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# The General History of the Middle Ages at the V. Babeş University of Cluj (1951-1952)

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**Abstract:** *The General History of the Middle Ages at the V. Babeş University of Cluj (1951-1952).* The 1948 education reform represented, besides a new institutional architecture transposed in accordance with the model of the soviet universities, a process of recycling professors. The process of changing the teaching staff was carried out on at least two levels – the definitive or temporary elimination (sometimes accompanied by incarceration) from the education system on the one hand, and the exertion of severe surveillance and intimidation, thus remodelling the discourse and the behaviour in the spirit of the socialist realist “cultural revolution” on the other hand. The study shed light on a method that led to the expulsion of the professors was the public defamation, the accusation of immorality and of their lack of understanding of the new political transformations of the country, thus labelling the professors as “enemies of the people”. The atmosphere of fear and humiliation was sustained through press campaigns of defamation. Especially the younger university professors were instructed to attack, in the press, the more professionally well reputed and publicly well-known professors. These articles contained not only analyses of the professors’ works and ideas, but also their dismantling, their “exposé” and their human undermining. This paper is a case study on a professor from medieval department of Cluj university, Francisc Pall at the beginning of 1950s years.

**Keywords:** communism, Romania, education reform, cultural revolution, violence, surveillance.

**Rezumat:** *Istoria generală a Evului Mediu la Universitatea V. Babeş din Cluj (1951-1952).* Reorganizarea învățământului superior din România ca urmare a reformei din 1948 a însemnat și pentru

Universitatea din Cluj și implicit pentru învățământul de istorie o schimbare radicală atât a modului de organizare instituțională cât și a conținutului procesului didactic. Modelarea instituțională după structurile didactice sovietice și predominanța caracterului ideologic în spiritul dogmatic al marxism-leninismului al conținutului învățământului au devenit trăsăturile fundamentale ale sistemului de învățământ din România. Frământările organizării administrative se reflectă și la nivelul structurilor facultății de istorie. Astfel, inițial, între alte structuri ale Facultății de Istorie a funcționat și o Catedră Generală a Evului Mediu, colectivul didactic activând sub această formă până în luna mai a anului 1952, de când s-a format o singură catedră de istorie universală, cuprinzând antichitatea, epocile medievală, modernă și contemporană. Studiul de față discută acest proces instituțional de transformare instituțională a studiilor de Ev Mediu și impactul lor asupra destinului profesional a profesorului Francisc Pall.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** comunism, România, reforma educației, revoluție culturală, violența, supraveghere.

The reorganisation of the Romanian higher education system as a result of the 1948 reform<sup>1</sup> represented, for the University of Cluj and implicitly for the history education system, a radical change in both the institutional organisational means and the contents of the didactic process<sup>2</sup>. The institutional model in accordance with the Soviet didactic structures and the predominance of the ideological nature in the dogmatic spirit of

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Someșan, Mircea Iosifescu, *Legile din 1948 pentru reformarea învățământului* [The 1948 laws for the reformation of the education system], in *Analele Sighet 6, Anul 1948 – instituționalizarea comunismului* [The year 1948 – the institutionalisation of communism], editor Romulus Rusan, Bucharest, 1998, pp. 439-444; Adrian Perșa, *Ce se urmărea prin reforma învățământului* [What was intended through the reformation of the education system], in *Ibidem*, pp. 481-486.

<sup>2</sup> Florin Muller, *Politică și istoriografie în România 1948-1964* [Politics and historiography in Romania 1948-1964], Editura Nereamia Napocae, Cluj-Napoca, 2003; Felician Velimirovici, *Istorie și istorici în România comunistă (1948-1989)* [History and historians in communist Romania (1948-1989)], Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2015; Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români 1944-1977* [Politics and history. The case of the Romanian communists 1944-1977], ed. a 2-a, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 2008; Anatol Petrencu, *Învățământul istoric în România (1948-1989)* [The history education system in Romania (1948-1989)], Editura "Știința", Chișinău, 1991.

the Marxism-Leninism in the contents of the education system became the fundamental features of the Romanian education system.

The search for organisational means at the level of the faculty can be identified in the adoption of certain provisional or definitive measures<sup>3</sup>. History, as shown by Ovidiu Ghitta<sup>4</sup>, was initially part of the Faculty of History and Geography, followed by the establishment of the Faculty of History, and, beginning with 1957, the Faculty of History and Philosophy, the institutional structure that subsisted throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, the administrative organisation's unrests are also reflected at the level of the structures of the faculty. Thus, initially, the Department for General Medieval Studies functioned among other structures of the Faculty of History and the teaching staff worked in this form until May 1952, when a single department of world history was established, thus covering the antiquity, the Middle Ages and the modern and contemporary periods. In a report in which F. Pall mentions this administrative transformation as a result of "the Dean's directives", the former department melded into "the wider frame... and the former collectives were transformed into subunits of subjects and the department heads became subject heads"<sup>5</sup>.

The 1948 education reform represented, besides a new institutional architecture transposed in accordance with the model of the Soviet universities, a process of recycling professors. The process of changing the teaching staff was carried out on at least two levels - the definitive or temporary elimination (sometimes accompanied by incarceration) of the education system on the one hand, and the exertion of severe surveillance and intimidation, thus remodeling the discourse and behaviour in the spirit of the socialist realist "cultural revolution" on the other hand. The expulsion from the university was motivated by the collaborationism with the Antonescu regime or by adherence to the ideas of the right-wing movement acts which were stipulated in the Armistice Convention as the judiciary substantiation of this measure. Another

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<sup>3</sup> Mihai Toader Nicoară, *De la Universitatea "Regele Ferdinand I" la Universitatea "Babeş-Bolyai (1948-1959)* [From the King Ferdinand I University to the Babeş-Bolyai University (1948-1959)], Editura Accent, Cluj-Napoca, 2014; *Istoria Universităţii Babeş-Bolyai* [The history of the Babeş-Bolyai University], (coordinator) Ovidiu Ghitta, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Ovidiu Ghitta, *Ştefan Pascu, momentul de răscruce* [Ştefan Pascu, the pivotal moment], in *Personalităţi ale Universităţii Babeş-Bolyai II Ştefan Pascu* [The great figures of the Babeş-Bolyai University II Ştefan Pascu], coordinated by Mihai T. Nicoară, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2015, pp. 53-89.

<sup>5</sup> The Lucian Blaga Central University Library, Special Collections, Francisc Pall Collection, Ms. 5567, f. 64 (henceforth regarded as CUL).

method that led to the expulsion of the professors was the public defamation, the accusation of immorality and of their lack of understanding of the new political transformations of the country, thus labelling the professors as “enemies of the people”. Among the Cluj based historians expelled from the faculty, Ioan Lupaș was forcefully retired in April 1945, he was prosecuted for “pro-Hitler activities” and he was harshly attacked in the “România liberă” [Free Romania] newspaper; in the same manner, Silviu Dragomir was labelled as “reactionary” and was retired in October 1947 as part of a group that contained 80 other professors<sup>6</sup>. In his study dedicated to this period in the history of the Faculty of History of Cluj, O. Ghitta noted: “The pillars of strength of the Cluj school of history disappeared from the institution one by one, through the decisive interference of the politics, which must have given troubling thoughts to those left active”<sup>7</sup>. The atmosphere of fear and humiliation was sustained through press campaigns of defamation. Especially the younger university professors were instructed to attack in the press, the more professionally well-reputed and publicly well-known professors. These articles contained not only analyses of the professors’ works and ideas, but also their dismantling, their “exposé” and their human undermining<sup>8</sup>.

The teaching staff of the Department of General Medieval Studies was comprised of four professors – the department head was associate professor Francisc Pall<sup>9</sup>, and the collective included associate professor

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<sup>6</sup> O. Ghitta, pp. 61-62; see also Stelian Mândruț, *Istorici clujeni “epurați” în anul 1948* [Cluj-based historians “purged” in 1948], in *Analele Sighet 6, Anul 1948 – instituționalizarea comunismului*, editor Romulus Rusan, Bucharest, 1998, pp. 565-570.

<sup>7</sup> O. Ghitta, pp. 61-62.

<sup>8</sup> Ion D. Sârbu, *Atlet al mizeriei* [The athlete of misery], Petroșani, 1994, pp. 114-116.

<sup>9</sup> For F. Pall see *Profesorul Francisc Pall la vârsta de 65 ani* [Professor Francisc Pall at the age of 65], foreword by Pompiliu Teodor. *Bibliografia operei (1933-1976)* [Opus bibliography] by Nicolae Edroiu, Iolanda Karolyi, Maria Tecușan, Cluj-Napoca, 1978; Mircea Popa, *Francisc Pall în corespondență cu Andrei Veress* [Francisc Pall in correspondence with Andrei Veress], in A.I.I.C.N., 1994, pp. 413-416; Aurel Răduțiu, *Francisc Pall*, in “Acta Musei Napocensis”, XXVI-XXX(1989-1993), pp. 667-669; Idem, *In Memoriam – Francisc Pall*, in “Romanian Civilization”, II(1993), 2, pp. 117-118; Sabin Bellu, *Francisc Pall*, AIICN, XXXII(1993), p. 409; Pompiliu Teodor, *Profesorul Francisc Pall* [Professor Francisc Pall], in “Revista istorică”, IV(1993), pp. 411-413; Idem, *Istoricul Francisc Pall* [Francisc Pall, the historian], in vol. “Miscellanea in honorem Radu Manolescu emerito”, edited by Zoe Petre and Stelian Brezeanu, Bucharest, 1996, pp. 341-348; Idem, *Istoricul Francisc Pall și exilul lui Inochentie Micu* [The historian Francisc Pall and the exile of Inochentie Micu], in *Francisc Pall, Inochentie Micu. Exilul la Roma* [Francisc Pall, Inochentie Micu. The exile to Rome], 1745-1768, edited by Ladislau Gyemant, Cluj-Napoca, 1997, pp. VII- XVII; Idem, *Introducere în istoria istoriografiei din Romania* [Introduction to the history of the Romanian historiography], Cluj-Napoca, 2002, pp. 249-251; Mircea Suma, *Particularități ale discursului*

Virgil Vătăşianu<sup>10</sup> and university assistants Camil Mureşan and Samuil Goldenberg, the latter of whom also had teaching obligations within the Department of General Modern History. The department was responsible for teaching the subjects Medieval General History, The Auxiliary Sciences of History, Latin Palaeography and Latin Palaeography Applications. If some of these subjects could be considered technical, with less ideological and political implications, the general medieval history course continuously represented an “apple of discord”, denoting what O. Ghitta regarded as “the Pall case”<sup>11</sup>.

The department functioned at the beginning of the 50s, the period in which it existed in this structure, under two great pressures. The first was represented by the changes requested regarding the contents and form of the teaching process. The second major pressure resided in the adaptation of the teaching body to the ideological and political directives, in impose a Marxist-Leninist view, to “assimilate the historical materialism based on the true worldview, the materialist view”, as one of the members of the department wrote, naturally into the forms of expression practiced at that time. The abundance of this bafflegab that was characteristic for that period and the recurrence of certain issues lead to two observations: we are either faced with a formalism to which the department professors conform in the absence of a different option, or the dynamics of the transformations that occurred in higher education and the direction imposed by the party completely conditioned the didactic activities. We shall try to establish whether it was not merely formalism, but a “revolutionary”, threatening reality that allowed for no reasonable alternative.

At the level of the Faculty of History, for the “improvement of the scientific, ideological, and political contents”, a series of “measures” were repeatedly taken into account. For instance, in the “work plan” of the Faculty of History between January and March 1952<sup>12</sup>, the following objectives were stated in this sense: the analysis of the activities of the teaching staff in the collective meeting; the improvement of the activities

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*istoric la Francisc Pall* [Particularities of the historical discourse of Francisc Pall], in “*Annale Universitatis Apulensis*”, VII (2003), pp. 377-383; Ionuţ Costea, *Francisc Pall și laboratorul istoricului* [Francisc Pall and the historian’s laboratory], in vol. *F. Pall, Diplomatica latină din Transilvania medievala* [Latin diplomatics in medieval Transylvania], edited and foreword by I. Costea, Editura Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, pp. 7-49; Liviu Pleşa, *Istoriografia clujeană sub supravegherea Securităţii (1945-1965)* [The historiography in Cluj under the surveillance of the Securitate], Editura Cetatea de Scaun, Târgovişte, 2017, pp. 356-393.

<sup>10</sup> Nicolae Sabău, Corina Simon, Vlad Țoca, *Istoria artei la Universitatea din Cluj*, vol. I (1919-1987), Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> O. Ghitta, pp. 74-79.

<sup>12</sup> .CUL, *Francisc Pall*, Ms. 5563, Personal documents – Miscellaneous, ff. 28-30.

of the teaching staff with the participation of the dean's office staff to 4-6 department meetings; the introduction of the individual work plan and the control form for the weekly activities of the teaching staff: lecturers, assistants, tutors; the strengthening of the prior control on the courses; the establishment of certain wider thematic that would cover an entire page for each one-hour lesson and their prior discussion in among the teaching collective – the prior discussion of at least 3 two-hour lessons in the case of the history departments; the periodic analysis of the courses; the analysis of the medieval history course; the improvement of the seminar methodology; the periodic analysis of the seminar activities of each department; the establishment of a new framework for the students to use; the organisation of a theoretical conference for the faculty, in collaboration with the Institute of History and Philosophy of the Romanian People's Republic, Cluj Branch; the organisation of experience exchanges with the Bolyai University; the support of the experience exchanges between the teachers of social sciences from Cluj, Tg. Mureș, Brad, Petroșani; continuation of the correspondence with the students from the USSR; assurance of the endowment of the library; the completion of the presentations for the University's scientific symposium; the preparation of the establishment of a students' the scientific circle. The same document also mentioned "the training for the individual study of Marxism-Leninism by all teaching staff members".

In accordance with the provisions of this "work plan" established at the level of the faculty for the period between January and March 1952, on 5 January 1952 the department of the General History of the Middle Ages or the History of the Middle Ages, as it appears in the report written at this time by F. Pall, established its own "activity plan"<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the establishment of collective meetings was decided for Thursday at 6PM, "as before". Moreover, new tasks were established for the department, namely, to improve the teaching method for the courses and the "deepening of the subject matters during the seminars". Besides the activities that focused on observing the level of appropriation of knowledge by the students, "discussing the scientific, ideological, and didactic issues in relation to the activities of the department (during the weekly meetings)" and "planning the reading of the classics of the members in relation with the issues of the department (in collaboration with the Marxism-Leninism cabinet)". Furthermore, the connection with the Soviet science was emphasised, and university assistant S. Goldberg was in charge with "overseeing and discussing the Soviet scholarly

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

literature"; a series of "reciprocal visits to the courses and seminars held by the members of the department" was expected, as well as a "monthly analysis of two lessons (...) held by each member of the department before actually holding the respective lessons". Such attendances were made once a month, as were the analyses of the courses.

The new wording of the administrative language of the proletariat dictatorship was also imposed in the documents compiled by professor Pall. Thus, for the period between April and June 1952, he established his own "work plan"<sup>14</sup>. This time, the document was more systematic, divided on each issue: organisational, ideological, didactic, and scientific tasks. In general terms, the organisational and didactic "tasks" were the ones mentioned above. However, the ideological aspects were emphasised. What was envisioned was the "control over the ideological combativity during the courses and seminars (through the reciprocal visits of the members of the department)" and processing the party documentation regarding the propaganda and agitation and "the written reports of the members of the department regarding the aid received from the party educational system".

The intimidation of the professors by means of reeducation was also mentioned in other cases in the memoirs. The aforementioned Ion D. Sârbu recounted such a situation. The professors of the Faculty of Letters were summoned to the dean's office and were ordered to read together out loud, the feature article from "Scântea"<sup>15</sup>.

On this matter, based on a manuscript draft, a report was compiled by F. Pall on 3 June 1952<sup>16</sup>, a few weeks before the time limit established by the department work plan on 8 May of the same year. The text of the report could be considered a true "confession" of the reeducation of the historian in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. The document bears the title "The help I received from the party education system", a title copied *ad litteram* from the requests made to the teaching staff. Professor Pall mentions attending the course on the History of the Communist Party (b), which he deemed to have been "very useful ... in raising the ideological and political level, thus giving me the ability to better understand the societal development and the construction of socialism". However, knowing the evolution from the Soviet Union also permitted the understanding of the implementation of the model in Romania. Regarding these general aspects, Professor Pall also notices a

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 69-70.

<sup>15</sup> I.D. Sârbu, p. 113.

<sup>16</sup> CUL, Ms. 5563, Personal documents - Miscellaneous, f. 48.

series of issues that, according to him, “have been of great practical help in my teaching work”. In this sense, the professor listed several issues: deciding role played by the production model in the development of the society, the creative role and the fundamental importance of the class struggle, the appreciation criteria of the figure heads in the historical development; the role played by the masses and by the bourgeoisie in the revolution, the unilateral nature of the bourgeoisie revolution or “The History of the Party showed me the necessity of ideological combativity and the presentation of the issues of history and their actualization”. The professor’s speech also shows a fashionable self-critical perspective through which the reeducation purpose of this activity is emphasised: “Here is a series of issues”, F. Pall wrote, “that I have overlooked or have not always managed to present justly in my professional work – for instance, in my courses before my in-depth reading of the History of the Party.” He emphasises, in the spirit of the epoch, the information gaps he seemed to have after attending the course, which, in F. Pall’s case, “due to other tasks, I could not dedicate sufficient time to the study of the recommended bibliography”.

The analysis of the lessons started at the beginning of February 1952 with discussing V. Vătășianu’s course on Italy<sup>17</sup>. In the second part of the same month, February, the course “The Iberic states in the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries” was analysed, a lesson which was supposed to be given by F. Pall – the lesson was “read beforehand by the members of the collective”. In his intervention, S. Goldenberg “considers that the lesson was of poorer quality than the previous ones (from England and France), since the material was much less systemised. One explanation would be the lack of accessible sources that would clarify these issues sufficiently.” V. Vătășianu also intervened, asserting that “the lesson was not of poorer quality” and C. Mureșan posed a question regarding “the differences between the situations of the exploited classes from the conquered regions and those from the regions that had not been conquered by the Muslims”. At the end, professor Pall also intervened, and the record stated that “Comrade Associate Professor Fr. Pall appropriates the majority of the observations and almost immediately takes action to use them in the lesson, which, through this contribution by the collective, will be given in an improved form”<sup>18</sup>. At the end of February, V. Vătășianu’s lesson on the Byzantine Empire in the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>19</sup> was also analysed, as well as F. Pall’s

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<sup>17</sup> BCU, Ms. 5567, f. 40.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 43.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 44.

lesson on England in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>20</sup> and C. Mureşan's lesson on the Bourgeoisie Revolution in the Low Countries<sup>21</sup>.

The department head, F. Pall, mentioned in the agenda of the meeting held on 24 April 1952 the "analysis of the weekly workplans of comrade C. Mureşan", as requested by the dean's office, as it appeared in the workplan and as it was also integrated in the activity plan of the Department of the General History of the Middle Ages. Although the aforementioned analysis never took place "due to a lack of time, since, at 7.30 PM the members of the department had to participate in a communication session at the Institute of History and Philosophy"<sup>22</sup>, it was kept in a manuscript form, probably as a presentation compiled by Camil Mureşan and submitted to F. Pall, as the department head. It is edifying for the way in which the political regime moulded not only the professional and intellectual reeducation that occurred in the 50s, but also the intimidation of individuals by constantly maintaining the sense of insecurity, continuous surveillance and total control. As a young assistant at the time, C. Mureşan was ready to present his activities from several viewpoints: the structure of the daily life, readings, the activities that involved the students, and social activities. What results from the text of the presentation is a very serious self-criticism and a strong fear that was festering within the author. From the outset, C. Mureşan stated that "my activity had planning deficiencies, in the sense that I only rarely managed to harmonise daily the teaching activities and those of the institute; there were times I only carried out teaching activities and other times I only worked for the institute. I managed to plan and to have one hour of rest at noon and, more often, one hour of walking in the evening. I attended shows much too rarely, I did not read enough works of fiction or press, and even when I did, I did not make notes of it on file cards"<sup>23</sup>.

The same strongly self-critical tone also appears in a handwritten note of the other department assistant, S. Goldenbers, made on 24 May 1952. We cannot assess with certainty what the purpose of these handwritten notes was – perhaps it was a form of self-characterisation that was so common at that time, or perhaps we are faced with another sheet of personal analysis, although in the responsibility report of the department from June it is written that there was no such sheet. As opposed to the aforementioned one, the note signed by S. Goldenberg is more general, containing a wider characterisation of the didactic and

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 54, f. 55.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 59, f. 60.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 59.

<sup>23</sup> BCU, Ms. 5567, f. 106.

research activities. However, the self-critical perspective obediently reoccurs. S. Goldenberg asserts that “for now, I am at the beginning of scientific activities which require more perseverance, self-restraint, and greater patience than I have had so far”. Further on in the text, he points out that: “Regarding the work discipline, I must mention that it often leaves much to be desired because of the multitude of tasks and because of the insufficient level of planning in the case of the workload. I often set off on an issue of scientific or didactic research and, without finishing it, I begin another. The only guarantee of my scientific and didactic progress can only be the continuous elevation of my ideological and political level, as well as a better planning of the workload”<sup>24</sup>.

Between the two department assistants, it would appear that F. Pall preferred C. Mureșan: “Comrade Mureșan is progressing beautifully in learning the Russian language and he is diligently studying the Marxist literature, attending the party night school”. However, a certain coldness towards S. Goldenberg can be observed: “I will not insist on the training of comrade Goldberg, here, his work sheet was checked in the beginning within the Department of General Modern History, since he also had attributions there.” Could this be the only reason for F. Pall’s reluctance? S. Goldenberg’s individual file came into the possession of Pall as well. It is possible that the head of the department for the Middle Ages to have considered him an intruder, a man placed within the collective, bearing no special merit for researching the Middle Ages, but rather for knowing the Russian language and for being a follower of historical materialism. F. Pall thus proves to be a believer in recruiting specialists based on meritocracy, with an affinity for scientific preoccupations and a passion between the master and his disciple.

The minutes of the department meetings of that time, the monthly reports, and trimestral accounts show several recurrent aspects: the issue of didactic activities, the appropriation of the Soviet scholarly literature, scientific activities and the fulfilment of the social “duties”.

The evaluation of the didactic activities can be found in several periodical reports and in the reports of the student’s session exams. At the end of the report in the summer of 1951, Professor Pall noted some of the proposals for the improvement of both the learning results and the students’ exams for the subject Medieval General History. On the one hand, Professor Pall insisted on the fact that “the subject is very vast” and “if it were taught in three semesters, weekly, two hours of lectures and two hours of seminar, the results would surely be better than the ones of

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 62-63.

this year". Similarly, regarding the "contents of the education system" and particularly for its alignment with "the most advanced science in the world", the Soviet science professor Pall considered that "although in teaching this subject, a certain number of Soviet studies accessible in Cluj have been used, a Soviet university text book on the Medieval General History would be of great help". The professor from Cluj mentioned that such a text book "was translated and typed" at the Romanian-Soviet Institute in Bucharest and that "measures must be taken in order for it to be sent to the local branch of the same institute as soon as possible."

The contents of the course was, of course, described in what its political and ideological character meant in the report from 9 July 1951, with an emphasis on the fact that the analytic curriculum was compiled "based on the experience of the previous years of restructuration" and "the official curriculum for Soviet universities was also take into account, a curriculum that could have been acquired through personal means". Professor Pall insisted on showing that for the elaboration and drafting of his course he used "all soviet studies that were accessible in Cluj (the text books by Kosmînski and Semenow for the secondary education system and for the pedagogical institutes, the Chrestomathy of medieval history by Graţianski and Skazkin, the studies of Alpatov, Gukovski, Kolseniţki, Porşnev etc. published in Soviet periodicals and some in Romanian periodicals, the text book for the History of Western Literature by Jirminski)." Moreover, as Professor Pall recounted, his course was "analysed in December 1950 and certain manifestations of objectivism were found", which as much as he could, he "tried to eliminate throughout the rest of the school year".

Regarding the didactic activities, Pall observed a progressive improvement of the seminars, "the students have become much more interested in the discussions when certain issues in the lessons are processed and analysed more in-depth, illustrated by parts of the sources, translated in front of them and sometimes with their collaboration". Other times, Pall observed that the students proved to have "the critical spirit and independence of mine, but without straying from the primary just a line of discussion"<sup>25</sup>. To help the students, bibliographies and seminar workbooks were compiled, their lecture notes were checked and they were taught how to use the critical apparatus in their scientific work. Thus, the report for March noted that "there was an increase in the students' interest in the bibliography, since they intensely visited the library of the Institute of History and Philosophy and they read the

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 46.

recommended books more and more". The consultation hours once established, as the time table became definitive, they "started to be attended" and the students "asked carefully thought-out questions on matters that interested them more or regarding issues that were not sufficiently clear to them; however, they were still somewhat shy and their presence was still in relatively low numbers"<sup>26</sup>.

In the department work plan, as a final aspect taken into account, the issue of scientific activity was also present. In the plan compiled in January of the same year by F. Pall, only the final item on the list vaguely mentioned the research activity: "gathering materials and writing articles, reviews or reports by the members, addressing the fields of their scientific interests"<sup>27</sup>. This issue is also integrated in the vocabulary that was characteristic to the epoch, since the scientific activity was, in its turn, a "duty" of the members of the department. For trimester II of the year 1952, its objective was to become familiar with the Soviet contributions to ("reading and referencing the Soviet scholarly literature" - an activity that, until that time, was S. Goldenberg's responsibility -, and compiling "monthly reports on the Soviet historiography" - "a duty" that was this time in V. Vătășianu's area of expertise); furthermore, "writing an article on the Romanian-Russian brotherhood of arms during the reign of Peter I, Tzar of Russia" was expected to be carried out as a collaboration between S. Goldenberg and M. Dan<sup>28</sup>.

The cumulative reports do not show intense research and particularly published activity. This activity was part of the research conducted within the Faculty of History. O. Ghitta, following the footsteps of Ștefan Pascu, who was the interim dean of the faculty at that time, identified three causes of this problem: the didactic "duties" were overwhelming and they did not leave sufficient "time for such preoccupations"; the lack of funding for trips to libraries and archives from other towns; finally, the absence of a local publication in Cluj that would exploit the studies and articles of the teaching body<sup>29</sup>.

Within the Department of the General History of the Middle Ages, the issues regarding scientific research can be identified based on certain general reports written by F. Pall, on 31 January 1952<sup>30</sup> and on 24 June 1952<sup>31</sup>. The former is a simple list of the research activities of each

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 33.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 70.

<sup>29</sup> O. Ghitta, pp. 70-71.

<sup>30</sup> BCU, Ms. 5567, f. 38-39.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 66-67.

member of the collective. The report shows that the professors were involved in different research collectives. In the collective of DIR documents, Series C, Transylvania, Pall had been the head, and starting July 1951, the deputy head, but he “practically led this collective and he made revisions on the translations of the Latin documents”<sup>32</sup> together with C. Mureşan and S. Goldenberg, who were the translators of the Latin documents. V. Vătăşianu was a collaborator in the Dinogetia archaeological collective and a scientific advisor for the collective that compiled the “Archaeological Repertoire” within the Institute of History and Philosophy, by “gathering materials and writing articles”.

The individual researches were thematically aligned with the expectation horizon of the “Marxist-Leninist” historical “new science”. F. Pall held a presentation at the scientific session of the University entitled “Serfdom after the treaty of feudal law of Beaumanoir (13<sup>th</sup> century)” and a report on how “The Soviet science unmasks the falsifiers of medieval history” in ARLUS, and in the history section of the Institute of History and Philosophy in Cluj, the report “Kosminski: The class struggle during the age of feudalism”. In the case of the other lecturer of the collective V. Vătăşianu, he was noted for “gathering material for a paper on The Byzantine Architecture in the Balkan Peninsula” (he gathered 90% of the documentation) and for “bringing additions to the research on the Art History in the Romanian People's Republic” (“chronological and stylistic indications regarding 80 architectonic monuments from Transylvania, 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries”<sup>33</sup>). Regarding the young assistants, they frequented themes meant to emphasise the class struggle in the Middle Ages, the centralised state in the history of the R.P.R., the economic history (C. Mureşan<sup>34</sup>) and the anti-fascist movement, the working-class movement and the Romanian-Russian relations (S. Goldenberg).

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 66.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 39: C. Mureşan: “Legislația lui Verboczi și caracterul ei de clasă” [Verboczi’s legislation and its class nature], “Problemele statului centralizat în Istoria R.P.R.” [The issues of the centralised state in the history of the R.P.R.], “Prețurile în economia agrară a Țărilor Române” [The prices in the agrarian economy of the Romanian Countries]; S. Goldenberg: “Răscoala antifascistă din Bulgaria (1923) și răsunetul ei în presa română contemporană” [The anti-fascist revolt in Bulgaria and its echoes in the Romanian contemporary press], “Relațiile româno-ruse la începutul sec. XVIII” [The Romanian-Russian relations at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], “Critica studiilor lui B.F.Porşnev în istoriografia sovietică” [A critique of B.F.Porşnev’s studies in the soviet historiography], “Mișcarea muncitorească din Transilvania” [The working-class movement in Transylvania], “Problema fascizării României” [The issue of the fascism of Romania].

In the report from 24 June 1952, the list of scientific research contributions is accompanied by an apparently harmless conclusion, but one which can represent a barely concealed critique of the organisation, orientation, and imposition of the research approaches. F. Pall pointed out: “Generally, the research activity of the members of the department is not linked with its characteristics, but with the duties they have for the Institute of History and Philosophy, which is obviously a great hindrance from the viewpoint of the didactic specialisation in which they are involved”<sup>35</sup>.

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The reading of this rich documentary material, the selection and reproduction of certain (perhaps excessively) long passages led us to a series of observations. In the aforementioned texts, one can identify a series of reasons for which the reports and individual and collective assessments have been compiled: “the lack of time”, the numerous didactic “duties” for such a small collective, the deficiencies in the organisation of didactic and research activities, the still problematic level of ideological and political training.

Moreover, one can note the application of the “revolutionary” language and the alignment with the requirements stated in the administrative forms of the new political power, the diligent fulfilment of the “tasks” from the “workplan” and a strong self-critical perspective, a common means of expression in the years of the proletariat dictatorship<sup>36</sup>. Thus, one can note the signs of conformism or rather the efforts to adapt to the “cultural revolution” and to become part of the “historiographic front”, to adapt to the directives of the new order. However, certain veiled and dissimulated critiques also arise, regarding the new organisation of the historical education system and historical research. These critiques can be identified in the conclusions of the balance sheets, in the explanations for the “shortcomings” detected in the “didactic activities” or in the “scientific research activities”, or as proposals aimed to improve the department activities. They were, means and reasons recurrently encountered in the stances taken by the older professors of the Faculty of History in Cluj, emphasised by O. Ghitta in his study on Ș. Pascu<sup>37</sup>.

By following the activities of the Department of The General History, the Middle Ages between 1951-1951, we could observe the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 67.

<sup>36</sup> See Andi Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive în România “democrat-populară”* [History and discursive practices in the democratic-popular Romania], Editura Albatros, București, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> O. Ghitta, pp. 71-73.

dismantling and restructuring of an “old World”, with western traditions in the Cluj historical education system, and its replacement with the “new World”, tailored in accordance with the Soviet model. In this context, one may note that certain organisational unresists were crossed, the contents of the didactic process were redirected, measures were taken to convert the professors trained in the spirit of the general culture and historiography Marxism-Leninism, measures were taken to train new professors that had a “revolutionary conscience” and that would understand the role played by “the party’s combativity, the actualisation and usage” of history for the edification of the socialist society in Romania. This was also the case of the general medieval history didactic collective. F. Pall emphasised this aspect: “All members of the department, except for comrade Goldenberg, shall follow the party education system: comrades, Vătăşianu and Pall for the History of the Party, 1<sup>st</sup> year; comrade Mureşan ... the Party University<sup>38</sup>”. What can actually be observed is a process of revolutionary reeducation of the teaching staff, seconded by the upholding of a climate of insecurity of continuous surveillance and permanent intimidation<sup>39</sup>. This is the approach by which one must interpret the course analyses within the collective or by the “superior forums”, the “duty” of elaborating the individual sheets and of writing reports on the aid given by the party education system to the teaching and scholarly research activities.

Thus, the contents of the course of the General History of the Middle Ages was reorganised – it became a synthesis that covered a vast chronology and geography that no longer only included Western and Eastern Europe and the Islamic World, but also the Orient, China, India and Japan. The theoretical foundations of the presentations were changed from the historical outlines of the period prior to the 1948 reform of the education system. In the case of Professor Pall, this didactic approach was already crystallised and presented in the preface of his course on the Crusades. His premise was based on the organisation of the presentation in accordance with the didactic objectives, “without sacrificing the methodical principles and the scientific accuracy of the facts”. Moreover, in his opinion, the course represented a synthesis, a systematic presentation “meant to aid understanding, memorising and obviously – why not admit it – its learning by a beginner”. Thus, Professor Pall insisted, the course “could not be conceived as a simple and superficial pleasure reading, or as a stale erudition work, encumbered by the ballast of citations”. The professor’s plea called for the direct use of historical

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<sup>38</sup> BCU, Ms. 5567, f. 67.

<sup>39</sup> See Liviu Pleşa, *Istoriografia clujeană ...*, passim.

sources, since he considered that the source “can sometimes be more significant and more suggestive through its concession or its picturesque in the rendition of the climate of an epoch (...) than a much subtle and often too personal modern interpretation”<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, the professor pleaded for the students to be urged to read and not to remain within the bounds of the written course, for the students “to be curious and diligent, to exceed and to deepen the issues that were treated and to reflect on them”<sup>41</sup>. In Pall’s view, the didactic activity was based on a collaboration between the professor and the student – the former offered systematic knowledge and structured scholarly literature and expected responsiveness based on a sincere desire for knowledge from the latter, “the research and love for scientific truth through the thirst for knowing and through the formation of the critical spirit”<sup>42</sup>. Faced with these expectations that could probably be found among the students until the 1948 Reform, things took a different turn. The aforementioned reform created an extremely heterogenous school population, with a precarious level of education, with difficulties in their oral and written means of expression, with shortcomings in their knowledge of the language of the sources and of modern languages. All of this was in addition to the climate of suspicion and surveillance that contributed to the lack of direct and sincere dialogue between the professor and the students. Pall was reproached for distance and coldness towards the students, for the difficulty in communicating with them, for the difficulty in making oneself approachable. However, Pall had been trained and educated for a different world, and he was suddenly compelled to face the new realities of the democratic popular education system in Romania, in which the students either originated from rural areas or were integrated in the production.

Above all, the control and surveillance of the professors was omnipresent. The documents firstly show the professional moulding and sometimes even the intrusion in their private lives. In the posthumously published memoirs, historian David Prodan recounted those times. “You woke up in fear of what could happen to you throughout the day, you went to bed with the unrest of what the night and the following day

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<sup>40</sup> F. Pall, *Curs de istorie universală. Cruciadele (sec. XI-XIII)* [A course on world history. The Crusades (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries)], edited by The National Students’ Union of Romania, The Cluj Students’ Centre, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

could bring. You started for any knock on the door, any sound of the doorbell, any phone call"<sup>43</sup>.

The authorities took advantage of the existence of certain older dissents among the historians from Cluj. Certain policies were paid for older accounts or for self-protection, to receive the goodwill of the hellhounds of the new power. We must draw attention to the case of the head of the Department of The General History of the Middle Ages, F. Pall. Pall's "personal file", a file that sends chills down anyone's spine at that time, points to control and "vigilant" surveillance to intrigues and "collegial" egos. The head of the University labour authority, after the investigation on Pall, posed the following resolution on 9 January 1950: "The professor is well trained. He is cold and distant in nature, unable to feel sympathy for the students. His ideological training is insufficient and he lacks combativity. The professor lacks the perspective of seeing the issues overall as interconnected. From a political viewpoint, he was a member of the National Popular Party and he is presently reticent and does not manifest himself. He does not know the Marxist-Leninist ideology and his willingness to enrich his political level leaves much to be desired. He is a formalist and he is malevolent; he originated from the level of middle-class peasants"<sup>44</sup>. The report was made as a synthesis of the references made by S. Goldenberg, Ş. Pascu, and M. Dan between 14 and 18 November 1949, colleagues working for the Faculty of History. F. Pall's professionalism, his ability to work "even by sacrificing his health"<sup>45</sup> was "of great use to the Romanian historical science"<sup>46</sup>, which prevails in front of his low ideological level, his lack of combativity, his neutrality/indifference ("by retreating into the ivory tower of science"<sup>47</sup>) and the formalism he of which he was accused. All of this shows that it has not yet been the time for an open battle with F. Pall, since he could be considered a "fellow traveler" in the establishment of a reform of the education system.

In spite of the efforts of recycling didactic activities of shifting the direction of the scientific research towards themes that more agreeable to the political power, the story of the Department of the General History of the Middle Ages has a sad ending. In the middle of May, as we have

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<sup>43</sup> David Prodan, *Memorii* [Memoirs], edited by Aurel Răduţiu, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1993, p. 68; cf. O. Ghitta, p. 78, note 115.

<sup>44</sup> The Archives of the Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, the *Francisc Pall File*, Report from 9 January 1950, f. 42 (hereby referred to as AUBB).

<sup>45</sup> AUBB, *Ibidem*, f. 10.

<sup>46</sup> AUBB, *Ibidem*, f. 12.

<sup>47</sup> AUBB, *Ibidem*, f. 10.

already mentioned, the department was dissolved and a new department of world history was established, the dissolution of the department foreshadowed another outcome, namely, that of the “termination of duties”, in the laconic expression present in the personal files of the two lecturers, Francisc Pall and Virgil Vătășianu at the end of the 1951-1952 school year, in the context of the removal from the Faculty of History of a certain number of professors<sup>48</sup>. The course of medieval general history was at that time constantly accused of a lack of combativity, idealism, formalism, objectivism, and cosmopolitanism, either at the level of the dean’s office of the Faculty of History, or at the level of the University rector<sup>49</sup>. Francisc Pall also noted in the activity reports of the department in April-June 1952 the “hardships and shortcomings” they faced, the lack of organised activities and didactic coordination: “of course, the members of the department made efforts and progresses in the restructuring of the subjects, but they still have numerous objectivist and cosmopolitanism issues, which proves that in order to further elevate their ideological levels, they still have much work to do”<sup>50</sup>.

The reckoning broke out in the fall of 1952 and Francisc Pall and Virgil Vătășianu were removed from the Faculty of History and from the Institute of History of Cluj, at least for a time.

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<sup>48</sup> O. Ghitta, 79-87.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 74-79.

<sup>50</sup> CUL, Ms. 5567, f. 68.

# **“With Marx against Moscow”: the backstage of editing Karl Marx’s manuscripts about Romanians**

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**Abstract:** *“With Marx against Moscow”: the backstage of editing Karl Marx’s manuscripts about Romanians.* In mid-1960s, a book containing unknown manuscripts attributed to Karl Marx was published in Romania. The documents were discovered at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam by the Polish historian Stanislaw Schwann. The sources of the most important notes were reprised from a book written by the French historian Élias Regnault in mid-19th century.

For the Romanian communist leadership, the Russian presence in the Romanian Principalities during the first half the 19th century was the most relevant part of the texts signed by Marx. As such, the historical discourse was co-opted in the political plan aimed to emancipation from Soviet authority in Romania.

The main Romanian historian involved in the plan for editing Karl Marx’ writings was Andrei Oțetea. As Director of the Institute of History of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, he received the main mission of maintaining the correspondence with the Institute of Amsterdam.

The study aims to establish the evolution of Romanian-Dutch treaties, in order to exploit the manuscripts, as well as the involvement of the historiographical circles. Although the question was treated as a strictly political one, the project experienced several phases influenced in particular by the changes of attitude from the Dutch Institute. Thus, an important objective of the study is to highlight the reactions produced by the Romanians’ intentions to bring to light some important data attributed to Karl Marx

**Key-words:** Andrei Oțetea, Karl Marx manuscripts, Institute of Social History Amsterdam.

**Abstract:** *“Cu Marx împotriva Moscovei”: culisele editării manuscriselor lui Karl Marx despre români.* La mijlocul anilor 60, în România democrat-populară a fost publicat o lucrare ce cuprindea manuscrite necunoscute și scrieri ce aparțineau lui Karl Marx. Conținutul acestor documente făceau referire la aspecte din trecutul național al românilor.

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Însă redeschiderea controverselor din relațiile româno-ruse din prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea a înregimentat discursul istoric în disensiunile cu sovieticii. Manuscrisele au fost descoperite la Institutul Internațional de Istorie Socială din Amsterdam de către istoricul polonez Stanislav Schwann.

Studiul urmărește să stabilească evoluția tratatelor româno-olandeze, în scopul valorificării manuscriselor și implicarea mediului istoriografic. Cu toate că problema fost tratată ca fiind una strict politică, proiectul a cunoscut mai multe faze influențate îndeosebi de schimbările de atitudine ale Institutului olandez. Astfel, un obiectiv important al studiului constă în evidențierea reacțiilor produse de intențiile românești de aducere la lumină a unor date importante ce i se atribuiau lui Karl Marx. În realitate, sursele însemnările cele mai importante au fost preluate de intelectualul german dintr-o lucrare scrisă de istoricul francez Élias Regnault la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea. Principalul istoric român implicat în planurile de editare a scrierilor lui Karl Marx a fost Andrei Oțetea. În calitatea sa de director al Institutului de Istorie al Academiei RPR de la București, a primit misiunea principală menținere a legăturilor cu conducerea Institutului de la Amsterdam, condus de A.J.C. Rüter.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Andrei Oțetea, manuscrise necunoscute, Karl Marx, Institutul Internațional de Istorie Socială din Amsterdam, Marx despre români.

The ideological detente recorded in the first half of the '60s created new directions and discursive premises in the Romanian historiography. The regime's intentions of reprising the national message from the past inevitably exposed academic institutions and specialists. The decline of historiographic Stalinism determined a certain freedom, enabling historians to approach the phenomena of the past from a broader perspective, in a way that aimed at restoring the tradition, which was brutally annihilated after the establishment of communism in Romania. Universal history topics, completely hidden for a decade, were included in the research horizons again. To the same extent, projects such as *Tratatul de Istoria României* claimed sources and instruments forbidden during the years dominated by the group of historians who followed Mihail Roller.

The objectives of the Second Congress of the Romanian Workers Party (RWP) - organized in late 1955 - followed a complex process of stopping the influence of the Stalinist historians on the Romanian historical writing. Instead, specialists of the Romanian historiography

acknowledged before the establishment of communism were in the limelight again. Institutions such as the Party History Institute and the History Institute of the Romanian People's Republic Academy have been charged with implementing the *Tratatul de Istoria României* on an increasingly relaxed ideological background.

After a period of dramatic narrowing of history studies in a sense provided by national landmarks, in the early 1960s, historians are allowed gradual freedom to return to Western models. As Bogdan Cristian Iacob argues, the possibility of recognition and reward in the historiographical "front" was a relevant factor of mobilization in historiographical production. Another element was the training internships both in the USSR and especially in the West<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the sources related to the activity of renowned historians such as Andrei Oțetea, we support the idea that the much wider access of specialists outside the borders - gained from the first years of the communist "that" - was based on at least three directions. Namely, the debates within certain scientific events whose objectives intersected controversial issues from the Romanians' past; the research of foreign archives and the attaining of contacts with academic institutions and foreign specialists.

The stakes of increasing interest in visiting Western research centres and especially the study of archival sources regarding the past of the Romanian space have received a deep political meaning, as well as a scientific one. During this phase, an attempt was made to resume the study of Universal History, and the topic of economic history benefitted from approaches proving noteworthy professionalism.

The re-emergence of frictions related to the issue of the legitimacy of Romanian territorial borders - caused by a change for the worse in the Romanian-Soviet relations - determined the active presence of the Romanian specialists during the international history congresses held in the years of separation from Moscow. Whereas - at the International Congress organized in Vienna (1955) - the Romanian historiography was poorly represented (five historians), at the one held in Stockholm (1966), the number of historians was higher (17 historians)<sup>2</sup>.

In the present study, we are interested in the evolution of a political project coordinated by the Romanian leadership in Bucharest, which involved the instrumentalization of controversial episodes from

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<sup>1</sup> Bogdan Cristian Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation: History - Production under Communism in Romania (1955-1966)*, Ph.D. Dissertation in History, Budapest, 2011, pp. 202-203.

<sup>2</sup> Pavel Țugui, *Istoria și literatura în vremea lui Gheorghiu-Dej*, București, Editura Ion Cristoiu, 1998, p. 173.

the national past, the overlapping the phase when the claims of Russian Empire became increasingly important in the direction of the Romanian Principalities, namely the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pretext was given by the discovery of several manuscripts that belonged to Karl Marx, depicting an image eminently contrary to official history. However, the central message was the resurrection of some Romanian-Soviet territorial disputes, namely, the question of Bessarabia.

Until now, the volume titled *K. Marx Însemnări despre români (manuscrise inedite)* – published at the end of 1964 – was included in the register of political manifestation forms, in the context of the “declaration of independence” from the spring of the same year, which sealed the diverging Romanian-Soviet relations. The historiographical contributions have been useful to us to establish clearly the context in which the publication plan was started, as well as the implications of management structures such as Propaganda Directorates within the RWP.

Bogdan Iacob identifies several levels that describe the publication of the manuscript in a Romanian edition. First of all, he mentions the so-called public dimension updating the Russophobia of the Romanians, then a form of political leadership expression that used sources with ideological “weight” to justify their orientation of national origin. From a historiographical standpoint, the action must have been understood as the official end of the Soviet influence on historical writing<sup>3</sup>.

### **Why Andrei Oțetea?**

This approach is based mainly on the involvement of the historian Andrei Oțetea in the project of editing the manuscripts. The analysis is relevant because it reveals the “backstage” of the plan and changes the viewpoint to an episode that fuelled the dissensions against the Soviets. We also try to focus on the evolution of the relations between Oțetea and the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, which managed the “Marx-Engels” Archives, where the manuscripts had been discovered. More precisely, we set out to follow the pace of the negotiations between the Romanian and the Dutch side, the emerging humps on the way, and the forms of reaction to the interest produced by the publication of the book<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Bogdan Cristian Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, pp. 246-247.

<sup>4</sup> Following the research carried out on the correspondence between Andrei Oțetea and A.J.C. Rüter, director of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, we found out that the “informative notes” written by the Romanian historian correspond to the details within the letters sent from the Netherlands.

The reasons provided by Pavel Țugui – the head of the Science and Culture Section of the RWP, at the request of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej – referred to the fact that Andrei Oțetea was the director of the History Institute of the RPR Academy in Bucharest, that he was one of the main specialists involved in the elaboration of *Tratatul de Istoria României*. His was mainly interested in the Modern History of Romanians and in Universal History, synchronized with the contents of the document signed by Karl Marx<sup>5</sup>.

In December 1959, the issue was presented to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej by Miron Constantinescu, Paul Niculescu-Mizil, and Pavel Țugui. As such, it was decided that Andrei Oțetea would be sent to Amsterdam to start the negotiations on exploiting the sources referring to Romanians' past<sup>6</sup>. The notification made to Gheorghiu-Dej regarding the existence of valuable documents in the Netherlands made him take a special interest in them for a possible publication, but he asked for caution at the same time. One of the essential conditions was the involvement of professional specialists without important political functions, but with scientific prestige<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, the manuscript editing project would be carried out with caution, because no Romanian political leader would participate directly<sup>8</sup>.

Pavel Țugui's notes suggest that – following his discussions with Andrei Oțetea, after his return from Amsterdam – he found out about a previous attempt by Polish historian Stanislaw Schwann, who had discovered the documents in 1957, to inform the Romanian historians about their existence. Probably, Oțetea had obtained such information only following the negotiations with the Institute of Amsterdam. According to him, there was no reaction from the RPR Academy, where Mihail Roller was still very influential<sup>9</sup>. The Romanian-Polish historiographical relations had begun to develop only in the late 1950s, based on the cultural agreement similar to the one established with other popular democracies. Plans were made for a joint project titled *Lucrări comune privind editarea tratatelor polono-române din Evul Mediu până azi*<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Pavel Țugui, *Istoria și limba română în vremea lui Gheorghiu-Dej...*, p. 179.

<sup>6</sup> Bogdan Cristian Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, p. 248.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Constantin Mățu, *Însemnările lui Karl Marx despre români și semnificația lor în contextul politic al anilor '60*, in "Analele Științifice ale Universității «Al. I. Cuza» din Iași". *Istorie*, tome L, 2004, p. 258.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1997, p. 256.

<sup>9</sup> Pavel Țugui, *Istoria și limba română în vremea lui Gheorghiu-Dej...*, p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> Arhiva Institutului de Istorie "Nicolae Iorga". *Rapoarte de activitate-Secția de Istorie modernă și contemporană*, 1959, f. 107.

In consequence, the first reaction after Schwann's notification came from the management of the Party's History Institute in the spring of 1958. Director Ion Popescu-Puțuri decided to ask the Dutch to provide the microfilmed manuscripts, but he received a clear refusal from the director of the Institute in Amsterdam, A.J. C. Rüter. The pretext of the Dutch intellectual was justified by the existence of another project where the documents were to be published under the aegis of the institution. It seems that – following Schwann's findings regarding the origins of Marx's writings, as mere reading notes from the work of French historian Élias Regnault<sup>11</sup> – Rüter lost interest in revealing them to the public. The efforts of the Polish historian to exploit the sources about the Romanians shifted toward the political leadership in Bucharest, to obtain the necessary funds for potential researches in the Netherlands. In Rüter's correspondence with Schwann, the Dutch intellectual was assured that Romanian communists were totally open to a future publication of the manuscripts by the institute. The content was considered of the highest interest in Romania. On the other hand, the Dutch's reply was poignant. Schwann was advised to abandon any thoughts of exploiting the manuscripts about Romanians and to use only those with strict reference to Poland<sup>12</sup>.

From Schwann's correspondence with Rüter, Wim P. van Meurs outlines in his researches several premises that were the basis for a direct dialogue between the Romanian political leadership and that of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Although he failed to obtain Marx's text, Schwann came to a consensus with the political leaders of the Romanian Propaganda Directorate, whereby Oțetea was to assume the role of a specialist interested in researching the manuscripts under the management of the Dutch institute. The new strategy thus proved the decisive role of the Polish historian in informing the Romanian leaders<sup>13</sup>.

At the session of April 1960, attended by Gheorghe Vasilichi, Pavel Țugui, Andrei Oțetea, Stanislav Schwann, and Nicolae Goldberger, it was established for the volume to be published as soon as possible. However, the project was dependent on the total opening of the Dutch institution and it would be carried out through extensive collaboration

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<sup>11</sup> It was about the work of Élias Regnault, titled *Histoire politique et sociale des Principautés Danubiennes*, Paris, Paulin et le Chevalier Éditeurs, 1855.

<sup>12</sup> Wim P. van Meurs, *The Bessarabian Question in Communist Historiography: Nationalist and Communist Politics and History-Writing*, East European Monographs, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 240.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 240-241.

with the Party History Institute<sup>14</sup>. However, the prudence of the Romanian communists persisted, as long as the Polish historian received the main mission of improving the relations with the Dutch institution. He was charged with sending a letter to the Institute asking for the consent to publish the discovered texts. Oțetea would only have a secondary role. The Romanian historian would deal with the exchange of photocopies: "should the Institute in Amsterdam request a collaboration with Prof. Schwann to get the material ready for editing, Comrade Acad. Oțetea would accept and would grant at the same time Prof. Schwann the copyrights"<sup>15</sup>.

### **A syncopated Romanian-Dutch collaboration**

In the context of the volume's publication, Andrei Oțetea prepared an informative note, titled *The History of "Notes about Romanians"*, describing the whole project carried out for four years, between 1960 and 1964, including its regression phases. The documents were discovered by Schwann while studying the "Marx-Engels" Archives at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Initially, his plans were to track down sources regarding Marx's relations with Poland, but upon finding the manuscripts about the Romanian Principalities, he began the process of decryption. Between February and March 1960, Oțetea received approval from the Propaganda Department of RWP to travel to Amsterdam and to meet Schwann. However, the main purpose was to conclude an agreement with the director of the Institute, Professor A.J.C. Rüter. The first impression after meeting the Institute's head was not among the most promising, with Oțetea stating that Rüter's attitude was full of suspicion concerning the possibility of exploiting the documents. An authorization to view the manuscripts was obtained, but the Romanians did not benefit from copies thereof. Finally, the Romanian historian mentioned a "tacit assent of the staff" suggesting the possibility of revising the text transcribed by Schwann<sup>16</sup>.

The mission of the Polish Marxist historian to the Institute of Amsterdam is difficult to establish. In the activity report of the Dutch institution for 1959, Stanislav Schwann appeared as a researcher in the archive documents belonging to Marx for the period when the German philosopher was a correspondent for the "Neue Oder-Zeitung" journal in London (1855)<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> ANIC, fund Central Committee of the RCP, *Propagandă și Agitație* section, file 2/1960, f. 117.

<sup>15</sup> BJ Astra (hereafter: BJ Astra), "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Report (April 9, 1960).

<sup>16</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Informative note.

<sup>17</sup> Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis. Jaarverslag 1959. <https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/annualreport1959.pdf> accessed on December 15, 2019.

Shortly after, Rüter totally changed his attitude towards the Romanian historian. At the last meeting following his return to Romania, on March 14, 1960, he launched a personal proposal – not on behalf of the institution – that implied the possibility of providing photocopies of Marx’s texts. Nonetheless, an exchange of documents was necessary. The Romanian side had to provide photocopies of letters belonging to well-known personalities who were part of the international communist movement, maybe even the correspondence between the Romanian and foreign socialists. The publication of the manuscripts or their conveyance to other socialist states was forbidden; the interdiction referred mainly to the USSR given that in that period, the Institute was in negotiations with other institutions in Moscow for an exchange of photocopies<sup>18</sup>.

Should the discussions evolve in a convenient direction, a critical edition of the manuscript was planned, to which would be added the articles published in *New York Daily Tribune* about the Romanians, as well as letters from Marx and Engels on the same issue. Oțetea claimed that Rüter was the first person who insisted that the Romanian historian publish the volume as the main person in charge to the detriment of the Polish historian. The main justification was that the members of the Institute could not have finalised such a volume, since their Romanian language skills were not sufficient to write the introduction and critical notes. The leaders of the Institute in Amsterdam proposed for the volume to be published in the collections coordinated by the specialists of the institution, the collation of the original manuscripts to be carried out by members of the Amsterdam establishment; the editor Andrei Oțetea would benefit from all possible support during the research. However, the main condition was for the edition to be “strictly scientific”. It was not desirable for the project to dive into in the sphere of polemics and “political arguments”. The decision-making committee comprised only of specialists and members with no “scientific socialism” training, but “sensitive to the general atmosphere”. And any attempt to use the introduction and notes as a vehicle for transmitting messages “incompatible with their beliefs” entailed an immediate cease of the collaboration<sup>19</sup>.

The Dutch side was also anxious to know the number of copies that Romania could have acquired, to establish the circulation. A usual circulation would comprise 1,000 copies. Negotiations would not be carried out only in Oțetea’s presence. Rüter demanded to know exactly who would guarantee that the photocopies would not be published or

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<sup>18</sup> BJ Astra, “Andrei Oțetea” Collection. Informative note.

<sup>19</sup> BJ Astra, “Andrei Oțetea” Collection. Mission to the Netherlands and Italy.

transmitted to other countries, too. Following these conditions imposed by the Dutch, the problem was presented to the Propaganda Department of the RWP, which expressed its full consent, especially concerning the "exclusive rights of the Amsterdam Institute" on the text<sup>20</sup>.

The three weeks spent by Oțetea in Amsterdam were dedicated to the collation of the three texts discovered by Schwann, which he had transcribed incompletely and with numerous errors. The manuscripts contained texts that were difficult to decipher, not only because of the "very small and clumped" writing. The notes written by Marx were a mixture of words from different languages such as German, English, and French. For these reasons, Oțetea argued that "a good editor of Marx must master the three languages". The group of Romanian historians did not meet these conditions, so dictionaries were used to understand the meaning of certain words and the connotation of certain sentences<sup>21</sup>. In addition, Schwann had identified other texts, too. One was titled *Russia, Moldavia and Wallachia*. Another one was an analysis of the *Organic Regulation* and the draft of a letter from Friedrich Engels to Ion Nădejde<sup>22</sup>.

One month after the negotiations between the Institute of History in Bucharest and the Presidium of the RPR Academy were completed, Oțetea sent 10 photocopies of letters written by Engels Lenin and Kautsky<sup>23</sup>. In exchange, Rüter was supposed to send full-sized photocopies of Marx's texts. At that time, the Dutch director argued that the management of his institution had nothing with Schwann's name being featured alongside Oțetea's. The next step consisted in the collation of the texts. The activity was carried out within the Institute by Cornelia Bodea and Gheorghe Zane. Throughout the publication process, Andrei Oțetea and A.J.C. Rüter maintained the correspondence, the Romanian historian were even invited in December 1960 to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Amsterdam Institute<sup>24</sup>. The visit to the Netherlands would no longer occur. Gradually, the Dutch's insistence on researching the documents became intense again. Oțetea claimed that "overnight" his Western collaborators acquired a great deal of knowledge in deciphering Marx's writings<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea (September 6, 1960).

