, and the economy was doing well.

Unfortunately, Romania found itself heavily in debt by the time the 80s rolled around, and Ceausescu said the huge debt—in the tens of millions—owed to foreign banks would be paid off before the end of the decade.

This could explain cutting back and rationing, but it cannot explain the clamping down on human rights, or the reemergence of the infamous secret police.

Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev strengthened his standing even further by helping to oust Honnecker, and he should not allow a feeble, megalomaniac to block reforms in Romania. Ceausescu should be removed at once.

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Fine wines

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increase extraction of color and flavor components. Both practices have been replicated with encouraging results in California. Some winemakers even have formulas or recipes for the percentage of stems which will be retained for fermentation.

The ideal soil in Burgundy is loose, sparse, and alkaline. It also, like Champagne, is permeated with limestone. One of the problems in California is finding similar soils. All too often, the soils are too rich and deep, lack limestone, and are acidic. The tendency of the Pinot Noir to develop many different clones has also been attributed as a problem in matching the Burgundian potential. Some feel that the quality of the top reds from the Cote d'Or is at least partially due to the diversity of Pinot clones grown in the vineyards. In California, by way of contrast, they tend to take great effort to keep the Pinot clones pure, and consistent.

There are those who feel that criticism of American Pinot Noirs is neither fair nor realistic since red Burgundy wines have proven to be inconsistent and have their detractors as well.

at any rate, it is obvious that American winemakers have turned the corner on this difficult varietal and that its best days in this country are ahead of it.

One of the factors which accelerated the growth of Pinot understanding has been the tremendous increase in wineries producing sparkling wines. The best of these, as in

Champagne, are based on Pinot Noir and a great deal of research and experimentation has accompanied the development of the sparkling wine business in America.

One additional comment on the Pinot Noir is that it is seldom blended. Other red grapes, Cabernet "Sauvignon in particular, may be, but the unique Pinot Noir character seems to be lost when blended with other grapes.

Types of Wine Produced: Dry red table wines and sparkling wines.

Sensory Characteristics: Compared to Bordeaux reds, Burgundies are softer, warmer, fuller-bodied, have more fruit in their scent, and possess a kind of meaty texture. Although they are as dry, they do not taste as dry or austere; they may even strike one as somewhat sweet because of the opulence of the fruit. The bouquet is very complex and perhaps more ethereal and evanescent. The color is both lighter in hue and less dense than that obtained from the Cabernet Sauvignon. Tannin is not as predominant an influence as with many red grapes and, while Pinot Noirs may not last as long as top Cabernets, they can be enjoyed sooner, while the fruit that is one of their attributes is still prominent. Enjoyable when young, they still have the capacity for graceful maturation. Wines made from Pinot Noir probably do not have the aging potential of Cabernet Sauvignon, but then, few, if any, grapes do.



GEORGE FLIES THE "FLAG"

