

## ROMANIA AND PORTUGAL DURING THE COLD WAR Different Paths in a Divided Europe

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# WHAT WAS THE COLD WAR?

- The Cold War was a political, ideological and military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Although the two superpowers never fought directly against each other, they competed for global influence through alliances, propaganda, nuclear arms and local conflicts.
- The Cold War shaped international relations for almost half a century and influenced the political evolution of many countries, including Romania and Portugal.



# THE IRON CURTAIN

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- In 1946, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill used the expression “Iron Curtain” to describe the division of Europe into two political and ideological spheres. Western Europe became associated with democracy and capitalism, while Eastern Europe came under Soviet influence and communist control.
- The Iron Curtain was not only a political border, but also a cultural and economic barrier. People living in Eastern Europe had limited political freedoms and less contact with the Western world. This division deeply influenced the lives of millions of Europeans, including those in Romania and Portugal.



# CHURCHILL'S IRON CURTAIN SPEECH

„From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.”

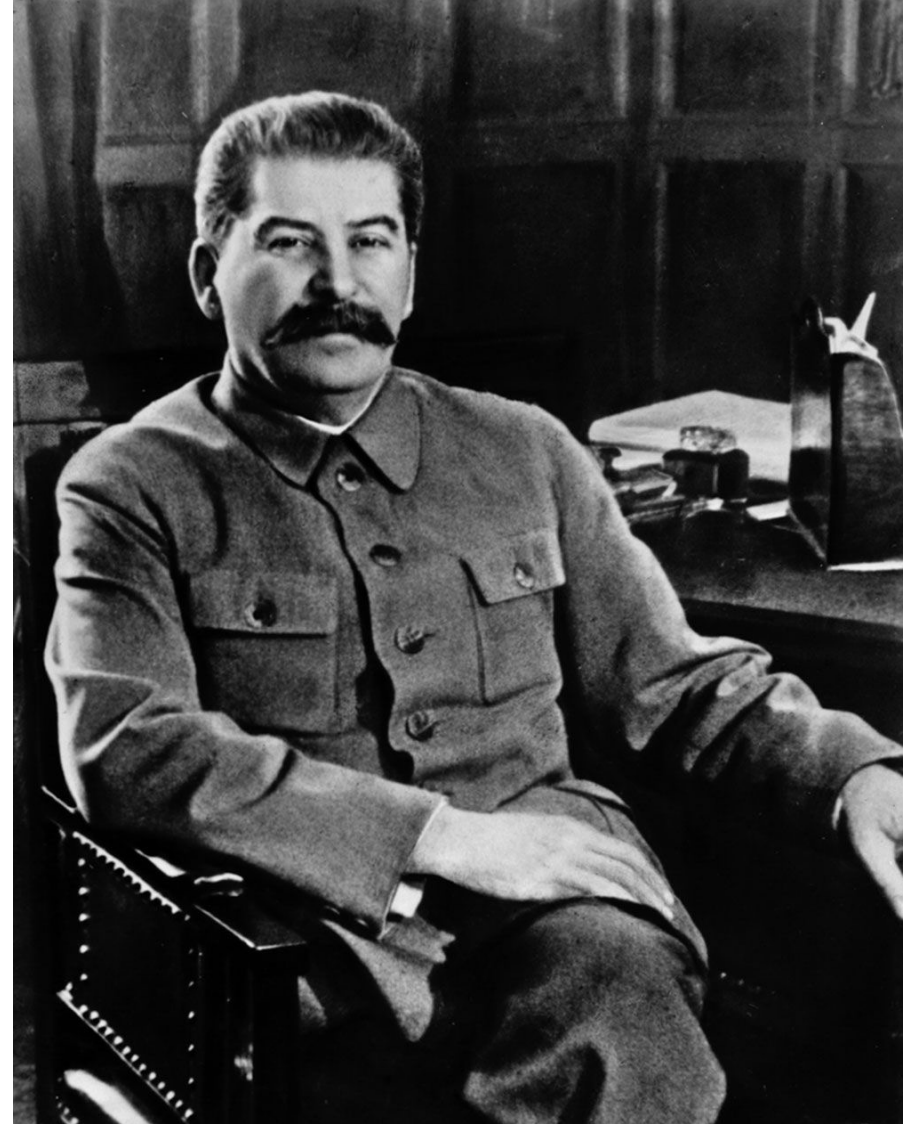
Winston Churchill, Fulton Speech, 1946



# STALIN'S VISION OF POSTWAR EUROPE

„This war is not as in the past: whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise. If there is not now a communist government in Paris, this is only because Russia has no army which can reach Paris in 1945.”

attributed to Joseph Stalin



# ROMANIA DURING THE COLD WAR

- After the Second World War, Romania became part of the Soviet sphere of influence and adopted a communist political system. The country joined the Warsaw Pact and followed the policies imposed by the Soviet Union during the Stalinist period.
- Beginning with the 1960s, Romania tried to develop a more independent foreign policy. Under Nicolae Ceaușescu, the country maintained diplomatic relations with Western states and sometimes refused to follow Soviet decisions, especially in foreign affairs.



# PORTUGAL DURING THE COLD WAR

- During the Cold War, Portugal was part of the Western Bloc and became a founding member of NATO in 1949. The country was ruled by the authoritarian Estado Novo regime, led for many years by António de Oliveira Salazar.
- Unlike Romania, Portugal was anti-communist and closely connected to Western Europe and the United States. However, political freedoms were limited, censorship existed and the regime used political police to control opposition movements.



# IMPORTANT MOMENTS FOR ROMANIA AND PORTUGAL

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- In 1968, Romania refused to participate in the invasion of Czechoslovakia led by the Soviet Union and publicly condemned the military intervention. This decision increased Romania's international visibility and strengthened its image as a relatively independent communist state.
- In 1974, the Carnation Revolution ended the Estado Novo dictatorship and opened the path toward democracy. The revolution became one of the most important political events in modern Portuguese history.



# THE END OF THE COLD WAR

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- During the 1970s and 1980s, important political changes transformed Europe. In Portugal, the Carnation Revolution of 1974 ended the authoritarian regime and began the transition toward democracy.
- In Romania, the communist regime collapsed during the Revolution of December 1989. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe marked the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new political era for the continent.



# GROUP ACTIVITY: ROMANIA AND PORTUGAL DURING THE COLD WAR

**Work in mixed Romanian-Portuguese groups and create a short digital product (text + visual elements) about the Cold War and the experiences of Romania and Portugal, following these requirements:**

- clear organization and accurate historical information;
- integration of visual elements (images, maps, quotes, diagrams etc.);
- coherent and well-structured arguments.

## **Possible Topics for the Digital Project**

- NATO and the Warsaw Pact;
- Differences between Romania and Portugal during the Cold War;
- The Prague Spring (1968): Romania and the invasion of Czechoslovakia;
- The Carnation Revolution (1974);
- The Romanian Revolution (1989);
- The fall of the Berlin Wall.