<sup>24</sup> The invitation was addressed by the director Rüter. In this respect, we also identified the letter by which Oțetea expressed his refusal to participate. Instead, he remembers the impatience that the Romanian side manifested in sending the manuscripts.

<sup>25</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea (October 19, 1961).

About the research stage, Keith Hitchins recalls an episode from 1962, when Oțetea showed him the typed pages of manuscripts. For the English pages, the American historian offered him – at that time – a series of suggestions necessary to transliterate and interpret certain passages<sup>26</sup>. The first public presentation of some sections of the manuscript was made by Oțetea, on June 8, 1961, at the Romanian History Museum, during a session of the Society of Historical and Philological Sciences<sup>27</sup>. The edition containing the manuscript was prepared only for the internal circuit of RWP, because the relevance of the information did not benefit from a favourable political situation, too. At that point, the Romanian political leadership was still on a pro-Soviet line, and potential disputes focusing on historical territorial disputes could have destabilized the country's foreign position<sup>28</sup>. However, Oțetea had had previous presentations at the Institute of History in Bucharest. An example is the paper presented in the context of the centenary marking the establishment of the first diplomatic representation of the United Principalities. The topic drew attention, discretely, to issues related to the support of the Romanian national cause by foreign intellectuals. Oțetea invoked both Regnault and Marx through his texts within the *New York Daily Tribune*, throughout the years preceding the Union of the Principalities<sup>29</sup>.

Oțetea referred expressly to Marx's interest in Regnault's book on the Romanian Principalities. It was necessary to explain clearly the reasons leading the French historian to write a book about the contemporary events. The available sources were also relevant, especially those from Romanian intellectuals and politicians such as Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Nicolae Bălcescu, and Ion Ghica, the political essence of the manuscript was the vision proposed by Regnault, who encouraged the principle of nationality in the area of south-eastern Europe, to refrain the Tsarist imperialism. Another stake was the delimitation of Marx's interest, which required a clarification of the interpretation from the angle of historical materialism. The conclusions drawn by Marx after reading from Regnault were relevant for the Romanian historian. One of the examples was the characterisation of the Organic Regulation, seen as a "clique code". Although Kisseleff has promulgated it, it represented the expression of a diktat of the Romanian boyars<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Keith Hitchins, *Andrei Oțetea*, in "Revista istorică", tome V, no. 7-8, July-August 1994, p. 672.

<sup>27</sup> Bogdan Cristian Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, p. 255.

<sup>28</sup> Florin Abraham, *Gheorghiu-Dej and Romania's Eastern Neighborhood*, in "Eurolimes", 11/2011, pp. 11-30.

<sup>29</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. France and Romania (September 7, 1960).

<sup>30</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. K. Marx and Fr. Engels about Romanians.

Regarding the "Marx-Engels" Archive of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, we have identified in Andrei Oțetea's archives some notes related to the past of the institution. To prevent confiscation by the new national socialist leadership, in 1934, the archive was evacuated from Germany to Copenhagen, where it remained until 1937, when it was relocated to Amsterdam, immediately after the establishment of the International Institute of Social History, specially created, it seems, for organising this archive. The main scientific concerns included the publication of this archive. In the 1960s, only 30% of the documents remained unpublished, including the manuscripts on Romanians<sup>31</sup>.

The institute founded in 1935 contained many of the private archives of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as well as numerous documents relating to the activities of the Second Communist International. Between 1935 and 1940, the institution was interested in saving documents from all over Europe, especially due to the ascension of political dictatorships. The most important archive obtained was the one that included the manuscripts of Marx and Engels. The activity was discontinued by the Nazi occupation in the summer of 1940<sup>32</sup>, and most of the documents were sent to Germany. These were only recovered in 1944, with significant support from the Allied armies, but those remained in the Soviet sphere of influence were returned after much effort or only partially recovered<sup>33</sup>.

The material existence of the Amsterdam Institute proved to be problematic in the first post-war decade, because the resources were usually internal (from the University of Amsterdam and local authorities). The involvement of the Ford Foundation represented an exception<sup>34</sup>. The Romanian efforts to intensify the cultural exchanges with the Polish People's Republic also involved the interest in getting an insight into the relations of this socialist state with the Western countries.

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<sup>31</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Heinz Roth, *The International Institute of Social History as a pawn of Nazi Social Research. New documents on the history of the IISH during German occupation rule from 1940 to 1944*, in "International Review of Social History", XXXIV (1989), Supplement pp. 1-24.

<sup>33</sup> <https://socialhistory.org/en/about/history-iish>, accessed on December 15, 2019.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*. In this regard, the Ford Foundation has been particularly involved in supporting humanist intellectuals in Poland, following the political tensions that broke out in Warsaw in 1956. The presence of the American capital facilitated research in the field of social sciences and especially the direct contacts with Western institutions, which explains a much clearer connection of the Polish intellectual environment to scientific manifestations, compared to the other socialist states. See Igor Czernecki, *An intellectual offensive: The Ford Foundation and the destalinization of the Polish social sciences*, in "Cold War History", vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 289-310.

In 1958, about 3,000 Poles crossed the border, either for academic purposes or for exchange of experience. More than half opted for capitalist countries. For them, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundation Scholarships were the most advantageous way<sup>35</sup>.

Regarding the articles published by Marx and Engels in *New York Daily Tribune*, between 1852-1862, director Rüter agreed that Oțetea should get them in microfilms. However, later, W. Blumenberg – custodian of the *Marx-Engels* Archive and the one who had brought the archive to Germany after Hitler came to power – claimed that the microfilms had been sent to the United States for another order, which made research impossible<sup>36</sup>.

The first article published in *New York Daily Tribune* was dated in London (March 22, 1853) and it was published on April 7, 1853, titled *The Nationalities of Turkey*. Marx stopped in 1860 with texts referring to Romanians. Of the entire series of articles submitted, many were not published or were censored, especially given that Marx and Engels had launched a campaign against tsarist Pan-Slavism. The texts were apparently rejected due to the intervention of the imperial diplomatic envoys to the United States. However, the published articles have essentially contributed to the identification of unknown manuscripts that referred to the topic of Romanians mid-19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>37</sup>.

In the preface to the French version of the materials prepared for publication, Oțetea considered the manuscript titled B 85 to be the most important, because it contained excerpts from Élias Regnault's book, but the first 94 pages could not be identified. He claimed that these documents were written by Marx between the years 1855 and 1856, shortly after the work was published. The manuscript titled B 86 was dated February 1868, while the manuscript B 91 was dated July 1860. Manuscript B 63 was dated September 1853. Regnault had written a work dedicated strictly to contemporary events, in the context of the Crimean war, and he had drawn inspiration from Romanian authors such as Bălcescu, I. H. Rădulescu, I. Ghica, and Al. Papiu-Ilarian, referring to the Romanians in Transylvania. In the preface to the French version, Oțetea focuses more on Regnault's works than on the context of Marx's manuscripts or on their symbolic importance. Russian involvement is mentioned sporadically. Not even in the case of the Organic Regulation, the Russian contribution was not stated. Oțetea extracted from the

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<sup>35</sup> AMAE, Fund Polonia, 335, file 217/1958, f. 83.

<sup>36</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection, Mission to the Netherlands and Italy, April 2, 1960.

<sup>37</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection, Document about the articles and manuscripts of Karl Marx.

manuscripts elements that described the Ottoman and Austrian interests in the Romanian Principalities. The French text has 19 pages and it is signed by Oțetea and Schwann<sup>38</sup>.

Oțetea's presence at events with international historiographical importance in the first part of the 1960s in capitalist states confirmed his close relationship with the communist regime. The personal documents of the historian contain a file titled: *Marx et les Roumains*<sup>39</sup>. He supported the special interest of the other socialist states, as well as well-known Western Marxists, precisely to propose in an initial phase an edition "of international circulation in French". The volume would include an "already verified" the preface and Marx's text, with all its notes and its inconsistencies. To reinforce his proposal in those "informative notes", the historian also invoked Alexandru Graur, a true philologist in close relation with the party structure, who had already agreed with his plan and who even encouraged "a mass edition". In exchange, the second phase was dedicated to the publication of a Romanian edition<sup>40</sup>. The edited text was verified by Director Rüter, but at the insistence of the Dutch intellectual, Schwann's contribution was not highlighted. Instead, Oțetea admitted that this version of the text would be a disappointment for Schwann. However, observing the conditions imposed by Rüter was a priority<sup>41</sup>.

Subsequently, relations became more strained, because it was already mid-1962 and the Dutch Institute failed to provide an answer after receiving the documents prepared for exchange in Romania. On June 29, 1962, the institution's management argued that following the discussions, it was decided that the Institute could no longer ensure the publication of manuscripts. The reason invoked was the lack of expertise in document editing. It was the moment when Rüter informed Oțetea that he could not publish the manuscripts. However, there was no opposition to the possibility of publishing them in Romania. The decision came with a new set of conditions. First of all, the origin of the documents would be very clearly mentioned in the volume, as well as the fact that they were in the possession of the Institute in Amsterdam and that the publication was possible only with authorisation from its management. In the preface, Schwann's contribution would not be mentioned, but only that these manuscripts were known and mentioned in the inventory of Marx archives. Romanian historians had to modify the preface in such a way as to suggest that Schwann only informed the Romanian Academy about the

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<sup>38</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Marx. Notes about Romanians (preface in French).

<sup>39</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Karl Marx et les Roumains.

<sup>40</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Publication of Marx's texts on Romanians.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*.

existence of the documents. The merits of discovering the manuscripts could not belong to a historian from a communist state within the Soviet sphere of influence. It seems that the main pretext was related to the distrust of the Dutch Institute in the Marxist knowledge of the Polish historian, but also to his faulty transcription of the manuscripts. The Institute requested 40 volumes free of charge<sup>42</sup>. Regarding the answer from the Netherlands, Oțetea claimed that he was authorised to answer and that he accepted the conditions imposed by the former. Moreover, on the occasion of a January 1963 visit, the historian had already provided a text to Rüter to avoid any misunderstandings. At that time, the party leadership agreed to the version of an internal edition, but the request of 40 volumes would have cancelled this plan. Firstly, Oțetea's interest were to maintain good relations with the Dutch Institute and mostly to meet the conditions imposed by Rüter<sup>43</sup>. The expenses required to produce the microfilms and photocopies were incurred by the Romanian authorities, upon a request made by the historian for 1,600 florins (470 US dollars)<sup>44</sup>.

A relevant aspect is worth mentioning throughout all these events. Romanian-Dutch relations were rather poor, which made the collaboration process more difficult<sup>45</sup>. As such, the publication of Karl Marx's manuscripts on Romanians was not based on a Romanian-Dutch cultural agreement.

On December 27, 1962, the Polish historian congratulated Oțetea for the acceptance received from the Institute of Amsterdam regarding the editing of manuscripts. Schwann's message referred to the tense situation created within this institute, following the discovery of the manuscripts. Rüter's conditions were intended to cover the lack of information on the contents of the archives belonging to the institution he ran, "after years of inventorying and description". The Polish intellectual conveyed to Oțetea that he understood the Dutch's intentions to diminish his contributions regarding the discovery of the manuscripts. Thus, he asked the Romanian historian to identify a way "that would not touch Rüter's ambition, but at the same time would not completely annul his merits"<sup>46</sup>.

According to the letters received by Andrei Oțetea from A.J.C. Rüter, the relationship between the two evolved so much that invitations

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<sup>42</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea (June 29, 1962).

<sup>43</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection.

<sup>44</sup> AMAE, Fund Olanda, 305, file 217/1962, f. 5.

<sup>45</sup> AMAE, Fund Olanda, 281, file 20/1962, f. 86.

<sup>46</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by Stanislav Schwann to A. Oțetea (December 27, 1962).

were addressed to the Dutch director to spend his holidays in Romania. However, the moment did not materialise<sup>47</sup>. There were New Year wishes or repeated invitations for a possible return to Amsterdam, exchange of views on manuscripts, and other issues related to scientific interests<sup>48</sup>.

After Rüter's conditions were accepted by the Romanian side, following discussions at the level of the RPR Academy management<sup>49</sup>, Oțetea returned to Amsterdam in January 1963, to collate the original text. At the same time, he presented the revised preface to Rüter, and he gave his consent for the publication. He claimed that the French edition was ready for print, and that in a few days he would also present the Romanian one<sup>50</sup>.

The contacts between the two states in the plans to facilitate access to foreign archives about Romanians have benefitted from constantly improving relations at the level of diplomatic representation. However, the political leadership carefully analysed the improvement of Soviet relations with Dutch officials<sup>51</sup>. For the year 1964, visits of Romanian specialists were planned to carry out scientific activities, along with cultural exchanges, seen as first steps in better political relations<sup>52</sup>. Within the period dedicated to the negotiations between the two parties, the involvement of the communist regime proved to be as obvious as possible, as highlighted by the correspondence between Rüter and Oțetea. The Romanian academician mentioned Aurel Gheorghe, the diplomatic envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In many cases, he was interested in finding out mainly the divergent aspects mentioned in the preface of the volume, suggesting the interest of the political leadership regarding the controversies generated by Marx's writings<sup>53</sup>.

Until the volume's publication, in December 1964, we have not identified any other correspondence of Oțetea with the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Most likely, the publication project became an issue that depended solely on the attitude of the political

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<sup>47</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea (June 23, 1963).

<sup>48</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea (January 8, 1963).

<sup>49</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A. Oțetea to A.J.C. Rüter, (July 26, 1962).

<sup>50</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Informative note. The notes identified in Andrei Oțetea's personal documents correspond with those sent to the Romanian Academy leadership and subsequently to the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See AMAE, Fund Olanda, 305, file 217/1962, f. 7-9.

<sup>51</sup> AMAE, Fund Olanda, 316, file 20/1963, f. 46.

<sup>52</sup> AMAE, Fund Olanda, 335, file 217/1963, f. 35.

<sup>53</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea (April 19, 1962).

leadership in Romania. The strained relations, which culminated with the so-called “declaration of Independence” of April 1964, further complicated the approach coordinated by Andrei Oțetea, transforming it into a gesture that could have generated vehement reactions from the Soviets.

### Western echoes

The Romanians’ the intention to become estranged from Moscow became a topic of interest for both the capitalist world and in the dissensions between the Soviets and the Chinese. Leaders such as Mao Zedong invoked the territorial disputes of the Romanian or Polish past to justify and fuel the complicated political relations of the present. Undoubtedly, the question of Bessarabia played a special role in articulating the intervention of the Romanian communists. Moreover, Karl Marx’s manuscript became a basic landmark, especially for interpretations that suggested that Andrei Oțetea had been sent with a precise purpose to the archives of Amsterdam, namely, to dig up old writings on the problem of Bessarabia and to talk about the abduction of 1812<sup>54</sup>. The fact that the sources of 1915-1916 could be identified in the same archives, where the socialist Christian Racovski, one of the founders of the Communist Party in Romania, referred to the same accusations, could not benefit from a similar political importance. The publication of the manuscript did not outline a clear consequence in the relations with the Soviets, but what mattered was that a gesture with multiple political and historiographical valences was assumed<sup>55</sup>.

The tense climate generated an increased interest of party structures in the Romanian Academy. The intellectuals had to strengthen the courageous reaction of the leadership towards the Soviets. At the party conference organised at the end of the year, Oțetea gave a speech. The academician acknowledged the political support received for the work of *Karl Marx. Însemnări despre români*. The phases covered until the printing level were outlined, from the Polish assistance to the exclusive right of the Amsterdam Institute to publish the documents within the Marx-Engels archive: “by publishing this work, our Marxist thought was armed with a work of major importance”. The draft of the discourse also contains a cut-out fragment that was probably not included: “Marx’s notes on the Romanians are thus an illustration of the *declaration of independence* contained in the Statement of the Central Committee of the

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<sup>54</sup> Ghiță Ionescu, *Communist Rumania and Nonalignment (April 1964-March 1965)*, in “Slavic Review”, vol. 24, no. 2, (June, 1965), p. 253.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

RWP last April. Its emergence is a success of our Party, like all successes of the Institute of History"<sup>56</sup>.

During the editing of the manuscripts, Andrei Oțetea expressed the hope that the instrumentalization of Marx's thought – to issue autonomous claims in the Soviet sphere of influence – would improve the conditions for the activity of Romanian historians. This meant a greater freedom in the direction of access to sources and a relaxation of ideological intrusion. At the same time, Oțetea became the main voice of the Romanian historiography, which exploited the importance of analysing a problem such as Marx's interest, the political evolution of the Romanian Principalities. In April 1965, the historian arrived at the Dutch Institute to hand over to Rüter 40 volumes. The historian had requested since November 1964 to go directly to Amsterdam to deliver the volumes, according to the contract concluded with the International Institute of Social History, immediately after a visit to Paris<sup>57</sup>. On this occasion, he explained the reasons for giving up on a French version, which had been in the initial plans. The historian argued that Marx's manuscripts were, first and foremost, important for the analysis of capital events from the Romanians' past. He insisted on the risk of receiving political implications: "that is why we preferred to publish an edition in the Romanian language, limited to a restricted circle of intellectuals". Rüter had told him about the immediate reactions of the Western press, who assaulted him on interviews regarding the collaboration with the Romanian historians. The relatively easy access of Oțetea to the documents within the institute had to be as well justified, because it was "natural" to transcribe Marx's texts. The Romanian historian stated about Rüter that "he agreed to continue our relations on the same basis of strict objectivity and, if he could not receive the invitation of the Romanian Academy to spend the holiday with us, it is precisely not to say that he had favoured us and that we had paid him with a trip to Romania"<sup>58</sup>. The Dutch director died shortly after, in 1965, as shown by the Institute's response to the condolence message sent by Oțetea<sup>59</sup>.

The Western press paid special attention to the climate created around the publication of the *notes*. In February 1965, *Der Spiegel* published a book entitled *Marx Against Moscow*, where he summarised the information used by the German "journalist" in the case of the

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<sup>56</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. The RWP Conference of the Academy (December 2, 1964).

<sup>57</sup> AMAE, Fund Olanda, 362, file 217/1965, f. 2.

<sup>58</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Letter sent by A.J.C. Rüter to A. Oțetea.

<sup>59</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Address of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam sent to Andrei Oțetea (October 15, 1965).

annexation of Bessarabia to the territory of the Russian Empire in 1812. The instrumentalization of Marx's manuscripts was considered as a concealed form of claiming the historical right over the former provinces that had been part of the Greater Romania. Moreover, the sending of Ion Gheorghe Maurer to Moscow would not have been a coincidence, but it carried the message through which the "retreat" of Bessarabia was requested. On this political background, Oțetea carried out his research on manuscripts at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. The paper published in *Der Spiegel* described the activity of the Romanian historian who, for two weeks, in July 1964, "sank in a pile measuring a meter and a half of Marx's manuscript works and finally he found what he was looking for: secret manuscripts, where Marx combats the legitimacy of Russian claims on Bessarabia"<sup>60</sup>.

In the flurry produced by the publication of the volume, the enthusiastic reactions were not delayed. On January 1965, Andrei Oțetea wrote to Vasile Dinu, the head of the Science and Art Section of the RWP, about the visit of Gherman Pîntea to the Institute of History. He was one of the Bessarabian leaders during the interwar period. The former mayor of Kishinev and Odessa intended to donate the original documents regarding the events in which he was involved, from February 1917 until the act of unification on March 27, 1918. As an example, he held the document of Revolutionary Committee foundation which provided for the proclamation of the Moldavian Republic and elections in the country's Council<sup>61</sup>.

In August 1965, Francisc Păcuraru, director of the Press Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had a discussion with H. Kolb, editor of *The Telegraph* newspaper in the Hague and Jules Huf, correspondent in Vienna of a Dutch TV station. The curiosities of the two foreign press journalists have reached the destinies of former communist leaders like Teohari Georgescu, Ana Pauker, and Vasile Luca, but also the territorial issues related to Bessarabia. Inevitably, they brought to the heart of the conversation the publication of the Karl Marx's manuscripts, to show that the Romanian authorities were well aware of this situation, but were reluctant to express themselves politically. Păcuraru's reaction overturned the consequences of the documents edited by Oțetea. The public interest in Karl Marx's writings, as well as some moments of Romanians' history, were summarily invoked. For these reasons, the

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<sup>60</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Translation in Romanian language of an article published in *Der Spiegel* (issue 8, February 17, 1965).

<sup>61</sup> BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Immediate consequences of the publication of *Karl Marx. Notes about Romanians*.

volume would have run out "in one hour", as Huf claimed. In the entire picture, there was no intention to bring up the issue of Bessarabia<sup>62</sup>.

### **The Consequences of a Political Manifesto**

The manner in which the Romanians chose to invoke the past Russian-Romanian relations provoked outrage from the new Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, who challenged the authenticity of the ideas exposed in the manuscript. Undoubtedly, the opening of the discussions between the two delegations suggested the attention that the specialists in Moscow paid to the volume published under the auspices of the Romanian Academy, as long as there was talk about "the true Marx" and "Marx resulting from the volume". The Soviet position came rather on the basis of the interest expressed by the Western press, and less on a potential instrumentalization of the past by the Romanians, to issue any territorial claims<sup>63</sup>. Emil Bodnăraș, a Romanian communist leader close to the political circles in Moscow, confirmed the views circulating among Soviet teachers about a "nationalist current" among the political and intellectual elite in Bucharest, through territorial claims on Bessarabia<sup>64</sup>.

The main political issue behind the volume was to exploit any Russophobe position of Marx in such a way that Élias Regnault's original vision would become secondary. The intentions can be noticed in the volume's preface, but the only form of intervention proved to be the analysis of the sources about Romanians from a Marxist-Leninist angle. In addition, the difficulty of determining whether Marx supported the Romanian national cause was an obvious one. The mere assertion that the author of the manuscript emphasized anti-Russian tendencies regarding imperialist policy in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century could not indicate an approving position towards the formation of a Romanian national state<sup>65</sup>.

The manuscript came as an internal reaction to the Soviet discourse of the years that followed the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union organised in 1961, regarding the existence of tensions generated by territorial claims between the socialist states. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej accelerated rather defensive measures, amid the reopening

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<sup>62</sup> AMAE, Fund Olanda, 375, file 20/1965, f. 6-11.

<sup>63</sup> See Mioara Anton, Ioan Chiper, *Instaurarea regimului Ceaușescu: continuitate și ruptură în relațiile româno-sovietice*, Bucharest, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2003, pp. 128-163.

<sup>64</sup> Mihai Croitor, *România și conflictul sovieto-chinez (1956-1971)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2014, p. 325.

<sup>65</sup> Octavian Silvestru, *From Romantic Nationalism to National Communism. Marx, Anti-Russianism and the Romanian Cause in 1855 and 1964*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane « Gheorghe Șincai » al Academiei Române", XII/2009, p. 190.

of the Transylvanian issue, a fact also noticed by the delay in publishing the manuscripts. In early 1964, the volume was a form of immediate reaction to possible pressures coming from Budapest and encouraged by the Soviets. In contrast, Marx's notes outlined in November 1964 the offensive side, too, by which the rights of Romanians over Bessarabia were claimed. The use of sources discovered by the Polish historian Stanislaw Schwann as a political instrument proved to be dependent on the Soviet positions towards the dissident attitudes of the Romanian communists<sup>66</sup>. From a relatively similar perspective, Dennis Deletant insists especially on the internal impact caused by the volume on extracts from Marx's manuscript. The existence of a "fertile ground of anti-Russian feelings" could only encourage the popularity of the regime led by Gheorghiu-Dej. The controversial position on the Bessarabian question after the moment of 1812 was the providential element to formulate a discourse with a deep political subtraction in the volume's introduction<sup>67</sup>.

The long interval of about six-seven years, during which efforts were made to publish the documents discovered in Amsterdam, was explained by Andrei Oțetea through the involvement of some party members who prevented, apparently, the normal evolution of the editing project. Another explanation provided by Paul Niculescu-Mizil resided in the analysis of the foreign context of the first half of the 1960s, while internally the main factor that led to the increased interest in bringing to light the manuscript was the retreat of Soviet advisors and military troops from Romania<sup>68</sup>. The moment became a favourable one, as the Romanian side was able to use the authority of the "fathers of socialism" to invoke the Russian occupation of the Romanian territories.

In mid-1960s, a paper was published comprising unknown manuscripts and writings belonging to Karl Marx was published in the Romanian People's Republic. The contents of these documents referred to aspects of the national past of the Romanians. However, the reopening of the controversies in Romanian-Russian relations in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fuelled the historical discourse on dissensions with the Soviets.

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<sup>66</sup> Georges Haupt, *La genèse du conflit soviéto-roumain*, in "Revue française de science politique", 18<sup>e</sup> année, no. 4, 1968, pp. 669-684; Irina Gridan, *Bucarest-Moscou: le ferment nationaliste des dissensions bilatérales (1964)*, in "Relations internationales", 4/2011 (no. 148), pp. 103, 108. Idem, *Du communisme national au national-communisme. Réactions à la soviétisation dans la Roumanie des années 1960*, in "Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire 1/2011 (no. 109), p. 122.

<sup>67</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Ceașescu și Securitatea. Constrângere și disidență în România anilor 1965-1989*, Bucharest, Editura Humanitas, 1998, pp. 157-158.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită*, p. 268.

The manuscripts were discovered at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam by the Polish historian Stanislav Schwann.

The study aims to establish the evolution of Romanian-Dutch treaties, to exploit the manuscripts, as well as the involvement of the historiographical circles. Although the question was treated as a strictly political one, the project experienced several phases influenced in particular by the changes of attitude from the Dutch Institute. Thus, an important objective of the study is to highlight the reactions produced by the Romanians' intention to bring to light some important data attributed to Karl Marx, the sources of the most important notes were reprised by the German intellectual from a book written by the French historian Élias Regnault in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The main Romanian historian involved in the plan for editing Karl Marx' writings was Andrei Oțetea. As the Director of the Institute of History of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, he received the main mission of maintaining the correspondence with the Institute of Amsterdam, led by A.J.C. Rüter.



# A Historian, the Securitate and the “Holy Party”. Reading the Secret Police Files of Ioan Dimitrie Suciu (1949-1982)

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**Abstract:** *A Historian, the Securitate and the “Holy Party”. Reading the Secret Police Files of Ioan Dimitrie Suciu (1949-1982).* The following article describes the life times and events that historian Ioan Dimitrie Suciu has experienced in Romania after 1948, under communist rule. By studying his personal Secret Police Files drawn up by the Securitate officers over a period of more than 30 years, I propose an account of his life story focused primarily upon his relationship with the communist regime. As an anti-Fascist former student of Nicolae Iorga, until 1947 I.D. Suciu has managed to become a self-made man in the capital city of interwar Romania. In 1949, he has got into a first conflict with communist authorities when he tried to flee the country. After spending over 3 years in jail, he was released in 1952, only to be soon again arrested and incarcerated for 6 years, for committing the crime of “conspiracy against the social order”. Between 1964 and 1975 I.D. Suciu has worked as a researcher at “Nicolae Iorga” History Institute in Bucharest, before being sent to jail for a third and last time (1975-1977). Never becoming a political dissident, during his last years of life, he experienced a growing discontent towards the regime and expressed abundant critiques against the Communist Party and its leaders.

**Keywords:** Romanian Communist Party, Securitate, Ioan D. Suciu, condemnation.

**Abstract:** *Un istoric, Securitatea și “Sfântul partid”. Citirea dosarelor secrete ale poliției lui Ioan Dimitrie Suciu (1949-1982).* Articolul de față descrie viața, vremurile și evenimentele pe care istoricul Ioan Dimitrie Suciu le-a trăit în România după 1948, în timpul regimului comunist. Studiind dosarele întocmite de ofițerii Securității pe numele său pe parcursul a peste 30 de ani, propun o relatare a poveștii de viață a istoricului axată în primul rând pe relația sa cu regimul comunist. Ca fost student al lui Nicolae Iorga, până în 1947 I.D. Suciu a manifestat o atitudine antifascistă și a reușit să se realizeze profesional în capitala României interbelice. În 1949 a intrat într-un prim conflict cu autoritățile

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comuniste când a încercat să fugă din țară. După ce a petrecut peste 3 ani în închisoare, a fost eliberat în 1952, pentru ca în 1958 să fie din nou arestat și încarcerat timp de 6 ani pentru comiterea infracțiunii de “conspirație împotriva ordinii sociale”. Între 1964 și 1975 I.D. Suciu a lucrat ca cercetător la Institutul de Istorie “Nicolae Iorga” din București, înainte de a fi trimis la închisoare pentru a treia și ultima oară (1975-1977). Deși nu a devenit disident politic niciodată, în ultimii săi ani de viață a manifestat o nemulțumire crescândă față de regim și a exprimat numeroase critici la adresa Partidului Comunist și a conducătorilor acestuia.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Partidul Comunist Român, Securitate, Ioan D. Suciu, închisoare.

The future historian I.D. Suciu was born in the summer of 1917 in Lugoj<sup>1</sup>, Austria-Hungary, in the heat of World War I. Unfortunately, little information is available about his early life. What we know for sure is that his mother Ofelia died in 1921 when I.D. Suciu was only 4 years old, and in 1928, when he was 11 and had already been admitted to the ‘Constantin Diaconovici Loga’ high school in Timișoara<sup>2</sup>, his father, who had served as a teacher for 36 years, also died<sup>3</sup>. In 1936, thanks to the support he received from his relatives in Bucharest, mainly uncles and aunts, Suciu graduated the ‘Gheorghe Lazăr’ high school in the capital city of inter-war Romania, and in 1937 he became a student of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Bucharest<sup>4</sup>.

His first writings date from these years: as a young student in Bucharest, he industriously wrote historical articles and studies concerning the past of his native province, Banat, which he has managed to publish in newspapers, journals and magazines both in Bucharest and in the province, such as ‘Youth’, ‘Timișoara’, ‘The West’, ‘The Society of Tomorrow’ or ‘Luceafărul’<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ioan Dimitrie Suciu”, in *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, (edited by Ștefan Ștefănescu), București, Ed. Științifică și enciclopedică, 1978, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Lăzărescu, Gheorghe Luchescu, Vasile Muntean, *Spiritualitate lugojeană*, Timișoara, Ed. Mitropoliei Banatului, 1993, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> The National Archives of Romania – Timiș County Service (Arhivele Naționale ale României – Serviciul Județean Timiș – ANR-SJTM), Fund *I.D. Suciu Family*, File No. 11, f. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Silviu Mureșan, “Istorie și politică la Ioan Dimitrie Suciu în perioada studenției (1937-1941)”, in *Restituiri Bănățene*, vol. II, Timișoara, Ed. Eurostampa, 2014, pp. 410-411.

<sup>5</sup> The Archive of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității - ACNSAS), Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, ff. 90-91.

Notably, during his first year of college, I.D. Suciu translated into Romanian and published a unique poem written in the 16th century by the Wallachian voivod Petru Cercel, which attracted the attention of professor Nicolae Iorga who appreciated his initiative and encouraged him to continue his research in the field of history of Banat<sup>6</sup>, because the province united with Romania in 1918-1919 has not benefited, during the entire interwar period, neither of a university of a humanist profile, nor of a research institution where the history of Banat could have been properly studied.

I.D. Suciu perceived this shortcoming as a professional opportunity which he understood to take advantage of since his earliest youth: in 1939 he published a study on Emilia Lungu-Puhallo, the first Romanian woman from Banat who wrote a novel, and in the summer of 1940, Astra Publishing House printed the synthesis "The Literature in Banat from the Beginning to the Union (1582-1918)"<sup>7</sup>, a writing into which, for the first time in Romanian literary history, a researcher presented "the contribution brought by this province to the development of Romanian literature and culture"<sup>8</sup>. The work was appreciated by the academic community, benefiting from some favorable reviews, including in the prestigious "Journal of Royal Foundations". Moreover, in the summer of 1940, the young Suciu wrote a series of political articles, where he vehemently condemned the territorial cessions that Romania accepted in favor of Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union, and in March 1941, after the Iron Guard had been forced out of Government, he wrote the first protest article against the murder of professor Nicolae Iorga.

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<sup>6</sup> About this episode I.D. Suciu will later recall: "At a meeting of the Universal History seminar at the beginning of the year, N. Iorga gave a lecture about Henry III and his relations with Petru Voivod Cercel. At that time, I had published in Romanian the lyrics of Petru Voivod Cercel. Speaking of the Wallachian prince's poetic work, he says that only now, a year ago a young Suciu had translated it from Italian. Involuntarily the eyes of colleagues turned to me. The professor, who noticed their movement, asks me if I am the one. From that moment started the great admiration which I will have for Iorga for all of my life. Not the fact of quoting a work of mine, but what surprised me was his exceptional bibliographic information that he had in his memory. A professor of his age, being up to date even with the smallest studies that are done in connection with his lectures. From now on I was always present at the seminar meetings, because I knew that in the two hours, I would earn more than if I would read dozens of books". v. I.D. Suciu, "Amintirile unui student", în *Tineretea*, seria a II-a, nr. 1 (1940), *apud* Silviu Mureșan, *op. cit.*, pp. 415-416.

<sup>7</sup> Ioan Dimitrie Suciu, "Literatura bănățeană de la început pînă la Unire (1582-1918)", Timișoara, Editura Regionalei Bănățene "Astra", 1940, 399 pp.

<sup>8</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, f. 83.

In June 1941 I.D. Suciu has passed his bachelor's degree exam at the University of Bucharest with the dissertation "The Military Role of the Transylvanian Romanians in the Hungarian State until the Battle of Mohács"<sup>9</sup>, for which he received the *magna cum laude* honor. He was admitted to the doctoral programme in the same autumn, and in 1942 he became the assistant of professor Constantin C. Giurescu at the Department of Romanian History<sup>10</sup>. As he wrote in 1975,

"From 1942 I started working on the vast monograph that served as a doctoral thesis in letters and philosophy: Nicolae Tincu Velia (1816-1867), His Life and Works. Tincu Velia was a professor in Vîrşeţ and a participant in the revolution of 1848. He published patriotic odes, elegies, and poems before the revolution of 1848-1849 and were among the first translators in Romanian of the German poet Fr. Schiller. However, handcuffed by the Latinist spelling and lacking in vocabulary refinement, his work remains only of documentary value"<sup>11</sup>.

He successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation in 1943 in front of a commission made up of professors Gheorghe I. Brătianu, C.C. Giurescu, Victor Papacostea and I.D. Ştefănescu<sup>12</sup>. Immediately after the end of World War II, in 1945, he managed to print it, and the work enjoyed a largely favorable reception<sup>13</sup>. In addition, in 1943, starting with January 1, I.D. Suciu got hired at the Institute of National History in Bucharest where he initially obtained a research assistant position, but by December 1, he had become chief of works<sup>14</sup> – equivalent to that of a lecturer. At the same time, starting on March 6, 1943, he also gained the position of Senior

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<sup>9</sup> Silviu Mureşan, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>10</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, ff. 55.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 85-86.

<sup>12</sup> Ioan Dimitrie Suciu, *Nicolae Tincu Velia (1816-1867). Viaţa şi opera lui*, Bucureşti, Institutul de Istorie Naţională din Bucureşti, 1945, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Although he had some favorable reviews in historical journals, historian Dan Berindei characterized I.D. Suciu in 1965 in the following words: "In the past he was not one of the brightest historians – even in a communication in 1944-45 he became confused and interrupted his conference, going back to his chair, the only known case – also his doctoral thesis – Nicolae Tincu Vela although 'thick', it produced ironic comments given the reduced significance of the subject matter": ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 135.

<sup>14</sup> ANR-SJTM, Fund I.D. Suciu Family, File No. 34, f. 1.

Inspector General<sup>15</sup> within the General Directorate of Theatres, Operations and Performances under the subordination of the Ministry of National Culture and Cults, where the general director was the well-known novelist Liviu Rebreanu.

The timeframe during which he completed his studies and began to assert himself as a researcher had coincided, in Romanian history, with the succession of the first three of the four dictatorships under which I.D. Suciuc had lived: Carlist, Legionary and Military. He was not an active member of any political party until August 23, 1944, but both through his writings and the memoirs he submitted to the authorities, he constantly displayed an anti-Fascist attitude, managing even to enter into open conflict with the legionaries from Bucharest on a few occasions.

In 1940, I.D. Suciuc set up and ran for a short time a magazine named "Flamura", which he himself has characterized as

"the first magazine with a Transylvanian irredentist character after the Vienna dictatorship, which benefitted from the collaboration of Iuliu Maniu, prof. Victor. Papacostea, Sever Bocu, Prof. Dan Simonescu, Ion Clopoșel, Franz Theodor Csokor, I. Copilu-Cheatră, I. Șugariu, Coriolan Gheție, etc., were also quoted in the History of Romanians by C.C. Giurescu, vol. III, part I, p 433"<sup>16</sup>.

As most Romanian historians had done those years, Suciuc's scientific research activity was duplicated by one of a militant or rather political nature: he will continue to campaign for the achievement of certain goals and to publicly support various social and cultural causes both after the collapse of the legionary regime in January 1941, and especially after August 23, 1944, among the most notable of such causes being the reformation of Romanian higher education system<sup>17</sup>, the transformation of the Huniade Castle in Timișoara into a Cultural Palace, or the establishment of a much-needed West University in the capital of Banat region<sup>18</sup>.

Given his family background - nephew of deputy Sever Bocu, a former minister in the Government of Iuliu Maniu - I.D. Suciuc naturally integrated himself into the national-peasant political groups in Bucharest. However, by studying the documents produced by various intelligence services between 1944-1948, one can clearly find numerous issues which appear to be unclear, many allegations, unverified speculations, incomplete data, and dubious assessments, frequently false or simply

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, File No. 12, f. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, File No. 34, f. 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, File No. 19, f. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, File No. 68, ff. 2-6.

contradictory. They tend to raise more questions than they clarify: for example, during the Antonescu regime, I.D. Suciu is described as simultaneously a close collaborator of Mihai Antonescu, the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, of the “notorious legionary” Balotă Anton, but also of Sever Bocu and Iuliu Maniu. After August 23, 1944, Suciu appears to be either as a member of the National Peasant or of the National Liberal Party<sup>19</sup>, or even of the Social Democratic Party. The most spectacular role he seemed to have played, as some rumours in the world of “journalists and actors”<sup>20</sup> tended to suggest, was in the first phase of the Antonescu dictatorship, when the historian had been commissioned by the Special Service of Information (or even by Mihai Antonescu himself, it is not clear) to collect and provide the Government with information from among the leadership of the National Peasant Party, receiving instead money and support to obtain various professional positions<sup>21</sup>. However, in the current state of research, such a hypothesis, however interesting, tempting, or plausible it may be, cannot be supported with certainty.

It is clear, however, that after August 23, 1944, in the new political context, I.D. Suciu – who, according to the opinions of several witnesses, was at that time a young man “very ambitious and eager to «become someone»”<sup>22</sup> – sought to orient towards a left-wing political party, but it is not clear why he chose the Social Democratic Party instead of the much more popular National Peasant Party. The only details regarding the political choices he made during those troubled years are offered by himself in the spring of 1949, in a statement he wrote under arrest:

“In the meantime, because of the events, Mr. Giurescu had fled to Turkey. He returned in 1945. He came to me with the proposal to join with him the party of Mr. Tătărăscu. I refused. Since then, the chain of miseries began, which culminated in my joining of the Social Democratic Party when Mr. Giurescu was afraid I was going to take his place and his chair. The miseries consisted of the bad atmosphere he made among

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<sup>19</sup> A document drafted on August 6, 1948 within the Investigation Brigade Bureau of the Capital Security Inspectorate mentions that in 1945 I.D. Suciu “joined Tătărăscu’s group with the N[ational] R[esurgence] F[ront] of C.C. Giurescu, who had been his professor, in this group receiving promises to be named cultural attaché or counsellor, with the purpose of playing the game of reactionary emigrants from abroad”: ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, f. 104.

<sup>20</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. I, f. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 1-4.

<sup>22</sup> This characterization dates from 1968 and it belongs to a *Securitate* informant with whom Suciu was friend since 1942; see ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 173.

older professors, of cutting me down from the salary list, and of launching the bad pigwash upon me, etc"<sup>23</sup>.

In 1946, therefore, I.D. Suciu joined the Social-Democratic Party, coming soon to fulfil the job of secretary at the organization of university professors in Bucharest<sup>24</sup>. He did not gain any personal benefits, on the contrary: in the autumn of the same year, he was dismissed from his office in the Ministry and remained only on the job he had at the University of Bucharest because, as he remembered in 1949, after the war the law no longer allowed the cumulation of jobs<sup>25</sup>. Although in the university he worked conscientiously and tried, according to his own appreciation, to adapt to the "new Times", and in 1947 he even managed to occupy the post of deputy inspector in the Historical Monuments Commission<sup>26</sup>, starting with November 1, 1948 he was dismissed from all his positions. The main cause of his dismissal he saw, in retrospect, in the conflict he had with professor Constantin C. Giurescu<sup>27</sup>, who, in Suciu's opinion, was considered "omnipotent" at the time, and to whom he kept an undisguised aversion until the end of his life.

After he remained unemployed in the fall of 1948, neither his professional capacities nor his relations in the intellectual and political fields (otherwise in a full process of dissolution) could not help him to occupy any other post. As a result, in a very short period of time, I.D. Suciu got into the situation where he could no longer afford to earn a living, which is why he began to even sell his clothes. Therefore, after unsuccessfully trying to find support and shelter from his relatives, having no concrete hope for the future, he took the decision to leave the country. Having this sole purpose in mind, together with the younger brother of a former colleague from the Ministry of Culture (Radu Andronescu), Suciu developed a plan to flee abroad, most probably to France, via Hungary.

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<sup>23</sup> ACNSAS, Penal Fund, File No. 380, vol. II, f. 63.

<sup>24</sup> Ioan Opreș, *Istoricii și Securitatea*, București, Ed. Enciclopedică, 2004, p. 413.

<sup>25</sup> Most likely I.D. Suciu was fired on the basis of Law No. 486 of October 8, 1944 (published in the *Monitorul Oficial* No. 233 from October 8, 1944), which stated that the state officials "employed in any form after February 20, 1938 [the establishment of King Carol II royal dictatorship] and until August 23, 1944 can be dismissed from work", benefiting from financial rights only those who could prove that they had a "worthy, fair and moral attitude".

<sup>26</sup> ANR-SJTM, Fund I.D. Suciu Family, Dosar nr. 68, f. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ioan Scurtu, "De la închisoarea Sighet la Academia R.S. România. Studiu de caz: Constantin C. Giurescu", in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, nr. 78-79 (1-2)/2013, pp. 83-92.

At the end of December 1948, Suciu went from Bucharest to Timișoara, where he was hosted by one of his aunts. In the spring of 1949, on March 5 I.D. Suciu, he left Timișoara with Andronescu and reached Pecica village, where the two were hosted and supplied by a cousin of one of Suciu's former high school colleagues. Previously, Radu Andronescu had procured two pistols which, according to the statements written by the two, they intended to use to commit suicide in the event of their capture by the border guards. On the evening of March 6, around 7 pm, Suciu and Andronescu set off from Pecica to the border, which they crossed during the night of March 6-7, 1949. In Hungary, the two fugitives were hosted by a Romanian priest in Battonya, and the following night they left by train to Szeged, a city where they were captured by Hungarian authorities in the train station immediately after their arrival. Suciu and Andronescu were arrested on March 8 and investigated by the Hungarian special services for 30 days in Szeged, after which they were taken to Budapest, where, on April 21, 1949, they were handed over to the Bihor Regional *Securitate* Directorate.

During the summer of 1949 I.D. Suciu and Radu Andronescu were investigated under arrest by the *Securitate*, and on October 18, the two were sent to court for the crimes of fraudulent crossing of the border and illegal possession of weapons<sup>28</sup>, charges that they have both acknowledged in front of the court. On October 25, 1949, by sentence no. 1624, the Military Court of Timișoara sentenced them to three years of correctional imprisonment and full confiscation of their assets. Although the date for the beginning of their sentence was initially set for March 8, 1949, I.D. Suciu was released from the Aiud penitentiary with a delay of more than six months, on October 30, 1952, after being thoroughly investigated and after he signed a commitment not to disclose "to anyone those seen or heard by the *Securitate*"<sup>29</sup>.

After his release from prison and until the fall of 1956, when he was employed as a history teacher, the data and information regarding the activities of I.D. Suciu are extremely poor. It is certain, however, that in November 1952 he tried to return and settle in Bucharest but failing that he eventually managed to find a job in Sinaia, as administrator of the resting houses of the Academy. He worked there for a brief period of time, before moving to the Jiu Valley. He then lived in Uricani until 1956, during which time he got hired as a worker in a hydrotechnical construction company, devoting his free time to reading and writing.

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<sup>28</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fund, File No. 380, vol. I, f. 23.

<sup>29</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 49.

As it appears from a letter that I.D. Suciú was sent on August 15, 1955 to Florin Ghiurea, a former colleague from the Aiud prison with whom he had befriended, his situation after release seemed to have been even worse than before he got arrested:

"In my case, the situation was tragic when I got out: my old uncle died in the camp of the former ministers at Sighet. My aunt Mrs. Suciú also died in my absence, a cousin where I wanted to find shelter was arrested and evacuated [...] Then, until I got a domicile, I stayed in Sinaia (they did not want me to stay neither in Bucharest nor in Banat, the latter being a border area)"<sup>30</sup>.

This letter is, one of the few personal documents written by I.D. Suciú in the 1950s, on the basis of which one can draw some conclusions regarding his inner state. He assures his friend that

"functions and honour do not interest me or impress me anymore. They are all vanity of vanity. One thing interests me: to be perfect myself in my profession as a historian, and to be satisfied with myself. That's why I'm glad that in my job I have free time and I able to work for myself. The ideal is to attain moral and scientific perfection; clearly, relative perfection because the absolute one is held only by God, whose judgment and deeds are not encompassed by the human mind. For the duty of our lives is to leave a trace of light behind us, adding a step forward to the work of our ancestors and parents. Whoever does not have this ideal in mind will die like any crawler without trace in the immensity of the stars"<sup>31</sup>.

In the autumn of 1956, probably as a result of an intervention made by Ilie Murgulescu<sup>32</sup>, I.D., Suciú was appointed as a history teacher at the Medium Afternoon School of the Ministry of Armed Forces in Constanța. The reason he chose to settle in Constanța is unclear: to some of his acquaintances he said that he had moved there from Roder to

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<sup>30</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. I, f. 44.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>32</sup> Ilie Murgulescu (January 27, 1902, Cornu, Dolj County – October 28, 1991, Bucharest). Chemist, full member (from 1952), and president (1963–1966) of the Academy of the Romanian People's Republic. He held the positions of Minister of Education in the Governments of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Chivu Stoica between 1953–1956, and then of Minister of Education and Culture in the Government of Ion Gheorghe Maurer, between 1961–1963.

undergo a longer treatment against the rheumatism he was suffering from, but to others he confessed a presumptuous plan, otherwise never put into practice, to flee the country via the port, in which he saw the only possible escape gate from the socialist camp<sup>33</sup>.

In Constanța, Suciu seems to have quickly managed to integrate himself into a new environment: some of the notes signed for the *Securitate* by his colleagues and students state that in a very short time the new teacher started to attract the admiration of his students, to whom he was addressed with the appellative “gentlemen”. One of the informers told the *Securitate* that “During the school year, I went to professor SUCIU’s history class, who taught irreproachably. He had a gift of inspiring patriotism, love for the fatherland. Whenever I left his class, I left fiery and in love for our country”<sup>34</sup>. On the other hand, another colleague, who signed his *Securitate* notes under the pseudonym “Sica Ion”, appreciated that

“I.D. SUCIU was a very demanding teacher with the students, but not with his own people, because he was coming to the school and reading the lessons which he had to explain [...] without controlling the facts. He is an enemy of our regime, on various occasions showing disrespect to our party and state leaders, even to comrade GHEORGHIU DEJ”<sup>35</sup>.

At the same time, I.D. Suciu quickly befriended fellow professors Ștefănescu and Paraschivescu, as well as professor Iordăchescu, the high school director. He liked to spend his evenings in restaurants or at home, where he used to invite some of the more studious students whom he sympathized. After he established contacts with fellow historians from the regional museum in Constanța, I.D., Suciu gained the conviction that “his merits are recognized by a number of university professors with whom he was a colleague [...] here in the bottom line, he will show the party what he can do in his job”<sup>36</sup>.

On March 8, 1958, the Constanța Regional *Securitate* Directorate opened a verification file on I.D. Suciu’s name, starting from the suspicion that he was intending to leave again the country fraudulently, but also because both in class and in private conversations he was expressing an anti-Soviet attitude. Therefore, on April 4, 1958, officer Iliescu Ion drew up the plan<sup>37</sup> of measures to collect as much data as possible about the connections of I.D. Suciu, to establish his attitude

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<sup>33</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. I, f. 25.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 26.

<sup>35</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 113.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. I, f. 28.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 19-22.

towards the regime and his possible political manifestations of a hostile nature, respectively, to clarify his past. For this purpose, four agents were directed in his near proximity ("Sică Ion", "Nae Constantin", "Titus Ozon" and "Nicolae Ialomițianu"). In addition, senior officers from the Constanța Regional *Securitate* ordered the interception of Suciu's correspondence.

To identify and track him by the team of operative officers, on April 14, 1958, Major Sarchiz Jan described the signals of the "target" I.D. Suciu – whom he baptized with the conspirative name "STAN" – as follows:

"Age 39 years, medium stature, medium body conformation, oval head contour, brown face, black hair combed on the back, middle and vertical forehead, straight eyebrows, rectilinus nose towards convex, chin sharpened and outward. Medium and straight shoulders, he is slightly back, walks, slightly limping his right foot, he is dressed in a beige coat, striped blue suit, brown shoes, a flowery scarf around his neck, his head uncovered, he is wearing sunglasses and brown leather briefcase"<sup>38</sup>.

Following the continuous surveillance of "STAN", a process that lasted almost two weeks, all his contacts were identified: about 35 friends, colleagues, students, and acquaintances, among them priest Gheorghe Comănici, a former detainee from Aiud, and professors Mia Popescu and Magdalena Garabenteanu, who constantly helped him with money. Because he seemed to have serious financial issues, I.D. Suciu unsuccessfully tried to sell an 18th century icon to priest Comănici<sup>39</sup>. Nothing spectacular, therefore, was detected in his activities while he had been under surveillance during the spring of 1958.

On the other hand, as one can clearly see from the notes written by the informants listed above, during the 1958 I.D. Suciu had constantly expressed a hostile attitude towards the communist regime, to which he even addressed "pornographic words"<sup>40</sup>, and repeatedly manifested his desire to leave the country in one way or another. He did not shy away from voicing his dissatisfaction to his circle of close friends, a dissatisfaction which increased especially in the fall of that year, after he was dismissed from his job at school together with several other colleagues.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 70.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 180.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 31.

After losing his job under Article 20 of the Labour Code, which provided the legal basis for the employer to end the work contract in case the employee suffered a criminal conviction, I.D. Suciu unsuccessfully sought to find a job at the museum in Constanța, and then at the Popular Council's Library. With negative references given by the Regional Party Committee, Suciu had no other option to earn a living but to give private lessons in Latin and French, while he was also seeking financial support from friends. At the same time, he made continuous efforts to get reintegrated: he sent memoirs to the regional and central structures of the Romanian Workers' Party, to the trade unions, and even quarrelled loudly in a restaurant with the director of a school where he previously worked<sup>41</sup>.

Perhaps as a direct consequence, in his private conversations he intensified his manifestations of aversion towards the regime, which he did not hesitate to condemn and even to bluntly swear: as captain Iliescu Ion noted in the November 25, 1958 report, I.D. Suciu

"on all occasions manifests hostile attitudes against the regime, brings insults to communists, and is a sworn enemy of the socialist camp. On all occasions, he manifests that the communists, under the lead of U.S.S.R. will lose political power and our country will be freed from the capitalist camp"<sup>42</sup>.

Dissatisfied with his dismissal from time to time he manifested nervous outbursts, so intense that, according to one eye-witness, they mimicked dementia – "It's shame for the Romanian culture that Dr. I.D. SUCIU and others have no place to work"<sup>43</sup> – but at the same time he was trying to explain in rational terms the situation into which he had come:

"We were thrown on the road because I executed years of imprisonment for certain mistakes that I made. I was imprisoned for 4 years. I went underground and was trapped [...] After I was released from prison, I sought to work for the regime, although the dictatorial methods of this regime are not in my view. As a teacher, I have sought to do my duty conscientiously. At the Institute of Science and Culture dissemination I also activated. I was charged that the monograph of Constanta was not printed because of me. However, I was the first to submit three articles for this monograph. I was also expelled from the Institute. Finally,

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 192.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 65.

today we are considered the "enemies of the people". I do not know whether or not we are enemies of the people, but we are certainly the enemies of those who have starved us to death on the roads"<sup>44</sup>.

On November 25, 1958, Captain Victor Burlacu approved the report proposing the arrest, investigation and prosecution of the "target", who was eventually captured two days later. His investigation and trial did not last long, as the *Securitate* officers had already managed to gather, during the verification process, numerous "proofs" that, in their opinion, demonstrated the historian's intention to leave the country, his "hostile" manifestations, as well as the hostile character of his "position": "The evidence by which the activity of the pursued has been materialized consisted of informative materials and testimonies of witnesses who attended the hostile discussions held by the one in question on different occasions."<sup>45</sup>

These elements were sufficient for the investigators to charge I.D. Suciu for committing the crime of "conspiracy against the social order"<sup>46</sup> incriminated by article 209, point 2, letter a of the Criminal Code. Following a quick trial, the Military Court in Constanța found him guilty and sentenced him on March 3, 1959, to 10 years of imprisonment. As one can easily ascertain from browsing the documents contained in his *Securitate* files, the guilt of I.D. Suciu has been previously established since March 1958, the court doing nothing else but to carry out a judicial procedure that formalized the sentence. Until the date when Decree no. 176 has entered into force in the summer of 1964, the historian spent six years behind bars, in the penitentiaries of Constanța, Botoșani and Gherla, as well as in the working colony of Salcia.

By reading the notes collected by the *Securitate* officers from the detainees who knew him and with whom he interacted during the detention period between 1958-1964 – first of all his roommates – we can now know I.D. Suciu's thoughts, how he endured the regime of punishment, what feelings animated him, what hopes for the future he nourished, and, above all, how he perceived the communist system that had sent him to prison for a second time.

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 56-57.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 188.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 189.

Almost all informants who provided notes to the *Securitate* in those years seem to agree in respect of his political beliefs. According to their opinions, he was generally reserved on political issues, but, benefiting from the company of “formers”, he did not hesitate to engage in discussions with them and to declare his pro-National Peasant views. At the same time, I.D. Suciu was eagerly following the news on the domestic and international political scene, hoping for a possible American intervention against the U.R.S.S. In the reading room of the prison, he used to read and comment the press with other prisoners who shared his views. Not infrequently, he used to make even depreciative appraisals against the internal politics and the leaders of the Romanian Workers’ Party.

Indeed, I.D. Suciu manifested a strong and undisguised dislike towards the communist regime, primarily because of its repressive policies: as noted by the detainee “Ilie Ioan” on July 26, 1962, his colleague

“does not like communism and does not deny this [...] He loves his country where he was born and would not leave it for the adventure alone, because the temperament of an adventurer he is not, but has no other option. He can no longer live in a country full of prisons and these in turn are full of people who have no other fault than that of thinking about real freedom. In 17 years of communist rule, he spent 8 in prison. He wandered through many prisons and what he saw and suffered in them is just outrageous. Only here in Botoşani in this prison full of elderly people, lacking basic medical assistance, kept only in the cell all the day except a few minutes of walking, and it is well known that many of the detainees here carry out a correctional sentence in heavy conditions. Everything that happens in this prison and in the others is wide-spread”<sup>47</sup>.

In the same manner, a month later the detainee “Pop Ioan” appreciated that I.D. Suciu is a “the fierce enemy of the current democratic regime in the Peoples’ Republic of Romania, because he hates all current achievements and makes all kinds of nonserious allusions to different democratic personalities from both the R.P.R. as well as foreign [...] He accuses all those intellectuals and scientists who collaborate with the current democratic regime in R.P.R. and foresees a black future for them if

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<sup>47</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 75, f. 77.

the communists leave power"<sup>48</sup>. Like many other intellectuals or former dignitaries imprisoned in Romania in the 50s and 60s I.D. Suciú expected and hoped that the communist regime would not last, be insufficiently consolidated internally, and would collapse within a foreseeable time horizon, which is why he frequently used to engage in discussions regarding the alleged postcommunist political future of the country.

On the other hand, in direct contradiction with the above characterizations, a detainee "Gherase Matei" has offered a detailed description of the historian's conceptions regarding the political situation at that time and his prospects for future evolution, ideas that seem to have been completely different than those described by the sources "Pop Ioan" and "Ilie Ioan".

According to the statement provided by the detainee "Gherase Matei", I.D. Suciú seemed to have realistically interpreted the state of affairs in the autumn of 1962: in his view, the communist system was on the verge of a "thaw"<sup>49</sup>, following which both relations between the two politico-military blocks as well as those between the regime and society were to be renegotiated, so that the former political prisoners would be professionally reintegrated. According to those arrested by "Gherase Matei", Suciú was convinced of

"the idea that we are on the verge of a slow, long-term relaxation, which, according to the communist system, is slow, psychological, but that the detention takes effective form until the complete liquidation of the situation of political prisoners, easily condemned for minor facts or simple misunderstandings or crimes devised ad hoc by the security organs in order to break through a difficult political moment, when all the "inconveniences" had to disappear from the social life of the state. This "difficult political moment" has passed and the regime seeks to clear its mistakes and approach those who are wrongfully condemned or too harsh. As far as he is concerned, he only wants to resume his career, and moreover, he would be satisfied even with a job of a teacher in the countryside, only to be left alone to continue his scientific research and to finish his work already begun [...] sometimes, against the current state of affairs, he frankly

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 85.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth Jowitt, "Inclusion and Mobilization in European Leninist Regimes", *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 1, October 1975, pp. 71-75.

acknowledges many of the communist governing measures, which he approves, comparing them with the state of indifference and slothfulness of past regimes. Thus, the work of enlightenment of masses through the establishment and reorganization of cultural centers, the re-establishment of regional theatres (abolished by previous regimes) for budgetary savings - counted as crime -), the establishment of regional and city philharmonics, the establishment of museums and libraries for the first time in villages, etc., the publication of numerous scientific and literary books, unknown until now [...] and the allocation of considerable sums for this works, for archaeological excavations, etc. and so on. Also, the organization of medical assistants in villages, unique in the history of the Romanian state, etc. [...] He hopes and believes in a close reconciliation between East and West, putting his hope in Mr. Khrushchev's ability and guilelessness, for which he shows a special sympathy, considering him a man of spirit and to whom, curiously, he never addresses Khrushchev but, out of sympathy, as he says, Nikita Sergheevici..."<sup>50</sup>.

In the summer of 1964, on August 3, I.D. Suciú was released from the Gherla penitentiary and, after a brief halt in Bucharest, where he searched for employment opportunities at the Institute of History of the R.P.R. Academy, he settled temporarily in Constanța and lived with his former colleague, professor Maria Popescu. Here too, he tried to find a job in education, but without success. He met his old acquaintances, rested and followed a medical cure after which, in October, he went again to Bucharest, where he was hosted by an old friend. Sometime in early November 1964, he was employed at the Institute of History of the R.P.R. Academy. After employment, I.D. Suciú seems to have tempered to a certain extent his hostile attitude towards the regime: as the agent "Gherase" pointed out, in the autumn of 1964, the former detainee was convinced that

"something essential has occurred in the domestic and foreign policy of the Romanian state, and as a consequence he is determined to work and to demonstrate in this way his gratitude and attachment to the leadership of the state, if of

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 82-84.

course the same attitude of impartiality and relaxation will continue in the future. Otherwise, he will be forced to take attitude. He has twice passed through communist prisons and is no longer afraid of death"<sup>51</sup>.

Once hired, I.D. Suciu seems to have abandoned any concerns and even political discussions. In the company of an old acquaintance, he made the following reflection aloud: "we have nothing to do. Let us be honest. Having a job is the only solution. If something happens, it will come over our heads. No action can influence the course of international events"<sup>52</sup>. On the other hand, being impulsive, Suciu did not avoid to insult the communists in his conversations<sup>53</sup> from time to time; still, however, his attitude was much more moderated and reserved during this period, very close to submission<sup>54</sup>.

After his employment, he dedicated all his force to his profession, being very pleased that he can finally study, write, and publish. In December 1964 he wrote to his friend Maria Popescu, the teacher of Constanța, the following lines:

"I am very happy with the work I received at the Academy, and now I work with all my power to research and write as many specialized publications as possible about my homeland, which I love so much. In the short time I have to live, I want to leave a glimmer of light and that is why I have to work hard. Who does not want to understand this is my personal enemy"<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 116.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 123.

<sup>53</sup> For example, sometime in mid-November 1964, I.D. Suciu met an acquaintance on a street in Bucharest. To his astonishment that the historian was hired, Suciu burst forth: "God and their mother's cross (allusion to the current political leadership) even if we are persecuted, there are still to be found those who give us hugs": ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 122.

<sup>54</sup> As he confessed to a former prison colleague he met in Bucharest in December 1964 and who asked him if he intends to involve into politics in the future, Suciu replied categorically that he did not, because "He was tired for what he did, 2 times in prison - he said laughing - and he has no teeth in his mouth (in fact he is almost completely edentulous). He wants to deal only with history, he will devote himself to the greatest projects and hopes to make his name known again as a historian": ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 102.

<sup>55</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 118.

Persevering, ambitious and eager to affirm on professional grounds – this is the image that is drawn by almost all his acquaintances, older or newer, in the informative notes they submitted to the *Securitate* during the years of so-called “liberalization” of the communist regime (1965-1971).

Having managed to obtain an identity card in Bucharest, I.D. Suciu started to make constant efforts not only to get back his Ph.D. title gained in 1943, but also to study in archives and libraries to publish paid scientific works, to complete his salary of about 2, 000 lei. In this regard, he expressed his constant gratitude for the material conditions that the state provides to historians and intellectuals in general, gaining the conviction that in socialist Romania one can live very well only and only from the scientific research work<sup>56</sup>. He envied Professor C.C. Giurescu for the fact that, once professionally reintegrated after his release from the Sighet penitentiary in 1955, he had received a salary of almost 7,000 lei a month, he afforded to buy a personal car, and he also wrote regularly columns in the “The Voice of the Fatherland” magazine, where “even his mug has appeared”<sup>57</sup>.

Concerning his inner state, the ideas he had and the feelings that animated him after his release and employment, illustrative is the following description that one of his acquaintances has made in November 1965:

“[I.D. Suciu] is really concerned about professional scientific issues. He showed the source (with great pride, but justified if it is true) how many works he has about what he writes, the fact he is very busy, that he goes around the country to search for documents in libraries in support of his works. At no point in the conversation [...] SUCIU did address any political problem.”

The source insisted only once when Prof. SUCIU said he had written and submitted for printing works which worth 100,000 lei, repeating the number with a childlike surprise and joy.

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<sup>56</sup> In October 1965, being asked by a colleague from the Institute of History what he thinks “about the current situation”, SUCIU replied: “What opinion can I have? The one I should have had from the beginning and today I would have been a happy man. Due to my mistakes, I moved away from the regime and I was two times in prison. Now that I have found a new scientific job, I only want to be left alone, so I can work and publish”: ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 129.

<sup>57</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 132.

The source asked him what he would do with so much money and then what about politics, if he were only occupied with texts, manuscripts, and history only? To which SUCIU said that he gives to [...] politics, that politics caused him to waste precious time in his life and that he suffered quite a lot because of it. He said that our socialist state pays well and rewards intellectual work very well, that it is very good [...] and that it is not worth pursuing anything other than your job. Because if you have a head and you know how to write, you earn well.

He told the source with enthusiasm that only one printing page, that means 16 pages of a book, is being paid today (of course according to the value of the name of the person who writes it) 2000-2500 lei, which means of a book of regular size 20-25000 lei, plus copyright.

He then told the source, laughing, that he had what to do with the money, he had to make clothes, to get furniture and arrange an apartment like all normal people (he really sits in a small, modest room, with a lady whose husband died soon) and then, of course, he gets a car"<sup>58</sup>.

Between 1965 and 1970, I.D. Suciú has published a number of 17 studies in scientific journals, a book<sup>59</sup>, very well received in academic circles<sup>60</sup>, as well as a comprehensive edition of Eftimie Murgu's writings<sup>61</sup>. During the same period, he managed to buy a studio apartment in a newly built block in Bucharest, which he managed to arrange on his own. These achievements, in addition to the recognition of his Ph.D. title and his promotion at the History Institute, have contributed to a significant improvement of his morale. Moreover, according to his own words, the secretary of the party organization in the History Institute proposed him to join the Communist Party, but the historian refused, motivating his option as follows: "they (colleagues, friends, acquaintances) will say that the SUCIU toady joined the Communists for the bowl, and the leadership of the party will criticize the party secretary for having inserted such a toady into the party"<sup>62</sup>. Subsequently, the issue of his adherence to the Communist Party was never raised.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 133-134.

<sup>59</sup> I.D. Suciú, *Revoluția de la 1848-1849 în Banat*, București, Ed. Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1968, 275 p.

<sup>60</sup> The National Archives of Romania - National Central History Archives, Fund "Academia de Științe Sociale și Politice - Secția Istorie-Arheologie", File No. 39/1970, f. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Eftimie Murgu, *Scrieri*, ediție îngrijită cu o introducere și note de I.D. Suciú, București, Ed. pentru literatură, 1969, 632 p.

<sup>62</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. I, ff. 75-76.

In the summer of 1968, he followed with great interest and commented in private conversations the events in Czechoslovakia. In one of these discussions, which he had on July 29 with "Miron Costin", a former colleague in detention, I.D. Suciu detailed his "personal" views that he held at the time:

"1) The fact that he lost 10 years in prison (1948-1952 and 1958-1964) plus another 6 years of professional inactivity (in the period between imprisonment, 1952-1958) means, in retrospect, a great void in his life. One is the labour power at 30, and another at the present age (he is 48).

2) As for his social situation, he managed to become exactly what he would have been without these lost years: he is a doctor, a scientific researcher with works published in the country and abroad, having full professional satisfaction. "Maybe if I didn't waste this huge time (16 years), I would have become a university professor [...] However, this does not tempt me today. I feel very tired (as a biological potential) and I only want to devote myself to intellectual work. Normally (that is, if things had not happened as they did), I would have given up the university chair anyway, to be able to reach deeper into scientific research"<sup>63</sup>.

Although until that summer I.D. Suciu had been "a robust and lively man, active, energetic, and up to date with all the professional researches"<sup>64</sup>, in August 1968 he was diagnosed with diabetes, which seems to have scared him quite a lot and caused him a genuine mental shock. However, he recovered quick enough and successfully managed to adapt to the new "old and sick" hypostasis, but also to strictly adhere to a diet. As a result, he was able to continue working on the same zeal, but from now on he attended the institute less often, choosing to work mostly at home. As noted by "Alexandrescu" on May 27, 1969, at that time the historian was "in a permanent turmoil. He is to be found in perpetual scientific activity"<sup>65</sup>.

Sometimes in 1970 or 1971 I.D. Suciu began to change again his perception about the communist system, although until then it has generally been as favourable as possible, given his professional

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<sup>63</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 173.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 155.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 175.

achievements and material fulfilment. However, it was precisely that he considered too modest in relation to his intellectual potential, and often "regretted what he was and what he could have been"<sup>66</sup>. Although in relation to his colleagues at the institute he displayed a kindness in the protocol, without making any friends - with some of them he rightly suspected to be *Securitate's* people." - I.D. Suciu did not hesitate to express his dislike of the most important historians of the moment (C.C. Giurescu, Constantin Daicoviciu, Ștefan Pascu), personalities who have succeeded to adapt to the new times and have gained significant positions in the professional, administrative and political hierarchies. However, what seems to have displeased him to the highest degree were the institutional<sup>67</sup> and legislative<sup>68</sup> reorganizations since the early 1970s, after which the Institute of History in Bucharest became indirectly subordinated to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. As a result of this reorganization and the new editorial regulations, the manuscripts completed and which were ready for printing were considered service obligations, so that they could no longer be paid. I.D. Suciu felt deprived of some of the rights he considered justified, so he began to express his discontent increasingly frequently, first in discussions with close acquaintances, often, "even obsessive", using ironic expressions such as: "if the party and the government wants it"<sup>69</sup>, "the party, in its great kindness, sheltered me from the anger of the people"<sup>70</sup>, or "when the party wants it, it makes you whatever you want, academician, writer, poet, if the party wants it, it also gives you money, no doubt"<sup>71</sup>.

Until March 1973, when he was arrested for the third and last time, I.D. Suciu continued to work, to write and to publish, to hold lectures in the country, to attend cultural events and to give radio presentations. Traveling quite frequently in Banat, especially in Timișoara, where he studied in the archives of the Banat Metropolitan Church, he befriended Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu, who would later support him, even financially, until his death.

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<sup>66</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. I, f. 68.

<sup>67</sup> Ștefan Bosomitu, *Miron Constantinescu. O biografie*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2014, pp. 320-323.

<sup>68</sup> Cosmin Popa, "Intelectualii în capcana ceaușismului, sau înființarea Academiei de Științe Sociale și Politice", in *Revista Română de Sociologie*, New Series, Year XXVIII (2017), No. 1-2, p. 23.

<sup>69</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 162.

<sup>70</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. I, f. 68.

<sup>71</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 3845, vol. II, f. 132.

On September 27, 1972, the *Securitate* Inspectorate in Bucharest opened another surveillance file on Suciu's name, given that he was repeatedly signalled as having "hostile manifestations at present and with the intention of fleeing to the West where he will carry out hostile activity against our country"<sup>72</sup>. Until February 23, 1973, when the *Securitate* officers completed the historian's file, they were able to collect a number of eight notes regarding his activities, behaviour, and attitudes. At the same time, furthermore, the Bucharest *Securitate* and *Miliția* officers have conducted at least one clandestine searching at the home of I.D. Suciu, they intercepted his personal correspondence and set up "operative techniques" (microphones) in his home to record the discussions he had with various guests. In this way, they were able to detect his sexual orientation illegal at that time, and they could arrest him sometime in the first days of March 1973.

On the basis of the famous article No. 200 of the Penal Code, on June 18, 1973, through sentence No. 529 issued by the court of Sector 3 of the Capital, I.D. Suciu was condemned to a sentence of 2 years and 6 months of imprisonment for homosexuality. During the trial he "tried to show that this process is due to the *Securitate* organs and that he accepted this one in order to avoid a more serious one for hostile activity against our regime"<sup>73</sup>. Although the homosexuality for which he was convicted was a real, constituted a crime, and was punished as such, what appears from the *Securitate* documents is that the basis of this last conviction was not primarily his sexual orientation, used in court rather as a pretext, but a political one: as in the first two cases, the third time again his hostility towards the regime has sent him behind bars. He has served his sentence in the Văcărești and Poarta Albă penitentiaries, being released in January 1975. Throughout the detention I.D. Suciu was placed under close surveillance.

According to his own assessment, he received very good treatment and conditions in prison, having managed to read hundreds of books. He maintained and continued to express his critical views against the Communist Party in discussions with other detainees, openly insulting both the party and "some party and state leaders" (the euphemism used in their reports by the *Securitate* officers to replace the names of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu). As one can clearly see from the *Securitate* documents elaborated in this period, the historian has not changed his critical views regarding the socialist order, but on the contrary, he radicalized, starting to consider the Romanian state as a police state, and to equal the policies

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<sup>72</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. I, f. 99.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 98.

of the Ceaușescu dictatorship with the national socialist ones promoted by Adolf Hitler<sup>74</sup>. Moreover, during his last detention, he decided that, after his release, he would try to flee to the West by any means. After a discussion with the warden of the Poarta Albă penitentiary, which occurred on August 22, 1974, I.D. Suciu seems to have become more reserved in making political appraisals during the execution of the rest of his sentence.

On January 9, 1975, I.D. Suciu was released from prison and returned to his home in Bucharest, being advised to retire. After resuming relations with some of his old colleagues, he began asking questions about the impression that his arrest had produced in the Institute, about the reputation he had, as well as of the possibility of printing his unfinished manuscripts. Because he needed another five months of seniority in the field of work to be able to retire, he started the procedures to obtain an illness pension. He finally managed to retire after he obtained the recognition of membership of the Literary Fund, thanks to the intervention of a number of writers such as Laurențiu Tulea, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, Lucian Dumitrescu or Anghel Dumbrăveanu. He also managed to publish his works: in July 1976 he printed the monograph of the Banat Orthodox Metropolis, which was printed the following year, and later he worked with Radu Constantinescu on the edition of documents related to its history<sup>75</sup>.

Surely, I.D. Suciu's surveillance continued even after his release,

"because after being released from detention in the second part of 1975, he continued to have hostile manifestations and bring insults to the *Securitate* organs"<sup>76</sup>.

Therefore, on March 15, 1976, the *Securitate* officers elaborated a first plan of measures to be taken to determine if the target code named "Suru",

"still maintains his intention to leave the country and what is he doing in this regard, as well as to find out what his hostile activity consists of and the nature of the connections he currently maintains"<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 152.

<sup>75</sup> I.D. Suciu, R. Constantinescu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Mitropoliei Banatului*, 2 vol., Timișoara, Ed. Mitropoliei Banatului, 1980.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 110.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 113.

In addition, during April, May, and June 1976, I.D. Suciu's telephone was intercepted by the *Securitate*, in order to identify "the hostile comments that he makes about the regime in our country and in the presence of connections with foreign citizens and discussions with them, the connections among Romanian citizens and their nature"<sup>78</sup>. Furthermore, the historian was suspected of having written and secretly kept in his home the manuscripts of works that were "hostile" to the socialist order, which he intended to publish in the West, entitled "The Romanian Night Traveler", "Mătrăguna" and "The Contemporary History of Romania". For this reason, on March 21, 1976, Lieutenant Ciucă Ion carried out a new secret search at Suciu's home, but without success, as the officer failed to identify the alleged compromising writings. On the other hand, the exploitation of the other operative measures was more successful, because it resulted in finding "data from which it turns out that the person, in various circumstances, is hostile to the social-political order in our country, asserting that he lives in a regime of dictatorship, without freedom where a man is forced to do what he is commanded, etc."<sup>79</sup>.

Since I.D. Suciu's attitude remained "hostile" towards the communist regime, on August 27, 1976, the *Securitate* officers dealing with his case organized a meeting with him, during which they warned and asked him to sign a declaration in which he promises that "such facts will not be repeated in the future"<sup>80</sup>. Additionally, the same officers informed the *Miliția* that the historian was practicing homosexuality, providing it the list of persons with whom I.D. Suciu was keeping contacts, mainly young foreign students (throughout the 70s and 80s, the *Securitate* preferred to work undercover, providing the *Militia*, compromising information regarding those individuals and deeds that could be included into the category of common law crimes<sup>81</sup>).

The informative notes collected starting with the autumn of 1976 by sources "Mihnea", "Pascu Iuliu" and "Alexandreaanu", suggest that after signing the aforementioned declaration, I.D. Suciu tempered his comments - "as if someone had cut him off his teeth"<sup>82</sup> - preferring to avoid any political discussions with those close to him and even asserting

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<sup>78</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, f. 98.

<sup>79</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. I, f. 104.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. V, f. 80.

<sup>81</sup> Florian Banu, Liviu Țăranu (editors), *Securitatea 1948-1989*, vol. 1, Târgoviște, Ed. Cetatea de Scaun, 2016, p. 228.

<sup>82</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, f. 77.

that he had "reconciled with the party"<sup>83</sup>. As a result, after becoming assured that "from the warning until now SUCIU ID has not had any hostile manifestations"<sup>84</sup>, on January 28, 1977, the *Securitate* officers closed his secret police file which they opened the same year in March.

However, the historian's surveillance process continued indirectly, as the informants reporting on him were instructed to "maintain the connection with I.D. Suciú to know his present conception and the evolution of his attitude"<sup>85</sup>. Thus, during 1977, 1978, and 1979, the *Securitate* found out that the historian returned to his old habit of criticizing the regime, this time even more vehemently<sup>86</sup>, because now he started to manifest a special interest in the dissidents' movement in Czechoslovakia and, more alarming, in the cases of Paul Goma and Vlad Georgescu<sup>87</sup>.

These years are the most troubling period in I.D. Suciú's life, given the fact that, on January 17, 1977, he agreed to become an informant and to provide the *Securitate* written notes about his acquaintances - mainly former political detainees - and in exchange he received insurance that he would be approved to leave the country. Paradoxically, during this period he seems to have definitively established his firm belief that his only chance to escape the "Holy Party"<sup>88</sup>, as he frequently used to name it, was to leave Romania forever. In this respect, he obtained a call from a relative in France, and at the end of 1977 he sent a request for a 30-day temporary travel permission to the commander of the Passport Service in Bucharest, which was not approved "as there were indications that he will not return back to the country"<sup>89</sup>. This refusal seems to have radicalized the petitioner even more, since, as it is apparent both from the post-verification notes and from a report dated November 18, 1980, so far, Suciú did not stop declaring himself openly against the communist

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. I, f. 125.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. I, f. 103.

<sup>85</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, f. 67.

<sup>86</sup> For example, in the fall of 1979 he told an acquaintance the following: "To be clear. I have no regard for the Party and I deliberately declare myself openly against it because I do not want others to say abroad that I have become a CONFORMIST and that I have been bought with a bribe, in order to raise praises to the Party (to the "Holy Party" - according to his words). He lives on the accounts of the church and the holy Metropolitan NICOLAE, which provides him with 60% of a year's house and meals": ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, ff. 43-44.

<sup>87</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Vlad Georgescu case, see Felician Velimirovici, *Istorie și istorici în România comunistă (1948-1989)*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Mega, 2015, pp. 269-304.

<sup>88</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fund, File No. 533936, vol. V, f. 45.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 1.

regime, beginning to assert and reiterate – including in front of many people – that he hated it with all his heart<sup>90</sup>.

In February 1980, he informed the officer with whom he was in contact that he wished to discontinue both the collaboration with the *Securitate* and any other discussion with the “organs” of this institution, so that on October 30, 1980 he was removed from the record of the informants’ the network and placed again under surveillance in the problem file of the former convicted politicians.

I.D. Suciu was removed from the records of this problem file on April 23, 1982, because, on March 3, he died.

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 1-2.

# The leadership of the historiographical field in late socialist Romania. A case-study on the year 1985

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**Abstract:** *The leadership of the historiographical field in late socialist Romania. A case-study on the year 1985.* The aim of this paper is to analyse the historiographical field in late socialist Romania, by looking at those historians having high institutional positions within the field in 1985. Our goal is not to discuss the individual themselves, but rather to use this case-study in order to define and characterize the milieu of history-writing as a social and professional structure. Our theoretical and methodological apparatus is built on the works of Pierre Bourdieu, using extensively concepts such as field, capital, habitus, strategy and autonomy, while taking into account their limitations when applied to a socialist system. The research design of this paper implied creating a biographical database, consisting in information regarding the biography of each dean and director, active in their leadership position in 1985. Therefore, information was gathered about Ion Agrigoroaiei, Dumitru Berciu, Gheorghe I. Ioniță, Camil Mureșanu, Ștefan Pascu, Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița, Ion Popescu-Puțuri, Constantin Preda, Ștefan Ștefănescu.

**Key-words:** historiography, sociology of history writing, intellectuals in late socialism, academic careers, and institutions.

**Rezumat:** *Conducerea câmpului istoriografic în România socialistă târzie. Un studiu de caz al anului 1985.* Scopul prezentului studiu este să analizeze câmpul istoriografic din România socialismului târziu, concentrându-se asupra acelor istorici cu poziții instituționale importante în anul 1985. Obiectivul cercetării nu este de discuta în mod direct persoanele în sine, ci de a utiliza acest studiu de caz pentru a defini și caracteriza comunitatea istoricilor ca structură socială și profesională. Perspectiva teoretică și metodologică pornește de la contribuția lui Pierre Bourdieu, folosind extensiv concepte precum câmp, capital, habitus, strategie și autonomie, luând în considerare, în același timp, și limitele aplicabilității acestora pentru un regim de tip socialist. Cercetarea a presupus crearea unei baze de date cu date biografice pentru fiecare decan și director, activ în această poziție în anul 1985. Așadar, au fost incluse date despre Ion Agrigoroaiei,

Dumitru Berciu, Gheorghe I. Ioniță, Camil Mureșanu, Ștefan Pascu, Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița, Ion Popescu-Puțuri, Constantin Preda, Ștefan Ștefănescu.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** istoriografie, sociologia istoriografiei, intelectuali în socialismul târziu, cariere și instituții academice.

## Introduction

As Pim den Boer argued for the case of French historians during 1818-1914, historical knowledge can be understood as the complex result of dynamics between the institutional, social, and cultural framework in which professional historians do their research, on the one hand, and, their professional or personal, individual or group, options and preferences, on the other<sup>1</sup>. Research on history writing has been focused for a very long time on the epistemic and intellectual aspects of this process, integrating topics such as epistemological debates, methodological innovations, historiographical schools and tendencies etc., defining in this way historiography almost exclusively as a part of intellectual history<sup>2</sup>. In this classic definition, the historiographical analysis is understood as a judgement on the relevance and quality of historiographical products<sup>3</sup>. Recently, the historiographical analysis became much more open to other aspects of historical knowledge production, such as the institutional framework, the social context, and the reception of historical publications in particular social and cultural contexts<sup>4</sup>. Starting from the '70s, quantitative analysis has been applied to history writing, to provide a new perspective, without limiting the scope of research only to the most important authors or contributions<sup>5</sup>. Influenced by authors such as Robert

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<sup>1</sup> Pim den Boer, *History as a Profession. The Study of History in France, 1818-1914*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Étienne Anheim, "L'historiographie est-elle une forme d'histoire intellectuelle? La controverse de 1934 entre Lucien Febre et Henoï Jassemin" in *Revue d'histoire moderne & contemporaine*, no. 59-4bis, 2012, pp. 105-130.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Becker, "What is Historiography?" in Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), pp. 20-28.

<sup>4</sup> Claude Gauvard, Jean-François Sirinelli (publié sous la direction de), *Dictionnaire de l'historien*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2015), pp. 375-377; Nicolas Offenstadt, *L'historiographie*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Jo Tollebeek, Ilaria Porciani, "Introduction. Institutions, Networks and Communities in a European Perspective" in Ilaria Porciani, Jo Tollebeek (eds.), *Setting the Standards. Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 21.

K. Merton<sup>6</sup>, Pierre Bourdieu<sup>7</sup>, or Charles-Olivier Carbonell<sup>8</sup>, historians established a greater degree of (auto)reflexivity about their own disciplinary and institutional frameworks.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the historiographical field in late socialist Romania, by looking at those historians holding high institutional positions within the field in 1985. Our goal is not to discuss the individuals themselves, but rather to use this case study to define and characterize the milieu of history writing as a social and professional structure. Our theoretical and methodological apparatus is built on the works of Pierre Bourdieu, extensively using concepts such as field, capital, habitus, strategy, and autonomy, while taking into account their limitations when applied to a socialist system.

For Bourdieu, the *field* is an autonomous social structure, not only defining strictly relations between individuals, but a true social universe, with specific rules, history, and specific transformations. The phenomena happening outside the field are not transferred inside directly, but are filtered in accordance to some internal rules, a process called Bourdieu *refraction*<sup>9</sup>. This internal mechanism of the field defines what is possible and what is accepted as legitimate in that particular social milieu<sup>10</sup>. Larissa Buchholz has identified three main characteristics of autonomous fields: an ideology (the author understands by ideology a set of generally accepted ideas that governs the activity of the field; for historians that idea is the acceptance of history writing as an objective and scientific discipline), rules for constructing hierarchies, and a specific set of formal and informal institutions<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, an autonomous field can be described as having specific roles for agents, sets of procedures and institutions that create a legitimate hierarchy, and an internal symbolic market, in which agents compete for resources<sup>12</sup>. The degree of autonomy

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<sup>6</sup> Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science. Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973).

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, (Stanford University Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> Charles-Olivier Carbonell, *Histoire et historiens: une mutation idéologique des historiens français, 1865-1885*, (Toulouse: Privat, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature*, (Columbia University Press), 1993, pp. 163-164.

<sup>10</sup> James Albright, Deborah Hartman, "Introduction: On Doing Field Analysis" in James Albright, Deborah Hartman, Jacqueline Widin, *Bourdieu's Field Theory and the Social Sciences*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 8

<sup>11</sup> Larissa Buchholz, "What is a global field? Theorizing fields beyond the nation-state" in *The Sociological Review Monographs*, vol. 62, no. 2, pp. 31-60.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Pierre Bourdieu. Un structuralisme héroïque*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2016), pp. 27-64.

can vary quite significantly from one field to another, or from one historical context to another. Even in dictatorial or totalitarian regimes, the intellectual field keeps a small degree of autonomy in relation to the political one, as Gisèle Sapiro has shown for the case of French writers during the Vichy regime<sup>13</sup>.

*Capital* can be defined as a “a collection of goods and skills of knowledge and acknowledgments belonging to an individual or a group that he or she can mobilize to develop influence, gain power, or bargain with other elements of this collection”<sup>14</sup>. The capital can be divided in four main categories: social, economic, cultural, and symbolic. The first three are converted by actors in the fourth form of capital. Symbolic capital is, in a way, a “super capital”<sup>15</sup>, the form acquired by all other capitals when used and accepted as legitimate in a social context. Apart from these main four types, Bourdieu and other authors have defined other forms of specific capital. For our research, the political capital, a derivative of the social capital, is essential<sup>16</sup>, as it describes the relations existing between historians and the political field.

*Habitus* defines a system of social predispositions, created in a collective manner, as principles that create and adapt social representations and social practices. In this context, the agents develop *the practical sense*, the result of interactions between the field and the habitus<sup>17</sup>. The practical sense can be understood as a sort of “feel for the game”, partially, rational partially intuitive a product of the habitus and all particularities of a given field. Is the capacity of agents to practically anticipate, having a prospective dimension<sup>18</sup>, creating various “communities of practice”<sup>19</sup>.

Without a doubt, this theoretical approach received criticism for its structure-based perspective. Recently, Jean-Louis Fabiani tried to argue in favour of Bourdieu’s apparatus, showing that the three main concepts: field<sup>20</sup>, habitus<sup>21</sup>, and capital<sup>22</sup>, can only be used as a set, as part

<sup>13</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, *La guerre des écrivains, 1940-1953*, (Fayard, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Evrik Neveu, “Bourdieu’s Capital(s): Sociologizing and Economic Concept” in Thomas Medvetz, Jeffrey J. Sallaz (edit.), *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu*, (Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 347.

<sup>15</sup> Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Pierre Bourdieu...*, p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action*, (Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> Idem, *The Logic of Practice*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 52-67.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>19</sup> Etienne Wenger, *Communities of practice. Learning, meaning and identity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Pierre Bourdieu...*, pp. 27-64

<sup>21</sup> For his analysis of the concept of field see: *Ibidem*, pp. 65-98.

of a coherent approach<sup>23</sup>. Discussing the criticism of reduction and determinism<sup>24</sup>, Fabiani shows that, for Bourdieu, any field is in a constant process of transformation, while the structure of any given field in a given timeframe is the result of all relations between agents and social institutions<sup>25</sup>. Regarding the criticism of determinism, Fabiani argues that the concept of *strategy*, by bringing back the active agent in the theoretical framework of Bourdieu, balances the tendency of understating in a determinist and rigid manner the actions of agents and limiting therefore their agency<sup>26</sup>.

Regarding knowledge production, Bourdieu's framework does imply important links between the political and intellectual fields<sup>27</sup>, while the boundaries of the of the intellectual field are very hard to map precisely<sup>28</sup>. Still, this approach has rarely been used in the field of historiography, because historians tend to point out that they have a distinct habitus compared to other disciplines, while historiography, as a research topic, as already argued previously, has been defined for a long time as a part of intellectual history or just used the classic biographical approach<sup>29</sup>.

Applying this model of Bourdieu's sociology to the field of history writing in Romania does have some epistemic difficulties and limitations. Broadly speaking, research on social sciences in Eastern Europe during the Cold War is still lacking<sup>30</sup>. The argument of Cyril Lemieux, that some researchers inspired by Bourdieu's theory do not fully comprehend its epistemic "limitations" is very relevant for this paper. Lemieux has argued that the theoretical system created by Bourdieu is not as coherent as some would like, and it has its own evolutions and development, and even some contradictions. The author observed that there are concepts of

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<sup>22</sup> For his analysis of the concept of habitus see: *Ibidem*, pp. 99-103.

<sup>23</sup> For his analysis of the concept of capital see: *Ibidem*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>24</sup> François Dosse, *La marche des idées. Histoire des intellectuels, histoire intellectuelle*, (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2003), pp. 112-115.

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Pierre Bourdieu...*, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 90.

<sup>27</sup> Christophe Charle, "The Transdisciplinary Contribution of Pierre Bourdieu to the Study of the Academic Field and Intellectuals" in Thomas Medvetz, Jeffrey J. Sallaz (edit.), *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu*, pp. 327-346.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Medvetz, "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Intellectual Life" in Thomas Medvetz, Jeffrey J. Sallaz (edit.), *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu*, pp. 454-480.

<sup>29</sup> Christophe Charle, *Homo historicus. Réflexions sur l'histoire, les historiens et les sciences sociales*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 2013), pp. 25-26.

<sup>30</sup> Adela Hîncu, "Introduction: "Peripheral Observations" and Their Observers" in Adela Hîncu, Victor Karady (edits.), *Social Sciences in the Other Europe since 1945*, Pasts. Inc., (Budapest: Central European University, 2018), pp. 1-25.

Bourdieu`s (habitus, capital) that are universally applicable, while others (field) are linked to the modern capitalist society. For this reason, concludes Lemieux, there must be other forms of organizing cultural production<sup>31</sup>. While not reflecting on this topic in particular, the argument of Lemieux raises some important questions regarding how the framework of Bourdieu`s sociology can be used for the socialist and post-socialist regimes. In such a specific context, the non-capitalist socialist regimes and capitalist postsocialism<sup>32</sup>, there are indeed limits for such approaches and contextual alterations.

This very difficult question of how cultural and intellectual activities function in a socialist regime has been tackled by Katherine Verdery, showing how the lack of a cultural market and the centralized distribution of resources in socialist Romania changed the rules and the structure of the intellectual field. As socialism works by different rules, compared to capitalism, cultural activity can be understood only by taking into the particular context. The cultural space is defined by two coordinates: political status and cultural authority. While the first is easily defined as having formal institutional power, the second is acknowledged only by other cultural actors in that particular field of cultural production. In socialism, there is a tendency of intellectuals to convert cultural capital to political status, and then of the later, by having better access to resources, to accumulate even more cultural capital<sup>33</sup>. The perspective is close to what Robert K. Merton called the “the Matthew effect”: intellectuals possessing the most cultural capital tend in return because of their privileged position to attract and concentrate increasingly cultural capital<sup>34</sup>.

Taking these broader theoretical aspects into consideration, our research will try to use the case study of historians with formal institutional power in 1985 to empirically ground institutes for Historical Research some of these various perspectives. By looking at how the agents were at the top of the intellectual field, what kind of socio-professional characteristics they possess, and what where their connections with, on the first hand, their

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<sup>31</sup> Cyril Lemieux, “The Twilight of fields: Limitations of a concept or disappearance of a historical reality?” in *Journal of Classical Sociology*, vol. 14 (4), 2014, pp. 382-402.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Fortescue, *The Communist Party and the Soviet Science*, (MacMillan Press, 1986); Jeffrey L. Roberg, *Soviet Science under Control. The Struggle for Influence*, (MacMillan Press, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu* [National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania], (București, Humanitas, 1994), pp. 47-71.

<sup>34</sup> Robert K. Merton, “The Matthew Effect” in *Science in Science*, vol. 159, no. 3810, January 1968, pp. 56-63.

own colleagues, and, on the other, with the party, some of the *specific rules* of cultural/historiographical production in late socialism can be defined more precisely.

### Deans and directors in 1985

In 1985 there were seven Institutes for historical research, five in Bucharest<sup>35</sup>, one in Cluj-Napoca<sup>36</sup> and one in Iași<sup>37</sup>, and three Faculties of history-philosophy<sup>38</sup>, each with one department of History<sup>39</sup>. Each institute was led by a director and each faculty by a dean, as described by **Table 1**. The research design of this paper implied creating a biographical database, consisting in information regarding the biography of each dean and director, active in their leadership position in 1985. Therefore, information was gathered about Ion Agrigoroaiei<sup>40</sup>, Dumitru Berciu<sup>41</sup>, Gheorghe I. Ioniță<sup>42</sup>, Camil Mureșanu<sup>43</sup>, Ștefan Pascu<sup>44</sup>, Mircea Petrescu-

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<sup>35</sup> "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History, the Institute of Archaeology, the Institute of South-East European studies, the Centre for Studies and Research on Military History and Theory and the Institute of historical and socio-political studies. The last was the former Party History Institute, coordinated by the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. Organised within the Institute of Archaeology, the Institute of Thracology had a director as well (Dumitru Berciu).

<sup>36</sup> The Institute of History and Archaeology of Cluj-Napoca.

<sup>37</sup> "A. D. Xenopol" Institute of History and Archaeology of Iași.

<sup>38</sup> In the Romanian academic system, a University is divided into Faculties, while each Faculty is made of several departments.

<sup>39</sup> See: Valentin Maier, *Învățământul superior istoric în comunism-structuri și statistici în NIȚU*, Florentina, MÜLLER, Florin, NICĂ, Remus (coord.), *Istorie și istorici la Universitatea din București, dimensiuni instituționale-proiecte intelectuale*, [History and historians at the University of Bucharest, institutional dimensions - intellectual projects], (București: Editura Universității din București, 2016), pp. 63-69.

<sup>40</sup> \*\*\*, *Manifestații științifice în "Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași"*, ianuarie-iunie 1985, p. 66, Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, [The Encyclopedia of Romanian historiography], (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978), p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Mihai Irimia, *Din activitatea Institutului de Tracologie în anul 1985 în "Thraco-Dacica"*, tomul VII, nr. 1-2, 1986, p. 174; Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, pp. 54-55; Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu, *Dumitru Berciu. O viață închinată arheologiei românești*, [Dumitru Berciu. A life dedicated to Romanian archaeology], (București: Editura Universității din București, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> National Archives of Romania, Anneli Ute Gabanyi Collection, dossier no. 211, f. 111; National Archives of Romania, AgitProp fund, dossier no. 79/1988, f. 79, v.; *O viață, un destin. Istorii știute și neștiute*, [A life, a destiny. Known and unknown histories], (București: Cartea Universitară, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> "Babeș-Bolyai" University Archives, Personnel fund. 1985-1986; Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, pp. 228-229; National Archives of Romania, AgitProp fund, dossier no. 80/1988, f. 45.

Dâmbovița<sup>45</sup>, Ion Popescu-Puțuri<sup>46</sup>, Constantin Preda<sup>47</sup>, Ștefan Ștefănescu<sup>48</sup>. We excluded from our research Gheorghe Tudor, who was the head of the Centre for Studies and Research on Military History and Theory, because there was not enough data regarding his biography.

We divided the database into the following categories: institutional position in 1985, educational background, professional career, previously held academic positions, non-academic positions, and level of internationalization. The structure of this paper reflects more or less these categories.

**Table 1. Directors and Deans in 1985**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Director/Dean</b>	<b>Specialisation</b>
Faculty of History-Philosophy, University of Bucharest	Gheorghe I. Ioniță (b. 1937)	History of the Romanian Communist Party
Faculty of History-Philosophy, "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca	Camil Mureșanu (b. 1927)	Modern history
Faculty of History-Philosophy, "A. I. Cuza" University of Iași	Ion Agrigoroaiei (b. 1936)	Contemporary history of Romania
"Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History	Ștefan Ștefănescu (b. 1929)	Medieval history
Institute of Archaeology	Constantin Preda (b. 1925)	Ancient history

<sup>44</sup> Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, pp. 253-254; "Babeș-Bolyai" University Archives, Personnel fund. 1985-1986.; National Archives of Romania, AgitProp fund, dossier no. 80/1988, f. 45.

<sup>45</sup> Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, p. 261; Victor Spinei, Nicolae Ursulescu, Vasile Cotiuță (edit.), *Orbis Praehistoriae. Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița-in memoriam*, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași, 2015.

<sup>46</sup> National Archives of Romania, Cabinet Fund. Annexes, dossier no. 164/1960, ff. 21-23; Idem, Party Household fund, dossier no. 5/1985, f. 27; Idem, Popescu-Puțuri collection, dossier no. 1, ff. 10-12.

<sup>47</sup> Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, pp. 273-274; Constantin Preda, available at: [http://www.humboldt-club.infim.ro/public\\_html/MEMBERS/PAGE\\_S/preda.htm](http://www.humboldt-club.infim.ro/public_html/MEMBERS/PAGE_S/preda.htm).

<sup>48</sup> Ștefan Ștefănescu (coord.), *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, pp. 317-318; National Archives of Romania, Cadres fund, dossier Ș/182, ff. 1-2; University of Bucharest Archives, Personnel fund, dossier 305/1985.

Institute of Thracology	Dumitru Berciu (b. 1907)	Ancient history
Institute of south-east European studies	Gheorghe I. Ioniță ( <i>ad interim</i> ) (b. 1937)	History of the Romanian Communist Party
Institute of historical and socio-political studies	Ion Popescu-Puțuri (b. 1906)	History of the Romanian Communist Party
Institute of History and Archaeology of Cluj-Napoca	Ștefan Pascu (b. 1914)	Medieval history
“A. D. Xenopol” Institute of History and Archaeology of Iași	Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița (b. 1915)	Ancient history

There are interesting links between institutions and the specialization of deans and directors. Of all nine directors and deans (there were ten positions occupied by nine historians, as Gheorghe I. Ioniță was both a dean and a director), most of them were ancient historians/archaeologists, followed by specialists in medieval history and the history of the Romanian Communist Party. As we will discuss further, this situation was very strongly connected to a number of phenomena from within and outside the Romanian historiographical field.

**Table 2. Number of deans and directors by specialisation in 1985**

<b>Specialisation</b>	<b>Number of deans and directors</b>
Ancient history/Archaeology	3
Medieval history	2
Modern history	1
Contemporary history	1
History of the Romanian Communist Party	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

As it has been already argued by previous researchers, entering the historiographical field in the last decade of socialism in Romania was a very difficult task<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, because some of those with leadership positions within the field had the tendency to keep their position for as

<sup>49</sup> See Valentin Maier, *Învățămintul istoric...*

long as possible, the age brackets for our analysed group are quite high. There were 2 deans/directors aged between 41 and 50 years old, 3 aged between 51 and 60 years old, no one aged between 61 and 70 years old, and 4 older than 70 years old. The oldest was Ion Popescu-Puțuri (79 years old in 1985) and the youngest was Gheorghe I. Ioniță (48 years old in 1985), closely followed by Ion Agrigoroaiei (49 years old in 1985). A correlation between specialisation and age brackets can be observed. Those historians working on contemporary Romanian history were younger, while archaeologists were the oldest. The exception to this pattern was Popescu-Puțuri, but his appointment as director of the Party History Institute followed different rules.

**Table 3. Age brackets<sup>50</sup> and specialisations**

<b>Dean/Director</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Specialization</b>
Ion Agrigoroaiei	49	Contemporary history
Dumitru Berciu	78	Ancient history/ Archaeology
Gheorghe I. Ioniță	48	History of the Romanian Communist Party
Camil Mureșanu	58	Modern history
Ștefan Pascu	71	Medieval history
Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița	71	Ancient history/ Archaeology
Ion Popescu-Puțuri	79	History of the Romanian Communist Party
Constantin Preda	60	Ancient history/ Archaeology
Ștefan Ștefănescu	56	Medieval history

There are different reasons for this correlation. First of all, one should look at the broader phenomena characterizing history writing during the communist period. The Romanian communist regime changed its official ideology from pro-Soviet to a nationalistic discourse. In this context, history was (re)defined and new interpretations imposed. As the contemporary history of Romania and of the Romanian Communist Party were very strongly linked, according to the official discourse, it meant that former pro-Soviet historians had to be replaced. This does not mean that other periods of history were not under the ideological pressure of the Party apparatus. Comparatively, they still had the advantage of requiring deeper professional training, such as technical skills in archaeology or medieval palaeography. There were two consequences of

<sup>50</sup> The age is calculated for the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1985.

this phenomenon. Starting from late 1950 to early 1960 (and to a certain degree up until early 1980), career advancement was faster for historians working on the history of contemporary Romania. On the other hand, their careers were much more dependent on the Party, as contemporary history was under strong ideological supervision of the Agitprop. The second part of the explanation is linked to the design of our study. It is important to point out that there were essential differences between the mandates` lengths for our group, as calculated for 1985. Gheorghe I. Ioniță and Ion Agrigoroaiei were in their first year as deans, being elected in 1985, while others had already in leadership positions for several years. This could explain as well some differences in age and specialisation.

**Table 4. Year of appointment in the leadership positions held in 1985**

<b>Dean/Director</b>	<b>The year of appointment in their leadership position</b>
Ion Agrigoroaiei	1985
Dumitru Berciu	1979
Gheorghe I. Ioniță	1985
Camil Mureșanu	1968
Ștefan Pascu	1973
Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița	1968
Ion Popescu-Puțuri	1961
Constantin Preda	1981
Ștefan Ștefănescu	1970

Therefore, it is very difficult to argue that the regime had the ability to coordinate in such some coherent manner appointments at the top of the historiographical field. The number of institutions, actors, and interested parties was very high, making a coherent approach from the Party`s perspective very difficult to manage. It is much more feasible to understand the differences in age brackets and specialization as a consequence of broader internal phenomena in the historiographical field that happened across different generations, as it will be argued further.

### **Educational background**

The high level of diversity within the analysed group can be observed in relation to their education as well. Dumitru Berciu, Ștefan Pascu, and Mircea Petru-Dâmbovița graduated before the end of the Second World War, the first two obtaining their PhD before 1945, while the latter obtaining it in 1947. Younger historians, such as Ștefan

Ștefănescu and Gheorghe I. Ioniță finished their doctorates in the 1960s, while Ion Agrigoroaiei, Camil Mureșanu and Constantin Preda did it in the 1970s. Only Ion Popescu-Puțuri had no formal historical education.

The level of academic mobility in Romanian historiography was rather low, as local institutional networks were key in career development. Only Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița worked in a different academic centre (Iași) than the one where he graduated (Bucharest). This particular case was linked to a biographical event, rather than a structural phenomenon<sup>51</sup>. If national academic mobility was low, international mobility was no different. Those who managed to do international academic research mobility did so before 1948 (Ștefan Pascu) or in Moscow afterwards (Ștefan Ștefănescu). The exception was Constantin Preda, who did a research mobility in Germany between 1968-1970, a period of quasi liberalisation by the Romanian communist regime. Broader evolution of the regime, generational trends, and opportunities were interlinked in this regard as well, as it was the hardest to do an international mobility in the 1950s than in the 1960s or 1970s.

### **Patterns of entering the historiographical field**

Patterns are very difficult to describe when considering how each historian from our group entered the historiographical field. Some of them entered in the late 1950s or early 1960s (Ion Agrigoroaiei became a lecturer in 1959 and Gheorghe Ioniță became researcher at the Party History Institute in 1960), while others were part of the field for a long time (Dumitru Berciu was a full professor already in 1945, while Ștefan Ștefănescu became a researcher in 1951).

Career advancement worked quite differently as well. Within the analysed group, only Ion Popescu-Puțuri had no academic rank or position. The others, except for Ion Agrigoroaiei, were full professors in 1985. Gheorghe I. Ioniță had the fastest career progress, managing in just 21 years to advance from a researcher at the Party History Institute to a full professor at the University of Bucharest. He was, as well, the one that, in 1985, held this academic title for least only four years.

Correlations between these aspects are difficult to point out. Without being strong, definite conclusion, we can argue that the biggest difference seems to be between contemporary history and archaeology. As previously stated, explaining this pattern as a consequence of party involvement is insufficient. A nuanced explanation must be linked to generational structures within the Romanian historiographical field. As

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<sup>51</sup> Victor Spinei, Nicolae Ursulescu, Vasile Cotiugă (edit.), *Orbis Praehistoriae...*, p. 6.

older historians working on modern and contemporary history (such as in Bucharest, Dumitru, Almaş, Vasile Maciu, or Aron Petric) retired from activity, there were more opportunities for younger historians to enter the field or to be promoted. The situation was very different for archaeologists, as they kept their leadership positions even after being officially retired (Dumitru Berciu and Mircea Petrescu-Dâmboviţa were older than the official retirement age in 1985).

### **Previously held leadership positions**

Another aspect of great importance is what leadership positions, if any, were held by the historians we analysed in our research before 1985. With the exceptions of Ion Agrigoroaiei, Gheorghe Ioniţă and Constantin Preda, all others held other leadership positions previously. The number of former deans was particularly high (Dumitru Berciu, Camil Mureşanu, Ştefan Pascu, Mircea Petrescu-Dâmboviţa, Ştefan Ştefănescu). Ştefan Pascu was the only one that held, before 1985, an even higher position within academia, being rector of “Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca. It is important to note here the exception of Ion Popescu-Puţuri, for whom the position of director of the former Party History Institute was actually rather unimportant position, comparatively with those held before, as he was in the 1950s vice-president of the State Planning Committee and ambassador to Hungary.

It can be said, therefore, that there were two different categories within the analysed group. For some, the position they held in 1985 was their first leadership position (Gheorghe I. Ioniţă, Ion Agrigoroaiei, Constantin Preda), while for others their positions in 1985 were of lesser formal institutional influence than the others they had held previously (Ştefan Pascu, Dumitru Berciu).

Another aspect to consider is mobility of leadership positions within a very small select group. It was widespread that the positions of dean of Faculty and director of the department had to be changed between two historians. For example, in 1984 Ion Agrigoroaiei (the director of the Department of History) became dean, while the former dean, Vasile Cristian, became director of the same department<sup>52</sup>. In Cluj-Napoca, leadership positions were occupied by Camil Mureşanu, Nicolae Edroiu, and Ştefan Pascu. In Bucharest, Ştefan Ştefănescu (former dean)

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<sup>52</sup> See: <http://150.uaic.ro/personalitati/istorie/vasile-cristian/>

was replaced by Gheorghe Ioniță, becoming director of the Department of Romanian History<sup>53</sup>.

A different situation was at the level of historical research institutes. In these cases, as the mandates were not limited, directors had the tendency to keep their positions as directors for many years. Ștefan Ștefănescu led the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History for 20 years (1970-1990), Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița led the “A. D. Xenopol” Institute of history and archaeology for 22 years (1968-1990) and Ion Popescu-Puțuri led the Party History Institute/Institute of historical and socio-political studies for 29 years (1961-1990). It is noteworthy that all three of them were changed from their leadership positions only after the fall of communism in 1990.

There are as well cases of holding more than one single leadership position at the same time. In 1985, Gheorghe I. Ioniță was both the dean of the Faculty of history philosophy in Bucharest and the director of the Institute of South-East European Studies, Ștefan Ștefănescu was leading both the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History and the Department of History within the Faculty, and Ștefan Pascu was director of the Institute of history and archaeology and the head of the Department of History in Cluj-Napoca. Two historians from the analysed group had, before 1985, at the same time two top-level leadership positions. Ștefan Ștefănescu was the dean of the Faculty while being director of the institute, while Ștefan Pascu held the position of rector while being the director of the history institute of Cluj-Napoca.

This was a direct consequence of two main phenomena. First of all, it is important to point out that in all academic systems, there is a strong connection between symbolic capital and holding an institutional position<sup>54</sup>. Because of this interlink, most of those who acceded to institutional power had, at the same time, a strong symbolic position within the field, which is expressed, in most cases, by being, at least, a full professor. Symbolic capital and institutional formal position are therefore very strongly interconnected. Secondly, the particular case of socialist Romania in the 1980s had a direct impact on this internal logic of the field. As the number of full professors was rapidly declining in the Romanian

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<sup>53</sup> In March 1985 the two Departments of History at the University of Bucharest (Romanian History and Universal History) were unified into one single department of History.

<sup>54</sup> Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență...*, pp. 47-71. Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). Françoise Waquet, *Respublica academica. Rituels universitaires et genres du savoir (XVII-XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2010).

historiographical field, especially starting from 1980, strategies for acquiring enough symbolic capital were decreasing in number, making it very difficult for replacements at the top of the field. Because of these two phenomena, those historians that had strong symbolic capital already could move easily from one top position to another. There was another important particularity, as well. Having strong connections with the Romanian Communist Party was of great help, as it was the case of Gheorghe I. Ioniță.

### **Internationalisation**

Analysing the degree of internationalisation is very hard, especially in the very complex context of socialist Romania. Data regarding this aspect is particularly difficult to operationalize. Still, the general context was one of a very low level of internationalisation, as the socialist regime gradually reduced all opportunities for intellectuals to engage in international academic exchanges of any sort. It is important to point out two different perspectives regarding internationalisation. First of all, there was a certain generational difference between those historians who managed to acquire connections outside socialist Romania during the 1960s-1970s, when the regime was in its quasi-liberal period, and those who had to develop their careers after 1971/1974, when it was getting progressively harder to participate in the international epistemic community. Secondly, being part of the international epistemic community had a role in acquiring symbolic capital for the national field. Because the historiographical field was structurally dependent on the resources allocated by the socialist state, it can be argued that being part of an international academic community of peers became more important.

One argument can be derived by analysing how historians described their own biographies. With few exceptions, it can be easily seen that it was almost a pattern to underline the strong connections with the international historical profession. The reason we hypothesize is linked to how symbolic capital and the intellectual field work in a socialist regime. As the role of the Party was increasingly becoming more important, these international connections were a strategy for historians of proving that their position within the national historiographical field were validated by an external, theoretically objective, structure. It was, in a way, a strategy of external legitimation. On the other hand, being active internationally was a way used by some historians to promote themselves as “professional historians”, in comparison with “Party historians”.

We can conclude therefore, that internationalisation structures the field in two different ways. First of all, it divides between those inside the

classical academic field (academic research institutes and universities) and those closer to the Party apparatus. Secondly, it creates a hierarchical structure, which became, in this context, even more monopolised by a small number of historians.

There are two other aspects to consider in this regard. First of all, to acquire institutional power, having a high degree of internationalisation was not a definite requirement. As it can be easily seen, especially for historians working on the history of the Romanian Communist Party, other strategies were much more viable. Secondly, holding a strong institutional position did not mean always becoming more visible on the international epistemic stage. For the same historians as mentioned previously, their position within the national field did not transcend directly to being considered by historians from other countries as legitimate intellectual partners.

### **Memory and intellectual lineage**

How these historians were perceived in the memory of the field is important for two reasons: how the intellectual lineages are working in the Romanian historiography across generations and how did they vary, and what is the relation between mentorship, lineage, epistemic innovations and “historiographical schools”. As this is a very broad topic, and it is not the aim of this study to describe it in detail, we will focus more on what kind of memory the members of our analysed group had/have, within the Romanian historiographical field, and what does that tell us about the field and its structural characteristics and evolutions.

There are three main sources relevant for this kind of memory. First of all, there is the institutional memory, most of the times signed by those from the same institution as the presented historian. As it is very often the case, these materialise in anniversary publications<sup>55</sup>. This type of memory is, generally speaking trans-generational. Secondly, there is the generational memory. It is a custom for historians from the same generation to present the achievements of another. The third case is as well trans-generational, and it includes the memory presented by the disciples of a given historian.

In our research, we can point out that the level of variation is very high. There are still conclusions that can be relevant, such as the very big difference between very present historians in all types of memory, such as Mircea, Petrescu-Dâmbovița, and those almost absent, such as Gheorghe

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<sup>55</sup> Françoise Waquet, “Les <<Mélanges>>: Honneur et gratitude dans l’université contemporaine” in *Revue d’histoire moderne & contemporaine*, no. 53-3, 2006, pp. 100-121.

I. Ioniță. If Ștefan Pascu, Ștefan Ștefănescu<sup>56</sup>, Ion Agrigoroaiei<sup>57</sup>, Mircea Petrescu-Dâmbovița, Dumitru Berciu, and Constantin Preda<sup>58</sup> are well present in the memory of the field, Gheorghe I. Ioniță<sup>59</sup> and Ion Popescu-Puțuri are not present. This is most certainly linked to how contemporary history in general was perceived by other members of the historiographical field, in the 1980s and after the fall of communism.

## Conclusions

The present paper's objective was to analyse the historiographical field in late socialist Romania, by looking as a case study, at the historians with formal institutional power in 1985. Conclusions point out that, in the specific context of Romanian intellectual and historiographical milieu, the top of the field was getting increasingly less numerous, as a consequence of both keeping positions of power for longer or changing one position of influence to another, and as well because of the decreasing size of the field itself. Still, as this paper argued, explaining the characteristics of the analysed group as a consequence of political intrusion is not sufficient, and other factors must be considered as well, such as: generational and trans-generational trends, the structure and rules particular to the field, broader evolution of the intellectual and political field in communist Romania.

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<sup>56</sup> Tudor Teoteoi, Bogdan Murgescu, Șarolta Solcan (edit.), *Fațetele istoriei. Existențe, identități, dinamici. Omagiu academicianului Ștefan Ștefănescu*, [Faces of history. Existences, identities and dynamics. Hommage to Ștefan Ștefănescu], (București: Editura Universității din București, 2000); Luca Cristian, Ionel Cândea, *Studia Varia in Honorem Professoris Ștefan Ștefănescu Octogenarii*, (București, Brăila: Editura Academiei Române & Editura Istros, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> Cătălin Turliuc, Gavriil Preda, Ilie Manole (coord.), *Clipe de viață. Prof. univ. dr. Ion Agrigoroaiei la 75 de ani*, [Moments of life. Professor doctor Ion Agrigoroaiei at 75], (Ploiești: Editura Karta-Graphic, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> Alexandru Suceveanu, *Constantin Preda* in "Dacia", XL-XLII, 1996-1998, pp. 485-396. Alexandru Barnea, *Constantin Preda (1 noiembrie 1925-28 martie 2008)* in "Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie", tomul 59-60, 2008-2009, pp. 273-288.

<sup>59</sup> With the exception of several articles published in: Gheorghe Ioniță, *O viață, un destin...*



# The Evolution of the Faculty of History at University of Bucharest (1970-1989).

## Case Study: A look into the professionalization of history graduates through the analysis of study programmes

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**Abstract:** *The Evolution of the Faculty of History at University of Bucharest (1970-1989). Case Study: A look into the professionalization of history graduates through the analysis of study programmes.* In this article I will analyse the evolution of the Faculty of History within the University of Bucharest from 1970-1989, from the perspective of the admission process, the changes that have occurred among the study programs, the number of students and the provision of the skills necessary for graduates to become good professionals in the domain.

**Keywords:** history, history-philosophy, students, education, Romanian Communist Party

**Abstract:** *Evoluția Facultății de Istorie a Universității din București (1970-1989). Studiu de caz: O privire asupra profesionalizării absolvenților de istorie prin analiza programelor de studiu.* În acest articol voi analiza evoluția Facultății de Istorie din cadrul Universității din București între anii 1970-1989, din perspectiva procesului de admitere, modificările care au avut loc în programele de studiu, numărul de studenți și modalitatea în care au fost dezvoltate abilitățile necesare ale absolvenților pentru a deveni buni profesioniști ai domeniului.

**Cuvinte cheie:** istorie, istorie-filozofie, studenți, educație, Partidul Comunist Român

The instauration of the communist regime in Romania led to major transformations in society, public institutions, and collective mentalities. One of the most significant and long-term hits was that dealt with the educational system. This came once the communists had succeeded in gaining total power over the country. Thus, we can characterize the educational system during the communist period as being:

“- monopolized by the state and its use for the ideological control of education;  
 - a centrally planned evolution of the system and its subservience to the options and preferences of those involved in its functioning (professors, pupils, students);  
 - the emphasis of quantitative development;  
 - the use of the educational system as an instrument of social engineering (a factor for the regulation of social, professional and geographical mobility of individuals; the substitution of its general formative with a political and economic one, aimed at creating a workforce, etc.)”<sup>1</sup>.

In the following, we will analyse the evolution of the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest between 1970 and 1989. We will look over the admission process, changes made to study programmes, the number of students, and the offering of required competences for graduates to make them good professionals in their fields. In addition, special attention will be given to the educational plans and the role seen by the party for graduates. In this endeavour we will mostly use information found in the archives of the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, of the Ministry of National Education, and the National Institute of Statistics. From an epistemological point, we will rely on the quantitative method, analysing the number of students, as well as the educational plans by looking at the share of various types of courses.

Transformations were brought on 2 August 1948 by *Decree No.175* for the reformation of education<sup>2</sup>, which meant educating the youth in the spirit of popular democracy and training media and higher staff of specialists and the creation of socialist society. Moreover, through this decree, universities and polytechnics were put on the same level, subordinated to the Ministry of Public Education, while some institutes could answer to their relevant ministries, in a case by case scenario. The imposed model was of Soviet origin, working on single manuals, most of them translated from Russian or written by the preferred academia, as was the case of Mihail Roller’s *Manual of History*. To both transform society and to create a new man, learning Russian became mandatory starting from 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

In the same period, the University of Bucharest underwent a series of changes regarding its structure, including its name, taking on the designation C.I. Parhon. This only changed when some of its faculties

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<sup>1</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)*, (Iași: Polirom, 2010), p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Decree No. 175 for the reformation of education as was re-edited in *Antologia legilor învățământului din România*, (București: Institutul de Științe ale Educației, 2004), pp. 342-345.

became independent<sup>3</sup> and some of the professors were purged. As a result of the 1948 reformation of education, the history department was reorganized leading to the creation of the Faculty of History and Geography<sup>4</sup>. In 1950, the faculty was broken off into two independent schools<sup>5</sup>, and for the first time, the Faculty of History became an independent institution and will remain as such until 1977, when it will be merged with philosophy. This new change influenced specializations as well, and students could get double degrees: history-philosophy and philosophy-history<sup>6</sup>. The institutional development of the Faculty can be divided into several periods; in 1961-1962, it was comprised of: the Department of Romanian History, the Department of History of the USSR and Popular Democracies, the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, the Department of Medieval, Modern and Contemporary History, and the Department of Archives. After the merger, in 1979, there were both a department of Romanian History and one of Universal History, however, in 1989, due to the ongoing economic crisis, these two will be melded into one of Romanian and Universal History<sup>7</sup>.

For some time, admission into higher education was based on the contents of their files rather than on their knowledge. This, however, changed during the 1970s, when higher education suffered yet another change, it was politechnized. Thus, we can observe more emphasis being put on technical fields to the detriment of the university pedagogical and juridical, in accordance with the directives coming from Nicolae Ceausescu.

Table 1. The evolution of the number of students based on their field of study:

		1960/1961	1970/1971	1980/1981
Technical		30.486	53.592	124.006
	Industrial	15.552	32.594	90.675
	Transports	1.075	1.106	1.877
	Constructions and Architecture	5.563	10.818	19.163

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<sup>3</sup> See the case of the Medical School.

<sup>4</sup> Ovidiu, Bozgan, *Universitatea din București. Scurt istoric*, (București: Editura Universității din București, 1994), p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 132.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

	Agricultural and Silvic	8.306	9.074	12.283
Medical-Pharmaceutical		7.625	9.898	23.381
Economics		5.085	21.016	21.919
Law		3.101	5.901	3.863
University-pedagogical		23.752	58.108	17.393
Artistic		1.230	3.370	2.207
Total		71.989	151.885	192.769

Source: *Învățământul în România - date statistice*, București, 1996, p.102-103

The available data illustrates that in just 20 years the number of technical students became four times bigger, answering the party's need for a more polytechnic-oriented society. This can be clearly observed through the nearly total transformation of theoretical high-schools into industrial ones. This type of thinking is evident from the new education law passed in 1978. Here, even in its introductory chapter, it underlines that "schools are built on the principle of politechnization, the tight combination of work, education and research - essential factors in the construction of socialism and communism in our country for the progress and civilization of humanity"<sup>8</sup>.

The 1980s proved to be extremely difficult for Romanian education and for society as a whole. The collective effort imposed on Romanian society, through massive reductions in all fields was also felt in higher education. In the span of just two years, the number of students plummeted by 25%.

As time passed, the role of the file during admission decreased and was eventually entirely replaced by an evaluation of the candidate's knowledge. Thus, in the second half of the 1960s "graduates of mid-technical schools, those with their baccalaureate examination or its equivalents" could enrol into higher education, while for distance learning "working people with a highschool baccalaureate diploma" could enrol<sup>9</sup>.

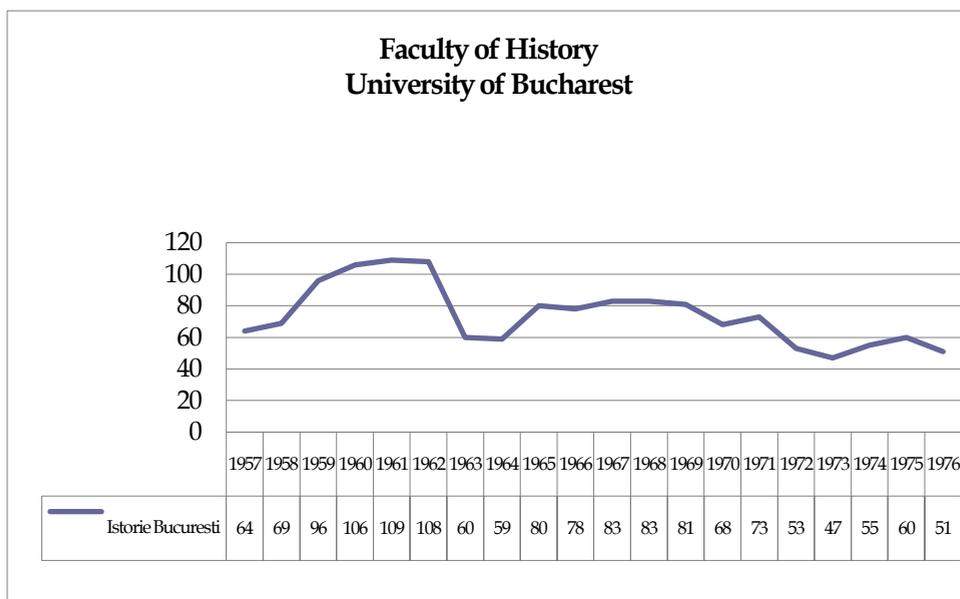
During the 1970s and 1980s, admissions for evening and distance learning courses, including for history candidates had to also provide proof that they had a job. Thus, this type of education was aimed at

<sup>8</sup> Education Law No. 28 from 21 December, "Buletinul Oficial" nr. 113/26 dec. 1978.

<sup>9</sup> *Admiterea în învățământul superior, 1968* edited by "Revista Învățământului superior", București, 1968, p. 61.

training people that were already working. This worked hand-in-hand with the regime’s tendency, especially during the 1980s, of lowering the number of places available in normal courses. Another condition for those that wanted to study philosophy, history, and law, either normal or evening courses, was that “they could enrol only on the basis of a recommendation from their party or youth organization”<sup>10</sup>. However, this was not the same as the previous practice of the candidate’s file during the 1950s, but rather part of a formality linked to the high level of ideologization of such subjects.

Graph 1: Tables containing students admitted in year I day courses<sup>11</sup>



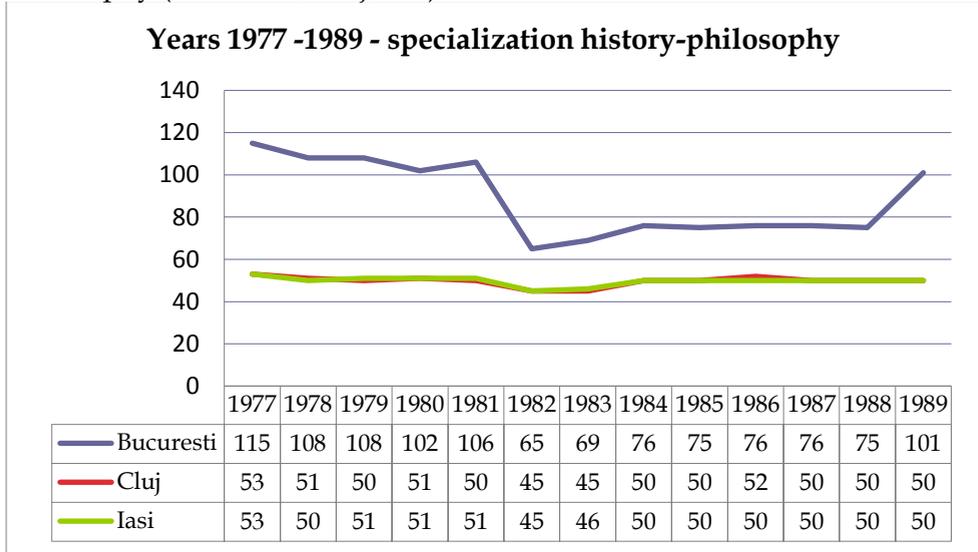
Source: Archives of the Ministry of National Education and Archives of the National Institute of Statistics

As we can see in the above graphic, the highest number of registered students in history at the University of Bucharest, enrolled in day courses, was between 1959 and 1962. Another period of growth can be noticed from 1965 to 1971, and during the eight-decade it stabilized around 50-60 students admitted in their first year.

<sup>10</sup> *Admiterea în învățământul superior, 1980* edited by “Forum”, București, 1980, p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> This was based on information found in the yearly reports of departments of higher education institutes as discussed in the Archives of the Ministry of National Education and the Archives of the National Institute of Statistics.

Graph 2: Table of students admitted in year I, day courses, History-Philosophy (Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi):



Source: Archives of the Ministry of National Education and Archives of the Institute of National Statistics

We have made a comparative analysis of the enrolled students at Romania’s three most important universities at the Faculty of History-Philosophy between 1977 and 1989. From looking at the school programmes<sup>12</sup>, it can be observed that during the 1980s there were around 80 to 90 places available at a national level, and this level was never exceeded, the Faculty of History and Philosophy in Bucharest faced a drastic reduction of the allotted places for admission starting with 1982, without ever recovering to previous numbers.

The analysis of school enrolment figures from the presented graphics was made on several levels. Firstly, we looked at the evolution of these figures between 1956 and 1989. There was a steady decline of admitted students during the mid-50s, but this tendency changed from 1959 onwards, marking a significant increase. This was true not only for history, as it marked an increase in the entire educational system<sup>13</sup>. The tendency remained very much the same until the first half of the 1960s, reaching an average of 150 students enrolled in their first year. We can also notice that when compared with the Five-Year Plan approved by the Council of Ministers, there was a positive difference, which was usually signed on by the minister.

<sup>12</sup> The Archives of the Ministry of Education.

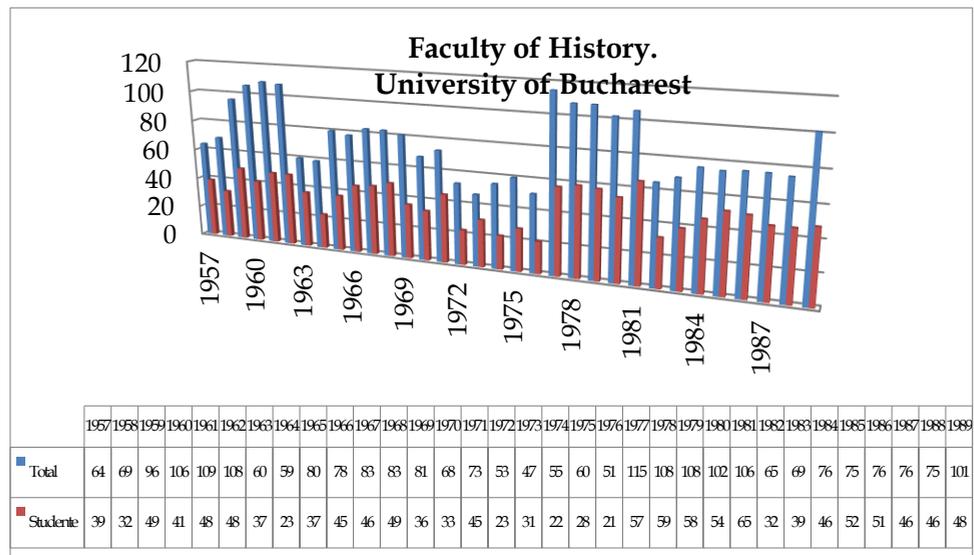
<sup>13</sup> *Învățământul superior*, Archives of the Ministry of National Education, File 231.

The middle of the next decade, the 1970s, brought about another change in the school enrolment figures, namely, a decrease in the number allotted to history, an average of only 100 places on a yearly basis. The beginning of the 1980s did not only bring the creation of the history-philosophy specialization, but also a decline in the aforementioned figures. Up until that moment the minister would sign for the approval of supplementary places, yet now it seems he would rather make negative adjustments.

The second level of this analysis is comprised by the competition of the admission examination. Despite the fact that we have very little data on this, which impedes in-depth research on the topic, we can affirm that there was high competition estimated at 4-5 people for a single place.

Regarding the gender representation of those who were admitted, we can notice a bigger share was given to males during the 1950s. However, during the following decade, in the 1960s, this very much changed and there was more of a balance, over 50% of admitted students at the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest were female, more relevant figures on this can be seen in the following graphic.

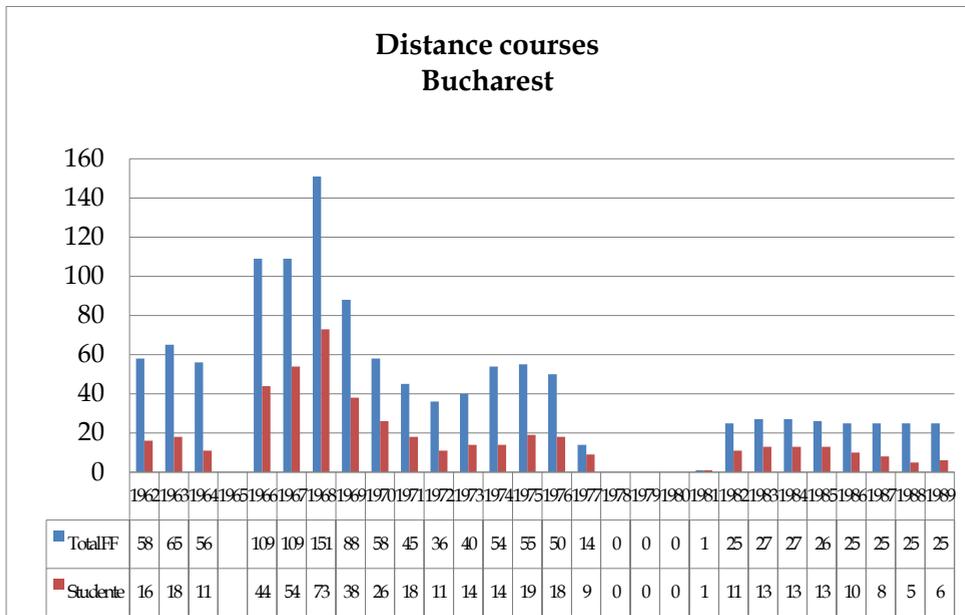
Graph 3: The number of admitted students at the Faculty of History - gender distribution



Source: Archives of the Ministry of National Education and Archives of the National Institute of Statistics

In the following graph we can see the distribution of the school enrolment figures for history (history-philosophy between 1982 and 1989), at evening courses at the University of Bucharest<sup>14</sup>. This form of education enjoyed real success during the 1960s, however, during the 1970s the number of those admitted decreased, and between 1978 and 1981 there were no more places put in competition. Evening courses were reintroduced in 1982, in the context of school enrolment figures decreasing in Romanian higher education at a constant pace. However, evening and distance courses became essential and were given much emphasis by the regime. When it comes to gender distribution of admitted students, we can again notice that males dominated. Thus, we can state that distance course was indeed more attractive for men, while normal school was preferred by females.

Graph 4: The number of enrolled students at distance courses at the Faculty of History:



Source: Archives of the Ministry of National Education and Archives of the National Institute of Statistics

<sup>14</sup> The presented data begin from 1962. For the previous period we could not identify information. Also, for 1965 we could not find any data.

Admission requirements for history changed on a couple of occasions during the communist period, based on the transformations imposed by the regime. Given its ideological importance, history attracted a high number of people for admission, which proved it was a specialization of big interest among academic fields of study. However, its merger with philosophy would prove to be an uninspired decision, quickly abandoned after 1989.

During the period we focused, our research on, educational plans suffered constant changes, as well as mergers of various specializations, as we were the aforementioned case of history and philosophy. Thus, at the beginning of the 1970s, the history programme was five years long<sup>15</sup>, which will be later reduced to four. In 1977, the merger with philosophy and the creation of a double degree came as an answer to the regime's call for more university-pedagogical efficient study programmes. Their elaboration was supervised by the Ministry/Party and by historians to offer the graduates certain competences and abilities which would answer the call of communist society. Thus, the Faculty of History had to train specialists in fields such as education, research, politics (Party work, journalism, and cultural activists):

- "Professors for secondary education and high school for the teaching of History, Philosophy, Political Economy, Economic Education, Socio-political Education, as well as Logics and Psychology at pedagogical high schools. Moreover, for the teaching of Scientific-Materialism and Revolutionary-Humanism (at pedagogical and sanitary high schools), of production and Work Organization of Elementary Law and constitution, etc., training was ensured by the system of theoretical disciplines, pedagogical practice, social-political practice, as well as other connected activities (scientific circles, political-ideological work, and propaganda, etc.)

- Scientific researchers in history, philosophy, sociology, pedagogy, and psychology.

- Graduates can work as cultural activists and in publishing, in laboratories focusing on socio-humanities, and other similar fields"<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, graduates of the Faculty of History (history/philosophy from 1977) could become professors, researchers and could also work in the press, publishing or as party activists. To determine if these people managed to acquire the necessary skills for such occupations, we will analyse the educational plans. The evolution of the share of disciplines within educational plans can be observed in the following table:

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<sup>15</sup> It closed at the beginning of the 1970s.

<sup>16</sup> Archives of the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest (AFIUB), Fond Secretariat, Files 1975-1980, unnumbered.

Table 3: The share of discipline in school plans, Faculty of History (UB), 1970-1989:

	General Courses (including auxiliary disciplines)	Philosophy	Specialized Courses	Ideological Courses	Party History	Pedagogy/ Pedagogical Practice
History (programme - 5 years)	54%	-	19%	11%	5%	11%
History (programme - 4 years)	50%	-	20%	10%	5%	14%
History/ Philosophy (4 years)	48%	25% (philosophy)	10%	7%	3%	8%

Source: Archives of the University of Bucharest and Archives FIUB

Thus, we can see that the base disciplines, containing general history courses, presented in a chronological manner, from prehistory and up to the contemporary period, represent on average half of the courses. This only changed slightly after the double-degree was introduced<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, this decrease can be observed more clearly by the number of special courses<sup>18</sup>, which were comprised of necessary disciplines for a student to be specialized on a certain period and / or historical topic. Once the double degree was introduced, the number of such courses decreased by 50%, which opened the possibility of real specialization. Thus, there was a place for “optional courses (third and fourth years), as well as research internships in the fields (second and third years), and scientific circles, etc”<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Examples of general courses: Ancient Universal History, Ancient Romanian History, Archaeology, Medieval Romanian History, Medieval Universal History, Modern History of Romania, Modern Universal History, Contemporary History of Romania, Contemporary Universal History. AFIUB, Fond Secretariat, Files 1970-1989, unnumbered.

<sup>18</sup> Examples of special courses: Special course in Ancient Universal and Romanian History, Special course in Medieval Romanian and Universal History, Special course in Romanian and Universal History, Special course in Contemporary Romanian and Universal History, Historic Demography, Political Parties in Modern and Contemporary Romania, etc. AFIUB, Fond Secretariat, Files 1970-1989, unnumbered.

<sup>19</sup> AFIUB, Fond Secretariat, Files 1975-1980, unnumbered.

Ideology courses<sup>20</sup> can also be found in educational plans, having a share on average of 10 to 15%, thus in the case of a double degree they would make up around half of all special courses.

Another important area of training history students, especially in the case of those who would become professors, was that of pedagogical practice<sup>21</sup>. Even if the share of hours allocated to this had diminished, the total amount allotted had remained a fairly high one<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, professional practice was also given much importance when it came to preparing future graduates, such as archaeological work, practice in museums, archives, research institutes, in Party related work, pioneer and school camps, as well as communist youth organizations<sup>23</sup>.

The introduction of a double degree meant that philosophy courses became an important component of the general courses, which made up around a quarter of their total number, with most focusing on ideological issues. In this regard, specialization training future professors which also had "in the 1987/1988 school year Philosophy as a discipline for the second year, the volume of hours of this discipline was increased by one hour of course and one hour of seminar to also encompass the issue of Scientific-Materialism and Revolutionary Humanism Education. The discipline was named Philosophy. Scientific-Materialism and Revolutionary Humanism Education"<sup>24</sup>.

Another important aspect for gaining the necessary competence to become good professionals was agricultural practices, which debuted at the beginning of the university year with two to four weeks of related work, which was supposed to offer students skills in: vegetables, fruit, grapes, potatoes, sugar bee, corn harvesting, as well as sorting and siloing of potatoes, sorting and conserving vegetables, etc. This type of education can be seen as a form of improving organized and political educative work. There was a period when the Faculty of History managed to

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<sup>20</sup> Disciplines such as: Scientific Materialism (scientific and revolutionary humanism materialism), Political Economy, Political Philosophy and Party History.

<sup>21</sup> In the 1980s, theoretically all graduates would become professors for at least a period of three years, as a result of repartition. However, there were special cases when a certain number of students would be exempt from this phase.

<sup>22</sup> For example, during the 1980s a high number of pedagogical practice hours – 180 hours per year – third year and fourth. AFIUB, Fond Secretariat, Files 1980-1989, unnumbered.

<sup>23</sup> During the 1986/1987 university year there were 504 hours of professional and social political practice planned, as opposed to the early part of the decade when there were only 300 (years I – II). AFIUB. Fond Secretariat, Files 1986, unnumbered.

<sup>24</sup> AFIUB, Fond Secretariat, Files 1975-1989, unnumbered.

change agricultural work to archaeological practice, thanks to the dean's Gheorghe Ionita political connections.

By going through the already mentioned educational plans, students were supposed to become good professionals such as professors, researchers, and political activists. For the last category, competences were to be acquired over the span of courses as follows: "students acquire fundamental knowledge in history, philosophy, sociology, and psycho-pedagogy, knowledge with an applied character and the necessary practical skills, capabilities for critical analysis and interpretation of historical and socio-political literature, a combative and militant spirit. Their entire training is organized and occurs based on the materialistic dialectic and historical conception, on the principles of scientific socialism, on the creative spirit that defines the policies of the RCP for the edification of a multilateral developed and advanced socialist society towards communism"<sup>25</sup>.

The introduction of the double-degree for the more efficient running of the educational process and the use of students in multiple fields eventually proved to be a bad one. The Party's own decisions would eventually reach this conclusion themselves. Thus, in the 1989 analysis was made at the level of the Central Committee, the Agitprop Section stated:

"- the introduction of a double degree has severely diminished the training possibilities of students, both in the field of history and of philosophy;

- none of the graduates of history philosophy was assigned in these years to teach philosophy;

- the share of history within history philosophy is under the requirements for the training of graduates needed for the teaching of History of Romania and Universal History, and the share of philosophy and other social sciences disciplines is small in comparison with their share at high-school level;

- the possibilities for specialization in dialectic and historical materialism and contemporary philosophical thinking have diminished, more so, there are traditional subjects in our historiography that are insufficiently studied"<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> ANIC, Fond CC al PCR, secția Agitație și Propagandă, Dosar 131/1989, f. 10-11.

Our analysis illustrates that the decision of introducing a double degree was an erroneous one and the manner in which the educational plans were devised was not capable of covering all competences the students were required to gain. Furthermore, the measure proved itself to be inefficient, since none of the graduates of history philosophy ever ended up teaching philosophy in high schools. The proposal coming after this analysis referred to the fact that "the necessary number of cadres cannot be trained through a double degree in four years of study, in these conditions it is necessary that in the future the training of professors should be in one degree of history"<sup>27</sup>.

The transformations imposed on history throughout the communist period have led to its transformation into an ideological field. From the History Handbook of Roller to the history supervised by Mircea Musat and Ion Ardeleanu and its loyalty towards Nicolae Ceausescu's cult of personality, the better part of the research methodology and knowledge gained during the communist period has been erased. This is reflected at the level of university programmes, which served towards the creation of a new generation of historians and professors, which were supposed to transmit or research history at a different level. The creation of the double degree at the University of Bucharest proves to be a totally flawed decision. Despite the presence of some highly respectable and well-trained professors, in the end they were unable to change this direction, which ultimately failed to bring the expected results, namely, the professionalization of history.

All these changes undergone by study programmes and Romanian historiography are very well synthesized by professor Mihail Berza in 1976:

"Through the historical context, which I will not analyse now, for a quarter of a century, Romanian historiography has evolved outside the University. Today, after integration, which again I will not judge, the University must once more take back its place as the motor of historiographical development and efforts in this sense are not lacking. There has been much discussion about the modernization of Romanian historical education. However, how can we have a true modernization, not in the sense of bringing each professor up to date, not even in the sense of a new perspective in existing courses, but in that of a broader opening towards new historical disciplines, towards those that today

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem.*

renew our historical understanding, with a handful of students, divided in as many groups as there are historic periods, to make place for all and not die of inanition? Without students there is no renewal and without developing historical education in secondary education within the necessary limits, to absorb graduates, you cannot have students. The biggest loss would be to society, but the University and Romanian historical research would also lose<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Professor Mihai Berza. The quote is from a conference entitled The educational value of history and its place in teaching, conference held in March 1976 at the Academy of Social and Political Sciences of RSR. Andrei Pippidi, *M. Berza - Pentru o istorie a vechii culturi românești*, București, Editura Eminescu, 1985, p. XI-XII).

# The Alternative Economy: Informal Exchanges and Criminal Activities from the perspective of the Communist regime's institutional framework\*

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**Abstract:** *The Alternative Economy: Informal Exchanges and Criminal Activities from the perspective of the Communist regime's institutional framework.* Shortages plagued Romanian communism from the very beginning to its inevitable downfall in 1989. People developed strategies to overcome it, based on informal exchange, creating an alternative economic system. Many of these activities involved stealing from the workplace, embezzling, abuse of position, and smuggling. It also involves a certain level of trust between individuals, allowing them to co-operate despite the risks. The authorities tried through surveillance and sting operations to reduce the extent of these activities, which were hindering the official economy. They went as far as infiltrating queues to gather information on the state of mind of the population.

**Key words:** *shortage, 'blat', alternative economy, Miliția, second economy, informal exchange*

**Rezumat:** *Economia alternativă: schimburi informale și activități criminale din perspectiva cadrului instituțional al regimului comunist.* Penuria a fost una dintre caracteristicile de bază ale comunismului românesc pe tot parcursul său, de la instaurarea regimului și până la inevitabila sa prăbușire în 1989. Oamenii au dezvoltat strategii pentru a o depăși, bazate pe schimburi informale, dând naștere unui sistem economic alternativ. Multe activități implicau furtul de la locul de muncă, delapidări, abuzul poziției sau chiar traficul. De asemenea, era necesar și un anumit nivel de încredere între indivizi, care să le permită să colaboreze în ciuda riscurilor. Autoritățile au încercat să restrângă fenomenul prin acțiuni de supraveghere și flagrante, deoarece afecta economia oficială. Au recurs inclusiv la

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infiltrarea cozilor de la magazine pentru a culege informații despre starea de spirit a populației. În acest articol propunem conceptul umbrelă al 'economiei alternative' care să cuprindă și să descrie aceste fenomene.

**Cuvinte cheie:** penurie, 'blat', economie alternativă, Miliția, economie secundară, schimb informal

### Introduction

Andrei had been standing in line for five hours, hoping he would be able to finally buy milk for his family. This was not his first time this week and from the position in the queue it did not seem that it would his last. It was frustrating, since the other people talked about fresh merchandise that had been brought early that morning. This Andrei was a fictitious character, but his experience was most certainly lived by someone in Communist Romania. Such episodes can be identified with relative ease in both archival documents and in the stories of interviewees.

Shortage was an inherent trait of communist regimes. It influenced the economy and society, becoming part of everyday life in Romania. It was felt by people in terms of consumption and services, impacting on quantity and quality the same, going as far as living conditions and work life. Shortage was the result of a centrally planned economy and a system incapable of managing economic and social issues efficiently. One truth derived from this historical experience is that it is impossible to plan or control people's needs through so-called scientific means. This, in turn, led to the unapproved creation of an alternative economic system. While it often operated against resources of the state, it was always outside the law and with officially acceptable social norms.

Historiography offers us several theories for explaining the origins of shortage and its impact on everyday life under communism. Firstly, we should mention Pavel Câmpeanu's interpretation, which stresses on intent, presenting it as a coercive strategy used by authorities to control the population<sup>1</sup>. While, indeed, the shortage put a strain on everyday life, there is far too little evidence in the regime's documents that this was part of a well-thought-out strategy. We agree with Câmpeanu's assertion that it generated social tensions, however, as this paper aims to illustrate, old interactions were replaced by a new kind of trust, based on a legitimate, mutual, but clandestine need to overcome shortages.

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<sup>1</sup> Pavel Câmpeanu, *România: Coada pentru hrană. Un mod de viață* (București: Editura Litera, 1994).

Secondly, we have the widely established interpretation that the shortage was the result of the system's flaws. The regime was focused on investments in the heavy industry sector and increasing rates of accumulation, very often neglecting consumer goods and services. While most European communist countries tried to reform their economies and societies in later decades, to a certain extent, Romania mostly kept in line with the principles of Stalinist modernization. Other than the Soviets, Romania was the only other country to fully collectivize its agriculture. When the global economy was moving towards a post-industrial trend, Romania was heavily investing in metallurgy and other oil-based enterprises. This led to inefficiency in selling obsolete products abroad, eventually to a cash drain, and to the economic crisis of the 1980s. Furthermore, the regime's tight grip hindered initiative and innovation, and the rotation of cadres during the last decade only led to an even more inefficient bureaucracy.

Instances of endemic shortage can be identified as far back as the first two decades of communism in Romania. While nostalgics would have us think that the late '60s and '70s were a golden age, this could not be farther from the truth. Documents created by the regime itself illustrate such a reality, in which local and regional bureaucrats were unable to find palpable solutions. This was mostly due to their ideological conditioning, but it also stemmed from the inflexibility of the planned economy, which left fewer options as one went down the chain of command. In this study, we will be focusing on how shortages impacted society and how this led to involvement in informal exchange and the creation of an alternative economic system.

Our research is based mostly on documents found in the archives, especially those of the Securitate and those kept under the care of the National Archives section in Cluj. We have looked over informative notes and bulletins focusing on the state of mind of the population in Cluj County. These were written by officers of the secret police or informants imbedded in queues. Moreover, they contain a lot of details on the operations of the Miliția, which still has most files classified. Starting from the examples identified in the documents, we can construct an image of how certain exchanges worked in the alternative economy and even some of the extent of such activities. Of course, there are limitations and traps to this approach. Mainly, we must keep in mind that the authorities were the ones telling the story with their own objectives. Thus, we are reading how the regime saw the alternative economy and how it saw fit to deal with it in the future. Documents from the National Archives are not as hostile and are rather focused on how the

bureaucracy worked. Yet, we can identify some local cases, as well as how shortage came to be the main characteristic of economic life.

Interviews are one rich source, but they also raise a large number of methodological issues. Individuals are sceptical in sharing experiences of informal exchange, especially when recorded, but were friendlier when involved in a relaxed conversation. Alena Ledeneva associated the reaction with an attempt at preserving their public self, as law-abiding and moral citizens<sup>2</sup>. However, this is contradictory, as Katherine Verdery believes that those involved in the alternative economy hold pride due to a sense of personal resistance<sup>3</sup>.

The Russian language has the word 'blat' to explain or illustrate a broad set of behaviours and interactions between individuals. These usually involve grey or illegal activities, condemned by authorities and official discourse. Alena Ledeneva has written extensively on the subject, bringing into attention both the characteristics of 'blat' and the methodological limits<sup>4</sup>. Both Ledeneva and Sheila Fitzpatrick have linked the term to a sort of 'second economy', a system functioning in parallel with the official distribution<sup>5</sup>. It seems that those who entered 'blat'-based relationships got caught up in a vicious circle, as it was always impossible to establish the value of an exchange<sup>6</sup>. Yet, it was far more complex, as 'blat' could be used as a means of gaining or maintaining social status. There were three types of people involved in 'blat'. Firstly, there were those with social skills who could easily manipulate others, allowing them to create large networks. Then there were 'blatmeisters', individuals who could arrange transactions. And lastly, there were 'tolkachi', people who used their abilities within and for the planned economy, they were usually employed in an enterprise. Ledeneva has also identified four situations which involved 'blat': everyday needs of consumption, periodic needs such as holidays, circle of life needs, and the needs of others<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Alena V. Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours*.

<sup>5</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalinismul de Fiecare Zi: Viața Cotidiană în Rusia Sovietică a anilor 1930* (București: Editura Corint, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> A. Peter McGraw, Philip E. Tetlock, "Taboo Trade-Offs, Relational Framing, and the Acceptability of Exchanges", in *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (2005), p. 3; Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours*, pp. 39-40, 55, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Alena Ledeneva, "<Blat> and <Guanxi>: Informal Practices in Russia and China", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 50, Nr. 1, (2008), pp. 122-123.

The Chinese have their own term called *guanxi*, although it holds a very different social value. The communist model built in China encourages a type of informal interaction heavily infused with moral teachings of honour. Here, the interest of the collective outweighs that of the individual, due to the value put on loyalty, not betraying the trust of those who know you. Those who do not keep in mind such aspects risk compromising their status and social bearing<sup>8</sup>. Like 'blat', its Chinese equivalent can play a role in business, where it brings reciprocity, so as all sides gain something<sup>9</sup>. Both concepts define types of personal networks which often help to make things happen in a heavily bureaucratized system<sup>10</sup>.

In the Romanian case, it is difficult to find one single word to describe such a broad set of social interactions. One could rely on the well-known '*pile, cunoștințe și relații*', which ends up as PCR, the name of the Romanian Communist Party. It covers exchanges between people and the bureaucrats of the state apparatus. As Cătălin Augustin Stoica argues, it ends up rather describing abuses of power, position, and privilege<sup>11</sup>. It leaves out informal exchanges outside the formal economy or grey and black-market activities, focusing more on how people could trick the bureaucracy with the help of functionaries. To this extent, we will use a new broader concept, the alternative economic system, or shortly the alternative economy.

This umbrella notion is meant to catch all the mechanisms and practices used by the population in their struggle against shortages. This type of economy was not organized by the classical principles: production -> distribution -> consumers. Rather, it high-jacked goods and resources getting them to the population via informal exchanges. To some extent, this served to the exacerbation of shortages, further pushing people into the grasp of the alternative economy. As we shall see in examples from documents and interviews, the interactions were complex, involving both collaboration and trust, as well as favours and risks. Unlike a normal economy, informal exchanges do not always involve money. Currency is usually replaced by favours or other goods and services.

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<sup>8</sup> Jan-Der Luo, Yung-Chu Yeh, "Neither collectivism nor individualism: Trust in the Chinese *guanxi* circle", in *Journal of Trust Research*, Nr. 1, Vol. 2, (2012), pp. 57-58.

<sup>9</sup> Silvia Ranfagni, Simone Guercini, "Guanxi and distribution in China: The case of Ferero Group", in *The International Review of Retail Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol. 24, Nr. 3, passim.

<sup>10</sup> Alena Ledeneva, "<Blat> and <Guanxi>", p. 120.

<sup>11</sup> Cătălin Augustin Stoica, *România Continuă: Schimbare și adaptare în comunism și postcomunism* (București: Humanitas, 2018), Capitolul 3.



### **Embezzlement and stealing:**

Given the state's monopoly over the means of production, individuals could only use stolen or smuggled goods or available resources at their workplace. It is quite easy to observe the regime's attitude towards such activities. The documents of the Securitate reveal a strategy aimed at stopping informal exchanges through targeted police stings and other similar actions. The regime was anything but tolerant to such activities which undermined its monopoly on the economy and society, thus prompting it to invest resources in stopping the 'alternative economy'.

A 1978 report from the procurature in Cluj illustrates part of this activity. Over one year, there were 2.780 criminal files opened to people who broke the law. In 1979, in Cluj County alone, there were 4.742 distribution units (shops and/or cooperatives), as well as other smaller units and 9 warehouses. For the surveillance of the distribution system, the Securitate employed 187 informants and had 147 people under observation, with 47 being taken to court. In addition, they organized 182 inspections by the economic police and another 1.200 by officers of the Miliție. The main crimes they looked for were embezzlement, forgery, abuse of power, and position<sup>17</sup>. This clearly serves to show that the regime was trying to hold a firm grasp on both the distribution system and the 'alternative economy'.

The regime was even less forgiving when it came to precious metals and foreign currency racketeering. It seems that between 1975 and 1978 the number of such activities had increased. In 1975, the authorities arrested 231 people for related crimes and by 1978 the yearly number went up to 300. The growing figures were the result of intensified preventive activities which were targeted against: "illicit trade in animals, industrial and agricultural products, foreign goods, intermediation of real estate transactions for profit, as well as selling illegal goods in shops or stealing from workplace". One of the best-known examples was *Operation Fermitatea*, which led to 368 people being accused of involvement in the racketeering of foreign goods or currency<sup>18</sup>.

Another 1972 report helps further expand on the regime's stand on the 'alternative economy'. In the summer of that year, the Miliția took preventive measures at 45 units and 22 transports, identifying two cases of theft. Eight of the trucks presented irregularities in the quantities they were carrying. In another place, two people were caught trying to steal a

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<sup>17</sup> Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității (ACNSAS), Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306, Vol. 1, Raport, ff. 5, 10-14.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 26, 29, 80.

10-litre canteen of milk cream and 5.5 kg of cheese<sup>19</sup>. These reports, mentioned so far, illustrate the regime's intolerance towards informal exchanges, taking active measures that stop and discourage them.

The situation remained much the same throughout the entire decade and were constantly surveilled by the Miliția and Securitate. Inspections and stings remain frequent and can be easily traced in informative bulletins and notes. An aspect constantly underlined by the authorities was that those taking part in the 'alternative economy' stole from the state. This was extremely disruptive to production, as it took the precious resources and time of those involved<sup>20</sup>. This is one of the main reasons the authorities cracked down so frequently on informal exchanges, not only the preservation of the rule of law.

The Miliția and Securitate acted based on the penal code and other carefully drafted laws. In the first two decades, the communist regime maintained the 1936 Penal Code, as it very much allowed them to prosecute most activities of the 'alternative economy', especially stealing from the workplace<sup>21</sup>. The 1968 Penal Code brought several changes as it introduced more ideological definitions for these crimes. Most notably, they added the crime against patrimony, which included: oil, gasoline, diesel, parts for irrigation, or electrical systems. Additionally, by using a word such as patrimony, articles 145 and 165 defined these crimes as an act of sabotage against the national economy and was punished with a jail sentence of between 5 to 20 years. It is also now that illicit commerce became a double crime. On the one hand, it was an unsanctioned economic activity, on the other hand, it often used stolen or smuggled goods<sup>22</sup>.

Some examples can be found in the documents of the People's Council, going as far back as the 1950s and 1960s. These came in the context of the massive but severely flawed expansion of the state distribution system. In one case, the employees of the 'URSUS Restaurant' in Cluj had cooked 100 portions of soup with the ingredients for 57. Further investigation revealed that this was the case for other meals as well. The unregistered profits were pocketed by the employees. Similarly, at the 'Cina restaurant' minced meat was mixed with extra rice, creating

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<sup>19</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D018306 Vol. 27, Buletin Informativ 25.06. 1972, ff. 215-216.

<sup>20</sup> Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism*, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> 1936 Penal Code, <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/heztqnu/codul-penal-din-1936>, accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

<sup>22</sup> 1968 Penal Code, <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/cod-penal-din-21-iunie-1968-em-itent-marea-adunare-na-ional-publicat-n-buletinul-oficial-nr-38070.html>, accessed on 27 June 2017.

more cabbage rolls, with an estimated value of 517 lei, which again was taken by those involved<sup>23</sup>.

These two cases were the most striking, but the authorities identified this as a widespread behaviour. These instances actually show us two phenomena, firstly, the problems of the distribution system, and secondly, a pattern of criminal activities constructing an 'alternative economy'. It is also evident that those working in the distribution system could always benefit from this, given their access to consumer goods. This was aptly described by Gheorghe Florescu in his memoirs, as the corruption that had plagued the system was mostly concentrated between those in leadership positions and truck drivers<sup>24</sup>.

In August 1973, it was discovered that employees at the 'Restaurant No.1' of the Consumption Cooperative had made an agreement to steal ingredients while also pocketing part of the profit. Similarly, at a coffee house in Apahida, a nearby village, the manager and an employee sold their own coffee (10.5 kg) keeping the proceeds. At a shop in 'Piața Mihai Viteazu', the administrator sold chicken that he had introduced illegally at a higher price as well as selling rotten meat. It seems that all these examples brought a profit of around 1,274 lei<sup>25</sup>.

As seen above, food was about the most sought-after goods in the 'alternative economy'. Another interesting example can be identified at a butchery section of the State Agricultural Enterprise in Cluj. Here, in 1974, it came to light that some of the workers would steal meat and derived products. During a sting operation of the Miliția a worker was caught trying to deliver 247 kg of pig's meat and 2.5 kg of Italian salami without proper paperwork. The subsequent investigation revealed that he was working with another employee who was providing the foodstuffs. The profits were split between the two, around 4,600 lei<sup>26</sup>.

Sugar was once a luxury good, worth even more than gold, thus it comes as a little surprise that it played a part in the 'alternative economy' as well. It was very often scarce in shops, making it an ideal target for profiteers. One interesting case was that of drivers caught in the autumn of 1975 while trying to steal 275 kg of sugar from a truck. The transport

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<sup>23</sup> Arhivele Naționale, Serviciul Județean Cluj (ANICSJC), Fond Sfatul Popular al Regiunii Cluj, Secțiunea Secretariat-Administrativ, Dosar nr. 6/1963, Procese Verbale de ședințe ale comitetului executiv, Vol. 1, 269-305.

<sup>24</sup> Gheorghe Florescu, *Confesiunile unui cafegiu* (București: Humanitas, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 22, Buletin Informativ 09.VIII.1973, ff. 90-91.

<sup>26</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306, Vol. 15, Buletin Informativ 1974, f. 86.

was registered with a load of sugar from a truck. The transport was registered with a load of 8 tons in 80 industrial-sized bags. The culprits had stopped the truck between the two villages and cut some of the bags, draining small quantities from each one and then patching them back. The three bags that resulted from this operation were to be sold for 5,800 lei, a quite a hefty sum of money<sup>27</sup>.

Alcohol has constantly played an important role in cultures around the globe, making it quite sought after and represents a perfect opportunity for profit. Yet again, we can find an example in Cluj during the communist period. The waiter of the buffet in a village had bought 26 liters of rum with the intent of selling it. He was helped by his wife, the administrator of the buffet, who had a surplus of 5,300 lei. At their home the police found 270 litres of vodka, ready to sell it<sup>28</sup>.

Yet foodstuffs were not the only goods sold in the 'alternative economy' or stolen. Fuel was also scarce in the shortage of communism, especially given the regime's preoccupation for energy in the heavy industry sector. The most common cases were those of drivers stealing from their cars, something which made sense given their nearly unlimited access to fuel. One such example was identified at the Paper Mill in Dej, where an employee was arrested for stealing 496 litres of gasoline from the workplace in 1973. His punishment was not all that bad, getting only warning from the police. However, it seems that he was not discouraged and went on to illegally sell 200 litres of gasoline<sup>29</sup>.

Then again, not all cases were as simple, some involved more complex operations on multiple individuals. Of course, the promise of bigger profits held higher risks and involved far more effort. The construction sector offers many such opportunities. One interesting example comes from the local division of the Romanian Train Company. Between 1970 and 1973, a group of 12 people managed to steal around 144,162 lei from the workplace. They would usually forge paperwork and cover for each other when taking materials. Later, they would either sell them or use them in illegal construction works making even more profit<sup>30</sup>. Similarly, in February 1977, a control by the economic police at four car shops in Cluj revealed that the mechanics working there used the tools

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<sup>27</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 17, Notă informativă 22.X. 75, f. 110.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 200.

<sup>29</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 15, Buletin Informativ 22.02.1974, f. 120.

<sup>30</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 16, Buletin Informativ 27.12.1973, ff. 314- 315.

and components they had at their disposal in private enterprises, pocketing the proceeds<sup>31</sup>. This kind of practice was very widespread. As one interviewee recounted, he helped his boss renovate his home using materials from work. For this, not only was he well paid, but it also served to gain trust and favour within the hierarchy<sup>32</sup>.

The 'alternative economy' was even more complex and was not made up only of those stealing from the workplace for survival or profit. Another consistent facet was smuggling and racketeering. Here we have to distinguish between the two types. Firstly, there were those dealing in rare, but not illegal goods, that were smuggled into Romania or acquired abroad to be sold back home for a profit. Secondly, there was the commerce of gems and metals, on which the state had a total monopoly. Thus, any private endeavour in this sector was illegal and prosecuted as a crime. The main difference between these two was that the first operated in a grey area, while the second one was clearly part of the black market. Yet, both involved a lot of risk, as the authorities tried curbing all activities outside the economy it controlled.

Smuggling consumer goods was usually conditioned by a person's access to foreign ties that would act as suppliers. We can create two more categories. Firstly, there were people who were actively involved in smuggling through contacts in border regions. Secondly, there were those who travelled abroad or knew someone who did. However, they worked on a lesser level since this was very limited. We have identified several examples which illustrate these activities and behaviours.

In November 1973, two women were approached by the Miliția in the Cluj train station as they were acting suspiciously. The officers found that they were in possession of unusual quantities of goods: 733 packages of condiments (Vegeta), 91 bracelets, and 300 vinyl wallets, all worth 15,000 lei. Further investigation into the case revealed that the two women had come from Arad, where in the local market they acquired the goods<sup>33</sup>. This example illustrates the first category, getting supplied from regions close to the border.

As we have already mentioned, some had a more direct supply source. For example, a lady that travelled abroad more often would acquire goods for supposed personal use, but would instead sell them at

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<sup>31</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 30, Buletin Informativ 10.03.1977, f. 165.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with I.O., 01.03. 2014.

<sup>33</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 16, Buletin Informativ 12.XI.1973, f. 167.

a higher price back home<sup>34</sup>. In another case from Cluj, a coffee shop employee came under suspicion from the Miliția in 1976. The husband of a friend, who was legally working for the Romanian state in Germany, would send her goods which she would then sell under the counter<sup>35</sup>. Of course, we should not picture a transaction between strangers. Most likely, these exchanges were initiated only after trust between individuals was established. This alleviated the feeling of threat that the other could be an informant. In a sense, this shows that while the regime isolates people through fear, people living in a society cannot be fully atomized.

Many of those travelling abroad would keep much of their daily allowance to buy goods for family and friends<sup>36</sup>. They were forced to employ this strategy because Romanian citizens were not allowed to own foreign currency, so they could only use what was given to them by the state. One wife wrote to her husband, who was working in Syria for ARCOM<sup>37</sup>, if he could buy and send her a pair of Levi's blue jeans, a rather rare piece of clothing under communism<sup>38</sup>. This example has a double meaning. On the one hand, it could concern the authorities of an isolationist regime that some of its citizens would wear clothing not found by others, it could shatter the image they tried constructing. On the other hand, it illustrates how difficult it was to travel abroad and the level of surveillance imposed on those who were given such privileges.

Communist regimes and Romania's even more so tried controlling as many aspects of everyday life as possible. This was made easy by the large surveillance system they had constructed and the repressive institutions. All citizens who had the slightest interactions with foreigners were to write informative notes on the Securitate, detailing what types of conversations they had. Of course, most insisted on the benign nature of these interactions to not incur further scrutiny<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, going abroad was very much the privilege of a few individuals who could be trusted not to defect. The regime's interest stemmed from its inherent need to keep people in the dark regarding standards of living and consumption in other countries, especially those in the West.

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<sup>34</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 17, Buletin Informativ 18.VIII.1975, ff. 21- 21v.

<sup>35</sup> ANICSJC, Fond Întreprinderea de Porțelan Iris, Dos. 84/1973-1978, "Plecări în străinătate în interesul serviciului 1973-1978", ff. 149, 176-179.

<sup>36</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Obiectiv CERO, D 2800, Vol. 2, ff. 64-65.

<sup>37</sup> Antrepriza Română de Construcții-Montaj, cu sediul la București.

<sup>38</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306, Vol. 31, Buletin Informativ 19.VII.1976, ff. 52-52v.

<sup>39</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Obiectiv Iris, D 2800, Vol. 1., ff. 116, 117-118, 119, 170-171, 172-175, 178-181, 182-185.

We now arrive at the second great category mentioned in this segment, smuggling gems and precious metals. This activity was both illegal and dangerous due to the regime's monopoly on this type of commerce. It should not be seen as a common occurrence, since it did not really appear out of everyday needs, but rather was the result of certain individuals trying to increase their income or others wishing to store gains from other activities, as was the case of Gheorghe Ștefănescu. Thus, we can place smuggling somewhere between the grey and the black market, as it deals with goods under the monopoly of the state, making them illegal.

Through the law passed on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1946, the circulation of precious metals was defined as all transactions or deposits of any such good, either personally or through others. Article 5 forced all jewellery owners to declare these possessions on the National Bank, although those for personal use were exempt, unless they had historical value. Articles 13 to 18 banned not only commercialization, but also private manufacturing of precious metals. To prevent thefts, body searches. Anyone caught breaking the law would be sentenced to between 15 days to 3 months of prison time and a hefty fine (50,000 – 500,000 lei). To underline these strict rules, sentences in such cases were to be passed in a maximum of 30 days, no matter what time of year it was. The most important instances could be punished with between 6 months to 2 years imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 – 10,000,000 lei. Those who reoffended could get a sentence of between 3 to 5 years and a fine of 1,000,000 – 20,000,000 lei<sup>40</sup>. One year later, in August, the regime passed another decree, regarding gold and foreign currency, all such possessions were to be surrendered to the National Bank. Only foreign citizens and diplomats were excepted. Punishment was between 5 to 25 years imprisonment, while the fine was to be decided based on the severity of each case<sup>41</sup>. Further laws passed later, Decree No.210 in 14<sup>th</sup> June 1960, put even more restrictions on owning foreign currency and other precious metals<sup>42</sup>.

The last relevant law passed was in 1978, and it underlined the regime's need to obtain foreign currency which it could later use in

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<sup>40</sup> Law no. 638 from 21st August 1946, <http://www.legex.ro/Legea-638-1946-92.aspx>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Law no. 284 from 15th August 1947, <http://www.legex.ro/Legea-284-1947-103.aspx>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Decree no. 210 from 14th June 1960 regarding the regime of foreign currency, precious metals and gems, <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/decret-nr-210-din-14-iunie-1960-privind-regimul-mijloacelor-de-plata-straine-metalelor-pretioase-si-pietrelor-pretioase-emitent-marea-adunare-nationala-136.html>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

transactions on international markets. The use of precious metals in Romania was going to be part of the planned economy and was to be decided by the State Council. In addition, once more, the National Bank was going to play an important role, which would be the only institution that could sanction the commercialization and use of precious metals<sup>43</sup>.

Despite strict legislation and constant surveillance of the Miliția and Securitate, this sector of the 'alternative economy' continued operating and was far more widespread than one would dare believe at first. In this respect, we would like to showcase a couple of such episodes from the 1970s, that we identified in the documents of the former secret police. We have already mentioned one of the most notable, that of Gheorghe Ștefănescu, who tried to keep his profits as gold and other valuables, since money is easier to trace and is always subject to official policies that might lower its value.

The role played by foreign citizens in this type of trade was extensive, this was due to the strict consumer conditions imposed by the regime on the local position. Often, they would act as suppliers for groups of sellers in Romania. Some would get directly involved on a constant basis, while for others, especially tourists, it was a spur of the moment, most notably selling foreign currency to the brave.

One such case was identified on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1972, when at the restaurant of the *Napoca Hotel* in Cluj a foreign citizen was trying to sell jewellery to clients. Two Miliția officers were sent to keep him under surveillance, but he quickly noticed them and left for the park where he hid the merchandise. The officers found objects made of gold, weighing around 1,238 kg<sup>44</sup>. Unfortunately, there was no further information about this case, leaving us with a lot of questions unanswered. Yet, the example is relevant as it illustrates the risks smugglers were willing to take.

In the autumn of 1972, the Miliția in Cluj identified a supposed network which sold gold jewellery acquired from foreign tourists. The case was cracked when the officers arrested an individual who then turned to his supplier and from there on the authorities just followed the thread. The starting point of the operation was in Arad county, with the main suppliers being Italian citizens who would regularly bring large quantities of gold<sup>45</sup>. This was facilitated by an agreement signed on 13<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Law no. 30 from 22nd December 1978, <http://www.legex.ro/Legea-30-1978-657.aspx>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>44</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306, Vol. 27, Buletin Informativ, 23.06.1972, f. 211.

<sup>45</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306, Vol. 24, Buletin Informativ, septembrie 1972, f. 33.

January 1970 between Romania and Yugoslavia, which legalized small commerce. Selected individuals were given special border-crossing permits giving them the right to acquire goods. However, as stipulated in Article 6 of the agreement, valuable metals, jewels, and pieces of art were strictly forbidden<sup>46</sup>.

Some cases of commerce with valuable materials involved stealing from the workplace, although there were usually small quantities. Although we identified at least one notable example. In February 1974, a control by the economic police, it was discovered that a jeweller from the 'Metalurgia Cooperative' there were 79 grams of gold missing. He was making jewellery using materials and equipment from work, but as the investigation revealed, there were people involved in Alba County as well<sup>47</sup>.

In 1977, the police identified four individuals who were trying to sell gold jewels (rings, earrings, lockets, etc.) at state-owned shops, 'Bijuteria'. Of course, they are put under arrest, but what is remarkable here is the lack of fear or caution on their part. It also serves to illustrate that the authorities were keeping these units under constant surveillance, and between 28<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>rd</sup> March 1977 they caught 7 people carrying 310 grams of gold<sup>48</sup>.

In another example, the Miliția found that a retired engineer had created in his home garden a small treasure made up of commemorative coins and other gold objects<sup>49</sup>. This further illustrates the type of behaviour shown by Gheorghe Ștefănescu and others like him, hoarding valuables in times of crisis or to buy goods, services, and even favours. Then again, lacking much other information, it is possible that this engineer was just hiding the objects he planned on selling them to the 'alternative economy'.

### **Abuse of power and position:**

Very much similar to stealing from the workplace was abusing one's position. The 1968 Penal Code defined embezzlement as the unlawful use of trafficking by a functionary of money, valuables and

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<sup>46</sup> Accord from 13th January 1970 between the governments of the Socialist Republic of Romania and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/acord-din-13-ianuarie-1970-intre-guvernul-republicii-socialiste-romania-si-guvernul-republicii-socialiste-federative-iugoslavia-privind-micul-traffic-de-calatori-in-zona-de-frontiera-emitent-21495.html>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>47</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306, Vol. 15, f. 110.

<sup>48</sup> ACNSAS, Vol. 30, Buletin Informativ 01.02.1977, f. 4v; Buletin Informativ 03.03.1977, f. 141.

<sup>49</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, Vol. 15, f. 232.

other goods under their care<sup>50</sup>. The description is relatively vague and leaves enough room for interpretation, something reflected in documents by the large number of crimes treated as embezzlement. Punishment was quite severe, from 1 to 15 years of prison, and from 15 to 20 years if there were victims<sup>51</sup>. However, the abuse of position was slightly different and split into two categories: one that threatened the interests of individuals and the one against public property. The latter was clearly subject to harsher punishment, between 6 months and 5 years imprisonment, as well as the confiscation of personal property<sup>52</sup>.

As we have already mentioned, the regime made active efforts to identify such crimes, especially through sting operations by the Miliția and Securitate. Towards the end of the 1970s, the authorities initiated 'Operation Fermitatea', which aimed against small crimes, as well as corruption within the state's bureaucracy<sup>53</sup>. These actions were based on law No.18 from 1968, regarding the origins of goods obtained illegally. Article 1 stipulated that all assets exceeding someone's income could be verified. The third article stated that verification should be made by a special commission, which would be activated in three types of situations: if work colleagues called on the authorities; if the suspect wished to prove their innocence; if the legal institutions requested it. The commission functioned under the jurisdiction of the county courthouse and it was made up of two judges, a prosecutor, a delegate from the county financial administration, a deputy, and a secretary. The law pretty much remained the same, with a few minor modifications in 1971<sup>54</sup>.

The most renowned case uncovered by 'Fermitatea' was that of Gheorghe Ștefănescu, made even more famous by the movie *Secretul lui Bacchus*. It follows the story of a journalist who tries to determine why mineral water Here is so scarce, only to discover that the administrator of a shop and his boss were using it to make extra quantities of wine for

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<sup>50</sup> Codul Penal din 1936, <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/cod-penal-din-21-iunie-1968-emitent-marea-adunare-na-ional-publicat-n-buletinul-oficial-nr-38070.html>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>53</sup> Florel Manu, "Cazul Ștefănescu: Execuția unui <capitalist> român", in *Historia*, <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/cazul-stefanescu-executia-unui-capitalist-roman>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Law no. 18 from 1968, regarding the control of the provenience of certain personal belongings, <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/g43tmmjs/legea-nr-18-1968-privind-controlul-provientei-unor-bunuri-ale-persoanelor-fizice-care-nu-au-fost-dobindite-in-mod-licit>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

personal profit<sup>55</sup>. Real-life Ștefănescu had constructed a flourishing alcohol business. His activities can be split in two large periods: firstly, between March 1971 and March 1974 when he gathered financial resources; secondly, from 1974 to 1978, when he made his biggest deals. His web of bribery and connections was comprised of managers, administrators, and even cellarmen. Unlike the movie character, Ștefănescu did not mix water with wine, but types of wine, the 7 lei one to the 9 lei type, selling at the latter's price, using the same technique for more expensive brands as well<sup>56</sup>. If in the movie he was discovered by a journalist in real life he was caught because he bought gold, as he was denounced by someone else.

We can identify smaller scale examples in the documents of the Securitate. One such case was that of a section boss from a hospital in Cluj. He was accused in 1972 of fraud on public property, forgery and using forged documents. His section was in charge of embalming dead people and there was an 80 lei tax that had to be paid, of which 50% was left to be shared among the personnel as a stimulant. The numbers were calculated based on the number of extra hours of work put in by each employee. It seems that during the summer of that year the number of dead people had been quite big and the amount exceeded 50% of the normal income, and all such surplus had to be given over to the state. To avoid this, the section boss had created fictive employees and even put himself on extra hours. Over the span of three years, the doctor had embezzled 32,090 lei, part of which he shared with his colleagues<sup>57</sup>.

Such strategies of tricking the system were quite widespread, so it is easy to identify another case. At a cooperative farm, in 1976, through the forgery of documentation, again someone created fictive people who apparently were working from home on one of the cooperative farms in Cluj County. During the investigations it was revealed that a foreman was behind everything. Together with his concubine, who was herself in a small leadership positions, and the chief accountant had created fictional workshops. They managed to steal money and other goods valued up to 30,000 lei<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.cinemagia.ro/filme/secretul-lui-bachus-4451/>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>56</sup> Florel Manu, "Secret comunistă cu iz de băutură", in *Historia*, <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/portret/articol/secretul-lui-bachus-o-poveste-comunista-cu-iz-de-bautura>, accessed on 4 August 2017.

<sup>57</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 27, Notă Informativă 19.05.1972, ff. 100-101.

<sup>58</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018306 Vol. 31, Buletin informativ din 18.08.1976, ff. 170-170v.

In 1973, a secretary working at a local shoe factory, 'Clujana', stole 32,484 lei, as she was the one responsible for the travel expenses of commuters coming from nearby villages. During a couple of years, she stole enough money to buy furniture and other decorative objects for her home<sup>59</sup>. In an unrelated case, a 27 year-old man was managed. To steal through forgery an even bigger sum, 69,342 lei<sup>60</sup>. Similarly, in 1976, a cashier working at the County Hospital managed to steal the money kept guarantees from other employees, all through a simple trick of not handing over the entire sum she had received<sup>61</sup>.

Some operations were more complex and were both aimed at higher profits as well as better hidden from the scrutiny of the authorities. In 1977, the Miliția identified a group of 9 individuals who used forgery to steal 30,598 lei. However, this was at first glance, in reality, it seems that just one individual had convinced the others to sign fictitious certificates which they later used to get 5,200 lei from the state<sup>62</sup>.

Forging paperwork or trying to trick the system was not always linked to immediate material gains, for some it had to do with migration. Given the high rate of growth of the big cities, they became even more attractive to young people living in the countryside. This phenomenon can be observed as early as the 1960s, continuing up to the very last years of the regime. However, authorities often proved incapable of keeping up with the rhythm and the growing needs of the population, so the easiest solution was to try and limit migration to the more important urban centres. The files of the People's Regional Council in Cluj are very revealing, as during the meetings it was mentioned that there was a need to immediately reduce the number of migrants. However, these attempts were stifled by the managers of factories, since they needed the workforce to match increasing production quotas<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018036 Vol. 22, Buletin informativ din 04.08.1973, f. 76.

<sup>60</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018036 Vol. 17, Buletin informativ din 1.XII.1975, ff. 177-178.

<sup>61</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018036 Vol. 31, Buletin informativ din 19.X.1976, f. 303.

<sup>62</sup> ACNSAS, Fond Starea de Spirit a Populației, D 018036, Buletin Informativ din 30.XII.1976, Vol. 31, ff. 481-481v.

<sup>63</sup> ANICSJCN, Fondul Sfatului Popular al Regiunii Cluj, Secțiunea Secretariat-Administrativă, Dosar nr. 6/1963, Procese verbale de ședințe ale comitetului executiv, ff. 664-667.

Some local enterprises falsified hiring paperwork so as individuals would receive approval to move to Cluj. The People's Council very much doubted that workers could not be found in the city and accused the Miliția of standing idle instead of trying to find those who did not have the proper documentation<sup>64</sup>. From here, it is obvious that alternative means were used not only by people, but by the bureaucrats in charge of state enterprises, who themselves wanted to overcome a shortage of employees.

The phenomenon was so widespread in later decades that it even became the subject of movies. Probably the most well-known example is *Bulletin de București*, a romantic comedy from 1982, which was laden with propaganda. The plot followed a mainstream line, a girl wants to move to the capital of Romania, but after finishing her studies she will be assigned to a farm in the countryside as a specialist. To avoid this, she tries to arrange a marriage with another student, that is from Bucharest. As they go through the pains of living a household existence under communism, they fall in love and end up happily ever after on a farm, striving to build socialism as a real family<sup>65</sup>.

### **Conclusions:**

Shortage was the spectre that haunted Romanian communism and came to define it. The regime proved unable to create and manage efficient production and distribution systems. The command economy leads to inflexible mechanisms, hindering the adaptability of regional and local authorities to the needs of state enterprises and of the people. While some would argue that this was the reality of the last decade of communism, we can follow this phenomenon from the very beginning. The 1980s, however, did show more severe shortages, increasing the level of everyday misery.

In this context, the population looks for the means to supply itself, giving way to the 'alternative economic system'. Since it operated in parallel with the official economy and that it used stolen goods or resources from the workplace, it was ill perceived by the regime. Even more so, it represented a threat to the legitimacy it held in society as the main provider of goods and wealth. The existence of an alternative based

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 664-667.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.cinemagia.ro/filme/buletin-de-bucuresti-328/>, accessed on 7 December 2017.

on informal exchanges, hindered the regime's ability to exercise control and placed people's loyalties towards each other.

We tried to outline a new concept which can be used to illustrate the shape taken by informal exchanges in Romania. While it would have been tempting and easy to use the Russian term 'blat', this shortcut would have meant importing and adapting it to a different cultural reality. While both communist regimes unwittingly encouraged the development of the 'alternative economy', the background differed. The terror in Romania did not reach that of Stalin's Soviet Union, thus giving people a milder perspective. This is not to say that informal exchanges were devoid of risk for individuals, most such activities were defined as crimes and punished accordingly. In Romania, people use the expression 'pile, cunoștințe și relații', which means connections within the bureaucracy that can help you. However, this is limiting and leaves out many of the behaviours mentioned in the paper. Thus, we came up with the idea of the 'alternative economic system', which encompasses a broad range of activities and favours.

The regime in Romania was anything but tolerant towards this sector. Firstly, as already mentioned, unlike the case of the 'second economy' in Hungary, this 'alternative economy' was not created legally by the authorities. It was rather the result of individual solidarity and initiative in the face of shortages and hardship. Secondly, it mostly operated through crime, as it could get resources only through theft or smuggling. Thus, the Miliția and Securitate, illustrated by the examples we presented, ran constant operations in trying to catch those involved. Unfortunately, this research has far been limited at this level and we did not follow-up on the prosecution of cases and the fate of those caught. It is although possible to reflect on this by looking at the execution of Gherghe Ștefănescu and the imprisonment of Gheorghe Florescu.

We managed to group the activities of the 'alternative economy' into three categories, based on their spread and shared characteristics. Embezzlement and stealing from the workplace were the most widespread. These were often determined by access to resources, the risks involved, and possible gains. Smuggling was the result of a combination between demand and the imperfect isolationism of the regime. Lastly, trafficking precious metals, jewellery, and foreign currency was also a common enough practice, sometimes mixing techniques and characteristics from the previous two.

The aim of this paper is not to present the social and economic landscape of communist Romania as one dominated by ill-conceived criminality. Rather, we aimed at illustrating how the shortage led to strategies which meant breaking the law, mainly due to constraints. People were not morally bankrupt, but they had to live in a grey world created by a regime which itself was continually undergoing a process of decay. Thus, the social stigma carried by the 'alternative economy' of communist times should rather be seen from a historical perspective, than a moral one.



# The Escape to Turkey. Ways and Methods of Illegal Border Crossings into Turkey from the perspective of SSI documents (1945-1948)

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**Abstract:** *The Escape to Turkey. Ways and Methods of Illegal Border Crossings into Turkey from the perspective of SSI documents (1945-1948).* Romania's first years after the communist regime took political power in Romania, concurrent with the onset of the Cold War, meant a reshuffle of the state institutions at first and later a dramatic impact on people's lives. The political and institutional purges were the first signal that soon repression and terror will follow, thus prompting numerous Romanian citizens to leave the country. Yet, due to the strict surveillance of the Secret Police Services which did not easily allow traveling to Western countries, the only way to escape was through illicit border crossings. One of the most common destinations was Turkey, with documents issued between 1945 and 1948 by the Secret police services revealing an impressive number of such cases.

**Keywords:** Illegal border crossings, escape, communism, Romania, Turkey.

**Rezumat:** *Evadarea în Turcia. Modalități și metode de trecere ilegale a frontierei în Turcia din perspectiva documentelor SSI (1945-1948).* Primii ani de după preluarea puterii politice de către regimul comunist din România, concomitent cu declanșarea Războiului Rece pe plan internațional, au vizat mai întâi întregul aparat statal, ajungând să fie resimțit apoi inclusiv la nivelul vieții cotidiene. Epurările politice și instituționale au fost semnalul că vor urma forme de represiune și teroare, ceea ce a determinat mulți cetățeni români să părăsească țara, doar că, sub atenta supraveghere a Serviciului Special de Informații care nu permitea plecarea spre Occident oricui, sigura modalitate de a fugi era în mod fraudulos, una dintre destinațiile preferate fiind Turcia iar documentele S.S.I consemnează pentru perioada 1945-1948 un număr impresionant de astfel de cazuri.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Treceri frauduloase de frontieră, fugă, comunism, România, Turcia.

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## Introduction

*"The number of those who run from Romania and take refuge in various parts of our territory is continuously increasing. Among these, refugees are officers of the Romanian Army but also different men and women belonging to all types of professions – they cannot stand the misery, or, better said, they cannot stand the life in the hell created by the communists"*<sup>1</sup>. This was the headline of a high circulation Turkish daily newspaper from August 1947 regarding the increasing number of Romanian citizens who crossed the border illegally or were shipwrecked in Turkey in search of a better and free life as Turkey was perceived as a safe tie to the West.

The world at the end of World War II was portrayed in the midst of geopolitical reconfiguration and transformation, and both Romania and Turkey faced the formidable challenge of finding the best way to remain uninvolved in the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. Another key thing to remember is that a political, economic, and military alliance with the United States was a feasible option for Turkey, which had already expressed its firm intention to join The North Atlantic Treaty, whereas for Romania the West was not an option given the negotiations between these and the Soviet Union behind the closed doors about the future of Eastern Europe<sup>2</sup>. Romania was therefore under Moscow's sphere of influence and with the Red Army's troops on its territory plus the Soviet advisors due to the provisions of the Armistice of September 1944 and The Allied Control Commission, there were no options left<sup>3</sup>.

This article attempts to create a framework for understanding how the internal Romanian situation and the lack of democracy shaped the unbearable living conditions as soon as the war ended and it determined the inhabitants to find even illegal methods to leave the country. Secondly, the article will try to identify the main reasons why Turkey was such a suitable destination, and which were the dominant methods of crossing the border. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn to have a clear picture of their route by bringing into attention the reaction of Turkish authorities, public opinion, and refugee's faith once arrived in Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic), August 10, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> For a broader perspective on the percentages agreement and the Moscow conference of October 1944 as well as Stalin's talks with W. Churchill see Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*, London, Yale University Press, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> We mention article 18: "An Allied Control Commission will be established which will undertake until the conclusion of peace the regulation of and control over the execution of the present term under the general direction and orders of the Allied (Soviet) High Command, acting on behalf of the Allied Powers", \*\*\**A decade of American Foreign Policy Basic Documents 1941-1949*, Revised Edition, Department of State, Washington, 1985, p. 490.

The installation of pro-Communist government on March 6, 1945, led by Dr. Petru Groza was coupled with the electoral fraud of 1946<sup>4</sup>, the King's forced abdication on December 1947<sup>5</sup>, and the institutional replacement of the monarchy with a *people's republic*<sup>6</sup>. These events are just some brief examples of how eager for power and control were the pro-Soviet government and the Communist Party, despite the fact that the Communist Party had a small number of adherents by 1948 and was not favored among public opinion compared to liberals or to The National Peasants' Party.

Moreover, the wave of repression, arbitrary arrests and detentions, the accession of opportunists, and poorly educated people in leading positions activated the survival mode, especially for the people working for the public system, whose activity was evaluated based on their relation with the Party and their ideology rather than on quality and professionalism. Consequently, one option was to adapt to and consent to the regime's policies, whereas the other option was to oppose the regime and face the consequences. Yet, for many Romanian citizens there was a third alternative as well - to leave the country illegally no matter what. This study aims to focus on this last alternative and to understand why Turkey was perceived as a safe destination.

The current literature on this topic concerning the chosen timeline is still consolidating as the Romanian historiography focused more on the emigration of Turks and Tatars in Turkey and some reference studies and papers belong to Metin Omer, Musfata Ali Mehmet, Adriana Cupcea, Kozák Gyula, Tasin Gemil, Marian Cojoc<sup>7</sup>. This study is based on the documents, reports, and official statements consulted in The National

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<sup>4</sup> See: Virgiliu Țărău, *Alegeri fără opțiune* (Elections without option), Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See: Andrei Muraru, Alexandru Muraru, *Regele, comuniștii și Coroana. Adevărata istorie a abdicării lui Mihai I* (The King, the communists and the Crown. The real history of King Michael I's abdication), Iasi, Editura Polirom, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> The new Constitution of 1948 ensured the first legal base for the reforms and laws that soon followed and allowed the State to implement nationalization and collectivization. See the text of Constitution available: [http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis\\_pck.htm?act\\_text?id=1574](http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htm?act_text?id=1574)

<sup>7</sup> On this topic see: Marian Cojoc, *Tătarii în istoria românilor*, (Tatars in Romanian History), vol. I, Constanța, Editura Muntenia, 2004; Metin Omer, "În căutarea spațiului identitar: emigrarea turcilor și tătarilor în viziunea elitelor comunității (1878-1940)" in Adriana Cupcea (ed.), *Turcii și tătarii din Dobrogea (Turks and Tatars in Dobruja)*, Editura Institutului pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, Cluj-Napoca, 2015; Musfata Ali Mehmet, "O istorie a turcilor din Dobrogea" in Adriana Cupcea, Kozák Gyula (eds.), *Istorie și identitate la turcii din Dobrogea* (The History and Identity of Turks from Dobruja), Cluj-Napoca, Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, 2017.

Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives and in The Ministry of National Defence Archives, most of the records referring to the surveillance and tracking files of those who crossed the border or attempted to, their family`s depositions, and the police`s inquiry into the escape.

Equally important to mention is the fact that the official Romanian reports and statements referred to the citizens who left the country as *defectors*, with many depositions of their relatives as *traitors*, whereas the Turkish authorities and the Turkish public opinion referred to them as *refugees*, *political refugees* or *immigrants*. In this respect, we will choose not to generalize any of these labels but to detail and specify each situation separately.

### **The main causes of escape. Why Turkey?**

The presence of the Red Army soldiers in Romania, the dispatching of Soviet advisers and experts to Romanian cities, the political and shortly after 1945 economic control<sup>8</sup>, ideology and The Communist Party`s interference in the public life and to a considerable extent in private life as well, all urged many Romanian citizens to take into consideration the alternative of leaving the country. We shall refer to them as *citizens of Romania* without referring to ethnicity, race, system of beliefs, or cultural criteria, as the wave of those who made efforts to leave the country was a multiethnic one. For example, members of the Turkish and Tatar communities in Dobruja aimed to move with their relatives or friends in Turkey, members of the Jewish community strove to transit Turkish territory to reach Palestine.

Hence, out of the hundreds of statements of those caught trying to cross the border illegally, many of them explained in their pleas of the unbearable political environment and poor economic and living conditions. Based on their files and depositions we tried outlining a profile of those who have tried or succeeded to leave the country during 1945-1948 and the results indicated that the first category adamant to leave was actually the first one targeted in the first phase of the regime:

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<sup>8</sup> Illustrating this aspect, we mention the fact that the treaty signed in Moscow (May 1945) was supposed to set out methods and ventures to support the economic reconstruction and securing the payment of war damages to the Soviet Union. Based on this treaty were established the SovRoms - Romanian and Soviet joint ventures but it soon proved to be unequal as an important part of the resources were ensured by the Romanian part (oil, natural gas, wood, coal extraction, iron extraction etc.), Adrian Cioroianu, *Pe umerii lui Marx. O introducere în istoria comunismului românesc*, București, Editura Curtea Veche, 2007, pp. 67-71.

the Army, the Navy, members of the diplomatic staff<sup>9</sup> of the mission who refused to return, members of various liberal professions (lawyers, doctors, architects, engineers etc.), and also civil servants.

One main reason for this profile is that the newly installed proCommunist government began to purge the local and national public institutions of the former systems' exponents, political opponents, intellectuals or vocal non-communists who publicly reacted against Petru Groza's government or against the Soviet Union and the Red Army. As a case point, one report about the military's attitude towards the government in 1946 and registered at the Then Ministry of National Defence showed that a high number of the officers and soldiers were against it. Moreover, the institution's internal stability was disturbed by some anonymous manifestos impelled to disobey and to condemn the new government:

“This Government is a lack of initiative and works as a Moscow puppet. The laws are framed in Moscow. Following the Soviet order, the best officers in the Army were purged, the same fate had also the most experienced magistrates, the most trustworthy public servants [...]”<sup>10</sup>.

Why Turkey? The answer to this question entails some level of analysis. First of all, we have to take into consideration the geographic factor which shows that the Black Sea was a link to Turkey, but the decisive factor was a rather a geopolitical one. Amongst all its neighbors and countries in its proximity, Turkey was the only one unaffected by the Soviet presence or influence and had close ties with the United States and Western countries. Additionally, Turkey accepted the American program providing aid to Western European countries known as Marshall Plan (*The European Recovery Program*)<sup>11</sup> and later expressed its intention to join The North Atlantic Treaty<sup>12</sup>.

Therefore, as we have mentioned, Turkey's geopolitical option at the beginning of the Cold War was to adhere to Western initiatives, a decisive step not only for the Turkish foreign policy agenda but also for

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<sup>9</sup> For a broader perspective on this particular topic see: Stejărel Olaru, *Agentul nostru Victor*, [Our agent Victor], Iași, Editura Polirom, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Arhivele Ministerului Apărării Naționale, (The Ministry of National Defence Archives - hereafter, A. M. Ap. N), General Staff Section II, file 1586, c. 45.

<sup>11</sup> See John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> In 1952 Turkey became member of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

the public opinion. For instance, the official newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, wrote a generous article entitled: “*The negotiations for the Atlantic Pact begun. Russia or any other state will not be allowed to infringe the Western frontiers*”<sup>13</sup>. Two days later, the same newspaper stated that “*Russia is trying to undermine the Atlantic Pact. It is rumored that the Soviets will take military measures against Finland to threaten Norway and Sweden*”<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, the Turkish public opinion criticized not only the Soviet Union but also the Eastern countries under its influence, therefore all those who opposed in one way or another the Soviets or communists were praised and welcomed to Turkey.

Lastly, Turkey was a suitable option also due to logistic aspects. Since Turkey had numerous cities close to the shores of the Black Sea, the escaping by using boats, merchant ships, or any other small vessel was easier and more affordable. There were also reported several cases of members of the Romanian Army or the Defense Ministry hijacking passenger planes or military aircraft and being offered temporary asylum in Turkey.

Consequently, due to this enormous Turkish geopolitical asset as it was quietly perceived by the Romanian public opinion during Cold War, many considered Turkey as we dare say, “a temporary dream land” before reaching democratic Western countries.

### **Ways and Methods of escape**

Western emigration under legal conditions at the beginning of Cold War when communists took power in Romania, was almost impossible for ordinary citizens, thus many of them risked their lives using clandestine methods to leave the country. This topic raises several issues: a) the vulnerability of borders; b) the regime’s lack of capacity to deal with internal issues; c) clandestine businesses in the public sector.

The war had a significant impact on the economy, but also on the military which was left ill-equipped and with soldiers in poor condition. Several notes addressed to General Staff showed that soldiers of the garrison near West border deserted, some committed suicide, and many were reported to be seen begging for food from local civilians<sup>15</sup>. The Port of Constanta (Constantza) and the Romanian Black Sea coastal area were a dynamic one as many commercial vessels docked frequently in the port city of

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<sup>13</sup> *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic), December 12, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic), December 14, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> See: A. M. Ap. N, General Staff Section II, file 1586.

Constanta. Moreover, the Coast guard had insufficient and ill-equipped personnel and some of its members were easily bribed.

The most common way to leave the country by sea was on small vessels, luggers, or merchant ships, either purchased, rented, or even stolen. To purchase any of these types and to save up for the road, many had to sell their properties or borrow from friends or family with the promise of paying back as soon as they found a safe country and a job. These types of border crossings were usually arranged after sunset or before dawn when the coast guard was less vigilant, but there were several other methods as well. For instance, some people embarked on Turkish commercial vessels disguised as American soldiers, because many American commercial vessels anchored in Turkish harbors and, from Turkey they could continue their cruise to the United States.

In addition, it is important to mention that the Romanian political situation and the desperate need of many people to leave the country appeared to be a potential business for Turkish sailors. Some of them were selling fake sailor authorization so, for an amount of money and an ID photo one could hide aboard the ship. Next, there were three scenarios: after the vessel left the Romanian port, the person could be dropped off in a port-of-call; the second scenario was to buy a boat and the officer in charge of the ship could declare that they saved the person from a shipwreck; or, the last possibility was to allow people to stay on the vessel until it anchored to a major commercial harbor or to the home port.

A statement of an arrested person from the records of the Secret Police Services illustrates this business and what the Turkish sailors offered:

“[...] the first option (the cheapest one, just 2-3000 pounds) involves the following: you just embark on the vessel and you will be dropped off somewhere on its way, the name of the port is unknown; the second option costs 5-6000 pounds and it implies buying a boat that will be carried on the vessel and the sailors will declare they saved the person from a shipwreck and could not abandon him and the third one costs 1000 pounds and the captain took the responsibility to disembark in a port in Italy”<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității (The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives – hereafter, A.C.N.S.A.S), Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 6., f. 205.

By way of illustration, we mention that only in July and August 1947 the authorities from Constanta put under investigation for illegal border crossing 100 suspects<sup>17</sup>.

As previously stated, the emigration topic developed into a clandestine business in the public sector. For example, we identified a case within The Ministry of Industry where one of the employees was able to facilitate clandestine departures abroad:

“Carol Gagel, an industrialist, declared that one day he met Ritsch Miroslav, a public servant for The Ministry of Industry who offered him the possibility to leave the country clandestine, arguing that he were able to provide some possibilities to facilitate his departure.

Among other aspects, Ritsch affirmed that he cannot reveal too many details, just the fact that the transport will be by Turkish commercial vessels that bring to Constanta harbor colonial goods and, on their way back transport cement. He also mentioned that so far 5-6 people have already left the country”<sup>18</sup>.

Although the most accessible, the Black Sea was not the only way to reach Turkey, there was another way, especially by people from military and aviation sectors. Some reports of the Secret Police Services and of The Ministry of National Defence registered a few cases of hijacked passenger planes or military aircrafts by pilots who diverted flights to Turkey. For instance, a report of the Secret Police in Timisoara was informing the authorities in Bucharest that on August 1948 they detected a group of approx. 18 people who were planning to fly from Bucharest to Ankara with the flight booked for some Soviet officers in Galati prepared to return to Bucharest<sup>19</sup>.

These types of illegal border crossings via internal flights increased in 1948. In fact, a report issued by the Foreign Ministry showed that Turkish authorities sent in February several lists of Romanian planes that landed in Turkey without permission and asked the Romanian authorities to provide explanations for these situations, while also refusing to repatriate the people<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 1., f. 49.

<sup>18</sup> A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 3, f. 146.

<sup>19</sup> A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 3, ff. 81-82.

<sup>20</sup> A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 2, f. 17.

### **Turkish authorities` reaction and Turkish public opinion**

The previous sections aimed to briefly define the internal Romanian context at the beginning of the Cold War and to reveal the most common methods used by Romanian citizens to leave the country determined by harsh living and politics conditions. The last part of this article aims to bring into attention the Turkish public opinion and the Turkish official reaction towards the increasing wave of people arriving illicitly on its territory. While maintaining economic relations with Romania, Turkey's approach to the pro-Soviet government in Bucharest was rather reserved and discrete. Few Turkish officials expressed themselves in official statements against the new Romanian government but subtly protected the newly arrived in Turkey. There were various situations when Turkish authorities refused to disclose the identity of those arrived, declined Romanian authorities' request to repatriate them, and instead offered them temporary asylum in special centers. Moreover, local authorities tried to integrate them into the labor market, but the language was the main barrier.

On the opposite, Turkish press and public opinion was vocal and aggressive, denouncing the regime from Bucharest. Interviewing people that left Romania was used as a strong argument to support their discourse. Many times, the Turkish newspapers revealed the interviewed persons` identities and each interview was published along with a dramatic headline about the Red Army troops in Romania, the communist rule, the uncertain situation of King Michael, and the social context:

“Russians own everything. The actual Romanian government cannot do anything except for obeying the Russians and accomplishing their behests. [...] None`s life in Romania is safe”<sup>21</sup>.

Another example is from *Hürriyet* newspaper from May 1948, where a wide article was dedicated to Romanian internal affairs and an interview with some refugees:

“Seven Romanian political refugees who recently escaped from their country by a small boat declared to our correspondent who interviewed them about their odyssey and about the living conditions in Romania:

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<sup>21</sup> *Vakit* [Time], August 3, 1947 in *Ibidem*, f. 39.

`- We left Romania in a small boat on May 7. On May 10, we reached Çilingoz shore, 17km south of Midiya. We are seven people. Among us are a captain, a gunner lieutenant, an officer of the Navy, a lawyer, three technicians, and one sailor. [...] The Turkish authorities welcomed us. First, they sent us to Kırklareli and then to Istanbul. Now we are totally free and independent. `

The meaning of freedom is for persons who live under communists' pressure completely different than the one we use. Freedom no longer exists in Romania. [...]"<sup>22</sup>.

This excerpt is just one example of the many published by the Turkish press that overwhelmed the Romanian authorities as the communist regime was blackened and blamed for the poor living conditions and lack of democracy. Even the ads in the local newspapers dedicated to integrating Romanian refugees into the labor market contained protests against Bucharest's regime: *"Each patriot's duty is to help the enemies of communism. Escaped from the red hell, these enemies of communism are in search for a job. Those who can help are required to contact our administration"*<sup>23</sup>.

As a counter reaction, the Romanian Secret police arrested family members, relatives, or close friends of those who escaped and forced them to testify that the missing persons were national traitors, delinquents, mischievous, vicious persons, and that they were not aware about their escape plans. Afraid for their lives or blackmailed, witnesses were constrained to provide false depositions and even to praise the regime<sup>24</sup>.

### **Final remarks**

As a last note, we mention that it was hard to track to the end the fate of those who crossed the border illegally and where they established themselves after departing from Turkey. At the same time, the life of those left at home was complex and perilous as they were constantly under close surveillance, arrested, sanctioned, or fired, with years to follow showing a crueller facet of the regime. Focused more on taking power and consolidating its position, the communist regime was unprepared at first to handle a wave of emigration, and the files and notes issued by the local authorities and by the secret police services perfectly illustrate this

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<sup>22</sup> *Hürriyet* [Liberty], 05<sup>th</sup> May 1948, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 2, f. 489.

<sup>24</sup> See: A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentar Fund, File 9511, vol. 5.

situation. The police and military points near borders signaled the fact that the staff is ill-equipped and faces food shortage; many urgent reports were registered or solved with delay due to insufficient personnel or, in some cases, due to a lack of experience or education.

This situation portrays a chaotic administration of an unconsolidated regime, yet this situation was also a breach that allowed many to leave the country. If escaping was not possible under legal conditions, many people found alternative methods to cross the border illegally.

To conclude, this study focused strictly upon the case of illegal border crossings into Turkey as it is less known that many of the Romanian citizens who left the country and asked for political asylum in Western countries first went to Turkey. Some of them just transited Turkey, others spent a few months there until finding ways to reach Western destinations. Turkey was an option not only due to common shores on Black Sea but also due to its close ties with the West and the United States and the shared rivalry against the Soviet Union. The dawn of Cold War caught Romania and Turkey on different sides of the Iron Curtain yet the diplomatic and economic relations were not interrupted, and, surprisingly, the fact that many Romanian citizens escaped to Turkey through illegal methods did not bring tensions between Bucharest and Ankara.

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# Brevi cenni sul rapporto tra turismo e letteratura italiana

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**Abstract:** *Brief notes on the relationship between tourism and Italian literature.* Using literary sources, the essay covers three points in the relationship between Italians and holidays: the first is the transition from vacation to tourism; the second from summer vacation as a moment of rest (mainly in the countryside) to vacation as an opportunity for fun (mostly at the seaside). In addition to these two, we have a third point: in the second half of the Twentieth century, holidays become a mass phenomenon, no longer elitist as they had been until the first half of the same century. They become something possible for most Italians who, especially in August, leave the cities empty. This historical-sociological parable is revisited through literary testimonies that go back to the roots of the mother literature, the Latin one and then it resumes its path, interrupted in the High Middle Ages, around 1300 in conjunction with the first literary testimonies (the triad Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio). The vacation phenomenon, intended as staying for the summer months in a villa more or less outside the city walls, finds its maximum expression starting from the 16th century with the Renaissance villas of the aristocracy, until it meets the aspirations of the small nobility and of the upper middle class in the 18th and 19th centuries. Crucial testimony is Carlo Goldoni's "Vacation Trilogy", a triptych of three comedies that actually constitute a single text portraying the vacation phenomenon as a status symbol far from the motivations of previous centuries (vacation as a moment of peace, "otium", rest). During the Nineteenth century, holidays are associated with tourism (especially in the thermal baths and in the mountains), while from the Twentieth century, the favourite option is the seaside. However, another change will characterize the use of leisure in the Twentieth century: the birth of mass tourism. With brief literary notes, we try to explain how in Italy holidays have now turned into something with anxiety-inducing traits, especially among young people and not only, in an almost spasmodic search for fun (with Dionysian and Bacchic traits) at the expense of original motivations (rest, leisure, "otium") in a relationship in which the "horror vacui" seems to have ousted the "horror pleni".

**Key words:** vacation, tourism, holidays, literature, Italy.

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**Rezumat:** *Note scurte despre relația dintre turism și literatura italiană.* Eseul parcurge prin intermediul izvoarelor literare trei momente cruciale ale raportului italienilor cu vacanța: primul e trecerea de la vilegiatură la turism, al doilea de la vacanța estivală înțeleasă ca odihnă (în special la țară) la vacanța ca distracție (la mare). Și, în sfârșit, al treilea: începând din a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea avem de a face cu vacanța de masă, care nu mai este elitară cum fusese până în prima jumătate a secolului trecut, ci devine posibilă pentru cea mai mare parte a italienilor, care, mai ales în luna august, părăsesc orașele lăsându-le goale. Această poveste de matrice istorico-sociologică este adusă în prim plan prin intermediul unor mărturii literare care ajung până la rădăcinile literaturii mamă, literatura latină, reluându-și apoi drumul, întrerupt în Evul Mediu timpuriu, în jurul anului 1300, concomitent cu primele mărturii literare (triada Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio). Fenomenul vilegiaturii, înțeleasă ca ședere în lunile estivale într-o vilă aflată mai mult sau mai puțin în afara zidurilor orașului, își găsește maxima expresie începând cu secolul al XVI-lea, odată cu primele vile renascentiste ale burgheziei, ajungând la întretărirea aspirațiilor micii nobilimi și ale marii burghezii în secolele al XVIII-lea și al XIX-lea. O mărturie crucială în acest sens e *Trilogia della villeggiatura* (Trilogia vilegiaturii) de Carlo Goldoni, un triptic comic, care, în realitate, constituie un singur text, ce descrie fenomenul vilegiaturii ca pe un status-symbol aflat departe de motivațiile secolelor precedente (vilegiatura ca moment de "otium" literar, de odihnă). Consolidându-se în secolul al XIX-lea, vilegiatura începe să fie însoțită de turism, mai ales termal și montan, și, începând cu secolul al XX-lea, în special balnear. Și totuși o altă schimbare va delinea caracteristicile petrecerii timpului liber în secolul XX: apariția turismului de masă. Prin scurte exemplificări literare încercăm să demonstrăm în ce fel vacanța s-a transformat deja, în Italia, în ceva anxios, mai ales printre tineri, și nu numai, în căutarea aproape spasmodică a distracției (cu aspecte dionisiace și bahice), în defavoarea motivațiilor originare (odihnă, relaxare, otium), într-o relație în care "horror vacui" pare să fi detronat "horror pleni", iar dionisiacul, pentru a folosi categoriile nitzscheane, pare să fi luat locul apolinicului.

**Cuvinte cheie:** vacanța, vilegiatură, turism, Italia, literatura.

### Introduzione

Vedere l'Italia da una prospettiva della storia turistica implica un capovolgimento di punto di vista. L'Italia, infatti, è stata considerata, sempre, soprattutto all'estero, come meta, come protagonista passiva del turismo.

Così gli italiani sembrano essere i coprotagonisti o meglio gli attori non protagonisti del viaggio che lo straniero mediamente colto intraprendeva nel Belpaese. O, al più, l'italiano rappresentava l'aspetto folclorico di contorno che si innestava nelle memorie e nei taccuini di viaggio dei visitatori della *terra dei limoni* per usare la felice espressione di Goethe.

Meno noto forse il rapporto tra gl'italiani e il turismo nel senso attivo del termine che è ricco e fecondo ed è rintracciabile attraverso questa disamina molto sintetica per mezzo di uno strumento parziale, ma a nostro avviso indicativo, che è quello della letteratura. Tanto più che si parla, in questo contesto, del riverbero che la bellezza dei luoghi, la ricerca di riposo o di svago e di tutto ciò che può essere assimilato al macroinsieme turistico ha avuto nelle nostre pagine letterarie. Si cercherà comunque di tenere separata l'idea di viaggio, come esplorazione, con tempistiche a lungo termine, dall'idea di turismo e di vacanza che è assimilabile a un impegno stagionale, per lo più estivo che ha quindi un andamento ciclico e ripetitivo. L'individuazione di questa distinzione non è sempre facile soprattutto nei primi secoli della nostra letteratura, visto che il turismo e la vacanza come la intendiamo noi si afferma nella seconda metà del Novecento. Tuttavia, la letteratura contiene tracce importanti di questo percorso che permette di offrire spunti e riflessione come base di partenza per un approfondimento maggiore. Ovviamente considerata la vastità e la mole dei materiali contenere in modo esaustivo in poche pagine tale argomento è impossibile. Si vorrà quindi giudicare il presente lavoro come lo scandagliamento di una suggestione che potrebbe offrire dei risvolti interessanti sia sul versante della storia del turismo, sia sul versante dell'opera letteraria vista attraverso una nuova angolatura gnoseologica.

Prima di iniziare il percorso tuttavia andrà fatta una precisazione lessicale sottolineando la differenza tra due termini: villeggiatura e vacanza<sup>1</sup>. La "villeggiatura" era nell'accezione comune dell'italiano della strada la permanenza stanziale nella stagione estiva in un determinato luogo fuori città: poteva essere al mare, in montagna o semplicemente in campagna nei dintorni della città o anche in una stazione termale. La villeggiatura era, fino agli anni settanta/ottanta del secolo scorso, la formula più gettonata per quanto riguardava il riposo estivo. Mercé le scuole che chiudevano a giugno per riaprire a ottobre (salvo i temuti esami di riparazione) e il legame stretto coi luoghi di origine aviti (genitori e nonni che ancora abitavano nei paesi e in campagna) faceva sì

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Tonelli A., "Tempo libero e turismo" in «Storia d'Italia», Annali 27, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore, pp. 211 e ss.

che molti di coloro che risiedevano in città si riversassero nella residenza estiva dove poter recuperare le forze. Oggi è sempre più raro sentir parlare di villeggiatura: le vacanze scolastiche più corte, la donna sempre più coinvolta nel mondo del lavoro, le tasse (nel caso specifico dell'Italia) sulla seconda casa fanno sì che la domanda turistica si rivolga sempre più verso modelli di vacanza breve e/o itinerante con viaggi all'estero o in Italia (secondo le possibilità economiche) facilitati da nuove formule offerte dal mercato turistico: i voli low coast, i villaggi turistici, vacanze studiate per determinati segmenti di mercato (famiglie, single, bambini, sport estremi e non). La cosiddetta vacanza turistica itinerante sta prendendo sempre più piede, soprattutto tra coppie senza figli e single e il viaggio di piacere o a sfondo culturale, quindi, sta soppiantando la villeggiatura, termine che andando alla radice della parola indica un'idea stanziale (in villa intesa come campagna e quindi fuori città) ed è qualcosa di diverso dal turismo (appunto "tour", viaggio, spostamento) o dalla stessa vacanza (dal cui lemma di origine latina possiamo estrarre due parole: vagante o vagabondo, colui che vaga gira senza meta o vacanza che possiamo associare a un vuoto da riempire e quindi a un periodo libero). Ma al di là di queste riflessioni lessicali possiamo dire che i tre termini (villeggiatura, vacanza e turismo) implicano del tempo libero da spendere per una gamma di scopi molto variabile coi due estremi: dal ritiro spirituale al divertimento puro ed effimero.

### **I prodromi: tra magnificenze romane e pellegrinaggi medievali.**

Prima di arrivare alla letteratura italiana un breve cenno al mondo latino è ineludibile. Nell'epoca tardo repubblicana e imperiale infatti tra gli strati più abbienti la villeggiatura era uno status quasi d'obbligo. Intorno Roma era gettonata la Sabina, zona che includeva Tivoli e dintorni. Qui soggiornava Orazio, nella villa sontuosa donatagli da Mecenate, individuata a Licenza (una sessantina di chilometri da Roma), qui si fece costruire una dimora imperiale Adriano. Altri poeti e intellettuali hanno associato le loro opere ai luoghi di villeggiatura: Catullo a Sirmione, luogo dove probabilmente si ristorava e alleviava le ferite inferte al suo martoriato cuore dall'inaffidabile Lesbia. Ma i Romani amavano anche il mare. La zona prediletta era quella di Baia, la piccola Roma, nell'odierna Pozzuoli. Era la residenza estiva degli Imperatori ricca di terme che vide un proliferare di ville oggi in gran parte perdute per via del bradisismo che ha inghiottito una buona fetta dell'antica costa. Ma ville romane extraurbane sono rintracciabili ovunque nell'ex territorio dell'Impero dimostrando come la cultura del ristoro estivo fosse acquisita per chi ovviamente se lo poteva permettere.

Con le invasioni barbariche tutto ciò ebbe termine, la villeggiatura in Italia divenne merce rara da un lato per l'interruzione delle vie di comunicazione, per la distruzione delle infrastrutture e per l'imperversare di guerre (una su tutte la guerra greco gotica che, nel VI secolo, devastò per vent'anni l'Italia), dall'altra per l'avvento del cristianesimo che per certi versi condannò il viaggio inteso come sciocco e distraente dal pensiero dell'eternità come sottolinea in un celebre passo Sant'Agostino<sup>2</sup> e in generale l'ozio.

Se la condanna del Cristianesimo e le difficoltà oggettive degli spostamenti ostacola nell'Alto Medioevo il viaggio inteso come avventura gnoseologica o come momento di svago e riposo, bisogna sottolineare l'intensificarsi di quello che oggi definiremmo "turismo religioso" sotto forma di pellegrinaggio. Nei primi secoli dell'era cristiana e per tutto il medioevo assistiamo al boom delle reliquie (resti dei santi martiri e oggetti) che viaggiano da un'estremità all'altra dall'odierna Asia minore, all'Africa, all'Europa.

I centri, meta di questi viaggi, sono principalmente tre: Gerusalemme, Roma e Santiago di Compostela.

Roma in particolare diviene ricetto di molte reliquie provenienti dai luoghi santi. Precursora ne è la madre dell'Imperatore Costantino, sant'Elena, che porta con sé di ritorno da Gerusalemme i resti della croce e dei chiodi della crocifissione (conservati nell'omonima basilica di Santa Croce), cui seguirono gli arrivi di altre reliquie cristiane dalla culla dove fu deposto Gesù alla nascita (presso la Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore), alla Scala Santa (dal Sinedrio dove venne interrogato da Pilato) fino alla celebre, e perduta, Veronica (personaggio non riportato dai vangeli che, secondo la tradizione orale, ha deterso il volto di Cristo insanguinato rimanendone impressi i tratti del volto) e innumerevoli altre. Le frequenti invasioni che si succedettero in epoca medievale e moderna, culminanti nel cosiddetto sacco di Roma (1527) ad opera dei Lanzichenecchi, ebbero poi un effetto moltiplicatore sulle reliquie trafugate con rivendicazioni di autenticità che si susseguirono in tutta Italia (per non dire in tutta Europa) allargando quindi lo spazio geografico dei pellegrinaggi.

### La ripresa nel Medioevo

Venendo all'ambito letterario, è con il *Cantico delle creature* di San Francesco che di solito si sancisce la prima testimonianza scritta di natura letteraria del volgare italiano. Precedenti documentazioni attestano l'uso del volgare non a fini letterari, ma più che altro per motivazioni

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<sup>2</sup> Agostino, *Confessioni libro X* 8. 15).

giuridiche, giocose o comunque popolari. Stiamo, quando ciò avviene, nel XIII secolo, in un periodo storico convenzionalmente definito come basso Medioevo, che sulla spinta della cosiddetta rinascita dell'anno Mille aveva vissuto, grazie al cambiamento climatico, e a una relativa prosperità economica la ripresa dei commerci e, di conseguenza, delle vie di comunicazioni. Il Trecento, in particolare, per l'italiano è il secolo d'oro, delle cosiddette tre corone, Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio. Tre figure che, per una ragione o per l'altra, sono segnate, per scelta o costrizione, dalla cifra del viaggio, del movimento.

Il primo, Dante, incentra la *Divina Commedia*, sull'allegoria del viaggio e vive gli ultimi vent'anni della sua vita da esule; il secondo Petrarca, nasce esule, essendo il padre concittadino di Dante, rifugiato ad Arezzo per essere appartenuto alla fazione dei Guelfi bianchi, per poi acquisire uno status cosmopolita precursore della cultura umanistica; Boccaccio infine col suo *Decameron* regala ai posteri l'epopea della figura del mercante, classe sociale dalla quale proveniva, diffondendola in ogni contrada d'Europa attraverso le novelle che spesso erano una rivisitazione di una ricca e varia tradizione della narrazione breve la cui periegesi rendeva evidente il debito culturale nei confronti della cultura mediterranea.

In Dante, ovviamente, non c'è l'idea turistica moderna, tuttavia ciò che va ritenuto traccia di un movimento che ha come vettore il ritorno a un'idea di viaggio quantomeno, come mera caratteristica estetica, sono alcuni commenti su paesaggi e riferimenti geografici che nella *Commedia* tornano costantemente.

Uno dei più celebri è quella del III canto del *Purgatorio*:

«Tra Lerice e Turbia la più diserta,  
la più rotta ruina è una scala,  
verso di quella, agevole e aperta»<sup>3</sup>.

Qui Dante si fa turista nel senso di ammiratore di un paesaggio straniante, è quasi uno spot pubblicitario, un invito a visitare questo luogo impervio, ma affascinante. Ma sono innumerevoli i passaggi di località geografiche anche con annotazioni antropiche, come nel caso di Bruges<sup>4</sup>, con riferimenti enogastronomici come nel caso di papa Martino

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<sup>3</sup> Alighieri D., *Divina Commedia*, Pur. III, v. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Id, If XV 4 Quali Fiamminghi tra Guizzante e Bruggia, / temendo 'l fiotto che ' nver' lor s'avventa, / fanno lo schermo perché 'l mar si fuggia.

V e il suo debole per la Vernaccia e le anguille di Bolsena<sup>5</sup>, gusti e abitudini perfino attitudini sessuali<sup>6</sup> come nel caso delle donne sarde della zona della Barbagia. Sono solo alcuni degli innumerevoli passaggi di quell'enciclopedica silloge universale del mondo e della cultura medievale che è la Commedia dantesca i cui riferimenti geografici e astronomici dimostrano la consapevolezza del mondo da parte di un uomo colto del XIV secolo. Riferimenti a soggiorni di piacere non ce ne sono, ma si attestano gli intensi traffici umani che esistevano di nuovo tra le contrade d'Europa soprattutto in seno a una città mercantile come Firenze. Di una generazione successiva è Francesco Petrarca col quale si apre una stagione nuova, un modello di figura intellettuale che resisterà fino al Settecento. Petrarca rilancia il mondo classico e quindi latino assumendo a modello i vari Ciceroni, Orazio e innestandoli sul filone cristiano prendendo a riferimento *in primis* Agostino. Petrarca stilizza la figura dell'intellettuale come torre d'avorio, dedita agli studi, infastidito dalle vicissitudini temporali. La ricerca di quiete e di distacco dai clamori mondani ritorna costantemente nelle opere di Petrarca. *L'otium* (inteso come opposizione al *nec/otium* e quindi al mondo degli affari, dei commerci) è la condizione ineludibile per scrivere, poetare, studiare. Valchiusa (vicino Avignone) in Provenza, è il suo luogo ideale, là dove trova rifugio per le sue pene amorose e sempre in Provenza realizza, insieme al fratello, l'ascesa al Mont Ventoux<sup>7</sup>, che rappresenta secondo alcuni, il primo resoconto di alpinismo sportivo, talmente sconvolgente da provocare la scelta monastica nel fratello Gherardo e la scelta della castità in Petrarca. Ma sempre per rimanere in tema di turismo religioso, o per meglio dire, di pellegrinaggio, inevitabile la citazione del celebre sonetto (XVI del Canzoniere) in cui "*il vecchierel canuto e bianco*" lascia la famiglia per intraprendere il viaggio a Roma e contemplare la Veronica, reliquia di cui abbiamo già parlato. Ma anche gli ultimi anni di Francesco sono all'insegna dei luoghi lontani dalla città e dal rumore del mondo. Meta del suo *buen retiro* nel crepuscolo delle sue primavere, sono i colli

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<sup>5</sup> Id, Purgatorio, Canto XXIV, vv. 19-24 "(...) e quella faccia di là da lui più che l'altre trapunta, ebbe la Santa Chiesa in su le braccia: dal Torso fu, e purga per digiuno l'anguille di Bolsena e la vernaccia."

<sup>6</sup> Id, Pur, XXIII, vv. 91-96.

Tanto è a Dio più cara e più diletta  
la vedovella mia, che molto amai,  
quanto in bene operare è più soletta;  
ché la Barbagia di Sardigna assai  
ne le femmine sue più è pudica  
che la Barbagia dov'io la lascia

<sup>7</sup> Petrarca F., Familiares I, IV.

Euganei vicino Padova, con l'adorata figlia Francesca. Terza figura che corona lo splendido XIV secolo della letteratura italiana è Boccaccio. Anche in questo caso dobbiamo partire dal dato biografico: nasce a Certaldo da padre mercante che si reca come rappresentante della famiglia Bardi, ricca famiglia fiorentina, a Napoli dove frequenta la corte di Roberto d'Angiò, sovrano per così dire illuminato, mecenate di poeti e letterati e poeta egli stesso. In questo clima "cortese" cresce Giovanni che a malincuore segue il padre quando questi è costretto a ritornare a Firenze. Dove si dimostrerà un ottimo manager culturale brigando tra l'altro per l'arrivo a Firenze di un famoso grecista (Leonzio Pilato) e aprendo così la porta alla riscoperta del greco e dando una decisiva spinta per la nascita della nuova stagione dell'Umanesimo.

E' nella sua opera più nota, il *Decameron*, che Boccaccio tuttavia offre spunti per rintracciare quei prodromi del turismo moderno di là da venire. Innanzi tutto, già nel basso Medioevo è ormai acquisita l'idea nelle famiglie più ricche di Firenze di una residenza estiva. E' proprio in una di queste, a Fiesole, infatti, che l'onesta brigata di sette fanciulle e tre ragazzi decide di prendere rifugio per fuggire il contagio della Peste nera che stava devastando Firenze e l'Europa intera. E' un ristoro in questo caso allegorico dalla tragedia della vita, lì, infatti a i giovani attraverso il racconto di dieci novelle in dieci giornate esorcizzano il pensiero della morte che inarrestabile si propagava per le vie di Firenze non risparmiando né giovani né vecchi. L'idea del rifugio nel periodo più caldo della stagione si rinviene anche nella novella che ha per protagonista un personaggio storico di assoluto rilievo nella storia dell'arte universale: Giotto da Bandone. Inserito nelle novelle della sesta giornata (la V novella per la precisione), quelle che celebrano "il motto", ovvero il saper prontamente cavarsi dai guai grazie alla padronanza della lingua e alla velocità della ragione, il testo narra del pittore fiorentino sorpreso, insieme al suo amico Forese da Rabatta, da un temporale estivo di ritorno<sup>8</sup> dalle "lor possessioni" nel Mugello "in quegli tempi di state che le ferie si celebran per le corti" segno di una ripresa nel tardo Medioevo di

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<sup>8</sup> Avevano in Mugello messer Forese e Giotto lor possessioni: ed essendo messer Forese le sue andato a vedere, in quegli tempi di state che le ferie si celebran per le corti, e per ventura in su un cattivo ronzin da vettura venendosene, trovò il già detto Giotto, il quale similmente, avendo le sue vedute, se ne tornava a Firenze; il quale né in cavallo né in arnese essendo in cosa alcuna meglio di lui, sí come vecchi, a pian passo venendosene, insieme s'accompagnarono.

Boccaccio G., *Decameron*, Giornata VI, Novella V. La frase "in quegli tempi di state che le ferie si celebran per le corti" sta per in quel periodo estivo nel quale "si prendono le vacanze nei tribunali" secondo l'edizione curata da Vittore Branca, Boccaccio G, *Tutte le opere*, vol. I, Milano, Mondadori, 1976, p. 1551.

usanze già affermatesi nell'era classica e precipuamente romana<sup>9</sup>. Nell'Umanesimo nel solco dell'emulazione dei modelli culturali dell'epoca greco romana diviene uno *status symbol* la villeggiatura delle famiglie nobili e degli esponenti più ricchi della borghesia mercantile. La villa soprattutto in Italia diviene il segno di prestigio di una dinastia e di lì in tutta Europa, con segni sontuosi in Francia, in Inghilterra soprattutto, ma anche nel Centro Europa. Roma stessa, sotto il dominio papale, è circondata, a partire soprattutto dal Cinquecento, da residenze estive meta di rifugio e di ristoro, fisico e intellettuale, dell'aristocrazia del tempo: all'interno della stessa Roma, a Frascati e sui Castelli, nella Tuscia, o comunque nei dintorni dell'Urbe abbiamo esempi di ville di aristocratici e cardinali.

### Tra villeggiatura e *Grand tour*

La villa e la villeggiatura, il pellegrinaggio, e il "Grand tour" sono i tre cardini sui quali poggia il turismo prossimo a venire. Villeggiatura forzata è anche quella cui è costretto Niccolò Machiavelli nell'esilio a San Casciano a pochi chilometri da Firenze. Eppure è lì, nell'isolamento e nella pace che ha la possibilità di concentrarsi per attendere al suo capolavoro, "Il principe" col quale fonda lo studio della politica come scienza autonoma. Se la testimonianza è forzata, tuttavia, l'idea di quei giorni testimoniati nella lettera a Francesco Vettori, possono indicativamente tracciare come era la vita in campagna di un intellettuale che da un lato cercava quiete per trovare un giusto gradiente di concentrazione, dall'altro non disdegnava di immergersi nella vita quotidiana del vicino centro abitato nel quale sovente si trovava non disdegnava immergersi tra i sodali d'osteria con il tempo speso a bere, a giocare e a litigare<sup>10</sup>.

Nell'Umanesimo fiorentino Poliziano e in quello napoletano Sannazzaro non possono non accostarsi all'idea di villa, di corte, di distacco dalle fatiche quotidiane e dagli affanni della routine. Nel periodo rinascimentale il tema della villa come luogo d'ispirazione, di pace e di

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<sup>9</sup> "In quegli tempi di state che le ferie si celebran per le corti" sta ad indicare "nel periodo estivo in cui si chiudono gli uffici".

<sup>10</sup> "Venuta la sera, mi ritorno a casa ed entro nel mio scrittoio, e in sull'uscio mi spoglio quella veste cotidiana, piena di fango e di loto, e mi metto panni reali e curiali; e rivestito condecientemente, entro nelle antique corti delli antiqui huomini, dove, da loro ricevuto amorevolmente, mi pasco di quel cibo che solum è mio e ch'io nacqui per lui; dove io non mi vergogno parlare con loro e domandarli della ragione delle loro azioni; e quelli per loro humanità mi rispondono; e non sento per quattro hore di tempo alcuna noia, sdimentico ogni affanno, non temo la povertà, non mi sbigottisce la morte: tutto mi transferisco in loro". Machiavelli N., dalla "Lettera a Francesco Vettori", 10 dicembre 1513.

distacco dal mondo ritorna con Pietro Bembo, uno dei primi teorici e studiosi della lingua italiana, nonché tra gli esponenti di punta del Rinascimento letterario e del platonismo allora imperante nella penisola. Nell'ambito della sua opera è da mettere in luce un testo interessante, scritto in latino, *De Aetna*, trattante l'esperienza che lo stesso Bembo aveva avuto a Taormina, assistendo a un'eruzione del vulcano che dà il titolo al libro. Un trattato naturalistico trascritto come si usava in forma di dialogo. L'interlocutore è il padre Bernardo e il dialogo si svolge nella villa dei Bembo, a Riviera del Brenta, in Veneto, luogo dove il padre si rifugiava per riposarsi dalle incombenze della sua attività politica quale senatore della Repubblica della Serenissima.

La villa dei Bembo, e il luogo scelto per il ristoro, sottolineano come nel XVI secolo si era affermato, tra le famiglie patrizie, l'usanza di costruire una villa fuori città per passarvi la stagione più calda. Modello di vita che resisterà almeno per due secoli fino ai giorni di Carlo Goldoni.

***Il Settecento: la borghesia veneta alle prese con la villeggiatura.***

Carlo Goldoni è l'autore della cosiddetta trilogia della Villeggiatura<sup>11</sup>, tre commedie che l'autore teatrale dedica a questa tematica e attraverso la quale possiamo osservare come la villeggiatura si afferma nelle classi economicamente in ascesa come status ineludibile. Pur essendo ambientata a Livorno, la storia ha come idea ispiratrice i costumi, le abitudini e le mode che ossessionavano la borghesia in ascesa della Repubblica veneta. Un passo indicativo è il dialogo tra la protagonista Giacinta, una delle straordinarie figure femminili forgiate dal genio goldoniano, e lo spasimante Lorenzo, ingelosito dalla presenza nella comitiva in procinto di partire da Livorno per Montenero, del rivale Guglielmo.

LORENZO: Sarebbe un gran male che non andaste un anno in villeggiatura?

GIACINTA: Un anno senza andar in villeggiatura! Che direbbero di me a Montenero? Che direbbero di me a Livorno? Non avrei più ardire di guardar in faccia nessuno<sup>12</sup>.

Chiarissimo in questo caso l'idea della villeggiatura come status di affermazione sociale, di strumento confermatore o meno l'appartenenza a un cetto. Il giudizio che Goldoni offre del costume del cetto emergente è di sonora stroncatura: *“L'innocente divertimento della campagna è divenuto ai dì*

<sup>11</sup> Il termine di trilogia per indicare le tre commedie collegate tra loro (Smanie della villeggiatura, Le avventure della villeggiatura e Ritorno dalla villeggiatura)

<sup>12</sup> Goldoni C., Smanie delle villeggiatura, atto I, scena *Trilogia della villeggiatura*, a cura di Franco Fido, Padova, Marsilio, 2005, p. 92.

nostri una passione, una mania, un disordine"<sup>13</sup>. Così nella presentazione delle commedie nell'anno 1768. L'indice di Goldoni è puntato soprattutto contro l'irruzione rumorosa e irrispettosa della pace dalla natura dei cittadini villeggianti i quali "avvelenano il piacere dei villici e dei pastori"<sup>14</sup> stravolgendo il senso di quelli che come Virgilio e Sannazzaro, Goldoni definisce "i panegiristi della vita campestre"<sup>15</sup> che esaltavano "l'amena tranquillità del ritiro"<sup>16</sup> traslocando in loco "il tumulto delle città"<sup>17</sup>.

*Le smanie della villeggiatura, Le avventure della villeggiatura, Il ritorno dalla villeggiatura* narrano perciò, attraverso la deformazione comica, le aspirazioni e l'ambizione della borghesia che tenta in maniera goffa e volgare di imitare le usanze del ceto aristocratico. Goffaggine e volgarità avvertite "in primis" dalla servitù al seguito che sbeffeggia i loro padroni facendone sarcasticamente e consapevolmente il verso e cogliendone a pieno il senso del ridicolo. All'interno della cornice spaziale si muovono amori possibili e mai realizzati, sfruttatori e scrocconi, nottate spese tra carte e pettegozzetti e un senso di vacuità che cala come una coltre di malinconia su una trilogia di commedie priva di lieto fine almeno, per quanto riguarda la condizione sentimentale di Giacinta e Guglielmo. Con Goldoni, quindi, con il suo "tumulto delle città" che sbarca sui luoghi ameni della villeggiatura si apre, seppure *in nuce*, un'idea nuova di villeggiatura, più di massa, meno elitaria, anticipo straordinario del XX secolo. Certo stiamo ancora nel campo referenziale dell'immaginario metaforico arcadico che nel Settecento si costituirà in accademia a Roma e che vide lo stesso Goldoni appartenervi. E la villa o la residenza in campagna rimarrà come luogo eletto per la villeggiatura di terra fino a fine Ottocento, quando, farà capolino anche l'altro elemento vitale: l'acqua, nello specifico, il mare.

Per continuare l'exkursus di luoghi di villeggiatura che si riverberano in passaggi letterari, una segnalazione va fatta per Ippolito Pindemonte, figura considerata dal punto di vista antologico quasi gregaria rispetto ai contemporanei, primo tra tutti Foscolo. È conosciuto nelle aule scolastiche italiane per essere appunto il dedicatario dei Sepolcri, il capolavoro poetico del poeta veneziano e il magistrale traduttore dell'Odissea. Ma anche lui, oltre a Foscolo, è un intellettuale di assoluto valore e di straordinaria apertura culturale. Pindemonte è uno dei rari intellettuali italiani, infatti, che compie il Gran Tour visitando

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<sup>13</sup> Ivi, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

l'Italia, la Germania, l'Austria, la Francia e in barca a vela la Sicilia, Malta e la Grecia. La sua poesia ha una forte influenza preromantica con una particolare predilezione per la natura che è la vera protagonista dei suoi lavori poetici. Citiamo Pindemonte, perché cominciamo a intravedere nella sua figura un'anticipazione, una prolessi per così dire, del turismo in Italia che comincia a diffondersi anche qui tra le élite culturali che oltre al luogo di villeggiatura cominciano ad amare lo spostamento come momento di ristoro per l'anima e, vedremo, per il corpo. Se il conte Alessandro Manzoni con l'amatissima villa di Brusuglio rimane ancora legato all'idea canonica di villa come evasione dal goldoniano tumulto urbano, la breve esistenza dell'altro poeta di spicco del primo Ottocento italiano, Giacomo Leopardi, è segnata, nonostante o a causa della salute malferma, dal continuo spostarsi in varie città trovando ristoro soprattutto in quelle di mare (Pisa e Napoli). Anche questa una spia, un indizio che ci aiuta a cogliere la visione della villeggiatura come luogo di mare, visti soprattutto i frutti benefici dal punto di vista della salute, in un secolo flagellato dalla tisi. Tuttavia la vacanza proprio con il dilagare del "mal sottile" e in particolare la vacanza marittima e montana, comincia ad essere associata all'idea curativa e non più all'idea di semplice riposo e rinfrancamento dell'animo e luogo ideale di studio e di ispirazione. Un elemento nuovo che prepara alla trasformazione del concetto di villeggiatura che assumerà molte sfumature e sottospecie a partire dalla seconda metà dell'Ottocento e soprattutto nel Novecento.

### **Dalla villeggiatura al turismo: prime avvisaglie**

La prima oscillazione del villeggiare verso il turismo balneare, quindi, avviene nel XIX secolo sotto la spinta salutista<sup>18</sup> che vedeva nelle terme o nei luoghi marittimi o lacustri un'opportunità per prevenire le malattie di natura polmonare (in primis la tubercolosi) e di natura reumatica. Il turismo di massa inizia ad affacciarsi soprattutto nell'Impero austro-ungarico e in Francia sotto l'egida delle strutture termali che si diffondono anche in Italia, in particolare, in Lombardia ed Emilia. Per quanto riguarda la nostra letteratura invece rimane ancora lo spazio della campagna a prevalere, in particolare in un poeta come Pascoli, il quale elegge a residenza estiva un luogo che viene immortalato dal titolo di una delle sue raccolte più celebri: *Canti di Castelvecchio*. La zona è quella della Lunigiana e in un poeta che fa della natura lo

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<sup>18</sup> A proposito di salutismo di *fin de siècle* cfr. Pasini W. E Chiarelli C. (a cura di), *Paolo Mantegazza. Medico, antropologo, viaggiatore. Selezione dei contributi dei convegni di Monza, Firenze, Lerici*. Firenze University Press, 2002. Il testo è sul web: <https://www.fupress.com/archivio/pdf/4211.pdf>.

strumento privilegiato della sua ricerca poetica, Barga e Castelvecchio diventano simboli universale dell'altro da noi, un caleidoscopio orfico di una natura tanto affascinante quanto inquietante. Li Pascoli attende i suoi lavori sui celebri tre tavoli: uno per il Pascoli professore universitario e dantista; uno per il latinista vincitore di numerosi premi poetici al concorso di poesia latina di Amsterdam, l'ultimo per il Pascoli poeta. Personaggio umanamente appartato Pascoli, introverso, l'immagine è quella contadinesca del "fattore" come ha affermato Debenedetti, critico che l'ha apprezzato e rivalutato scoprendo le numerose connessioni impressioniste dalla forti tinte decadenti nella sua poesia. Suo rivale poetico (ma nella vita tra i due ci fu sempre massimo rispetto) fu Gabriele d'Annunzio. In Italia, nella letteratura, al pari di Croce nella filosofia, D'Annunzio segna un'epoca, un costume, una concezione del mondo tanto da esser coniato un termine che indica uno stile di vita da imitare: il dannunzianesimo. D'Annunzio è l'emblema del dandismo e del decadentismo Italiano, vive con slancio la sua epoca come il personaggio protagonista del *Piacere*, Andrea Sperelli, il quale è invitato dal padre a vivere la propria vita come un'opera d'arte. D'Annunzio incarna le contraddizioni d'inizio Novecento tra gli strascichi patriottici del secolo precedente che in tutta Europa si trasformano in focolai nazionalisti. Ma anche altri sono gli eventi che segnano la traiettoria biografica di D'Annunzio: l'erompere della modernità, conseguenza delle numerose scoperte scientifiche che trasformano le città e la vita degli uomini e delle donne delle nazioni più avanzate; le balbettanti prove di forme di governo più democratiche e liberali; la strisciante formazione di quelle ideologie totalitarie che segneranno il secolo nella sua fase più drammatica ovvero dagli anni venti al secondo dopoguerra. D'Annunzio è in questo il secolo XX: da un lato la sua scrittura sembra grondare di artificiosità ridondante, ma a una lettura più profonda, il poeta pescarese innesca un nuovo modo di far poesia influenzando col suo lessico, intarsiato e gemmeo, tutta la poesia successiva. Amori travolgenti, guadagni favolosi e altrettante perdite per una vita che dire dispendiosa è dire poco, vedono il poeta condurre un'esistenza all'insegna dell'eccesso, ma che segna proprio come diremmo oggi, da "influencer", quegli anni. Ecco, ad esempio, l'immagine del mare come luogo di rifugio e di riflessione poetica a testimoniare vieppiù, come le mete turistiche cominciassero a spostarsi verso luoghi marittimi. La celebre *Pioggia nel pineto*, ad esempio, poesia antologica indica uno spostamento che non è solo di immaginario poetico, ma anche di costume del tempo e apre anche un nuovo gusto poetico: quello marino a discapito di quello montano. La poesia è scritta a Marina di Pisa presso la pineta che fa da

cornice suggestiva al luogo di residenza estiva condiviso con l'amante, Eleonora Duse, la più famosa attrice teatrale del tempo. *Alcyone* è il titolo della raccolta ed è il testo poetico che fa da spartiacque tra poesia ottocentesca e novecentesca. Il mare qui è il grande protagonista, quel mare che nel costume delle classi più agiate del resto già aveva iniziato a soppiantare la campagna come luogo privilegiato della villeggiatura. Cominciano a fiorire in rigoroso stile *liberty* villette lungo i litorali italiani sia del mar Tirreno sia del mare Adriatico. Nei legami con la letteratura e, in particolar modo, nell'ambito della poesia questo è evidente con i poeti di poco successivi, tra cui spicca Montale. Il padre di Eugenio Montale possedeva una villa a Monterosso, nelle Cinque terre, in Liguria, dove il poeta trascorrerà le estati della sua infanzia e della sua prima giovinezza e dove si formerà il suo sentire poetico da un lato, ma anche, quel carattere ombroso che lo contraddistinguerà. Il mare e le "Cinque terre" sono le protagoniste incontrastate della sua prima raccolta, *Ossi di seppia*, uscita nel 1925, che lo renderà noto alla critica e a una cerchia di estimatori fino a varcare i patri confini. Non è ancora il turismo di massa del quale lo stesso Montale, come vedremo più avanti, sarà un caustico commentatore. Biograficamente legato alla villeggiatura e, contemporaneamente, al mare, è un grande minore della poesia italiana, ci si passi l'ossimoro, ovvero Guido Gozzano. La sua poesia più celebre inserita nei "Colloqui" ovvero la "Signorina Felicita, ovvero la Felicità"<sup>19</sup> è ambientata nei luoghi di villeggiatura del poeta, nel Canavese. Interessante notare come in fondo poco cambi in termini di passatempo dalla villeggiatura di più di un secolo prima raccontata da Goldoni. Pur nell'aura di soffusa melanconia mista ad ironia che traspare dai versi di Gozzano, le azioni dei villeggianti del Canavese riportati dalla sua *Signorina Felicita* sono sempre quelle: si gioca a carte, si spettegola, si *flirta*. Né più né meno di quello che fanno i protagonisti di Goldoni. Il suo "Verso la cuna del mondo. Lettere dall'India"<sup>20</sup>, invece, è la cronaca di un viaggio in India, viaggio che in realtà non ha solo le finalità di *loisir* esotico, ma anche curativo, nel tentativo di contrastare la tubercolosi che lo minava. Viaggio inutile, purtroppo, visto che a soli trentatré anni, poco dopo il viaggio, Gozzano morirà. Ma il *Viaggio verso la cuna del mondo* apre uno squarcio su un altro genere d'interesse turistico: l'atmosfera esotica. Tale atmosfera aveva già invaso l'Europa attraverso la pittura con Gauguin e le sue suggestioni thaitiane e le influenze africane che si riverberano in Picasso, Modigliani, Matisse, Braque. Antesignano dal punto di vista della

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<sup>19</sup> Cfr. Gozzano G., *Le opere*, i Meridiani, Milano, Mondadori, 1980, p. 172.

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. Gozzano G., *Verso la cuna del mondo. Lettere dall'India.*, Torino, EDT, 1998.

promozione in questo senso è un altro scrittore che gravita attorno a Torino ovvero Emilio Salgari i cui romanzi di avventura si ambientano in Malesia, terra nella quale Salgari non andò mai e che testimoniano la ricerca dell'altrove forte in questi autori italiani che peraltro non si confrontano con le poche colonie di patrio interesse come la Somalia e l'Eritrea e comunque verso quell'Africa Orientale che costituisce l'obiettivo agognato e dichiarato dell'Italia postrisorgimentale. Perché allora il desiderio di guardare appunto altrove? Probabilmente il desiderio di spingere l'immaginazione laddove la realtà non poteva e non rischiava di contaminare un'atmosfera sospesa e di favola come quella che vedeva protagonista Sandokan, la perla di Labuan, lord Brook, Tremal-naik. Per trovare un'opera letteraria incorniciata in territorio coloniale bisognerà aspettare quasi mezzo secolo, con Ennio Flaiano e il suo *"Tempo di uccidere"* ambientato in Etiopia all'epoca della guerra d'Africa voluta da Mussolini nel 1935, ma il contesto narrativo non è certo turistico.

Tornando ai primi del Novecento, alla montaliana villa di Monterosso, troneggiante sulla riviera ligure, emblema dell'ascesa della borghesia commerciale va contrapposta un'altra villa familiare e avita che ebbe su uno scrittore e sulla sua opera un'influenza non trascurabile. Parliamo di Carlo Emilio Gadda e della villa che il padre volle costruire in Brianza, a Longone, come emblema e status di agiatezza. In realtà, l'iniziativa fu economicamente rovinosa per la famiglia Gadda, come annota lo scrittore nei suoi passaggi autobiografici e come si evince in uno dei suoi capolavori, *La cognizione del dolore*, pubblicato nel 1963. Qui lo sfondo del romanzo è costituito da un immaginario Sudamerica, quel Sudamerica, e precisamente quell'Argentina, dove lo scrittore aveva lavorato come ingegnere negli anni interbellici. Tuttavia lo spazio narrativo è un travestimento evidente della Brianza e, storicamente, dell'Italia fascista. Nel romanzo ritorna il motivo della villa, causa di rovina economica per la famiglia del protagonista, don Gonzalo Pirobutirro, e ossessivamente custodita dalla madre che non vuole saperne di venderla. E' curioso come in versione drammatica si ripropongano i tic, le ansie, le paranoie che con un'atmosfera comica e caricaturale aveva già proposto il Goldoni della trilogia della Villeggiatura. Le paure delle goldoniane Giacinta e Vittoria, il "che penserà la gente" rimane incollato all'idea del villeggiante del quale, più che una fuga dalla città e dalle ansie mondane, ne costituisce l'apice e il coronamento nevrotico. Il villeggiare come riconoscibilità e rispettabilità sociale. Gli stessi autori, il poeta Montale e lo scrittore Gadda viaggeranno e non mancheranno riferimenti allo sguardo sul paesaggio seppure in termini e in modalità diverse. *Il Castello di Udine* e *Meraviglie*

*d'Italia* sono due espressioni di quella geografia culturale in cui lo scrittore lombardo esprime tutta la gamma sinfonica del suo splendido repertorio pluristilistico.

Ma con le famiglie Montale e Gadda siamo ancora nel primo Novecento dove la villeggiatura rimane ancora appannaggio di famiglie benestanti. Un esempio non trascurabile è anche quello riportato nel romanzo autobiografico di Natalia Ginzburg "Lessico familiare"<sup>21</sup>. Il capitolo sulle vacanze in montagna della protagonista sono un emblema di come la borghesia piemontese, una borghesia colta e raffinata, spendesse i mesi estivi in villeggiatura.

### **Il fascismo e prime prove di turismo di massa**

Con l'avvento del fascismo il turismo comincia ad affermarsi non solo nelle classi della media e alta borghesia, ma comincia a fare capolino anche nelle classi più subalterne, grazie all'istituzionalizzazione del tempo libero e soprattutto nella forma del "mordi e fuggi", di quelle che ad esempio a Roma erano denominate come gite fuori porta. Il miglioramento della mobilità, la maggiore comodità dei trasporti danno l'opportunità di raggiungere luoghi di diporto in montagna o al mare non lontani dall'Urbe. Esempio più lampante è l'apertura della tratta Roma - Ostia Lido, un trenino che permette a masse di romani di raggiungere la spiaggia più vicina alla capitale. Di tale abitudine che comincia a prendere piede ce ne parla Ercole Patti, in *Quartiere alti*<sup>22</sup>, un resoconto tra fantasia e realtà di un aspirante intellettuale della provincia trasferitosi nella capitale, dove cerca di frequentare il mondo dell'alta borghesia romana. Il breve romanzo annusa quel cambiamento in atto, anche nei costumi, che sarebbe poi stato sancito tra la fine degli anni Cinquanta e degli anni Sessanta, anticipando di fatto la dolce vita felliniana di una Roma sospesa tra divertimento e vuoto esistenziale. Le domeniche al mare erano un'abitudine di una società e di una Roma che cominciavano a secolarizzarsi e che vedevano la domenica come un'occasione di svago al mare e non più come esclusivo giorno di riposo e da dedicare al Signore. Il litorale, però, per antonomasia degli italiani comincia a divenire quello romagnolo, il cui successo di presenze estive contribuisce lo stesso Mussolini (romagnolo anch'egli) a irrobustire con le immagini dei cinegiornali d'epoca. Rimini, Riccione (dove il duce aveva una villetta nella quale si recava l'estate con la famiglia), Cesenatico cominciano a

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<sup>21</sup> Ginzburg N., *Lessico familiare*, in *Opere*, Vol. 1, I Meridiani, Milano, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1986, pp. 903-907.

<sup>22</sup> Patti E., *Quartieri alti*, Roma, Edizioni Roma, 1940.

organizzare quelle strutture turistiche che esploderanno, unite alle colonie estive per bambini, nel secondo dopoguerra e raggiungeranno l'apice negli anni Ottanta trasformando la riviera adriatica romagnola nel divertimentificio per antonomasia.

Sul piano letterario, tornando agli anni interbellici, sottolinea il cambiamento di gusto e di genere, sempre più evidentemente in atto, *Agostino*, il romanzo di Alberto Moravia. Di gusto perché conferma ormai la netta preferenza del mare alla montagna, con il mare che fa da cornice al romanzo di formazione dell'adolescente *Agostino* e anche per altri elementi nuovi come il periodo più corto della vacanza e la classica casa di villeggiatura sostituita da un più anonimo albergo. *Agostino* è stato pubblicato nel 1943 alla vigilia della fase più drammatica della seconda guerra mondiale in Italia. Incentrato sui turbamenti di un adolescente, il romanzo nutre dei debiti nei confronti della psicoanalisi, tematica della quale in Italia, in pieno regime fascista ben poco si sapeva. Ma quello che più interessa è che la cornice della crescita e della maturazione sessuale del ragazzo è la riviera toscana, la cui riviera, insieme alla citata sponda adriatico romagnola e a quella ligure, è la, turisticamente parlando, più sviluppata. A questa tendenza e a questo sviluppo arriverà un brusco stop posto dallo scoppio della guerra mondiale.

### **Il turismo del boom**

Saranno poi gli anni della ricostruzione a infondere quasi subito nuova fiducia agli italiani per poi arrivare alla modernità, modernità che coincide con gli anni del miracolo tra la fine degli anni Cinquanta e l'inizio degli anni Sessanta. Testo specchio di questi anni e specificamente nell'ambito di questa breve ricerca è senz'altro *La speculazione edilizia* romanzo breve d'Italo Calvino, pubblicato da Einaudi nel 1957. La data di pubblicazione è importante perché immediatamente precedente l'inizio del cosiddetto miracolo economico italiano che evidentemente inizia già a intravedersi nella metà degli anni Cinquanta. Annota Calvino, attraverso il pensiero del protagonista, l'intellettuale Quinto Anfossi, la febbre edilizia e di arricchimento che investe una cittadina situata sulla riviera ligure<sup>23</sup>. La cittadina in questione adombra Sanremo, la città di adozione di Calvino, ma ciò che interessa è vedere come in pochi anni il turismo cominci a diventare di massa tanto da fornire agli abitanti della cittadina ligure l'occasione di farne uno strumento di arricchimento. Metafora di

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<sup>23</sup> "La febbre del cemento s'era impadronita della riviera: là vedevi il palazzo già abitato[...].qua il caseggiato appena finito". Calvino I, "*La speculazione edilizia*" in "Romanzi e Racconti", vol. 1, M. Bareghi e B. Falchetto (a cura di), Mondadori, Milano, 2003, p. 781.

un passaggio, quello della villeggiatura di élite alla villeggiatura della piccola borghesia<sup>24</sup>, la trama si può ridurre alla vendita di una porzione di parte del giardino della villa avita per permettere la costruzione di una palazzina che avrebbe creato, appunto, l'opportunità di una speculazione economica approfittando della grande domanda di alloggi dovuta al boom turistico. Il romanzo non è solo questo. Insieme alla problematica della famiglia Anfossi si inseriscono temi che secondari non sono come quello della caduta degli ideali della resistenza, lo squilibrio tra Nord e Sud, la totale insensibilità di quegli anni nei confronti della tematica ambientale distruggendo squarci di paesaggio di inestimabile valore per costruire i cosiddetti ecomostri<sup>25</sup>. Quest'ultimi furono il frutto di anni di abusivismo e di speculazione indiscriminati che hanno in parte devastato territori urbani ed extraurbani in nome di un turismo visto solo come fonte di arricchimento. In questo senso il racconto di Calvino è l'anticipazione di un turismo di massa, senz'anima piegato alla mera logica del profitto.

Il turismo, quindi, rispetto alla villeggiatura si pone come ramo industriale del tempo libero, come organizzazione delle grandi masse aprendo opportunità a tutte le classi sociali. Emblema di questa fase possono essere alcuni versi del già citato Montale, tratti dalla poesia *Sulla spiaggia*<sup>26</sup> ritratto di una spiaggia italiana (la Versilia) all'inizio degli anni Settanta:

#### SULLA SPIAGGIA

*Ora il chiarore si fa più diffuso.  
Ancora chiusi gli ultimi ombrelloni.  
Poi appare qualcuno che trascina  
il suo gommone.*

(...)

*Ma tra poco sarà qui il cafarnao  
delle carni, dei gesti e delle barbe.  
Tutti i lemuri umani avranno al collo  
croci e catene. Quanta religione.  
E c'è chi s'era illuso di ripetere  
l'exploit di Crusoe!*

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<sup>24</sup> Cfr. Ivi, Capitolo XIV in particolare le pp. 843-846.

<sup>25</sup> Due esempi su tutti: i mostri di Alimuri (penisola sorrentina) e di Punta Perotti (a Bari).

<sup>26</sup> Montale E., *Sulla spiaggia* nella raccolta "Diario del '71 e del '72", Milano, Mondadori, 2010.

Con il termine *cafarnao* il poeta vuole indicare l'ammasso indistinto di persone, definite col termine spoetizzante di "carni" cioè materia senz'anima in una visione quasi da Giudizio universale michelangiolesco con croci e catene che fanno riferimento alla moda anni Settanta di adornare il collo con crocifissi per mera motivazione estetica. Versi che straordinariamente ritraggono che cosa sia accaduto nella seconda metà del Novecento. Una parabola anagrafica emblematica quella montaliana, dai tempi della sua prima adolescenza e giovinezza (era nato nel 1896) con un'idea di tempo libero estivo da impiegarsi in ville snob della borghesia benestante, alla sua vecchiaia con le spiagge invase dal turismo di massa.

### **Turismo come industria del divertimento: gli anni Ottanta**

Turismo di massa che viene ritratto in maniera magistrale da Pier Vittorio Tondelli nel suo romanzo, forse, più famoso "Rimini".

Nel romanzo Tondelli fa della città romagnola l'epicentro di una cultura edonista e modaiola che proprio nella metà degli anni Ottanta (il libro è pubblicato nel 1985) raggiunge il suo apice. La città di Fellini da centro di villeggiatura anni Sessanta per famiglie e per ragazze del Nord Europa in caccia di qualche pappagallo, folcloristico esempio del latin-lover italiano da affiancare agli spaghetti, alla pizza e al mandolino, si trasforma in un luogo di sfrenati divertimenti notturni.

"La gente crede che sia un posto di villeggiatura. È al contrario un luogo faticosissimo. Si vive di notte, tutta la notte. Se ne accorgerà fra pochi giorni quando la riviera funzionerà nel pieno delle proprie possibilità: discoteche, locali di intrattenimento, feste per i turisti, sagre di paese...E la nostra industria principe macinerà giorno e notte: a qualunque ora potrà trovare qualcuno con cui divertirsi e togliersi tutte le voglie che ha, di qualsiasi genere. Qui la chiamano l'industria del sesso<sup>27</sup>".

Così descrive il mondo della riviera adriatica Carlo, amico di Susy, collaboratrice del protagonista, Marco Bauer, un giornalista di una grande testata del Nord inviato a curare *La pagina dell'Adriatico* l'inserto speciale che doveva raccontare l'estate coi suoi eventi mondani e di cronaca di quella fetta d'Italia che andava dalla foce del Po al promontorio di Gabicce.

Un'Italia che è la degenerazione di quelle prime immagini del turismo di massa che aveva fotografato il Calvino della *Speculazione edilizia*. Per cui la villeggiatura come idea di *otium*, magari accompagnata da qualche flirt sentimentale si è perduta, a discapito di un tempo libero da

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<sup>27</sup> Tondelli P.V., *Rimini*, Milano, Bompiani, 1985, p. 41.

impiegarsi in cerca di un divertimento compulsivo, trasformando il periodo di riposo in *“luogo faticosissimo”*, con una sorta di eterogenesi dei fini. La modernità quindi ha capovolto il senso del tempo libero, facendone invece che riposo, svago e al massimo status-symbol che ostentasse un’ascesa sociale come la borghesia di Goldoni, un vuoto da riempire con la ricerca affannosa di uno stordimento quasi orgiastico e bacchico. Un passaggio, per usare categorie nietzschiane, dall’apollineo al dionisiaco.

### Conclusioni

Tra gli anni Settanta e gli anni Ottanta inizia questo mutamento della vacanza intesa come turismo e non più come villeggiatura. Emblema è il declino numerico dei villeggianti estivi nei piccoli paesi che sorgono intorno ai grandi agglomerati urbani.

Un esempio su tutti è quello dei paesini intorno a Roma. Durante l’estate, i paesi dislocati nel Lazio, negli Abruzzi, in Umbria, nella Marche si riempivano di villeggianti. Erano le famiglie dei figli e dei nipoti dei residenti, ma non solo, che si erano trasferiti a vivere nella capitale, ma che tornavano nei paesi dei nonni per trascorrervi le lunghe vacanze estive (soprattutto per i bambini era un periodo che andava da giugno a settembre incluso). Alla fine degli anni Ottanta questi paesi cominciano a vedere sempre meno villeggianti. Le motivazioni già accennate all’inizio del nostro percorso sono qui da ribadire: meno tempo libero, abbassamento dei costi del turismo di massa e degli aerei con offerte low-cost e last-minute, innalzamento dei costi della seconda casa per via delle tassazioni sempre più incisive, hanno spinto gl’italiani a optare per forme di turismo sempre più brevi e lontane dai luoghi di residenza, recidendo quel legame con le zone di origine che costituivano anche un confronto e un dialogo con la propria cultura di provenienza. Il turismo quindi si è fatto sempre più *“divertimentificio”* anziché ristoro, con luoghi atti soprattutto a quello, al di là delle bellezze naturali da offrire. In tale contesto la riviera romagnola è la prima a intuire questo cambiamento di esigenza come visto nel romanzo di Tondelli e Rimini, Riccione, Milano Marittima diventano le mete dei ventenni degli anni Ottanta, così come successivamente saranno soppiantate da altre mete estere in Grecia e in Spagna, da Mykonos a Ibiza o Formentera. Ma anche mete più lontane una volta esotiche e status symbol del jet-set, ma che invece ormai fanno parte degli obiettivi estivi dell’impiegato e dell’impiegata medi: la Thailandia (Phuket), l’Egitto (Sharm el Sheik), il Messico (Cancùn), i Caraibi, le Canarie, Miami stessa ecc. in un villaggio globale che inesorabilmente si è trasformato in un villaggio turistico globale che ha annientato il villeggiante vecchio stampo e il viaggiatore romantico per

creare una forma ibrida di vacanza global e *pret-a-porter* priva di quel senso di appartenenza a un luogo o di scoperta di nuovi paesaggi e diverse umanità, svuotandosi così la parola “vacanza” del senso originario di apertura verso una conoscenza della propria interiorità e del mistero che abita dentro ognuno di noi.

Di tutto questo aspettiamo che scriva la narrativa e la poesia italiana di oggi.



# The “evaporation” of Romanian citizens towards Western Europe, with the secret help of Hungary, between 1985-1989

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**Abstract:** *The “evaporation” of Romanian citizens towards Western Europe, with the secret help of Hungary, between 1985-1989.* The Document edited and published here it was a secret one. It comes out from the communist archives of Hungary and deal with the problem of the emigrants that enter from East in Hungary in the last years of the communist regime. It is an illustrative piece in which secretly and silently the communist authorities of Hungary understand to lease the persons who wants to travel in west to exit from Hungary without any control. It was not only an expression of the tensions between Romania and Hungary in those years, but also a rehearsal for what was happened with the East German citizens who passed over Hungary to the West in 1989. The authenticity of the act is proved also by the oral and written testimony of one of the travellers which pass over Hungary in Austria in 1985.

**Key words:** End of Communism, border regime, Romanian-Hungarian tensions, emigration from East to West in late 80s.

**Rezumat:** *“Evaporarea” cetățenilor români spre Europa de Vest, cu sprijinul secret al Ungariei, între 1985-1989.* Documentul editat și publicat aici este unul relevant pentru felul în care Ungaria a înțeles să trateze problema emigranților din spațiul estic, cu precădere pe cei din România, în ultimii ani ai regimului comunist. Documentul secret emis de structurile de frontieră din Ungaria în 1985 ilustrează schimbarea de

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atitudine a structurilor oficiale maghiare care, tacit, au permis, trecerea înspre vest a multor cetățeni originari din România. A fost nu doar expresia tensiunilor existente între cele două state, ci și o repetiție pentru ceea ce s-a petrecut în 1989 cu est germanii care prin Ungaria au ajuns în vest. Autenticitatea documentului este întărită de mărturia orală și scrisă a unui asemenea *călător din România*, care a traversat granița dintre Ungaria și Austria în 1985.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Sfârșitul regimului comunist, regimul frontierei, tensiuni româno-maghiare, emigrarea din est în vest la sfârșitul anilor 80.

In December 2019 we celebrated thirty years from the fall of the Romanian communist regime. The break that occurred then was part of an irreversible process, given that through Eastern Europe for months, even years there was a wind of change. Romanian communist authorities were incapable of noticing it or accepting it.

If this was the path taken by Romanian authorities, its neighbours took a different route. The document we are analyzing here, issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the highest level of secrecy is highly relevant. It was issued in regard to applicable procedures for Romanian citizens of Hungarian descent who transited Hungary on their way to the West. Based on these instructions, around four years before the fall of the Iron Curtain, Romanian citizens crossing into Hungary and presenting themselves at a BCCP (Border Crossing Check-Point), Hungarian border guards secretly, and breaking conventions between the two states, simply let them pass onwards.

As it is a well-known fact, in the 80s, Romanian-Hungarian relations constantly declined, according to Horn Gyula<sup>2</sup>, the former minister of Foreign affairs, ultimately reaching a minimum. The two countries developed in totally different directions and their bosses met very rarely, except for the conferences of the Warsaw Pact. Meanwhile, in Romania, where the standard of living was continuously declining, the regime imposed a series of restrictions, the systematization of villages programs was also put into motion, and Romanian nationalism was consolidated, mainly against the Hungarian minority.

In Hungarian public and political circles, protesting increased regarding the harshening situation of Hungarians living in Romania, something which did not go unnoticed by public opinion and politicians in Hungary.

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<sup>2</sup> Informative note from Horn Gyula for the Political Committee and Central Committee for Romanian-Hungarian relations. Informative reports of the CC of the MSzMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party). Archives from 1980-1989.

On the other hand, in historiography there were emphasized other evolution that affected the relations between these countries. The progressive deterioration of Hungarian-Romanian relations was noted in documents and interpreted as such by Hungarian authorities:

- "Breaking the respective conventions, Romania is conducting an intensive operative information activity in Hungary. To neutralize it, the competent bodies of the MIA must make an evaluation report on Romanian activities that are contrary to the security of the state, this includes the network of relations of the embassy and information gathering activities in Hungary"<sup>3</sup>.
- "*The systematization of villages*" impacting mainly villages populated by Hungarian ethnics;
- Between 1986-1987 in cities in Ardeal, the majority of Hungarian street names were replaced with Romanian ones;
- In Romania "*during the first trimester of 1985 in Cluj, Târgu Mures, and Timisoara, regional radio posts in the language of minorities ceased their activities, editorial boards were disbanded, and nearly 600 employees dismissed. The Hungarian language show on Romanian Television had the same fate. Starting with 1986, the exhibits of museums in Ardeal were taken to Bucharest*"<sup>4</sup>.
- In Romania, the circulation of books in Hungarian decreased.
- Hungarian tourists are undergoing more severe customs controls. These were first felt in 1984 when between April and 31 December, 2790 Hungarian citizens were turned from the Romanian border because they had with them certain publications, books, etc., considered forbidden. The percentage remained the same the following year, when in the first five months of 1985 1,500 citizens were stopped<sup>5</sup>.
- In the aforementioned period, the number of expats and those living in Hungary increased constantly<sup>6</sup>.
- "*The MSzMP leadership considered that the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romanian was dire, but it does not believe that intensifying its pressure on the Romanian Party will give results*"<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> MOL M-KS (National Archives of Hungary HSWP: Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party; 288. f. 5/1035.

<sup>4</sup> Révész Béla, *From the history-problem of the relationship between Hungary and Romania in the 1980s*.

<sup>5</sup> Földes György, *Hungary, Romania and the national problem 1956-1989*, (Budapest: Napvilág Publishing, 2007), p. 354.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*: in 1983: 540 people; 1984: 887 people; 1985: 1,166 people.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 301.

Given that context, it is not surprisingly that there, in the archives was a single copy of this top secret and essential circular. In essence, starting from 15 July 1985, the attitude of the Hungarian authorities was different in the application of special procedures regarding certain Romanian citizens which want to leave Hungary and go to Austria. This document is significant for the quiet change in the attitude of Hungarian authorities. It was probably the first sign of the coming age. One was that at the respective moment focused only on Romanian citizens, but which later, on 11 September 1989, was applied to all other East European citizens. For over four years many Romanian citizens left for the West using this loophole. This was a good rehearsal for tens of thousands of GDR citizens crossing the border towards Austria, under the impassive gaze of Hungarian border guards in the autumn of 1989<sup>8</sup>. The Romanian model worked.

Actually, based on these indications, Romanian citizens legally crossing into Hungary with a valid passport, with the intention of travelling further through the BCCP at Ferihegy, Budapest or in the South-West of the country, after registering of their personal information, were allowed to leave Hungary, despite having only a visa for entering this country. This was known only by the commander of the Border passing point BCCP, his adjuncts, and the chief of the information section. The rest of the members, all other clerks, and guards, knew only that this was requested for their activities. Of course, to all of them a total discretion was imposed and they strictly keep the secret. It was forbidden to stamp the passport, and the exit was to be done discretely, without any trace so as not to attract attention.

Personal information of the Romanian citizens was noted in a separate record book, then secretly sent to the chief of the information section, who then would archive them.

All these were not applied to Romanian citizens trying to illegally cross the border. They were still returned to Romanian authorities.

According to Hungarian estimates, around 3,500 Romanian citizens left East Europe in this way, starting a new life in the West. Although the circular referred to certain Romanian citizens, which according to verbal instructions meant Hungarians from Ardeal, similar to the manner in which Saxons were allowed to leave, but it also included

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<sup>8</sup> Sallai János, *Amprenta unei epoci apuse - Abdruck einer versunkenen Epoche - An impression of a bygone era: Poestea cortinei de fier - Geschichte des Eisernen Vorhangs - The History of the Iron Curtain*, (Budapest: Hanns Seidel Foundation, 2012).

Romanians who did not speak Hungarian. However, the majority was made up of Hungarians living in Ardeal.

The document was so secret (consciously contravening on valid conventions between states), that authorities relied on it remaining this way forever, its existence being masked even in regard to its registration number. It is evident that at the beginning of the registration number the authorities added another zero, in case the secrecy of other circulars would ever be revoked, thus its unique existence would not be noticed.

Of course, after some time Romanian authorities noticed something was amiss, and agents of the Securitate left Romania in this manner, even more, they returned home to report this. At a diplomatic and political level, these evolutions did not have any serious consequences, even if Romania increased the security of its border with Hungary, and the relations between the two countries, already bad, continued to worsen.

A few significant examples are: strengthening of Romanian anti-Hungarian propaganda; increasing the rhythm of systematization; specific for this period was the *en-masse* creation of villages forcing the Romanian-Hungarian border exclusively on the Romanian side

On a yearly basis, the number of Romanians and Hungarians crossing the illegal border increased in leaps. While in 1987 it had not yet reached one thousand, in 1988 there were 7,182, while in 1989 it had reached 19,006 people illegally crossing the Romanian-Hungarian border<sup>9</sup>.

- The conflict extended to a military level as well, something mentioned by the minister of National Defence of the Németh government: *"Together with my collaborators we have reached the conclusion that the Ceausescu clan – in order to maintain its grip on the power – might venture, through hazardous initiatives, and not excluding brutal action, against Hungary"*<sup>10</sup>.
- *"the Romanian-Hungarian border, tourists are made to get naked, even the newspaper Népszabadság is being confiscated. No such thing is happening at the border of any other neighbouring country"*<sup>11</sup>.
- Increased border security on the Romanian side.

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<sup>9</sup> Nagy József, *Dezvoltarea locației teritoriale, a activităților, a organizării și a numărului de polițiști de frontieră din 1958 până în 1998*, (Budapest: Doctoral Dissertation, 2000), p. 211.

<sup>10</sup> Kárpáti Ferenc, *Revoluția română și Ungaria, 1989. Memoriile unui fost ministru. Un caz. 2000*, p 4.

<sup>11</sup> Révész Béla, *From the history-problem...*

How does such a border crossing occur? The co-author of these lines, Paul Horváth, made it in 1985 from Romania to Austria. This is his short story:

On 1 August 1985, I entered Hungary from Romania in my Trabant. I was with my mother, who was widowed at a young age. Neither of us could stay in Romania, after my father, we were in the eyesight of the Securitate.

At home we heard, about two weeks ago, that two couples, whom we knew, had managed to cross from Hungary into Austria, but no one knew exactly how. We started on our way with the firm intention, if we could, to never return.

For two weeks, in Budapest and nearby, we sought various opportunities, I tried talking with connections living abroad, but I could not get any concrete information about how we could run. The simple visa on our passport would allow for our access into Hungary-Czechoslovakia-GDR-Poland.

Lacking any other information, in the evening of 15 August 1985, after passing through Mosonmagyaróvár, we instinctively veered left towards Austria. At about five-six hundred meters from the Hegyeshalom BCCP, the soldier at the border, seeing that we had a Romanian registration plate, signaled me to pull over and asked: What are we doing there? We got lost, we wanted to go to Bratislava and ended up here by mistake." "You have to turn back here, towards Rajka, there."

"If we are already here, can we just visit Vienna by night?" "Aha, so you want to cross into Austria?" "Yes, if we are already here, we would like to visit Vienna, then we would come back to Bratislava and go on to the GDR."

In the guard house, the phone rang. "Comrade lieutenant, reporting, nothing unusual. Actually, there are two Romanians here, they got lost, they were going to Bratislava, and they are asking if they can cross into Austria... Yes, yes, family, better say mother and son... Yes, speak Hungarian..., Yes, I will tell them..."

After that he came turning back to me: it's all right, lets go to the BCCP. "Who should be asking for there?", "They're waiting for you."

We were shown to the diplomatic lane and two controllers appeared, one left with our papers, the other stood by our side: where to?" "Well, you see, we wanted to go to Bratislava, and we got lost, so we thought, since we're already here, we could visit Vienna and then go to Bratislava..." "Young man, tell me the final destination?" "Bratislava, and then the GDR, and afterwards we thought we could return home through Poland..." "Young man, look into my eyes: the final destination of your trip?"

I did not dare open my mouth.

"As it happens, wouldn't it happen to be Germany? FRG?" "Look, sir, you know very well that if you let us leave now, of course that is where we will go to West Germany" "Very well, that is what I will be saying, a few minutes and you can leave."

I do not think there is any need to talk about the emotions and our state of mind...

Meanwhile, he was looking at my newly tuned Trabant, which I had greatly improved: "What is this button for? And this flap?" He also owned a Trabant.

"Sir, can we really cross?" "Yes, stay calm today, we already allowed another Hungarian family from Ardeal to cross. Everything will be fine." "Sir, give me your name and address, so I can send you my Trabant as a gift."

His answer shocked me: "No, young man, look at my face, forget you ever saw me, forget even that you passed through here, anyway there will not trace in your passport, and you will need the trabant, especially at first."

All of this took about ten minutes, a time in which several border guards passed us, they saw the Romanian registration plate and knew exactly what was happening. They would smile to us and encourage us: "Where to abroad, abroad?" "Best of luck in your new life!" We got back our passports, there was no stamp, not a single sign as if we had crossed through there. The barrier was lifted and we left Hungary for Austria.

For us everything was so unbelievable and we were shocked. Darkness, heavy traffic, small Trabant, trembling knees, that is, how we got into a car crash forty kilometers after crossing on Austrian territory. Due to our injuries, no

way of travelling further, so this is how we ended up in Austria, which to think about I am thankful for.

In the next four and a half years, until the fall of the regime in 1989, I helped with the similar “evaporation” of tens of people. Most of them were Hungarians from Ardeal, but some were also Saxons who could speak Hungarian and Romanians who could not. Hungarians leaving Ardeal already in Hungary, I would instruct on the telephone, on what day and at which BCCP they should go and what to say, how to behave, and what to expect. Very often I would wait for them there and tell them what steps to take next. There were cases when my Austrian connections with travelling rights went to bring them to their cars. Those that I helped, all made it across, I don’t know of any failed attempts.

Now, after thirty years, as an amateur historian and researcher, lucidly and leaving aside sentiments, I have to say the following:

The “evaporation” of Romanian citizens was a top-secret operation and exceptionally organized at a central level, known by all those involved, each knowing exactly as much as they were required. Border guards, soldiers, they all knew what was happening, conscious of the importance of the operation and respecting the conspiracy. Over the extent of my research, I talked to many border guards, **but none had ever seen any written order, they only followed verbal orders.** The importance and the conspiratorial character of the procedures got engrained in their conscience, even today almost none want to talk about this subject.

An adjunct commander of a BCCP at the Austro-Hungarian border, who himself had never seen any written order, got an explanation, which he then communicated to his subalterns, that the passport of Romanian citizens is valid for all countries, as that of tourists from any other country. On all pages it was written “this passport is valid for all of the world’s countries”. This admission is a convention between states according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There was, however, in the Romanian passport a small loophole (simple visa) where the countries the citizen was allowed to visit were written. The ministers of internal affairs of member countries of the Warsaw Pact convened that this loophole should reciprocally be taken into consideration at the border. However, this internal affair was not a of external affairs, and the

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Hungary did not agree to abide by it when it came to Romanian citizens.

Later, the mass exodus of Romanian citizens with the help of Hungary took large proportions. In 1989, Hungary joined the Geneva Convention, officially becoming a country that could receive refugees. Increasingly Romanian citizens (mostly ethnic Hungarians) requested the right to stay or help to cross into Western countries.

There were some interesting cases. Possibly the most absurd was that on 29 July 1988, when a man from Miercurea Ciuc requested to be allowed to stay in Hungary at the Moscow embassy. In this special case, for his travel and settlement in Hungary, the Soviet authorities had to give their consent, which did not happen. Moscow did not want to get involved in the Romanian-Hungarian conflict, but also, they did not report the case to Romanian authorities<sup>12</sup>.

The most complicated situation was at the Hungarian embassy in Sofia, where on 24 September 1988, three families (seven adults and five children) requested the right to stay in Hungary. The case is relevant because the Western press covered it even more, they insisted on Bulgarian authorities to respect the international conventions between states. They requested that tourists be allowed to go back to Romania and officially request the right to live in Hungary, as the Romanian government was willing to quickly negotiate the case. Of course, the refugees refused to return home and in October 1988 requested that Hungary, through the International and Hungarian Red Cross, solve the issue. The case was the subject of diplomatic and high political discussion. The extent of the subject is very well illustrated in the Hungarian press, and prime minister Németh Miklós did not want to discuss about the date of the Hungarian-Bulgarian summit until the matter was solved. Due to political pressure, Bulgaria eventually agreed to let the refugees travel to a neutral country. Thus, on 17 February 1989, under the shadow of well-planned secrecy, they left Bulgaria on a plane for Vienna<sup>13</sup>.

A Hungarian border guard – then working on trains – recounts in his memoirs an event on the Budapest-Vienna train, when he allowed a lady from Ardeal pass through, after refusing a hefty bribe from her. He instructed her to stay in the compartment and later told his Austrian colleagues: *Diese ist gut!* (This one is good). Of course, the Austrian

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<sup>12</sup> Révész Béla, *From the history-problem...*

<sup>13</sup> Révész Béla, *From the history-problem...*

border guards also knew what was happening, Romanian citizens were not legally allowed at the moment to receive an Austrian visa.

We posted questions on this subject on a Facebook group created by former border guards. We were mainly interested in the social angle and the emotional side of the cases, what the border guards felt, as they were the one influencing the destinies. Here is a selection of their replies:

I only know that in 1989 those coming from Romania were not sent back! A young man, half Romanian, half Hungarian, we caught two times! We never harmed anyone!

It all started sometime in 1985, one could cross to Sopron as well, I was at Ferihegy, it also worked there, but I will not publicly write about this.

Look, we got the orders for the day, but we never turned this into a political seminar. We were not given any other information. We did our job, and sometimes even 24 hours a day, and in the best case we would beat our heads about the whys, but silently.

Hegyeshalom train, between 23 December 1989 and the midnight of 26 December we had to let all Hungarian ethnics cross. We could not put stamps on the passports, each one of them received a note, and it would be stamped. Thus, in case they returned, home, Romanian authorities would never see they had been in the West. The procedure was the same for the visa on a separate sheet.

88-89 Mosonmagyaróvár. I also let Romanian citizens in buses cross. They mixed with GDR citizens.

On 21 August 2019, at a conference in Hegyeshalom, where was a celebration of 30 years since the fall of the communist regime, I was also invited as speaker. We were given the chance to relive the sentiments we had back, then to see and hear the people who took these decisions and then applied them. The theme of the conference was of course the exodus via Hungary of GDR citizens, the context, and its main moments. However, it was regrettable that there was nothing said of the Romanians “evaporated” over the span of four and a half years. Even if the border guards were present at the conference, they were the main focus of this process and it would have been good if they knew that Hungarians from Ardeal *were and still are very thankful*.

The Iron Curtain has ceased its existence thirty years ago and our world has changed. We know this is an irreversible transformation,

sooner or later it still would have occurred. However, Hungary can be proud of its role as a catalyst, as it accelerated the process, playing a decisive role in the rapid change and – except for Romania – a peaceful one. Without doubt the most evoked and promoted moments of the regime's fall are tied to the exodus of GDR citizens. However, we are happy that after so many years, finally, this process has been brought to light. It was 1985, moment when, according to this secret order, the behaviour of Hungary changed. It was five years before the 1989 change, making it its oldest and most important harbinger.

Ministry of Internal Affairs "Top Secret!"

"Extremely Important!"

National Commandment of the Border Guards

copy no. 1

Budapest

Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Commander of the Border Guards,  
Circular no.0001/1985, referring to procedures regarding Romanian citizens, Budapest, 9 July 1985

In the future, in the case of certain Romanian citizens, procedures to be followed:

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1./ Romanian citizens entering on the territory of the People's Republic of Hungary with valid identification papers, and those with a passport, with the intent of travelling further abroad, presenting themselves at the BCCP (Border Check-Point) in Budapest, respectively the Yugoslav and Austrian BCCPs must be allowed to cross Hungary, even if the indications on the passport do not extend to other territories and periods.

The agent checking the passport must record - in the special registry created for this purpose - the personal data and the number of the Romanian citizen's passport leaving Hungary, to stamp for exit and then transmit the information to the on-duty officer. On-duty officers must give these data to the commander or to the deputy of the BCCP, which must then send them in a closed envelope, during working days until 15:00 hours, to the chief of the Information Section of the district or to his deputy with the specification that the envelope be opened by them alone.

The commander of the BCCP in Budapest or his deputy, the chief of the Information Section of the districts or his deputy, must gather all records and continuously transmit them to the chief of the Information Section of Border Guards or his deputy with the specification that the envelope be opened by them alone.

At the Information Section of the Border Guards a special envelope must be open for the archiving of these records.

The above category will not include Romanian citizens trying to illegally cross the border; they must be retained and put under according procedures of current practices.

2./ Information regarding Romanian citizens detained on Hungarian territory, for the illegal crossing of the common border will be given only at the explicit request of Romanian authorities and slowly. The repatriation of these defecting citizens – if the committed other crimes – will be done directly, according to current practice, with the approval of the chief of the Information Section of the Border Guards.

Romanian citizens who have crossed the border accidentally or against their will be surrendered directly to the Romanian border guards, with the approval of the commander of the Orosháza and Nyirbátor District or of his deputy.

3./ At the crossing points of the Romanian border, for trained personnel – without drawing attention – there will be increased monitoring and information gathering activities.

At these crossing points, reports regarding other measures on the established conventions, aggressive or harassing manifestations against travellers, will be done urgently through the on-duty guard, by telegram.

## II.

1./ Tasks established in the circular must be strictly executed according to the rules of conspiracy and secrecy. Our actions must go unnoticed by the Romanian authorities and the in cause citizens.

2./ Of those mentioned in this circular and the way of their carrying out those informed must be:

The national commandment: the national commander, his deputies, the first secretary of the border guards' Committee of the MSzMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party), the deputy chief of the border police of the MI, the chief of the border traffic Department and his deputies, the chief of the Information Section and his deputies, the chief of Counter-Information and his deputies.

- at district level: the commander of the district, the chief of the district, the chief of the Information Section and his deputies, the general reporter of the BCcP;
- at BCP level: the commander of the BCcP and his deputy, the on-duty officers and the passport controllers, only to the extent of their duties, as mentioned at point I/1.

3./ The content of this circular, except for those involved in the execution of these order, cannot be made know even to officials.

Each commander is bound to keep this circular in a closed envelope, in his safe, the making of copies is forbidden. Subalterns will be given orders only verbally, in a clear and explicit manner. During instruction, with the exception of the BCcP commander, nobody has permission to take notes of what is discussed.

Activities mentioned in this circular come into action on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1985, 00:00 hours, and will be valid until its retraction.

In case it is retracted, this will be sent to the chief of the border guards at the MI, in a closed envelope with the specification that the envelope be opened by him alone.

# Controlling and preventing the actions of the foreign agents. A relevant order for the county structures of the Securitate UM 0110 from 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1989

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**Abstract:** Abstract: Thirty years after the fall of communism the debates about the soviet role in the East European Revolutions of 1989 are not ended. In this short article we discuss a relevant document in relation with this topic. It was an order issued by the Chief of the UM 0110 at the beginning of December 1989 in relation with the dangers related to the presence of tourists from East and West in Romania. In essence, in the same day when supposedly Bush and Gorbachev discussed in Malta the fate of Romania, the UM 0110 enter in an alarm situation. According to the directive, in order to control and prevent, but also for neutralize and thwart any hostile actions of the possible dangers, the UM 0110 need to intensify the surveillance of different categories of subjects which were in the attention (foreign tourists, other foreign travelers or representatives that were in Romania from other communist countries). What this document tells us is the fact that the Romanian Securitate was aware that such dangers need to be addressed urgently and that beyond routine urgent actions need to be prepared. These perils become pressing in terms of control, prevention and neutralization of the eventual actions of those tourists.

**Keywords:** Romania, December 1989, foreign tourists, Securitate surveillance, UM 0110

**Rezumat:** La treizeci de ani de la căderea regimurilor comuniste, dezbaterile despre rolul jucat de sovietici în Revoluțiile din 1989 din Estul Europei încă nu s-au încheiat. În scurtul nostru articol vom discuta un document relevant în relație cu acest subiect. Este vorba de un ordin emis de șeful Unității Militare 0110 la începutul lunii

decembrie 1989 cu privire la prezența unor pericole legate de prezența în România a unor turiști din Est și Vest. De fapt în ziua în care, speculativ se afirmă că, la Malta, George Bush și Mihail Gorbaciov discutau despre soarta României, Securitate prin unitatea ei specială dedicată urmăririi și supravegherii cetățenilor din statele comuniste a intrat în stare de alertă. În acord cu directivele date în ordin, pentru a controla și preveni, dar și pentru a neutraliza și a face imposibile orice acțiuni ostile, UM 0110 trebuia să intensifice toate acțiunile de supraveghere și control asupra categoriilor de persoane care intrau în atenția sa (turiști sau reprezentanți ai altor state comuniste aflați pe teritoriul României. Ceea ce documentul ne indică este faptul că Securitatea nu doar că a fost preparată să gestioneze acest tip de pericol, dar au fost elaborate și ordine precise, dincolo de supravegherea obișnuită, pentru a preveni, neutraliza și controla acțiunile venite din partea acestor *turiști*.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** România, Decembrie 1989, turiști străini, supravegherea Securității, UM 0110.

A lot of debates and rumours circulated in the last thirty years in relation with the sparks that ignite the Romanian Revolution. Many of them were related to the role and importance of the soviet factor in the destruction of the communist regimes in the region, an enigma that is not yet overcome in the historiography<sup>1</sup>.

Conspiracy theories appeared early in 1990 everywhere in the former countries of the communist bloc, not only about Romania<sup>2</sup>. All of them deliver scenarios of change that were mastered from and by forces that depend on the Soviet Union. They accentuate the role of the tourists that come, not from the Cold, but from the East. The travellers were everywhere in these scenarios They did not only observed, but they act decisively in order to destroy the communist citadels in the region.

Taking into account what was discussed in the Romanian historiography in relation with this subject, the passion and efforts which the former Securitate officers put in that direction<sup>3</sup>, but also the

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> In relation with Romania the *beginning* was delivered in Western media by the articles published in early 1990s by Vladimir Bukovski, Radu Portocală and Olivier Weber, "Les Cinq Actes D'une Manipulation", (*Le Point*, 922, no. 1 1990) Michel Castex, *Un Mensonge Gros Comme Le Siècle, Roumanie, Histoire D'une Manipulation*, (Paris, Albin Michel, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> The historiographical debate in the last thirty years, was structured initially in the articles and books published by the party leaders and former officers of the Securitate. See

contribution of some historians that sustain similar perspectives<sup>4</sup>, we try to contribute to this debate from another point of view and we will add a documentary piece to it. In other words, in the light of the balanced contributions to the subject in historiography<sup>5</sup>, we will address the problem of the specific dangers that were perceived by the Securitate at the end of 1989. The document that it is annexed here is a relevant one for the actions ordered in the direction of the visitors/travellers from neighbouring countries, for the officers and other employees of a *very special Unit* of the Securitate, namely UM 0110. That means that different

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for example: Filip Teodorescu, *Un Risc Asumat, Timișoara, Decembrie 1989*, [An Assumed Risk, Timișoara, December 1989], (Bucharest, Viitorul Romanesc, 1992); Ion Coman, *Timișoara. Zece ani de la singerosul decembrie 1989. Documentar [Timișoara. Ten Years from the Bloody December 1989. A Documentary]*, (București, Editura Sylvi, 1999); Nicolae Mavru, *Revoluția din stradă, [Revolution from the Street]*, (Editura Rao, București, 2004); Gheorghe Dragomir, *Recoiem pentru spioni [Requiem for spies]*, vol. I, (Editura România în Lume, București, 2006); Vasile Mălureanu, *Evenimentele din decembrie 1989 în percepția unui ofițer de informații interne (I-III)*, [Events from December 1989 in perception of a Former Information Officer], în *Vitralii - Lumini și umbre*, Anul I, nr. 3-5, iunie-decembrie, 2010, Aurel Rogoian, 1989. *Dintr-o iarnă în alta...România în resorturile secrete ale istoriei*, [1989. From a Winter to Another...Romania in the Secret resorts of the History], (Editura Proema, Baia Mare, 2009) etc.

<sup>4</sup> See the contributions of Larry Watts (*With Friends Like These. The Soviet Bloc's Clandestine War Against Romania*, Bucharest, Military Publishing House, 2010; Idem, *Cei dintâi vor fi cei din urmă. România și sfârșitul războiului rece [The First will be the Last. Romania and the End of the Cold War]*, (Bucharest, RAO, 2013); Idem, *Extorting Peace: Romania and the End of the Cold War, 1978-1989*, (Bucharest, RAO, 2013). All his articles in relation with the soviet factor were also published on his personal blog but also on his account on the Academia.edu, Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Istoria Loviturilor de Stat în România, Vol. 4, Revoluția din Decembrie 1989, O Tragedie Românească [The History of the Political Coups in Romania, Vol. 4, the December 1989 Revolution]*, (Bucharest, RAO, 2004); Cristian Troncotă, *Duplicității: O istorie a Serviciilor de Informații și Securitate ale regimului Communist din România 1965-1989 [The Duplicit: A History of the Intelligence and Security Services of the Communist Regime in Romania 1965-1989]*, Bucharest, Editura Elion, 2004; Idem, *Momente și portrete din istoria serviciilor secrete românești*, Paul Editions, București, 2020, pp. 334-352) or, recently, Tudor Păcuraru (*Planul Nistru- 1989. Implicarea GRU în Revoluția din Decembrie*, Editura Evenimentul Istoric, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> A very good analysis on the different interpretations on the Revolution is the one realised by Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Decembrie '89. Deconstrucția unei revoluții*, (Iași, Polirom, 2004). Recent relevant and valuable contributions in that direction in the books of Anneli Ute Gabany, Alexandru Muraru, Andrei Muraru, Daniel Șandru, eds., *Revoluția din 1989. Învinși și învingători [Romania in 1989. Losers and Winners]*, (Iași, Polirom, 2020); Constantin Corneanu, *Victorie însângerată. Decembrie 1989. Premisele, izbucnirea și desfășurarea Revoluției din decembrie 1989, [Bloody Victory. December 1989. Premises, Ignition and Unfolding of the December 1989 Revolution]*, (Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2014). In the western literature dedicated to the events of 1989 we need to mention the excellent book published by Peter Siani-Davies, *Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2005).

signals that appear in relation with the revolutionary events through diplomatic<sup>6</sup> and secret services channels were processed and through operational directives were implemented in order to increase the surveillance of the potential enemies. There are not many documents published from these last *channels*. But from those which were public it is important to notice that almost all of them add warnings in relation with the tensions which could appear in the milieu of the Hungarian minority, in towns of Transylvania and Bucharest<sup>7</sup>. These reports were clear that what was happened in the socialist camp was dangerous for the communist regime in Romania and the peril of spreading out beyond its borders was present<sup>8</sup>.

At the end of 1989 the process of breakdown of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe reached its peak. The events unfolded in different sequences and have different revolutionary forms (negotiated transfer of power in Poland and Hungary; non-violent political changes in German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria; and, a violent that occur in Romania)<sup>9</sup>. After a hot summer in which the conclusions of the Round Tables in Poland and Hungary, set both countries on a democratic direction, their political systems were liberalized through the reform of the electoral rules and procedures, consequently the structure of the Government and Parliaments were transformed. Then, in Autumn, the protests in the streets and the pressures from above for reforms in German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia produce the same outcomes. Gradually or radically in the central part of the region the communist order collapsed and democratization process began through an implosion of the system and a non-violent democratic takeover. In the southern corner of the region the events follows a different logic. In Bulgaria, in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a coup take place at the level of the communist

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<sup>6</sup> Majority of them were transmitted on official diplomatic channels. see Dumitru Preda and Mihai Retegan, 1989. *Principiul dominoului. Prăbușirea regimurilor comuniste europene* [Domino Principle. The Failure of the European Communist Regimes] (Bucharest, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Sebastian Sarcă, ed. *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*, [It is a beginning in all end....], (Editura Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune, București, 1998), p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Ceaușescu was aware of the danger and he stress in his conversations with Gorbachev its preoccupation in relation with the survival of the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe. See a balanced evaluation of the relation between Romania and USSR in Vasile Buga "Revoluția Română din Decembrie 1989 în contextul raporturilor dintre România și URSS", in Annelly Ute Gabany, *et alii*, *op.cit.*, pp. 43-58.

<sup>9</sup> Dragoș Petrescu, *Entangled Revolutions: The Breakdown of the Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe*, (Bucharest, Editura Enciclopedică, 2014), pp. 25-5.

leadership, and Todor Jivkov was replaced and the new *reformist* team announce the start of the liberalization of the regime at the end of the first decade of November. The case of Romania was the one that deviate from the negotiations and non-violent character of the political changes. Its sequence of events, in the second part of December, were violent, and a lot of victims appeared in the revolutionary context.

In fact, in Romania at the end of November 1989, when in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Bulgaria the political changes gradually transformed the communist regimes, Nicolae Ceaușescu and his institutional followers prepare the country for the XIV Congress of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP)<sup>10</sup>. It was the last show of the communist dictator. The party major event of 1989 was boycotted by some of the communist parties from the West and East. Romania was isolated and its leader seems to be under siege at that moment. This was the context in which authorities raise the level of alarm for the military forces and increase the surveillance inside the country in order to prevent any disturbances during the meetings of the Congress. These measures also affected the travelling in and from the country. According to Radio Free Europe, the borders were almost closed<sup>11</sup>. Tourists from neighbouring countries were stopped at the frontiers. Journalists from Western countries did not receive visas to enter in the country and other applicants for the visa were refused.

Unanimously re-elected in his position as leader of the Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu express in many instances his irritation to what was happened in the rest of the Bloc during the meetings of the Political Bureau of the Executive Committee of RCP before and after the Congress. His position was bluntly expressed also outside of the country, that the reforms which were initiated everywhere in Eastern Europe jeopardize not only the road to the socialism, but also the existence of the communist parties and the fate of their leaders<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The diversity of the exit of communism is discussed from a regional perspective in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe. From Communism to Pluralism*, (Manchester University Press, 2013); an international or global approach it is exposed in Jacques Rupnik, ed., *1989 as a Political World Event. Democracy, Europe and the New International System in the Age of Globalization*, Routledge, 2014 or in George Lawson, Christopher Ambruster and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989. Continuity and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Sebastian Sarcă, *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>12</sup> In his conversation with Gorbatchev, in 4th of December, according to his translator Vasile Buga (*op.cit.*, pp. 49-50), Ceaușescu raised his preoccupation in relation to the fate of Honecker and Jivkov.

His concerns were alimented with the information's that arrived through diplomatic channels and the briefings of the Securitate. For example, one of the informative *notes*, which arrive from Romanian Foreign Intelligence Service (CIE) – no.00263 – in 22<sup>nd</sup> of November stated that the danger comes from: "...intensification of the actions in order to create destabilizing internal tensions through the pretext of the discontent and provocations in the milieu of the Hungarian minorities"<sup>13</sup>. Such warnings had consequences not only in the political discourses, but also at the operational level of the Securitate. One such effect is presented here, an executive Order (no. 614751 from 2.12.1989) that raised the level of alert in the UM 0110, a special and independent Unit of the Securitate specialized with the actions in relation with the *perils* from the socialist countries in relation to Romania. In brief, let look to what was this special and not very well studied entity of the former Securitate.

The history of this *special service* started in 1968, in the context and immediately after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was one organized to manage the counterintelligence agenda that had in attention Romanian citizens that have relations to the Soviet Union and other East European socialist countries. According to Dennis Deletant its origins were to be found into the Section for Armed Forces and Security of the Central Committee of the RCP, set up by Ceaușescu to monitor the loyalty of senior party members before 1968<sup>14</sup>. In the next years new targets were added and this unit was integrated in the Directorate for External Information (DIE) as UM 0920/A. Expanded in terms of operational objectives, but also with an increase in the numbers of officers and resources, the Unit become autonomous in the structure of the Securitate (after Ion Mihai Pacepa, the former chief of the Department for foreign Information, DIE, defected the unit was renamed as UM 0110 in 1978)<sup>15</sup>. Its main attributions were focused on three directions:

- surveillance of the embassies and other foreign official representations and representatives in order to prevent espionage activities;
- monitoring the visitors from socialist countries, tourist and travellers (from 1977 even a computerized system for recording the visitors from Warsaw Pact was started)<sup>16</sup>;

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<sup>13</sup> *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communism. Paradox and Degeneration*, (Routledge, London, New York, 2019), *op.cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>15</sup> It was named: Independent Unit for Counter Espionage for socialist countries, F. Banu, L. Țăranu, *Securitatea*, vol. 1, (Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2015), p. 168.

<sup>16</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Romania...*,p. 264.

- observing the Romanian citizens that had origins in the other socialist countries, they had relatives there or studied and travelled regularly there.

Until the end of the regime, these three problems remain as the main *targets* in the activities of this military unit. What was changed was the organizational chart and structure. From 1978 on UM 0110 was divided in eight services (each had three services on the subjects mentioned): “five of them dedicated to one socialist country (USSR, Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany and Yugoslavia), one which had in attention persons that had origins in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Cuba and two which deals with the former members of the Comintern, members of the RCP from illegality and an anti-terrorist service”<sup>17</sup>. It is also relevant that at the level of the County Inspectorates were organized such subordinated units. All in all, according to the former chief of the First Directorate of the Securitate, col. Gheorghe Rațiu, in the second part of the 80s the number of the officers in this Unit, 300, was similar with those that belong Third Directorate that deal with of all agendas of Counterespionage<sup>18</sup>. It is important to note also that the bulk of activities were related in the same period with the Soviet and Hungarian subjects. According to one former officer, 99% of their activities had to do with such *perils*<sup>19</sup>.

The document published here was issued in 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1989. It is now archived in the special documentary fund from the National Council for the Securitate Archives (CNSAS) in Bucharest. It is the 25th copy of the order that was kept in one of the dossiers form the Dâmbovița county unit<sup>20</sup>. In essence, in the same day when supposedly Bush and Gorbachev discussed in Malta the fate of Romania, the UM 0110 enter in an alarm situation. According to the directive, in order to control and prevent, but also for neutralize and thwart any hostile actions of the possible dangers, the UM 0110 need to intensify the *surveillance of different categories of subjects which were in the attention*<sup>21</sup>. The locations identified as vulnerable – Transylvania and Bucharest – were certitudes, and the actors who will act in order to destabilize the situation were from *specialized*

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 552.

<sup>18</sup> Gheorghe Rațiu, *Raze de lumină pe cărări întunecate*, București, Editura Paco, 1996, p. 34. The figures were confirmed by last chief of this Unit Victor Neculicioiu. See F. Banu, L. Țăranu, *Securitatea*, vol. 1, p. 180.

<sup>19</sup> Ion Constantin, *Securitatea în revoluția română din decembrie 1989*, în “Periscop”, nr. 4, decembrie 2008, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> ACNSAS, FCX Fund, file 002904, vol. 1-5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, f. 1.

*structures of Hungary, Hungarians and Romanians alike. The urgency of the activities and their content were order as follows: activation of the informants network, then taking active measures in relation with the foreign officials and tourists “ in order to see if their visits and travelling are not connected with specific missions of organizing and urge on destabilizing actions” and “...a permanent and efficient cooperation will be organized with other work lines for an active exchange of information, for value them in the prevention process, organization of offensive measures to neutralize any hostile attempts or actions against our country”<sup>22</sup>.*

In essence, on the line of warnings contain in this note was issued the order that we will discuss here. What this document tells us is the fact that the Romanian Securitate was aware that such dangers need to be addressed urgently and that beyond routine. These perils become pressing in terms of control, prevention and neutralization. That means that the danger was not only observed from a distance, but more or less, addressed with active measures in order to be resolved. The milieu, the minority, the region, the actors were already mentioned in the order that we present below. This is the reason that it is surprisingly that the former Securitate officers did not produce more evidence to sustain their allegations about foreign intervention and tourists. Because they were perceived as the main danger in December, and at this moment the evidences did not sustain their interpretation in relation with their activities. Even if they were *many*, according to this document they were supervised not only incidentally, as they enter in a place or in another, but along all their routes and roads in Romania. Leaving aside the scarcity of numbers regarding the visitors before 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1989<sup>23</sup>, we must also emphasize the fact that their movement in Romania was not only restricted, but also strictly controlled.

If we look precisely at the level of the county where the order arrived, we must say that in Dâmbovița lived only few Hungarians and Soviet targets for the Unit. The majority of them were observed according to the three problems that the unit had in attention: foreign official representatives; persons who had relatives in the countries from the

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, f. 1, 1v.

<sup>23</sup> Here we must appreciate the efforts of Constantin Corneanu, *op.cit*, pp. 472-474, who advanced some figures -via the documents created at the level of the Ministry of Interior, Direction of Passports, Foreigner Evidence and Border Control - but as they are the only ones, we did not risk an interpretation in relation with them. Anyway, from that numbers we can see that the numbers that enter in the first 15 days of December were less than the number of visitors that get out of Romania (110 896 to 110 938) and, in any case, as we see all of them were strictly surveilled by the Securitate.

socialist camp and, tourists that travel there. According to the documents that are now in CNSAS custody Târgoviște was a transit stop for the tourists that came from Soviet Union in their travel journey to Yugoslavia or Bulgaria. Here they had hotels and other arrangements made by INTOURIST and ONT in relation with their journey. The tourist's problem was connected in this region not only with the winter resorts, but also with the transit points for the travellers that go in South or in South- West for the so-called *commercial tourism*. From the border to the transit points usually the buses that come from Soviet Union were controlled in strategic points as petrol stations (PECO) and hotels/restaurants where they could find accommodation or where they could get the gas for transiting Romania.

As a consequence, all the resources in relation with the foreign visitors were activated and all touristic groups were actively observed in the next weeks. That means that this problem became pressing in terms of control, prevention and neutralization and the Securitate officers were oriented especially in that direction. The order made clear that Then, if this is true, and these targets were closely watched in December 1989, maybe finally we will arrive to a more balanced view over the role that the external factor played in the events of 1989 in the case of Romania. Until then, the legends concerning the foreign tourists remain legends and nothing else.

*Annex*

*Order for the intensification of surveillance of different categories of subjects which were in the attention of the U.M.110, 2nd of December 1989<sup>24</sup>*

Ministry of Interior  
Department of State Security  
UM 0110 Bucharest

Strictly Secret  
Ex. No.1

No: D/00/614751 from 2.12.1989 (multiplied at Xerox, copy no. 25)  
To County Security Dâmbovița<sup>25</sup>

We inform you that we have signals that the specialized structures from Hungary had in preparation measures for initiating and provoking group actions, disorders, demonstrations, in which they want to attract elements from the Hungarian minority, but also Romanians, in localities of Transylvania and Bucharest, in order to destabilize the internal political situation for irredentists objectives.

These actions were anticipated by intensifying the propaganda against our country exploiting the anti-Romanian feelings in Western and in some countries of Eastern Europe.

In order to control solidly the operative situation, but also for obtaining a convenient and full prevention, for neutralization and thwart any hostile action, of espionage and treason, the 0110 Compartment from the Securitate County, will take urgently following measures:

1. Orientation and instruction for all operative sources for obtaining and transmitting with maximum efficiency the informative data regarding of some elements in attention, strangers or indigenou, that are in their competence and could initiate, provokes or adhere to hostile actions, but also against the ones who spread and sustain national-irredentist thesis and activities organized abroad, the ones who are put into hostile, defeatists, and destabilizing propaganda actions.

Information and actions related to those activities will be reported and put in work immediately, seriously verified in order to organize efficient preventive measures under the control and direct coordination of the Central Unit.

2. Measures will be taken for solid organization of the complex control of all foreign representatives that are in the competence of the profile (diplomats, news correspondents, specialists,

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<sup>24</sup> Archives of National Council for the Securitate Archives, Fund FCX, file 002904, vol. 5, pp. 1, 1v.

<sup>25</sup> It was completed by handwriting in blue ink for each county.

representatives), but also tourists and other visitors to their relatives, harbingers, refugees or repatriates which are in the area of competence, permanently or temporarily, *in order to see if their visits and travelling are not connected with specific missions of organizing and urge on destabilizing actions.*

3. In the case of the persons who were the object of the notes asked with our Order no. 00609670 from 28th October 1989, the complex control measures will be also intensified, in order to observe with priority if they are involved in such hostile group actions.
4. A permanent and efficient cooperation will be organized with other work lines for an active exchange of information, for value them operationally in the prevention process, organization of offensive measures to neutralize any hostile attempts or actions against our country.

Chief of the Unit [ signature indecipherable]



## Book Reviews

### Andrei Dălălău, *New books on the History of the Legionary Movement*

**Tatiana Niculescu**, *Mistica revolverului și a rugăciunii. Viața lui Corneliu Zelea Codreanu*, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2017, 240 p.

**Oliver Jens Schmitt**, *Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Ascensiunea și căderea "căpitanului"*, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2017, 456 p.

**Roland Clark**, *Sfântă tinerețe legionară: activismul fascist în România interbelică*, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2015, 288 p.

**Traian Sandu**, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier. Un fascism românesc*, Ed. Cartier, Chișinău, 2019, 479 p.

**Abstract:** In recent years, many works dealing with the phenomenon of the Legionary Movement came to the attention of the Romanian scholars, who tried to understand the Iron Guard from a synchronous historiographical perspective called the "new consensus", theorized by Roger Griffin. In this context, the present article aims to analyze the works of Oliver Jens Schmitt, Tatiana Niculescu, Roland Clark, and Traian Sandu. In their work, the writers adopt a broader understanding of the legionary phenomenon as an indigenous version of European fascism, reconfiguring Captain Codreanu's image in two provocative biographies, one concerning the local and regional activities of the Iron Guard (Clark) and one work oriented towards sociology (Sandu). The first part aims to compare the authors' interest in researching the subject, as well as the methodological similarities and differences between their books. Each paper is analyzed separately, seeking to observe traits of their specificity and originality. The second part focuses on the common elements of each author, followed by a section on a comparative perspective, where we observe how the *student activity* and the *religious spirit* (two support pillars of the Iron Guard) may involve multiple valences of historiographical interpretation. Moreover, a listing of the sources seems essential.

**Key words:** fascism, comparative historiography, The Legionary Movement, biography, religion

**Rezumat:** În contextul apariției în ultimii ani a unor lucrări de specialitate și de popularizare care tratează fenomenul Mișcării Legionare dintr-o perspectivă istoriografică sincronică numită a “noului consens”, eseul de față își propune să analizeze istoriografic lucrările lui Oliver Jens Schmitt, Tatiana Niculescu, Roland Clark și Traian Sandu. Cercetătorii au adoptat o viziune mai largă de înțelegere a fenomenului legionar ca variantă autohtonă a fascismului european, astfel încât analizele lor reconfigurează imaginea Căpitanului Codreanu în cadrul a două biografii, trec dinspre istorie politică spre istorie locală la Clark și sondează sociologic substratul mișcării la Sandu. Sunt comparate motivațiile autorilor de a scrie pe această temă, asemănările și deosebirile metodologice între lucrări, elemente accentuate sau trecute intenționat cu vederea din viața Legiunii, urmate de o secțiune a perspectivelor comparate, unde observăm cum *studentii și religia*, doi stâlpi de susținere ai Gărzii de Fier, pot implica valențe multiple de interpretare istoriografică. Mai mult, o trecere în revistă a surselor ni se pare indispensabilă.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** fascism, comparatism istoriografic, Mișcarea Legionară, biografie, religie

### Introduction

The Legionary Movement represents a controversial episode of the Romanian interwar period, being a socio-political party with nationalist, anti-Semitic, mystical, Orthodox and authoritarian values that was to be discovered as accurately as possible after the disappearance of the national communist monopoly on Romanian historiography. After 1989, Romanian historiography treated the subject of legionaries under the tension of the relationship between the subjective recovery of the past and the methods of scientific rigor according to European academic standards. The rediscovery of the interwar period as an archetypal spatial and temporal sequence, which could provide a model for the new post-December democracy, has favoured the recurrence of the extremist political “models” founded in Greater Romania. The liberalization of historiography has made it possible to rediscover the Legionary Movement on the basis of archives, journals, memoirs, and the press, leaving aside the party ideology based on predetermined clichés. After the fall of communism in 1989, a new phase of scholarship dealing with Romanian

fascism emerged. Romanian fascism was then discussed without any political inhibition or restrictions, and the assimilation of new methodologies and tackling of new types of sources was possible as well. We want to mention Irina Livezeanu, Constantin Iordachi, Radu Ioanid, and Valentin Săndulescu for producing some of the 'most interesting late studies on the history of the Legionary Movement in Romania', as Marius Turda pointed out in 2005<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, certain groups of legionary supporters have had the opportunity to gather around these symbols and identities, mainly using the rhetoric of the anti-communist resistance in the mountains and the argument of the persecuted legionnaires in prisons to legitimize themselves in the public space.

In the case of the Legionary Movement, in the early years of post-communism, Western historiography has taken into consideration *the concepts* that the legionaries used in their actions rather than *the processes* that were unfolded in the interwar years. Concepts such as anti-Semitic, anti-democratic, anti-European, political radicalism, cult of death, etc. are not self-sufficient to describe the dynamic internal operating system of the Iron Guard. A number of works refer to the Legion as an ecstatic, religious, terrorist movement, oriented towards political assassinations, the Romanian case being considered illustrative 'only insofar as it can help the historian to highlight the substantial differences between marginal fascisms and the central cases'<sup>2</sup>. During the 1980s, attention was paid to the Legion's internal dynamics and its political trajectory, as well as its relations with other Eastern European instances of fascism. The most noticeable analysis of the Legionary Movement was Armin Heinen's *Die Legion 'Erzengel' in Rumänien*, which succeeded to cross the barrier of the 'Romanian exceptionalism' of the Iron Guard. Some other historians also understood the Legion's ideology as a form of 'clerical fascism'<sup>3</sup>, a fact that determined Eugen Weber to describe this movement as essentially a reaction to the modernity specific to a backward society<sup>4</sup>. Historiography also noticed the fact that except for Italy and Germany, the Iron Guard was the only European fascist movement that came to power without foreign aid. As Constantin Iordachi shows, the Iron Guard professed a form of 'sacralisation of politics pertaining to a Romanian

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<sup>1</sup> Marius Turda, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Mihai Chioveanu (coord.), *Țara, Legiunea, Căpitanul: Mișcarea Legionară în documente de istorie orală*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Roger Eatwell, 'Reflections on Fascism and Religion', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 4 (2003): 146-66.

<sup>4</sup> Cosmin Sebastian Cercel, 'The Right Side of the Law. State of Siege and the Rise of Fascism in Interwar Romania', *Fascism* 2 (2013): 205-233.

version of modern palingenesis'<sup>5</sup>. We will now analyse the recent historiography – mainly the works published between 2015 and 2019 on the subject.

### Recent historiography

The recent historiography that deals with the subject of the Legionary Movement is diverse at the epistemological level and methodology: interviews with former legionnaires, psychological insights, theology, political doctrine, and biographies of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Others tend to describe the Legionary Movement from the perspective of a relatively separate and isolated political group, others claim that it was a fully socially integrated group. The ideology of the movement and its relationship with the masses and the establishment have given birth to a historiographical debate that continues until today. Nor is the relationship of the Iron Guard with the Orthodox Church definitively solved: some historians place the religious manifestation of the legionaries in direct connection with the mystical orthodoxy of the “young generation”, others claim that the religious impetuses of (neo) Protestant inspiration under the influx of the Young Man Christian Association and the practices of evangelization undertaken by young westerners; others adopt the argument of “originality” according to which the legionary religious element is the result of an indigenous process in which syncretism played a major role, impossible to transplant in another cultural context, being a creation specific to the Romanian space.

The post-December historiography of the Legionary Movement can be divided into at least two coordinates of analysis: the first axis contains works that exclusively dealt with the Iron Guard as a form of a *diachronic* history divided chronologically into specific ‘historical ages’, in the writings of Oliver Jens Schmitt, Tatiana Niculescu, Armin Heinen, Roland Clark, Francesco Veiga. The second axis contains works of *synchronic* history, which do not focus exclusively on the analysis of the Legion, but also on the characterization of the whole nationalist, religious, mystical, and cultural ensemble of the interwar period, integrating the Legionary Movement into a specific context in which it manifests. We mention here the contributions of Irina Livezeanu, of Lucian Boia, Leon Volovici, Mihai Chioveanu and Zigu Ornea. It is necessary to mention here that neither of these two axes is exclusively *diachronic* or *synchronic*. They are interdependent and complement each other organically.

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<sup>5</sup> Constantin Iordachi, ‘God’s Chosen Warriors: Romantic Palingenesis’, in *Comparative Fascist Studies: New Perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 320.

Moreover, in the recent historiography we observe an analytical evolution in the sense of broadening the causal explanations, more precisely by identifying the component elements of the Legion on a social basis. Scholars analysed the Guard's internal tendencies, dissidences, regional differences, and its relation with different categories of people, associations, unions, and parties. Gradually, recent sources and interpretations come to show that the Legionary Movement hasn't always had a precise ideology, a perfect organization, and an indestructible unity, so that the probing of popular mindsets, the need for belonging, the opportunism of individuals and the integration of the marginal become vital elements in the new research. We are witnessing the transition from the classical *event-oriented history* to the *social and cultural history*.

In recent years, in the historiography of the legionary phenomenon has been a transition from presenting the overall history of the Movement to a biographical form of the history of 'Captain' Codreanu, taking into consideration the work of Oliver Jens Schmitt (*Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Ascensiunea și căderea "Căpitanului"*) and Tatiana Niculescu's *Mistica rugăciunii și a revolverului. Viața lui Corneliu Zelea Codreanu*, published in 2017, which deals with the profile of the legionary leader by probing his intimate psychology and the 'philosophy of silence', alongside the eventual history of the Legion to illustrate as authentic as possible the leader's position in the key moments of the interwar historical period.

However, the two biographies both differ in the writing technique and in the purpose of argumentation: Oliver Jens Schmitt tries to understand Captain 'from within', to establish the veracity of its integration into the fascist current theorized as 'palingenetic ultranationalism' by Roger Griffin, to show how the European fascist reality is combined with the nationalist religious reality in the Romanian space; the historian structurally questions the activity of the Captain as an integral part of the society but also as an autonomous creative force. The work of Tatiana Niculescu aims to offer the general public portrait of Corneliu Codreanu in an accessible manner, often impregnated by 'literary fireworks', facilitating the understanding of the interwar atmosphere even by an unspecialized reader. Moreover, in the *Author's note*, Niculescu states that the text is 'an attempt to unravel the image of time that mixes politics with religion, ended in blood and barbarism' (p. 7), with the desire to render Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's life 'as I understood it, trying to betray the character's truths and contradictions as little as possible'. Schmitt, on the other hand, addresses also the general public, but the vast composition, methodology and historical rigor of the

concepts made his text accessible more on the academic level. He tries to open new interpretive paths through an approach that is meant to be exhaustive. The two works differ even quantitatively: the 454 pages of Schmitt's work cover a wider area of research compared to the 239 pages of Tatiana Niculescu's book. The Swiss author exposes both the strengths and weaknesses of the biographical method, among which we mention: the risk of the biographer to identify with the object of his research, the risk of making psychological assumptions, the lack of historical contextualization concerning the socio-political interdependencies, but there is also the epistemological danger to instrumentalize the text for revisionist purposes.

The works of Francisco Veiga (*History of the Iron Guard: 1919-1941: the mysticism of ultranationalism*, Humanitas, 1993) and Armin Heinen (*Die Legion "Erzengel Michael"; The Legion "Arhanghelul Mihail"*, 1986, published in Romanian translation by Humanitas Publishing House in 1999) have inaugurated the method of the diachronic history of the Legionary Movement, followed by the work of Roland Clark, *Holy Legionary Youth. Fascist activism in interwar Romania*, published in 2015 by the Polirom Publishing House. These works present the historical events of the Iron Guard, following a clearly determined chronological line and largely avoiding the personal introspections encountered in the biographies. However, the shift towards microhistory starting with Clark's work and its tendency to 'descend' to the level of individual destinies and to the level of local 'legionary nests' marks the transition from social history to the historiography of the Legionary Movement. The strengths of these diachronic works combined with multiple microhistory episodes are the multitude of local and regional examples, the joining of an impressive number of 'small' events that are integrated within the general image of the era and which are symptoms of the 'interwar spirit'. Unlike biographies, chronological historical works don't focus particularly on the family education of, for example, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, but seek to showcase how the daily violence of the era can be explained through the student protests and through nationalist and notorious anti-Semitic activities. We can say that the two types of historiography are intertwined, offering the reader the historical picture necessary to understand the interwar 'code' in which the activities of the legionaries can be read.

The work of Traian Sandu, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier. Un fascism românesc*, is included in this historiographical category. Published in 2019 by the Cartier Publishing House in Chişinău, the Romanian version of the work was originally published in French under the title *Un fascism*

*roumain. Histoire de la Garde de fer*, in 2014 at Perrin Publishing House. If the work of Schmitt and Tatiana Niculescu analyses the portrait of Codreanu within the social, cultural, and political context, Traian Sandu's work is to be placed in the continuation of the current of the *new consensus* that emerged in the 1990s under the theorization of Roger Griffin. The analytical approach proposed by Sandu aims to overcome the simple descriptive method that stops at a series of legionary personalities "following their prolongation in matters of political socialization" (p. 17) and contributing to the completion of the image of the Legionary Movement through consistent archival research. The work capitalizes the funds of the Central National Historical Archive, of the National Council for the Study of Security Archives, the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie and the Regional Police. The archival sources are important for bringing forward the documents of the informants infiltrated among legionaries, the politicians' decisions regarding the activity of the Legion, the statistical data regarding the penetration of the new political formation in different areas of the country and the social structure of the voters. From a methodological point of view, Sandu's work brings an element of novelty by exposing and analyzing some archival sources that have not been used before. The limits of archival sources can be exceeded by cross-comparing them with other sources - journals, memoirs, correspondence, legionary speeches and writings, press, etc. All of these come to support Traian Sandu's thesis that the Legionary Movement was a manifestation of a fascist current synchronous with other European fascisms, in the spirit of the historiography of the *new consensus*.

### **Oliver Jens Schmitt. Codreanu: between introspection and contradiction**

Oliver Jens Schmitt offers a new dynamic of the historical events, he introduces qualitative analyses and personal considerations into the chronology of the Legionary Movement, so that the reading of the work 'leaps' from period to period to best explain the decision-making processes in the Iron Guard leadership, nonetheless, this is done without prior notice. For example, chapter 30 covers the events of 1936, while chapter 31 deals with the issues of 1934-1935 events. This transforms the analysis of the Swiss author into a description that is new and challenging. He shapes geography of the movement from Cuzist, Moldova, to Legionary Muntenia, to which he even adds the less well-known connection of the legionaries with Poland, overlooked by historians. Schmitt builds the history of the Legion in its distinct periods and time segments in the natural evolution of an adaptive process that

coincides with the “massification” of the movement –the strategies, plans, sympathies, underground or public struggles differ radically from year to year which makes it difficult to accurately frame the legionary actions. He deconstructs the idea of legionary consistency and its unity of action throughout its course as communist historiography constructed it from the ideological considerations of Marxism-Leninism. Schmitt probes Codreanu's psychological motivations, his hesitations, internal struggles, the legionary strategy of the Captain's image, the desire for violence in the 1920s, the passivism and militancy of regional groups, all in the dialectic between “center” and “periphery”. In this reading, key decisions of the legionary leadership were constantly altered by the deviations of the members, by the political risks of some forced actions, by the temptation of the response, and by the frustration of refraining from responding to the Carlist violence.

The history of the Legionary Movement is for Oliver Jens Schmitt, the history of the circumstantial interwar developments of the Romanian society, of the relationship between the electorate (with its expectations, mentalities, aspirations and ideals) and establishment: one of inclusion and rejection, of enthusiasm and revolt in specific political ages. Schmitt's analysis develops in two different directions: first, a fascist direction, where Codreanu is regarded as a leader of the legionary fascist movement; secondly, a direction concerning the history of religion, where religious mysticism is highlighted in concepts such as ‘collective salvation’ or ‘resurrection’. The Swiss researcher's method is part of the quantitative socio-historical approach used in the classic research of European Nazism and Fascism, but it is complemented by field research in Vâlcea County or in the Sub-Carpathians area. Archival documents, newspapers, and magazines of the era are used. As he himself states, the paper tends to transcend the debate centered on Bucharest or that of the history of the ideology, focusing on the psychological questions of the Captain. The novelty lies in its archival basis in the research of police and security reports, but especially in the reinterpretation of Codreanu's diary of 1934.

### **Tatiana Niculescu. Literary Portrait**

The method used by Tatiana Niculescu Bran is similar to Schmitt's, being a biographical research of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. However, the rationale behind the approach is different: while Schmitt tries to present convincing arguments in favour of new theses and hypotheses about the Captain's personality, Tatiana starts the research with the need to explain to herself how the political and religious leader

from the interwar period was able to gather so much emotion and hatred around him. The writing style focuses on deduction, counterfactual assumptions, intentionally left blank spaces, uncertainties, and clear certainties, so that the whole work is a well-constructed narrative, sprinkled with literary fingerprints to facilitate the understanding of the interwar era. The author analyzes the reports, newspapers, magazines, newspapers, Codreanu's books, and the publicity of the time, but, unlike Schmitt or Sandu, she does not use archival sources.

An interesting note of the author shows how her philo-Semitic inclination transforms the historical reproduction of an anti-Semite like Codreanu into an 'interesting experience'. While Schmitt claimed that historians overestimated Codreanu's education at Dealu Monastery, Tatiana argues that the military training offered there has had significant effects. She makes a comparison of Dealu Monastery military training with that of European scout groups, such as those of Baden-Powell, Czech *sokolists* or Prussians from *Turnverein*. Tatiana also highlights some readings of the young Codreanu that Schmitt did not mention: *Semănătoru* and *Neamul românesc*, whose reading strengthened the national and traditional feeling of Corneliu Codreanu. The deductive writing style can, however, leave certain aspects uncertain, the reader not knowing whether the information presented is authentic or not. The use of counterfactual images such as 'if they were' or of deductive ones such as 'may have been', 'will have been imagined', 'will have been dreaming' are meant to render clear images of some sugar-coated and humanized events from Codreanu's existence - his readings, his actions, his beliefs, the impact of the war - they cannot be proved exactly, but they can be at least intuited.

Another aspect that Tatiana emphasizes and that Schmitt seems to overlook is the contribution of the nationalist officers grouped around Gheorghe Bădulescu in the assassination of the prefect Manciu. The first one supported anti-Semitic students' breaks in the newsrooms of the Jewish newspapers. The agitations within the army did not stop. Tatiana also recalls the plot of 8 active officers and 5 civilians, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Victor Precup against King Carol II, on the night of April 6-7, 1934. She emphasizes the impact of speech, *The duty of our life* of Vasile Pârvan from Cluj on the national ideal imagined by the young generation, analyzing it in detail, as opposed to Schmitt. Moreover, the author recalls the carving of the corpse of Mihai Stelescu assassinated by Decemviri and the following ritual dance around him, which was supposed to have happened after the assassination. Schmitt seems more circumspect and he

only illustrates how Stelescu was shot with dozens of bullets, without launching the idea of any subsequent ritual "dance".

At a glance we can say that Tatiana illustrates very suggestively how, as the state fails to integrate certain groups in favour of the legionaries, a transition from student revolutionary to legalism and a diminution of violence occurs. The ethnic group that was active in the Guard were the Aromanians - presented in sufficient detail in all specialized works - which represent an example of integrative failure promoted by the Romanian state in relation to its own colonization program in the Quadrilateral. The Aromanians will gradually radicalize and form a violent nucleus in the Legionary Movement. Tatiana Niculescu emphasizes the testimonies of Constantin Argetoianu and Alexandru Vaida Voevod of Armand Călinescu, but also the ones of Carol II's. It captures neither the activity of the `nests` in the country, nor the ascension of Horia Sima. For quantitative reasons, she does not focus on the struggles between the different groups within the Iron Guard. However, her work manages to highlight very well the failure of the institutional apparatus and to capture the expectations and frustrations of the population generated by a politically subordinated justice.

### **Roland Clark. The microhistory of the Iron Guard**

Roland Clark's work, *Sfântă tinerețele gionară*, is placed in the continuation of the method of Armin Heinen and Francisco Veiga. From the beginning, Clark were trying to integrate the Legionary Movement into the definition of European fascism, as opposed to Schmitt and Tatiana Niculescu, who rather emphasize the 'native' elements of the Guard. The researcher makes an incursion into the Romanian anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century and tries to identify the nucleus of anti-Jewish sentiment since the time of Carol I. Clark uses the term 'ultranationalist' to differentiate the legionaries from 'the nationalist' politicians (the liberals were also nationalists). Although he often uses Marxist concepts such 'rural proletariat' or 'neo-serfdom' borrowed from Alexandru Dobrogeanu Gherea, it is only to emphasize the social element of the Legion in its regional diversity. The information comprising individual destinies, life stories, personal actions and regional elements occupies more than half of the book, his intention being to highlight the ramifications of the legionary supporters and to shift the attention from the main figure (Codreanu) towards simple members. The abundance of events often considered 'minor' are meant to build a complete picture of the Legionary Movement affirmation and activity, but also to show the social extent of its support 'from below' and the sacrificial spirit of the

members. Another difference in Clark's method is the emphasis on the 'normative' character of student protests on the Captain's personality, as opposed to the importance given to family education by Schmitt or to the military training in Dealu Monastery by Tatiana Niculescu. Roland Clark's argument is built around the student core and their claim of the legitimacy of university protests once the relations between LANC and Legion broke up.

We cannot overlook the "outlaw" (*haiduc*) tradition which is less common in other works. Clark argues that among the rural population the Legion created the image of an outlaw band (*bandă haiducească*) that shares justice among villagers. However, the 'outlaw' justice was an arbitrary one, being parallel to the justice of the law. The image of the *haiduci*/legionnaires was meant to develop a social practice that became an instrument of power concurrent to the state power. This form of altered justice offers a partial and subjective justice according to a Manichean view of the world: the 'good' is represented by the legionaries and the "evil" is represented by the Jews and the Romanians who made compromises with the Jews. The legionary integration of marginality through popular symbols which were familiar to the peasants, shows again the integrative failure of the state apparatus and the electoral tactics of the legionaries. Another detail omitted by Schmitt, Tatiana, or Chioveanu is the fate of the lawyer Istrate Micescu, who used legionaries to intimidate his opponents in the bar. As soon as he obtained the presidency of the bar, Micescu turned against the legionary students. This example is very suggestive to illustrate the difference in approach between Clark and Schmitt: the Swiss researcher shows how the Captain was manipulated by the interests of influential political personalities in the general context of the establishment (Codreanu as an intermediary between the "deep state" of the chamber and masses), without giving concrete examples, Roland Clark brings the explanation to details, presenting particular events from which the reader must construct an overview for himself.

The structure that summarizes the difference in method between the two is that Clark starts from *particular* to *general*, from numerous examples apparently 'thrown' into the narrative without a concrete connection between them, while Oliver Schmitt creates a narrative whose puzzle pieces are all well placed from the very beginning, where no socio-political and economic element remains outside. Using Roger Griffin's explanations, Clark analyzes the press structures such as *Axa*, *Calendarul* or *Cuvântul* and the intellectual elites who supported the Legionary

Movement (Nae Ionescu, Nichifor Crainic, Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Mihai Polihroniade), interpreting their fascist message.

The multitude of examples offered is explained by Clark as the need to place practical activity above abstract ideology, thus exceeding the classical horizon of ideological interpretation of the Iron Guard. Political activism shapes the trajectories of individual destinies, which gives the author a unique writing perspective. The individual members of the Legion embodied, in one way or another, the ideal of the “new man” imagined and Clark's intention was to identify in many examples a ‘the collective archetype’. These hundreds of testimonies, examples and short biographies provide a consistent area of documentation from archives to journals, biographies, press, periodicals, books, private fund materials, oral sources, etc. Just as an iconostasis with numerous images of the important or less important members of the Legionary Movement, Clark analyses the processes of transformation and conversion that each and every member of the Legion was required to perform from an ontological and historical view.

### **Traian Sandu. History and sociology**

Traian Sandu addresses the genesis of the Legionary Movement in the context of the aftermath of the First World War in an agrarian society dominated by the communist threat, as well as the internal struggles of the leadership. The daily violence and the radicalization of university students crowned the genesis of Archangel Michael's Legion in 1927. It then proceeds to the organization of the Iron Guard; a unique aspect brought into discussion was the relationship of dependence or independence between Iron Guard and Nazi Germany. The evolution of this relation has been analyzed in detail. The tension between the legionaries and King Carol II is also addressed, but there is a certain level of complicity between these two parts of the establishment, as well as the inability of public authorities to respond to the legionary violence which was targeted either against the Jews or against the parliamentary system. Despite documenting the abuses, they were guilty of the Legion were often acquitted and transformed into heroes acclaimed by the masses with leniency and even the support of the authorities. Moreover, the attitude of the authorities towards the movement was inconsistent, the repression phase interspersed with the moments when it was allowed to manifest relatively unsteadily. That is why legionary violence was ‘deliberately tolerated’ (p. 82). Although often arrested, Codreanu and other legionaries were acquitted under the pretext that - since they did not attack the monarchy, but ‘corrupt’ parliamentary system - their actions and

propaganda did not represent an attack against the security of the state. Even after the assassination of I.G. Duca in 1933, the King has continued to monitor the Iron Guard's actions against political parties, and the acquittal of the legionaries in the process that followed the assassination of Duca (only three assassins received convictions) raises question marks.

Traian Sandu approaches the problem with a question that many researchers have tried to answer, but only a few succeeded: what caused the peasants and workers to lean towards the Legion? The role of intellectuals, mentors, academics, students, theologians, and philosophers was studied after 1990, but 'the penetration of the working environment takes place only in the mid-1930s' (p. 11). The author tried to analyze the role of ritual, symbols, uniforms, flags, decorations, the songs, and marches which are 'gathering instruments' for illiterate people. In the rural world, the ritual enchants and offers safety. From a methodological point of view, Sandu's work comes to complement the overall image of the Legion created by previous writings that did not have access to archives or did not cross the intellectual elite barrier. Studies on legionary ideology either concentrate on some famous intellectual personalities or remain stuck in the doctrine and are unable to probe its prolongations in terms of political socialization. The relationship between religion and politics is also very interesting. Sandu states that legionarism was a transcendental fascism, unlike the Italian atheist fascism and the German pagan Nazism. Because of this, Codreanu was forced to instrumentalize the religion and at the same time to get rid of it, just as he openly revered the monarchy but fought against the unworthy king Carol II. The probing of Codreanu's inner dialectic is part of the new historiographical current and is a common thing among the works discussed here. The interest of this political religion lies precisely in its massification and not in its elitist isolation.

Probably the most significant element of novelty brought by *Istoria Gărzii de Fier. Un fascism românesc* lies in the detailed presentation of the movement's structural constituency, in the calculation of 'militant profitability', as well as in the study of the social and regional composition of the Legion - the legionary leadership itself distinguished between the mass movement and the political party, acting accordingly. Observing 'the weak capacity of electoral mobilization 'outside its militant body' (p. 345), Sandu shows that 'the best scores of the *Totul pentru Țară* party are registered in the most urbanized provinces' (p. 353). In conclusion, the paper proposes both a political history of the movement and a sociological analysis of it, enriching the historiography of the problem with new interpretive paradigms. The author's thesis is that 'the legionary movement was the only Romanian fascist

organization' (p. 360) and that Romanian fascism had 'two defining characteristics: weak electoral irradiation outside the militants of an anti-system party, on the one hand, and poor development of political communication in certain regions caused by mediocre acculturation due to their backwardness and isolation, on the other hand' (p. 353). Noting the 'full Euro-synchronous enrolment' of Romanian fascism between European fascisms, Traian Sandu observes that Romanian legionarism has developed in a socially, economically, and politically backward society - 'a big fascism in a small country'.

### **Comparative perspectives**

The uniting the idea that crosses through the historiography regarding the Legionary Movement of the last decade seems to be the orientation towards the *social* research, with a stress on the Iron Guard's capacity of integrating the masses engaged as a consequence of adopting the universal voting system in 1918, of establishing a dialectic of proximity and remoteness in the institutions of the state during specific ages of the Romanian interwar period and of enveloping in its structure individuals of all social categories. Oliver Jens Schmitt claims that research has underestimated the importance of the legionary workers' program, imagined as part of an organic and harmonious community and as a counter-model to the Marxist social class struggle. At the same time, historians have overrated the military training at Dealu Monastery, where Schmitt claims, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu perfected, from a military and organizational perspective, the training received from his father, Ion Zelea Codreanu. Schmitt's method can be characterized by his differentiating between the leader and the movement, more precisely between the revolutionarism of the movement and the mysticism of the ruling nucleus. The historian captures the internal struggles within the movement by illustrating the 'western' dissidence of the radical terrorist faction led by Horia Sima, which continued to provoke the authorities by disobeying Codreanu, who ordered a total lack of fight-back, especially during his imprisonment in 1938.

This appended the image of an overburdened leader, one in the position of maintaining the unity of his movement and inclined towards contradictory actions. Moreover, Schmitt discovers a scission within the Movement between pro-carlists and anti-carlists, mirrored by a resembling a chasm inside the establishment between those who supported the Legion (Vaida Voievod, Incuțeț, Tilea, Titeanu, Iuliu Maniu, joined by manufacturers, aristocrats, clerics) and the ones who wished it silenced (Carol al II-lea, Nicolae Titulescu, I.G. Duca, Armand Călinescu, the royal

camarilla, the famous case of Istrate Micescu etc.) For a more suggestive analysis of the rise and fall of the Iron Guard, we shall analyze the perspective of the conflict between the movement and the establishment.

Schmitt uses analysis concepts such as `nationalist-conservative` to illustrate the mentality of the elites, a fact that allows us to infer that the Legionary Movement could be categorized as `nationalist-revolutionary`. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu had been an outsider from the beginning, a marginal looking for ways to climb the social ladder in the very establishment that would ultimately have him meet his end. First, King Carol the 2<sup>nd</sup> sought to draw the sympathy of the public opinion through intermediaries who resonated ideatically and behaviourally with the peasants, workers, as well as with groups of intellectuals, the reason for which some historians believe that Carol offers Codreanu the position of Prime Minister with the condition of renouncing the leadership of the Movement. Codreanu declines, and this leads to the disruption of any connection between the two, creating, at the same time, two cores of power in a permanent conflict. Indirectly, the common grounds of the Legion and Carol were the spite and the fight against democracy to obtain the power. The actions of defiance of the parliamentary order, student violence, assassinations, royal decrees, and the change of the Constitution in 1938 rendered the state of law out of order.

The new political reality, in Jens Schmitt's opinion, looks as follows: on the one hand, the royal camarilla led by Carol 2<sup>nd</sup> overtook the establishment in the form of a `deep state`, where the secret services, army, businessmen, masonic lodges and intellectuals had a greater influence than the Parliament and democratic institutions. The mentality of the `deep state` was rooted in the epoch before 1941, being elitist, masculine, founded on favouritism and which didn't have any authentic contact with mass society; on the other hand, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and the Legionary Movement had developed a direct contact with the masses, the elite, the army, intellectuals, the peasants and the workers, the Church throughout the years, thing which determined Carol II to attract Codreanu as an intermediary. Because of his lack of political experience, the Captain could have been a good instrument for intimidating the opponents, whereas through his influence Carol could have acquired a base of mass without changing his authoritarian vision of power. The failure of intermediation and total rupture made the two power nuclei in society impossible to coexist. The victory of one meant the annihilation of the other a thing which occurred. In Schmitt's words, `it was Romania's tragedy that the Legion wasn't crushed by a democracy able to defend by means of the

rule of law, but by an authoritarian regime, permeated by legionary ideas, without any actual support in society`.

### Students

Tatiana Niculescu and Oliver Jens Schmitt paint a portrait of the student social circumstances in an almost exhaustive manner. Both evoke the activity of Codreanu as a 'strike wrecker' for communist manifestations, as a member of the Guard of National Conscience of Constantin Panou and as a fighter against the actions of communist students; nonetheless, in our research, the German historic lowers his gaze upon the shortcomings of daily life. Besides having a striking political conscience and displaying fear regarding the infiltration of Russian Jews from the East, students were faced with a harsh reality: universities were overwhelmed with the great number of students, the number of scholarships was low, the canteens couldn't feed them all and the accommodation was insufficient. Jewish students coming from an urban environment and living with their parents' were doing a better things, which sparked the envy of Romanian students. Schmitt introduces here the psychological factor of `socio-cultural alienation that students from a rural environment confronted with in an unfamiliar urban universe`.

This aspect is strengthened with the help of an oral history by an ex-legionary interviewed in *Țara, legiunea și Căpitanul* of Mihai Chioveanu, where it is stated that peasant students found in the cities an environment that didn't match the rural spiritual background, where cosmopolitanism inhibited and alienated the mental structure of the young man raised in the countryside with certain automatisms, habits and religious activities. The enthusiasm and adherence of students to the Legionary Movement came from the fact that it cultivated `what they had left at home`. Chioveanu remarks the natural need of the individual of being part of a community in an environment that was alien to him, in which his integrations were difficult. The Legionary Movement used the *catch party* tactics, offering students and later his members certainty, involvement, integration, and representation within a hierarchical structure that cultivated socializing in a controlled environment (in canteens and guest houses), that offered distinction, decoration, work camps, departments and whose rationale was that of being an `educational institution`, nu a stereotypical party. Thus, Chioveanu underlines that the Legionary Movement came to offer nationalist solutions to a rural(`-izing`) horizon of the peasants that came to the cities and felt marginal, distant from the reality of urban cosmopolitanism.

Tatiana Niculescu evokes rather literally that the cosmopolitan Iasi, with a Jewish population of 34%, according to the 1930 census, and with 'paved streets, shops belonging to French, Viennese or Swiss merchants', with parfumeries, cake shops, 'bragagerii', with salons of the nobility, in trend with the the European fashions, was 'disturbed' by the student body coming from all corners of Great Romania. Tatiana's initiative has the merit of underlining, despite the general opinion, that the anti-Semitic nationalists had actually lost the 'academics' war. The excesses of A.C. Cuza were a symptom of a crisis rather than those of a normal manifestation. Tatiana highlights the fact that very few professors embraced nationalism, leftist professors, Bessarabian students, and Jewish socialists, along with thousands of workers that organized manifestations of protest singing 'International' and chanting slogans against the king being the majority. Schmitt claims that nationalist professors were in conflict with their more numerous socialist colleagues about the way of organizing the state of Great Romania. The ideological left and right influences transformed courses in education about the nation. A complete radiography of political orientation among the professors is offered by Lucian Boia in *Capcanele istoriei. Elita intelectuală românească între 1930-1950*. Boia argues that the Liberals are, by far the most numerous (129), almost twice as many as Peasants (with 71 specialists/academics). Then the next one was The National Christian Party with 21 university professors, The People's Party with 14, and the last ones on the list were the Legionnaires, with 8 declared professors, followed by Grigore Iunian's Radical Peasant Party, with 5 professors.

The University of Iași was dominated by the Peasant Party, especially by those in the left of the party. The political climate in Iași dominated not only by Constantin Stere's tradition, by Poporanism, and by 'Viața românească', but also by the conflict with A.C. Cuza's nationalists had gone to a more accentuated polarization of students. Furthermore, Schmitt shows in a unique way how student violence came from the lack of efficiency in applying the law, which was replaced with the common law, with the traditional honour code. A first trait of Codreanu could be the fact that he used to put his own knightly code of Medieval-Romantic origin above the Civil Law, considering his entire behaviour as a legitimate defence.

Regarding the student movement, Roland Clark claims that in 1920 many of the Romanian students were the first of their families that were pursuing higher education. Their secondary education was defective, the complaints of the professors being suggestive in this sense. Only 10% of the students enrolled between 1929-1938 obtained a

graduation diploma, a sign of their lack of success, and the slim chances of building a career. The first mass, the student generation didn't have the rationale of education itself/on its own, substituting it for political imperatives and personal vendettas. Clark considers that poorly prepared students, with barely education capable of understanding and believing A.C. Cuza found a solution for their shortcomings in anti-Semitic violence and in activating in the student congresses. The students didn't seem to have, in Clark's opinion, some well-shaped political objectives. They would serve justice on their own, imitating the procedures of legitimate authority, the violence coming from anarchy, not from a fight truly serious. Clark considers that these manifestations as 'distractions' for the young students, a way of socializing and group integration, comparing them to the Italian *squadrists* and German *Strumtruppen*.

### **Religion. Mystical orthodoxy and emergent neoprottestantism**

A significant historiographical difference is the religious influence on the members of Legionary Movements. Oliver Jens Schmitt shows that, in contrast with the uncertain spirituality of the '27s young generation', which had a cultural fight with the 'national ideals' generation, the Legionary Movement incorporated both young and old men in favour of healthy national community ideals. Corneliu's father, Ion Zelea Codreanu, professor A.C. Cuza, Moța's father, general Cantacuzino-Grănicerul assured social prestige to the Legion, financial support and, also, the clergy's support. Their religious influence on legionnaires was a reality and, seeing this fact, Schmitt offers to the reader an incursion in Cuza's theology, which was the base of LANC doctrine under the slogan: 'Christ, King, Nation – Romanians' Romania', an ideology of the 'anti-Semitism of the deed'. Nevertheless, A.C. Cuza had his own representation of Christianity, interpreting the Old Testament as a Judaic text which had to be eliminated from Christianity because, in his words, it was abolished by Jesus. For the professor from Iași, Jesus has fought against Judaism and Jews who are 'the people of Satan' and 'the reign of darkness'. A.C. Cuza's remarks have led to indignation among the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, but the support of the priests from countryside and the help of some hierarchs could indicate the fact that Legionary Movement was blessed with the Church's official support, it was not a support or a unitarian rejection in a specific Catholic way, but more like a fragmented and individual one, from the bosom of the Church.

Scholars often ask themselves why the Orthodox Church has not firmly delimited itself from the Iron Guard. In contrast to the Catholic West

where there are numerous monk orders, Schmitt argues that the legionary movement has been an ambiguous political organization, but not a heretical one in particular. More precisely, the orthodox tradition does not have an excommunication instrument compared to the Catholic Church, which implies that the boundaries of the groups that benefit or not benefit from the support of the church remain vague. The church did not proceed to prompt exclusion. Priests, monks, nuns, hierarchs like Nicolae Bălan or Grigore Cristescu supported the Iron Guard, others like Miron Cristea and Popescu-Mălăești condemned it, and, considering this situation, it was never officially condemned *in toto*. Codreanu delimited the legionary education from the Orthodox preaching, considering that the mission of the church is much nobler than the legionary one. The Guardists believed that the human nature is corrupted by the original sin so that violence, excesses, and crimes may occur in exceptional circumstances.

Schmitt asserts that Captain's writings address mysticism not from a religious perspective, but from a nationalist perspective. The messianism of Corneliu Codreanu was a political one, but he used the repertoire of religious images and symbols both from personal belief and to offer the peasants familiar elements, with which they identified themselves. For Codreanu, the Romanians had an important historical mission- the widely used concept of 'Resurrection' was actually the victory of the legionary Romanians. Fascist 'palingenetic nationalism' was, the expression of a national revival but also of a transcendent one as Christianity promises. Schmitt tries to show that the Church and the Legion differed doctrinally, but they resembled rituals and traditions: requiem, cult of the dead, fasting, prayer 'ascetic struggle', mysticism in times of crisis, sacrifice, the Way of the Cross were all politically understood. Codreanu made the religion the core of his 'creed' - his own intransigent, steady moral behaviour, the poverty in which he lived, and the fanatical orthodox faith indicated him as a model in a 'corrupt' political world, which contributed to the creation of the personality cult. In addition, the late reading of the Bible in 1938 confirms to the German researcher the hypothesis that Codreanu's Christianity was predominantly determined by orthodox popular religious rituals and practices, which distances him from the Protestant understanding of the faith that Tatiana Niculescu considers a determinant in the Legion's every day practice.

Tatiana Niculescu breaks the thread of research that attributes the doctrinal influence of the Legionary Movement to the Orthodox Church and dedicates a chapter (*Christian Travel*) of her work in researching the neo-Protestant religious background of the legionary activity. The author

claims that the translation of the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress* books by Dumitru Cornilescu, an Orthodox theologian later becoming neo-Protestant, were two important elements in the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) activity. This group combined physical exercise, religious instruction, and evangelism within the masses, adapting to the confessions of the countries where it was active. Tatiana Niculescu claims that the YMCA was inspired by the scouts the principles published by Lord Baden-Powell, which will later be put into practice by the Legionary Movement, and the main collaborator of this association in Romania was Virgil Bădulescu, former professor of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu at the military school Mănăstirea Dealu. Sports camps, youth evangelisms, Bible readings, and community volunteering campaigns are organized according to the European main trend at that time.

The author draws a parallel between the leader of a YMCA cell and the head of a legionary 'nest': he had to be an elite student, a good organizer, a Christian, an athlete, and a volunteer. He had to support the church for the moral revival of the country. From these premises, although she acknowledges that there is no evidence of Codreanu's activity in the YMCA, Tatiana considers that he participated in the camps organized by Virgil Bădulescu at Carmen Sylva, the site of the future legionary camp. The author explains how the religious reorganization after the First World War would have favoured a kind of ecumenism among the religions of the soldiers on the front. This quasi-military advance of the confessional barrier-breaking process manifested itself in Romania through the works of Dumitru Cornilescu and the priest Teodor Popescu, who held sermons, popularized books, offered brochures and spread new ideas in cities through conferences. Following criticism of the Orthodox Church, Cornilescu was forced to leave the country, and Teodor Popescu was forbidden to preach. Later, Cornilescu will be claimed by the Pentecostal cult while Popescu continued his apostolate through conferences, the 'Christian Group after Scripture' being later assimilated by the Baptist cult.

During this time, another religious movement of neo-Protestant inspiration, *Oastea Domnului*, appeared in Transylvania as a reform within the Orthodox Church. Tatiana Niculescu argues that the community spirit and the organization of the *ostași* attracted the Orthodox youth, and the common passages from *Cărticica șefului de cuib* and *Călătoria creștinului* would be the symptoms of this new religious spirit. Although the author's incursion is daring, at the end of the chapter,

Niculescu offers the verdict of the rather fragile argument of the no Protestant influence on the Legion: 'their voluntarism (of C.Z. Codreanu and his friends) kept nothing from the spirit of the YMCA, failing to overcome the hooligan spirit of the group'. The bullying, beating, fear, and humiliation of the Jewish students did not have much to do with the activity of 'Christian-athletics' association, whose activities had no political but strictly moral religious objectives. Tatiana shows, however, that Zelea Codreanu and his Văcărești colleagues rarely mentioned the Orthodox Church, using instead terms such as 'Christian Church', 'Christianity'. The explanation could be the desire of the legionnaires to acquire an extended representation among both Orthodox and Greek Catholics and Protestants, with whom they often shared the quality of colleagues within nationalist associations. The author's conclusion is that the Legionary Movement used a magic-religious syncretism of Christian symbolism familiar to the Romanian space, easily recognizable by all social categories, to gain influence among the society.

Roland Clark shows with the help of percentages, statistics, and numbers that the legionnaires promoted traditional orthodox themes, a police report from 1937 estimates that 1,2% of legionnaires were ordained priests. Taking the conclusions of Francisco Veiga, approximately 2000 of the 10000 priests in the country were legionnaires. The adhesion of the clergy is explained by Clark by the fact that they found a political platform to represent their religious views. The priests blessed flags, took part in funerals, offered the members access to the church, whereas some theologians such as Nichifor Crainic and Nae Ionescu wrote in favour of the Guard. Some other laics like A.C. Cuza and Nicolae Paulescu were atheists for a while, after which they embraced 'religious anti-Semitism', as Clark named it, rejecting the Old Testament. The method used by Roland Clark consists of evoking the insignificant destinies of individuals with the purpose of making the order part by part, to build the grand image of the Legion. In his paper, he supports his arguments presenting the destinies and ideas of some persons such as Teodosie Popescu, Paraschiv Anghelescu, Nicolae Georgesc-Ediniti, George Racoveanu, Vasile Boldeanu etc. Clark recalls that legionary ideas regarding national society were similar to the ones of orthodoxy at that time, mixing it up with the ideas of Christian communities. The idea of an organic community that ties the past, present, and future generations that can be found in Codreanu's thinking was similar to the orthodox theology that claims that the church unites the believers, dead and alive, in a unique

community – the body of Christ. The commemoration of the dead was practiced with thorough use of the anaphora and requiem as well as by building triptychs, rituals that the legionnaires practiced to show their availability for sacrificing themselves in the service of the national ideal, as well as to offer examples of heroism to other legionnaires. Roland Clark ties the doctrine and practice of the Orthodox Church to the legionary ideology, the latter manifesting some particular rituals coming from the creed of the Iron Guard and of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the recent historiography on the Legionary Movement and the Iron Guard is diverse for both methodological and quantitative reasons. It can be analyzed based on two axes: *diachronic*, divided chronologically into specific ‘historical ages’, and *synchronic*, which focuses on the whole nationalist, religious, mystical and cultural ensemble of the interwar period. The historiography leaned towards a biographical form of the history of ‘Captain’ Codreanu, taking into consideration the work of Oliver Jens Schmitt (*Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Ascensiunea și căderea “Căpitanului”*) and Tatiana Niculescu’s *Misticarugăciunii și a revolverului. Viațalui Corneliu Zelea Codreanu* both published in 2017. These works deal with the profile of the legionary leader by probing his intimate psychology. Oliver Jens Schmitt tries to understand Captain ‘from within’ while Tatiana Niculescu aims to offer the general public portrait of Corneliu Codreanu in an accessible manner. Roland Clark’s work shifts towards microhistory and its tendency is to ‘descend’ to the level of individual destinies and to the level of local ‘legionary nests’, marking the socialization of the historiography of the Legionary Movement. Traian Sandu’s consistent paper proposes both a political history of the movement and a sociological analysis, enriching the historiography of the problem with new interpretive paradigms. The author tried to analyze the role of the ritual symbols, uniforms, flags, decorations, songs, and the marches which are ‘gathering instruments’ for illiterate people. Sandu’s work comes to complement the overall image of the Legion created by previous writings that did not have access to archives or did not cross the intellectual elite barrier.

The debates around student radicalization and the role that religion have played in the legionary ideology continue to this day, but new archival sources and new perspectives for analysis will generate other specialized papers on Iron Guard in the near future. Until then, we

can observe that elements of novelty are brought into the books analyzed above: neoprotestantism, psychology, institutional conflicts, etc. Historiography follows its natural course of development. For the Romanian society, the Iron Guard theme will continue to be a sensitive one, but mature historical analysis can shed light on the history of interwar Romania without provoking negative or positive emotions from society. A nonbiased analysis has the role of a historical catharsis.

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## **Sailing through the high waters of current public debates and politics of memory**

**Reflections on the new monograph published by Catherine Horel on the Horthy-era in the context of the current debates on the contemporary history of Hungary.**

The “fall of the idols” of the Marxist-Leninist world view cleared the scene which had a referential role to public actors in a need for sources and means of symbolic legitimating. In the process of delegitimizing of the Communist system, an important role has been played by the hyphening of the scarcity of resources and the growing scale of poverty at the societal level, as the discourse on the eradication of poverty was of a referential value of the Communist political identity – of an ever-higher value for the János Kádár-led Hungarian regime. The issue of Hungarian minorities’ gradually worsening situation in the neighbouring states, as part of a generally growing referential value of the ethno-culturally defined national agenda, including national sovereignty and independence, in a state which remained attached to a Soviet Union oriented loyalty up to the late 1980’s, were part of a new, alternative set of referential values which played an important symbolic role also in legitimating regime change. The need for a new symbolic figure for “the father of the nation” with a referential role for an ever larger solidarity, challenging and uprooting the compromised solution-based Kádár regime’s symbolic hegemony (which tried to build up its symbolical reference to the era of long peace and welfare between 1867 and 1918, attached to the father figure of Franz Joseph), had led to a revival of the cult of historical personalities identified with nationalism, independence and sovereignty, motivated by political legitimating. In that struggle for symbolic reference, the political actors had tried several strategies which after all had not succeeded entirely neither to eradicate the symbolic capital of Kádár (as in the early 2000’s still had held an essential public presence as one of the most referential Hungarian figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with a strong nostalgic background for its economically based, socially appeasing policies), neither to build up a symbolic consensus around any other historical or public personality of the same century. Symptomatic for the current situation is that the main symbolic place of the capital city of Hungary is still a scenery of an ongoing “battle” of the politics of memory, which was gradually reshaped by restated statues of

pre-20<sup>th</sup> century leaders, and also not assumed entirely by the public. The symbolic capital of leaders which marked the Hungarian 20<sup>th</sup> Century seems to be eroded by the ever-louder political fight for imposing each side's hegemonic view on the other side's responsibilities for the tragedies of the last century.

In the meantime, the post-1989 public debates on the contemporary history of Hungary had resettled the stage for a plurality of discourse, which also used references to a new historiography that revisited and reinterpreted the sources, hyphenated by the opening of archives and the build-up of oral history. It had gradually resulted in different approaches to issues of contemporary history, which in the Communist era were addressed as part of the ideologically dictated hegemonic discourse. That hegemonic discourse for half a century had set the official politics of memory, disseminated through the setting of public symbolic places, media references, also as part of the educational curricula, of manuals and text books, made for public schools and universities. The rewriting of manuals and textbooks, the reshaping of public symbolic places, new media references had been structured in parallel, as the re-evaluation by professional historians of contemporary history had just started, without reaching a consensus about the referential set of values that have to meet the main end of a new, democratic and pluralistic setting of the post-1989 Hungarian society. The politically biased public discourse had reached an overwhelming media presence, as the professional historiography was gradually overshadowed and drawn to the periphery of the main core of the debate. The historians and their work were mainly referred (with some notable exceptions) only if they could be used as an argument for an already set political positioning. There was not a lot of interest for detailed views and assuming paradoxical truths. History, as represented in the public media, was seen as a tool for un-equivocal positioning in the battle for hegemonic expressing of truth. Paradoxically, modern and contemporary history was very much frequented and historical reference was fashionable, but with very little respect to the inner logical built-up and the value of historical enquiry and knowledge. A historical discourse which assumed complexity and filled with contradictory realities of a past era or of a historical personality, as assumed by someone who was not sensible to the use of discourse with historical references present in the current public debates, and not looking for presenting a new argument favouring any of the politically biased actors of the public media was to get very little if any attention, subsidies or public reckoning.

As history became fashionable, historians who remained faithful to their vocation became less frequented.

The politics of memory had been an important tool of the current political establishment all along the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond, as history had represented a referential value for the modern nation-building process, especially in East-Central Europe. The late or belated modernity, marked by a very ethno-centric view on constructing the nation, and the nation states of this region, explains also the ever-important role assigned to intellectuals engaged in the study of humanities, including history, which served as a referential field of ideas used for political legitimating discourse. The struggle for imposing its own hegemonic view about the symbolic figure of the “father of the nation” has been used both by the political left, as by the political right-wing discourse in contemporary Hungary. At the turn between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the discursive building of the nation had not lacked the very frequented instrument of reburial of historic personalities<sup>1</sup>: In 1870, it was the moment of the first prime minister of 1848 revolutionary Hungary’s reburial, which had symbolized the appeasing of king and country, only three years since the crowning of the Habsburg emperor Franz Joseph as also king of Hungary, part of a political process that led to the establishment of parliamentary monarchy and a specific devolution of government; Then in 1894, it was followed by the reburial of Lajos Kossuth, leader of the national revolution and fight for independent Hungary, and in 1906 of Ferenc Rákóczi II, leading figure of the anti-Habsburg national uprising in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century of the Hungarians, whom since that historic moment had been symbolically separated in “kuruc” (used as synonym for radical nationalists, up for total independence and free-electing of a national dynasty), and “labanc” (moderate conservatives, dedicated for a compromise solution with the Habsburg dynasty, evaluated as a tool for modernizing and synchronizing with Western Europe of Hungary, but evaluated as “traitors of nation” by the other group). Then it was the moment of 1938, celebrated as the year of King Saint Stephen of Hungary (together with the Eucharistic Congress held that year in Hungary), when in the former medieval capital Székesfehérvár a complex symbolic place had been structured as a main scenery of the celebrations, and the embalmed right hand of the medieval founder of Hungary (which is

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<sup>1</sup> For a short but very relevant analysis see: Horel, Catherine, *Amiralul Horthy, regentul Ungariei*, (București: Editura Humanitas, 2019), pp. 378-384. For a more detailed analysis, with strong references to the Romanian cases, see: Verdery, Katherine: *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies. Reburial and Post-Socialist Change*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), *passim*.

assumed also by the Roman-Catholic Church as a religious relic) had been carried across the whole country of a specially designed train – as a strong references of the then current political regime to the medieval kingdom of Hungary established as part of the Western Christianity. Then in 1956 it was the symbolic moment of the reburial of László Rajk, then presented as a victim of Hungarian Stalinist brutality (he was the minister of interior in the first period of the most aggressive repressions' times, which was shadowed by the show trial he was victimized by in 1949), which was an important part of a re-legitimizing effort of post-Stalinist Hungarian Communism, followed by the Hungarian Revolution that year, and then still assumed as a symbolic source of legitimating by János Kádár (who was the minister of interior back in 1949, playing a certain role in the liquidation of Rajk, then being imprisoned in 1951, and became the new ruling figure after restoring Communist rule in late 1956), as delimitating itself also from the Stalinist legacy, as stating the legacy of a martyrdom for the Communist idea. 1989 was a momentum marked by the reburial of Imre Nagy, evaluated then as the martyr prime minister, who was identified with the 1956 revolution's idea, the statue of whom was recently removed from the vicinity of the Parliament in Budapest. 1991 was symbolically marked by the reburial of Roman-Catholic cardinal József Mindszenty, a very strong symbol of anti-Communism and conservatism, a symbolic act which also defied post-modern liberalism as a statement. That was followed in 1993 by the reburial of Miklós Horthy, regent of the Kingdom of Hungary between 1919 and 1944 – in a moment when the first post-1989 prime minister of Hungary, József Antall's illness (soon after he died of cancer) was publicly assumed, and the ruling political coalition was heading to an election without a strong leader figure. It was the moment when the act of symbolic reburial lacked the consensus that was part of the scenery in most of the cases presented before. After a short period of relative silence, as in Hungary, a coalition of the post-communist Socialist Party and the Free Liberal Alliance had their moment between 1994 and 1998, followed by the enactment of the first FIDESZ-led government in 1998, and the reburial of Attila József, Béla Bartók, as also István Bethlen (prime minister, the most important political figure of the Horthy-era), Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer and Domokos Szent-Iványi (both part of the late Horthy-era government, playing a role in the efforts of Hungary to depart from the German wartime alliance), István Barankovics (anti-Communist political figure deported to the Soviet Union) occurred without stirring an important debate – the symbolic colluding on the ground of historical personalities assumed by one part, as loudly refused through symbolic

gestures by the other part of the political scenery had been restarted with the moment of the reburial of Bálint Hóman, himself a historian, leading personality of the Hungarian Academy of Science and minister of culture in the Horthy-era.

In parallel, the symbolic places of Budapest became once again subject of the politically biased public debate, which was fuelled by the continuously changing politics of memory: In 1919, the Soviet Council's rule had erected only temporary statues and symbolic figures, mainly on May, 1<sup>st</sup>, of which remained no trace after the regime's downfall. In the interwar era, first the figure of István Tisza (1926), then the symbolic representation of Ferenc Rákóczi II, and the Kossuth-led 1848 revolutions' government (which contained mainly of aristocratic figures) had been built up, followed by the four statues of the Trianon Memorial, memorial of the victims of the Soviet Councils Republic of 1919, and the later erected statue of the belated prime-minister Gyula Gömbös (which was destroyed as an act of defiance by the wartime resistance in 1944), and a symbolic memorial for the belated son of the Regent, István Horthy, victim of a plane crash at the Eastern War Front in 1942, which was re-established as a monument of Liberty after 1945, under Communist rule. In 1945, already a memorial for the Soviet Liberators had been erected in the close nearby of the Parliament, as the Kossuth-led 1848 revolution's government was replaced by a new representation of Lajos Kossuth surrounded by symbolic figures of the people (peasants, workers, etc.) for the People's Republic of Hungary the main symbolic reference was to be tied with the 1848 revolution, the memory of the 1919 Soviet Council's rule being overwhelmingly negative. The statues of Gyula Andrassy, István Tisza, the Trianon Memorial, the Memorial of the 1919 Soviet Republic's victims were all cleared from the scenery. Any reference in the Stalinist era to the previous era marked by the regency of Miklós Horthy was anathema, the entire period being demonized as the era of fascism, reactionarism and revisionism which led to war and crimes against humanity, from which only the Soviet Army had "liberated" Hungary – any act against Soviet hegemony being out ruled as Fascism. Then it was the statue of Stalin erected in 1951 – followed in 1956 by its tearing down as an important symbolic act of the anti-Communist revolution. Only after 1959 there are the first symbolic references to the 1919 Soviet Council's Republic, and in the second half of the 1960's the representations of symbolic references to that moment of history were placed in the public spaces of Budapest. In the 1970's and 1980's, a widening of symbolic legitimating discourse is established by the Kádár regime, as the compromise solution and economic reforms founded on

social welfare was to be anchored in a historical symbolic reference to the era of Franz Joseph's compromise started in 1867 and lasted to 1918, which led also to a turn in the Hungarian historiography, re-evaluating the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in positive terms. The symbolic figure of Mihály Károlyi and the episode of the 1918 to 1919 republic was also re-evaluated, and a statue of the first president of republican Hungary was erected near the Parliament. In the first decade after 1989, the statues representing the Communist regime's symbolic figures were removed to a Statue Park, outside of Budapest. It was the first time after 1956 that symbolic references to the Soviet Republic of 1919, and of the 1945 to 1989 Communist rule were cleared from the public spaces of Hungary. A statue dedicated to Imre Nagy, and the one dedicated to István Bibó was placed in the nearby of the Parliament, as several symbolic references to the 1956 Revolution had appeared in the public space.

After the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century a new agenda of reshaping the symbolism of public spaces had made itself gradually visible, referring to a different set of values: The setting of the House of Terror (Terror Háza) as a museum representing the totalitarian downturn and the horror of repressive political regime had already stirred a very animated debate and established an important divide in the public sphere – as one side assumed its discourse as a clear delimitating of the post-1989 era from any common ground with the 1944 to 1989 totalitarian regimes, as putting on its agenda the naming of perpetrators, hyphening the responsibilities, and praising for all victims of totalitarian regime, and as the other side claiming that it had not emphasized the entire history of totalitarianism, but only the Communist past which is not properly represented, as the repressive dimension was overstretched way beyond its historic boundaries, without emphasizing enough the right wing totalitarian era, and the Holocaust. As the prime minister of the post-2002 government, which was led by the Hungarian Socialist Party, had visited the museum and had approved it symbolically, there was a short period of relative peace. Than with the post-2006 crisis of political legitimating of the then elected government, followed up by public demonstrations and violence, as also a downturn of symbolic authority, the symbolic places, the plural discourse on the politics of memory became just another scenery of deep conflict which mirrors the great divide that defined the Hungarian society. There was not ever again a consensual moment, no discourse of pacifying, but hegemonic discourses which cleared the scenery for their own symbolic representation without any concern for the other side's sensibilities or values. The plurality of values faded as the plurality of

discourse led to virtually impossible to appease positioning. That had been gradually built up as the main scenery of any situation of assuming the legitimacy of different interpreting of the historical past, as it carries certain relevance for politically legitimating discourse. That was the historic moment in which Gábor Koltay's film was made about Miklós Horthy - *A Kormányzó* (2006) - contested as representing a unilateral discourse without any criticism of the sources assumed, a film which was a follow-up to an also debated movie dedicated to Trianon (2004), which was also presented in Romania, and had led to a very animated debate<sup>2</sup>.

In the 2010's, the FIDESZ-led, government had been legitimated three times by the Hungarian electorate, and the plural landscape of the political scenery became unbalanced as the political opposition lacked the ability to build any public support for the challenging ruling party for a decade, which is an unprecedented situation in East-Central Europe after 1989, the public symbolism of the new politics of memory had already a decade to be stated. It was marked by reerected statues like those of István, Tisza, Gyula, Andrásy, and the Kossuth-led 1848 revolution government's statue as established in the Horthy-era, etc. and by the removal of the statues of Mihály Károlyi, Imre Nagy, etc., and also by the erecting of new memorials as the one dedicated to the German occupying of Hungary in 1944. In parallel, the public opinion was once more divided by new statues representing Miklós Horthy - as, the one erected in Gyömrő (Pest county) in 2011, and the one in Kereki (Somogy county) in 2012<sup>3</sup> - which led to tribunal cases and acts of public defying. The two historic themes of debate which appeared in the public debate as attached to the contested memory of Miklós Horthy and the era of his regency, and which both contain a very dividing nature, are the politically motivated terror of 1919 - the "white terror" of the second half of 1919, which was always carrying references to the "red terror" perpetrated by the Soviet Republic in the first half of 1919 that the other one followed - , and the Holocaust carried out in Hungary in 1944. These themes had mobilized also the public debate in the post-1989 period of time, which had referred only in a few moments to the historiography of those issues that had been professionally addressed by the current Hungarian historical writing.

These are the main defining elements of the wider context of the current historical debate on Miklós Horthy's role as a personality of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and of the era marked by the period of his regency,

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<sup>2</sup> Also presented in: Horel, Catherine, *Amiralul Horthy...*, pp. 393-394.

<sup>3</sup> Both cases are discussed in the monography written by Horel, Catherine, *Amiralul Horthy...*, pp. 394-395.

prolonged as a chronological unit, mainly for the years 1919 to 1944. This post-1989 debate has a different setting to the previous historiography, which is still sometimes used as a reference to differentiate from, sometimes to use parts of it, without the context severely polluted by political demands. One of the still used patterns is the “neo-baroque”, set by Gyula Szekfű’s 1934 edition of the referential work on Hungarian modern nation-building process, titled *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik* [Three Generations and What Came After]<sup>4</sup>, reprinted in 1989 with an introduction by Ferenc Glatz. That was followed by a less remarkable, but written with more attention to the formulated politically demands in 1947 entitled *Forrádalom után* [After Revolution], in which the author tried to delimitate itself in absolute terms from his former views, not much of the analysis to be the case. The defining works of the era were signed by Erzsébet Andics<sup>5</sup> in 1945, then followed up to 1959 by Dezső Nemes<sup>6</sup>, all defining the interwar period as fascism, the main element of which was counter-revolutionary motivation, repression, the class war against the workers, a regime set as ideologically related directly to Hitler-led political regime *avant la lettre*. In the second half of the 1960’s and the beginning of the 1970’s, Lackó Miklós, György Ránki, Iván T. Berend, Zsuzsa L. Nagy had integrated some of the recently published historiography which appeared in the Western European states, admitting that fascism was not the sole root, indicating a strong conservative and “bourgeois” line into the regime’s ideological references, but still evaluating it as authoritarian, reactionary system, built on repression of the working class, and comparable with the corporative states of the era (Poland after 1926, Portugal after 1926, Austria after 1932, Spain after the Civil War)<sup>7</sup>. In the early 1980’s, some of

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<sup>4</sup> Szekfű, Gyula: *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik*, (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1934).

<sup>5</sup> Andics, Erzsébet: *Fasizmus és reakció Magyarországon*. Budapest: Magyar Kommunista Párt Központi Vezetősége, Propaganda Osztály, 1945.

<sup>6</sup> Nemes, Dezső (ed.): *Az ellenforradalom hatalomra jutása és rémuralma Magyarországon 1919-1921*. Budapest: Szikra Kiadó, 1953. Idem (ed.) *Iratok az ellenforradalom történetéhez*. Vol. I-III. Budapest, 1953-1959.

<sup>7</sup> A representative volume as a synthesis for that evaluation of the interwar era in Hungary is: Ránki, György et al. (eds.): *Magyarország története*. Vol. VIII: 1918-1945, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976). See also: Lackó, Miklós: “A fasizmus Kelet-Közép-Európában”. In: Idem: *Válságok-választások*, (Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó, 1975), pp. 298-317. Hanák, Péter, Lackó, Miklós, Ránki, György: “Gazdaság, társadalom, társadalmi-politikai gondolkodás Magyarországon a kapitalizmus korában”. In: Spira György (ed.): *Vita Magyarország kapitalizmuskori fejlődéséről*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971). For an evaluation of the historiography of that era on the interwar period of time, see: Romsics, Ignác: *A Horthy-korszak. Válogatott tanulmányok*, (Budapest: Helikon Kiadó, 2017), pp. 369-372.

the analysis emphasized the importance of the existing parliamentary structures of the legal opposition, as traces of plural political structuring between the cadres of a conservative authoritarian mainstream, which had eroded in the 1930's towards similarities with a fascist authoritarianism, announced by the political rhetoric of the Gyula Gömbös led movement, but used as a clear political motivation in part only in the times marked by the government led by Béla Imrédy, then clearly turned towards a totalitarian outcome only after the end of Miklós Horthy's rule in late 1944, as Hungary was led by Ferenc Szálasi, imposed by the German occupier<sup>8</sup>. This was the setting for Ignác Romsics's first monographic analysis of the first decade of the Horthy-era, published in 1982<sup>9</sup>, which followed a short János C. Andrew's main approach<sup>10</sup>, edited as a professor of the University of California (Berkeley). That was to be followed by a comparative perspective built up by Iván T. Berend<sup>11</sup>, which in a revised form was reedited also under the aegis of the Cambridge University Press. Then it was once again re-evaluated by Peter F. Sugar (University of Washington, Seattle) as an authoritarian regime, with conservative liberal ideological backgrounds, eroded to the end of the era mainly by outer sources of pressure<sup>12</sup>. In this way, the debate has passed over the Hungarian national frontiers and became a part of a wider approach on the interwar period in East-Central Europe. The Communist regime's cultural hegemony was challenged, so the party had to respond – and that was made through the articles published in the main newspaper "Népszabadság" in 1985, under the signatures of Mihály András Rónai, János Berecz, etc.<sup>13</sup>. However, it was too late, as at that moment the main course of historiography had concluded as the Horthy-era to be evaluated in terms of an parliamentary monarchy with authoritarian limits that had been hyphenated by the general eroding of parliamentarism in Europe at the end of the 1930's and the new decade of 1940's, evolving to totalitarian regime under the aegis of the Second

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<sup>8</sup> A representative monograph for that approach is: Balogh, Sándor - Gergely, Jenő - Izsák, Lajos - Jakab, Sándor - Pritz, Pál - Romsics, Ignác: *Magyarország a XX. Században*, (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> Romsics, Ignác: *Ellenforradalom és konszolidáció. A Horthy-rendszer első tíz éve*, (Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> Andrew C. János: *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary 1825-1945*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> Berend T., Iván: *Válságos évtizedek. A 20. század első fele közép- és kelet-európai történetének interpretációja*, (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1987).

<sup>12</sup> Sugar, Peter F.: "Continuity and Change in Eastern European Authoritarianism: Autocracy, Fascism and Communism." In: *East European Quarterly*, 1984/1, pp. 2-23.

<sup>13</sup> See: Romsics, Ignác: *A Horthy-korszak...op.cit.*, pp. 374-375.

World War and its aftermaths. And that was publicly stated as in 1986 the Historikerstreit had its moment marked by the dispute between Jürgen Habermas and then by the very different approach held by Ernst Nolte<sup>14</sup>.

That discourse was represented in the early 1990's in the works signed by Ignác Romsics, Jenő Gergely, Pál Pritz, Mária Ormos, Zsuzsa L. Nagy, considered as a representative generation of the Hungarian historiography, mainly related to the Eötvös Lóránd University of Budapest, the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Science<sup>15</sup>. That academic institutional framework had edited the monthly review named "História", which in the same period of early 1990's had sustained the editing of historical memoirs of defining personalities of the interwar period in Hungary – such as György Barcza, Gusztáv Henyey, Miklós Kállay, István Kertész, Géza Lakatos, Ferenc Nagy, Vince Nagy, Antal Ullein-Reviczky – a series named "Extra Hungariam", as most of them had lived and died outside the boundaries of Hungary after 1945. In that series had been reedited for the first time in Hungary, the memoirs of Miklós Horthy in 1990<sup>16</sup>. It was doubled by an editorial effort signed by the Zrínyi Editing House, which had published the memories of Béla Bethlen, István Bethlen, Mihály Jungerth-Arnóthy, Árpád Lajtos, Antal Náray, Cardinal Jusztinán Serédi, Ferenc Szombathelyi – volumes that were part of a critical edition series edited by professional historians as Dániel Csatári, Péter Gosztonyi, Sándor Orbán, Ignác Romsics, Péter Sipos, Péter Szabó, Sándor Szakály, László Szűcs, István Vida.

All that effort of memorialistic literature had completed the new series of critical editing and publishing sources for the history of the interwar period of Hungary, which was in parallel addressed by the publishing effort of archival materials regarding the foreign policy of the Miklós Horthy led Hungary by Gyula Juhász and László Zsigmond, consisting of more than 10 000 pages in 7 volumes<sup>17</sup>. That came to the complete publishing of archival materials of great value for insight to the Horthy-led political regime, began back in 1963 with the documents from

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<sup>14</sup> See: Nolte, Ernst: "Cartea de față și »disputa istoricilor«. Un bilanț după zece ani (În loc de prefață la ediția a 5-a". In: Idem: *Războiul civil european 1917-1945. Național-socialism și bolșevism*, (București: Runa, Grupul Editorial Corint, 2005), pp. 477-502.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 378.

<sup>16</sup> Horthy, Miklós: *Emlékirataim*, (Budapest: Európa Kiadó- História, 1990). That edition appeared after the first in Buenos Aires (1953), and second in Toronto (1974), with a critical apparatus and introduction, as also appendix made by Péter Sipos and László Antal, as part of a series which had been under the patronage of Ferenc Glatz, presiding the Hungarian Academy of Science.

<sup>17</sup> *Diplomáciai iratok Magyarország külpolitikájához 1936-1945. Vol. I-VII. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézete, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978-1986.*

the so-called “secret archives” of Miklós Horthy<sup>18</sup>, followed up in 1972 by a volume published from similar archival sources titled to the name of the former prime minister and defining personality of the entire period István Bethlen<sup>19</sup>. The programs of all political parties of the interwar period had been published as part of a series coordinated by Ferenc Glatz in 1991, signed together as editors with Jenő Gergely and Ferenc Pölöskei<sup>20</sup>. As a conclusion, one can state that a wide range of sources were out of reach and use for the historians who proposed a political history-based analysis of the period of time marked by Miklós Horthy.

The results were shown first as a series of historical biographies, which had treated the carriers, motivation, results and afterlife of the Horthy-era's prime ministers as István Bethlen (Ignác Romsics<sup>21</sup>), Gyula Gömbös (Jenő Gergely<sup>22</sup>, József Vonyó<sup>23</sup>), Pál Teleki (Antal Czettler<sup>24</sup>), László Bárdossy (Pál Pritz<sup>25</sup>), Miklós Kállay (Antal Czettler<sup>26</sup>), as also of those active in the second line of decision making as for example Miklós Kozma (Mária Ormos<sup>27</sup>). Then in parallel appeared little monographs dedicated to three major issues: the revisionist policy of the political regime – the issue of explaining the roots of that led to the Peace Treaty of Trianon and its aftermath were treated by the works of Mária Ormos<sup>28</sup> and József Galántai<sup>29</sup>, then the revisionist policy was addressed in a monograph written by Miklós Zeidler<sup>30</sup>; the relation between state and church – it was the major theme of a volume of studies edited by István Zombori<sup>31</sup>, then the themes of political Catholicism, Christian Socialism,

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<sup>18</sup> Szinai, Miklós - Szűcs, László: *Horthy Miklós titkos iratai*. Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár - Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1963.

<sup>19</sup> Szinai, Miklós - Szűcs, László: *Bethlen István titkos iratai*. Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár - Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1972.

<sup>20</sup> Gergely, Jenő - Glatz, Ferenc - Pölöskei, Ferenc: *Magyarországi pártprogramok 1919-1944*, (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> Romsics, Ignác: *Bethlen István. Politikai életrajz*, (Budapest: Magyarországi Kutató Intézet, 1991).

<sup>22</sup> Gergely, Jenő: *Gömbös Gyula. Politikai Pályakép*, (Budapest: Vince Kiadó, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Vonyó, József: *Gömbös Gyula*. Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Czettler, Antal: *Teleki Pál és a magyar külpolitika 1939-1941*, (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Pritz, Pál: *Bárdossy László*, (Budapest: Elektra Könyvkiadó, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Czettler, Antal: *A mi kis élethalál kérdéseink. A magyar külpolitika a hadba lépéstől a német megszállásig*, (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Ormos, Mária: *Egy magyar médiavezér: Kozma Miklós*. Vol. I-II, (Budapest: PolgArt Könyvkiadó, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Idem: *Pádovától Trianonig 1918-1920*, (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1984).

<sup>29</sup> Galántai, József: *A trianoni békekötés 1920*, (Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó, 1990).

<sup>30</sup> Zeidler, Miklós: *A revíziós gondolat*, (Budapest: Osiris Könyvkiadó, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Zombori, István (ed.): *Magyarország és a Szentszék kapcsolatának ezer éve*, (Budapest: Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség, 1996).

social movements and organization of political participation were addressed by several monographs signed by Jenő Gergely<sup>32</sup>; the anti-Semitism of the political regime - it was addressed by several studies of Viktor Karády<sup>33</sup>, László Karsai<sup>34</sup>. After 2010, signalled by a series of monographs dedicated to the metamorphosis of the anti-Semitic ideology since the 1910's, through the two decades marked by the Regency of Miklós Horthy until the period of the Second World War and the Holocaust - historical monographs signed by János Gyurgyák<sup>35</sup>, Rudolf Paksa<sup>36</sup>, Róbert Kerepeszki<sup>37</sup> and Áron Máthé<sup>38</sup> - a new discourse appeared which was sensible to inner differentiations of radical right-wing ideologies and doctrines, of group structuring and elites, of inner roots and external influences, of media strategies and proliferation of ideas, as well as of analogies in a wider European frame of the interwar and Second World War era. And there were also volumes referring to the ethnic minorities and the impact of radical right-wing ideologies on interethnic relations - analysing the German minority and the Volksbund (Norbert Spannenberger<sup>39</sup>) and the Gypsies of Hungary in the times between 1919 and 1944 (László Karsai<sup>40</sup>). For this reason, also, but not only, it was rather surprising the politically motivated statements of some public intellectuals as Mária Schmidt, director of the Terror Háza Múzeum, and Gábor Koltay, director of the film dedicated to Regent Miklós Horthy, in the same decade which were trying to clear the elites of that political regime of anti-Semitic motivations and responsibilities, which led to the Holocaust in Hungary, projecting as the main factor for

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<sup>32</sup> As a synthesis of his work, see: Gergely, Jenő: *A Katolikus Egyház története Magyarországon 1919-1945*, (Budapest: Pannonica Kiadó, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Karády, Viktor: *Önazonosítás, sorsválasztás. A zsidó csoportazonosság történeti alakváltozásai Magyarországon*, (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> Karsai László: *Kirekesztők. Antiszemita írások 1881-1992*. Budapest: Aura, 1992. Idem: "A magyarországi zsidótörvények és rendeletek 1920-1944". In: Molnár Judit (ed.): *A holokauszt Magyarországon európai perspektívában*, (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Gyurgyák, János: *Magyar fajvédők. Ezmetörténeti tanulmány*, (Budapest: Osiris, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Paksa, Rudolf: *Magyar nemzetiszocialisták. Az 1930-as évek új szélsőjobboldali mozgalma, pártjai, politikusai, sajtója*, (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó - MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Történettudományi Intézet, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Kerepeszki, Róbert: *A Turul Szövetség 1919-1945. Egyetemi ifjúság és jobboldali radikalizmus a Horthy-korszakban*, (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor Kiadó, 2012).

<sup>38</sup> Máthé, Áron: *A nyilaskereszt árnyéka. A magyarországi nemzetiszocializmus elmélete és gyakorlata*, (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor Kiadó, 2019).

<sup>39</sup> Spannenberger, Norbert: *A magyarországi Volksbund Berlin és Budapest között*, (Budapest: Lucidus Kiadó, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Karsai, László: *A cigánykérdés Magyarországon, 1919-1945 - Út a cigány Holocausthoz*, (Budapest: Cserépalvi, 1992).

that result the German occupier, and presenting an alternative chronology which abruptly began after March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944, lacking any structural relations with the interwar political regime's own identifying, redefining it as a parliamentary and democratic pluralist regime<sup>41</sup>.

That discourse collided with a very different analysis, stated in a monograph signed and published by Krisztián Ungváry in 2012<sup>42</sup>, which had systematically addressed the political, cultural, social discourses and realities of the political regime under the aegis of the Miklós Horthy regency, concluding that its anti-Semitic identification had to be recognized and assumed, as itself the regime's elite did not deny it, but stated it in different ways and following different ends. That led to an ostracizing of that historian, member of the Hungarian Academy of Science, an institution which came under pressure gradually after the second part of the decade of 2010's. In the meantime, the debate was fuelled by new arguments, which were stated as a new generation had published its historical analysis – such as the new political biography of Pál Teleki signed by Balázs Ablonczy<sup>43</sup>, the analysis of the 1918-1919 moment signed by Pál Hatos<sup>44</sup>, a monograph dedicated to the cult of Miklós Horthy and the propaganda machine of that era signed by Dávid Turbucz<sup>45</sup>, and the analysis of the Parliament of the Horthy-era published by Levente Püski<sup>46</sup>. Three of the senior generation of historians had also edited monographs and volumes of studies dedicated to the analysis of the Horthy-era – Jenő Gergely and Pál Pritz in 2000<sup>47</sup>, Ignác Romsics in 1998<sup>48</sup>, 2017<sup>49</sup>. The new historiography shows a gradually widening divide between politically motivated public acts structured as new

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<sup>41</sup> See also the critical statements toward that discourse in: Romsics, Ignác: *A Horthy-korszak...*op.cit., 379.

<sup>42</sup> Ungváry, Krisztián: *A Horthy-rendszer mérlege. Diszkrimináció, szociálpolitika és antiszemitizmus Magyarországon*, (Pécs –Budapest: Jelenkor Kiadó – OSZK, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Ablonczy, Balázs: *A miniszterelnök élete és halála, Teleki Pál (1879-1941)*, (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2018).

<sup>44</sup> Hatos, Pál: *Az elátkozott köztársaság. Az 1918-as összeomlás és forradalom története*, (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2018).

<sup>45</sup> Turbucz, Dávid: *A Horthy-kultusz 1919-1944*, (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Történettudományi Intézet, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> Püski, Levente: *A Horthy-korszak Parlamentje*, (Budapest: Országgyűlés Hivatala, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Gergely, Jenő – Pritz, Pál: *A trianoni Magyarország 1918-1945*, (Budapest: Vince Kladó, 2000).

<sup>48</sup> Romsics, Ignác (ed.): *Trianon és a magyar politikai gondolkodás 1920-1953*, (Budapest: Osiris Könyvkiadó, 1998). The volume publishes the studies signed by Balázs Ablonczy, Lóránt Péter, Iván Ifj. Bertényi, Miklós Zeidler, Attila Lengyel, Krisztián Ungváry, Gábor Richly, Piroska Balogh, Nándor Bárdi, Jiyoung Kim, Tibor Zs. Lukács, Ádám Szesztay.

<sup>49</sup> Romsics, Ignác: *A Horthy-korszak...*op.cit. passim.

politics of memory on the one hand, and academic history writing based on critical interpretation of sources on the other hand.

The Hungarian language version of Catherine Horel's monograph<sup>50</sup> (originally published in French in 2014), dedicated to the subject of the historic figure of Miklós Horthy and the political regime of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has been published in the midst of that debate in the new Hungarian historiography (in 2017), a very different context from the Romanian edition of the book<sup>51</sup>, as one can notice a general scarcity of Hungarian historical monographs translated and published in Romanian language (published in 2019). In both cases, a very positive event – in the Hungarian context brings a clarifying moment, and a detached perspective motivated by a critical evaluating and synthesizing of sources and recent historiography; in the Romanian context bringing an important amount of data and a general image of the main issues addressed by a current historiography of a neighbouring state, less known by the Romanian historians as a result of a very few translations of recent historical monographs of contemporary history of Hungary.

The introduction already emphasized the peculiar way in which the figures of Miklós Horthy – as well as of Mátyás Rákosi and János Kádár – were not addressed by several historical biographies, as the political regimes shaped by their personal involvement, as well as the biographies of other defining personalities of the Hungarian 20<sup>th</sup> Century were addressed in a very professional manner<sup>52</sup>. Moreover, it stated that the evaluating of the modern and contemporary eras of Hungarian history stood under the signed of the “kuruc” vs. “labanc” dichotomy, in which the Horthy-era is ambivalent also. The structure of the book – three main parts – is chronologically based on the three stages of Miklós Horthy's biography, divided by two main events: the first one is between 1868 and 1919, ended by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the revolutions of 1918 and early 1919, and the restoring of the Hungarian Kingdom formally as a parliamentary monarchy without clarifying the issue of a ruling dynasty, which led to the instituting of Regency; the second is the period of time known as the Regency personified by Miklós Horthy since 1919 to 1944, the third one is the end of that political regime, followed by successive occupying by foreign armed forces and totalitarian downturn in Hungary, as Miklós Horthy is not only departed from power, but also forced to leave the territory of the Hungarian state,

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<sup>50</sup> Horel, Catherine, *Horthy*, (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 2017).

<sup>51</sup> Idem: *Amiralul Horthy, regentul Ungariei*, (București: Editura Humanitas, 2019).

<sup>52</sup> See as best practice case for example: Rainer M. János: *Nagy Imre. Politikai életrajz*. Vol. I-II, (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1996-1999).

ending up as a political emigré, a period of time beginning with the Fall of 1944 to his death in 1957. However, as a main view of Horthy's self-defining and positioning related to political power, the major divide came in his biography in 1918/1919 – all that happened before was related to his place and act as a subject of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and everything after that moment was a result of his redefining of relation with the centre of political power, embracing the role of Regent in the new Kingdom of Hungary, which also defined his post-1944 options and opportunities. And, that dividing line is seen in his habits, as before 1918/1919 Horthy is a very mobile person, motivated by personal career aims, as after that moment he is much wavering, gradually losing confidence and emphasizing a more conservative approach, then also hesitating, as ending up as an object of other actors' decisions and acts in 1944 and after. The main course of the narrative is also aimed to other different dimensions, which are not to be contained by that chronological aspect: the cult and propaganda image of Regent Miklós Horthy, which projected another Horthy which escaped the logical build-up as controlled by his decisions and will, and the afterlife (including the politically motivated use and misuse of his historical figure) less influenced by his direct acts and real historical self, than by the needs and aims of those who had built up and instrumented the symbolism, served also by his reburial and symbolism integrated in the ever changing politics of memory. All these aspects are addressed by Catherine Horel's monograph. It also formulated the main questions which were tried to be answered throughout the almost 400 pages volume: A. The generational aspect, as Miklós Horthy was part of the pre-1918 generation, having already 50 years from the debut of the Regency, and trying to shape a post WWI world measured by a very different generation at the end of that era. B. The continuously evolving relation of Miklos Horthy towards the Habsburg dynasty: marked by his loyalty declared to Franz Joseph, his positioning against restoring the Habsburg dynasty in 1921 as confronted with Charles IV, and his distancing of any official relation with the Habsburgs after 1922 to 1944, then, once again redefining his personal relating to representatives of the Habsburgs in emigration in the last decade of his life. All of that happened as he never wished to make any gesture towards a possible instituting of a dynasty, often misinterpreted by his contemporaries. C. The nature of the political regime – as the author applied a clear differentiation between fascism, corporatism, authoritarianism, dictatorship, and totalitarianism, referring also the thesis which regarded the political regime of the Horthy-era as a form of parliamentary democracy and genuine pluralism. D. The place of

revisionist policies and mobilizing discourse which touched the very heart of the regime self-projected image. E. relating to the anti-Semitic discourse and politics of a essential part of the regime's elite, analysing the motivation, the personal relation of Miklós Horthy to the phenomena of anti-Semitism and the later and gradual distancing from it. F. The post-WWII efforts of restructuring his identity narrative's relation with the historical past, as a very specific legitimating discourse was built by Miklós Horthy in the times of political enquiries as questioned by the Allied tribunal in Nürnberg, and in the last decade of his life spent in exile. G. private family relationships' a role in shaping the personality of Miklós Horthy. H. His referring to the official cult dedicated to him by the time of his Regency and after. I. The relation between the historical figure of Miklós Horthy and the image projected as part of the post-1989 politics of memory.

The reality captured in the first main part of the monograph, covering the period between 1868 and 1918, are already offering a paradoxical image: the Miklós Horthy, that is a very mobile and adventurous person, is marked and driven towards a metamorphosis of the experience lived as part of Franz Joseph's inner circle of power related structures (1909-1914), then is once again translated as an active officer in the times of WWI through its interiorizing as absolute values of a sense of duty and of the patriarchal relations of the dual monarchy. The referential episode of that biographical sequence was a battle which was not turning the tides of the general evolving of the war, neither on that particular war front, but it was perceived and reconstructed in the public narrative as the founding moment for his identifying with the role of a saviour, of the loyal and always ready to act commander on whom the larger community can rely on, as also of the self-sacrificing as a way to react in moments of danger. This topics were re-activated in 1919 – presented in the second main part of this monograph signed by Catherine Horel –, as Miklós Horthy entered the second stage of his life at the age of 50, forced by the events neither he or anyone else around him could control, but his options are motivated by a self-projected image of his possible role as part of the community which does not evaluate the major transforming as an opportunity, but as a source of danger, feeling himself and his related under siege, which is the main source of his reactive way of building his strategy of life, aimed to resist any abrupt transforming, and the “restoring” of order of a patriarchal society, repressing of any source of any major change being perceived like the defining values for orienting itself. This conservatorism is motivating him to elude addressing the challenges of a new world by major reforms, neither wanted nor

understood, had driven him to the reactionary cause, genuinely anti-revolutionary (from where the self-assumed counterrevolutionary identifying emerged, perceiving all revolutions of 1918/1919 as the arch-enemy, sources of chaos and insecurity at societal level). In that approach, even the right-wing radicalism, which also embraced a revolutionizing agenda, was a strange and dangerous setting, from which Miklós, Horthy and his regime kept a well-calculated distance, never totally identifying with that group. However, it had tolerated at least if not sustained the “white terror”, later using the pressure created by the violence of those groups against any plan of genuine reform, be it an agrarian, left-wing or liberal project, and prioritizing stability against any dynamism that could be reached by positive transforming of the main political, economic or social setting.

The presence of personalities with identified Jewish background in the highest level decision making structures of the 1918/1919 revolutions, especially in the Soviet Republic experience in early 1919, had motivated the attaching of the symbolic Jew to the image of the arch-enemy - the disastrous radical revolutionary forces - as building the symbolic figure of the enemy as a stranger, or an inner ally of the outer enemy, which attempted against the security and welfare of the Hungarian society. That projection had nurtured the acceptance of politically motivated anti-Semitism, dissimulation, isolation, peripheralizing, and out casting of a part of Hungarian citizens of Jewish identity in the interwar period. It had conflicted with the personal experience of Miklós Horthy of a Jewish establishment well integrated in the Hungarian higher society, generating welfare, security and positive drives to the Hungarian society as a whole: the industrial, financial elite members were dissociated from the general image of the Jew, aimed primarily by the most aggressive anti-Semitic discourse. All that had led to an ambivalent relating of the Horthy-led establishment to the radical right-wing anti-Semitic ideology and aggressive acts. At the very end of the era, just after the tragedy was set already as a direct result of accepting that discourse as part of the political scenery, Miklós Horthy had actively tried to halt that phenomenon, but without real results. His emotional and ethical wavering was later explained and reinvested as proof of genuine resisting against political extreme right-wing anti-Semitism, but defeated by the greater force of Nazi Germany, the military occupying of Hungary was to serve as a post factum legitimating of a different political heritage, without assuming the responsibilities for the political regime's own deeds that led to the known tragic outcome. All responsibility was to be externalized on the one hand to the radical right-

wing political groups, on the other hand to the Nazi Germany, in which the military occupation became a referential moment, valorised like that in the post-1989 discourse of politics of memory.

The analysis of the main defining figures of the political elite of the Horthy-led regime also tries to shed a light to that technique of eluding responsibility, and creating the aura of a saviour which had to fight against overwhelming forces for the sake of the Hungarian society's security and welfare: the prime-ministers are – with the one exception of István Bethlen – represented as invested by the trust of the Regent with all powers and instruments, but then disappointing him by their agenda that dissociated from the genuinely positive project symbolized by order, security and peace as the main cornerstones of the conservative Horthy-regime. That kind of resetting of historical facts – as Catherine Horel draws our attention – is eluding the main element of Horthy's responsibility for the selection and investing with the power of all those personalities which at the end had failed to bring Hungary the much-awaited security and welfare. The active measures taken by Horthy to depart the one who failed to meet the national interest for political power, repeatedly lead to the investing power of one more leading figure which once again fails to meet his agenda. That have to bring the reader to a conclusion regarding the failing political management of Miklós Horthy, which is the inner core element as evaluating the direct results of his regency.

The analysis of the interacting of the Horthy-led political regime with the international system leads to the very idea that it had genuinely failed to break the isolation from which it started its evolution in 1919: the Italian, Austrian and Polish states were themselves evolving towards isolation as Hungary established a regional collaboration plan with them in the late 1920's and the first half of 1930's; that it had not succeeded in positively restructuring its relation neither with the neighbouring states, allied as the Little Entente, nor with the great powers that won WWI and structured the International System after 1919 and still played a major defining role at the end of the interwar era; and it had not successfully resisted the totalitarian powers which destroyed all elements of regional and national level independence or sovereignty at the end of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The lack of success of the international agenda of the Horthy-regime is once again argued by the dynamism of the revisionist discourse and policy: as one is to evaluate it in a larger context, it had to be observed that up to 1937 it had not met its main goal (defined as the peaceful resettlement of Hungary's post-1920 borders with its neighbouring states), and when territorial revisioning of the peace treaties happened, it led to the establishment of German hegemony to which

Hungary could not successfully relate to, illustrated by the growing frustration which led to the suicide of prime minister Pál Teleki, followed by Hungary entering WWII with its tragic outcome.

Revealing the way Miklós Horthy had projected and put in the act the strategy to be followed by Hungary in the times of prewar revisioning of borders, of WWII, as Catherine Horel has meticulously built up her analysis, is also offering a comparative perspective at European level, from which one can conclude, that the conservative approach followed by Horthy has much in common with the way Maréchal Pétain, Joseph Tiso and Emil Hachá<sup>53</sup> had tried to solve (and failed to do so) a very complex equation of safeguarding what remained of national independence and sovereignty, building a larger solidarity inside the national body, as also trying to minimize the conflictual nature of the relations with the hegemonic power and its ever growing demands, and has little or nothing to compare with Franco's Spain, Salazar's Portugal, or even Mussolini's Italy, which due to their peripheral and Mediterranean geostrategic situation, and the real control over inner society driven dynamism, had succeeded in maintaining a wider range of autonomy in their positioning and acts. Even comparing with the half or partial success of Finland, and the moment marked by the success of switching sides by Romania in August 1944 (as a similar plan had gone all wrong in Italy a year before, ending up to be the scenery of a prolonged war between the major actors of WWII in Europe, as also with a civil war alike situation between the North still controlled by forces allied to Germany, and the Centre and South which backed the effort to switch sides), Hungary lost even its remained partial sovereignty gradually from March to October 1944, which led to the total failure of leaving the orbit of the hegemonic great power. Hesitation and over emphasizing the importance of a peculiar sense of honour had obscured the higher duty of the political regime: its "loyal" behaviour also in the moment of leaving the former ally's side had directly led to failure of the Miklós Horthy-led attempt to build a faith accompli on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944, and the instituting of radical right-wing political actors to power, which was to be known in the history as the tragic episode symbolized by Ferenc Szálasi led government.

The third main part of the monograph is not only new in interpretation, but also in gathering and corroborating different historical sources to reconstruct the last decade of the former Regent of Hungary, spent in a forced exile apart from its country. The reconstruction of each episode of the 1944 to 1949 odyssey of Miklós Horthy and his family, as to

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<sup>53</sup> Horel, Catherine, *Amiralul Horthy...*, pp. 255-256, 320.

the motivation and specificity of his exile in Portugal is also offering an important element to the evaluating of the former Regent of Hungary's activity in shaping history as it happened. The specific place he had chosen for himself in the political emigration's society is contrasting with the closing scenery animated by the reception of news about the 1956 revolution in Hungary, his febrile and outdated efforts to reemphasize his relation with the Hungarian society, then followed by a lethargic end, as Miklós Horthy had just realized there is not any role to be played by him, lacking any interest for the reality of this world surrounding him.

The volume has a very valuable chapter dedicated to the afterlife of Miklós Horthy and his family in the entire period of time following his death, a historical symbol more often frequented by the actual politics of memory in the late Communist, then transitioning and finally the post-Communist era. After synthesizing her conclusions in a few pages, Catherine Horel offers also a structured list of sources and bibliographies used for writing this monograph, completed by photographs published to illustrate the main discourse of the present volume. An index of names completes the critical apparatus of the book.

As reflecting on the question of how one can integrate the volume published by Catherine Horel in the new historiography dominated by the phenomena presented in the first part of this presentation, we are sure that it will serve for a certain positive drive toward a new approach to elude the politically motivated partisan discourse-shaped scenery, as returning attention to a narrative based on critical use of sources and integrating all results of the already published bibliography, much common to the professional historian and his vocation.

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## **Viorel Rusu: The Maramureș Diocese of the Romanian Church United with Rome during the pastorate of Bishop Alexandru Rusu (1931-1948)**

Viorel Rusu is currently the director of the Maramureș County Museum of History and Archaeology, a position he has held since 2007, before being the director of the Maramureș County Directorate of National Archives, during 1998-2007, as well as archivist during 1996-1998. Viorel Rusu's fields of interest focus on political and religious life after the First World War until the 1970s, with an even more pronounced emphasis on the 4-6 decades of the twentieth century. Analyzing the geographical area on which the historian turns his attention, it can be seen the fact that Maramureș County is most often targeted in the studies published by him. Therefore, Viorel Rusu's doctoral thesis, the work entitled "The Maramureș diocese of the Romanian church united with Rome during the pastorate of Bishop Alexandru Rusu (1931-1948)" is part of the author's long-standing concerns, being a topic of interest his. Due to his experience as an archivist, but also as director of the National Archives, along with numerous studies related to political and religious life in Maramureș, the author is qualified to complete the proposed research.

The book covers the evolution of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Maramureș from its establishment in 1931 (with all the premises and details of the foundation) to the dissolution of the diocese in 1948, as a result of the forced conversion of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Community to Orthodoxy, a measure implemented by force by the communists.

The author's aim is to present the history of the almost two decades of existence of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Northern Transylvania, under the patronage of Alexandru Rusu, the historian stating that he chose this subject due to the fact that no thematic research had been conducted on the Diocese of Maramureș between the years 1930-1940. In order to achieve his goal, the author chose four objectives for the research, each of them being achieved in a distinct chapter.

An important reference point in the analysis of each scientific paper is represented by the number of research sources. Viorel Rusu's book totals a number of 1710 footnotes and a wide range of bibliographic sources, the author using only textual sources for his research. Starting with the original sources, Viorel Rusu researched numerous collections of documents, such as: *Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, C.C. of the Romanian Communist Party*, these being found in Bucharest, the funds of the Communist Party and of the *SUBB – Historia, Volume 65, Number 2, December 2020*

Baia Mare mayor's office, the funds of the archdioceses, etc., in an attempt to outline the image of the church life in the Maramureş County. Viorel Rusu also uses a number of edited primary sources, such as *Almanacs, Diplomas, Bulletins, Censuses, Schematics, Periodicals*, or even *Memoirs and Journals*. Regarding the specialized literature, even if strictly related to the subject of the author's research there are not many studies, as he himself states this aspect, the number of over 100 papers consulted (books, doctoral theses, studies), demonstrates the extensive approach made by the author to offer a representation of the course of the diocese on as many levels as possible: organizational, social, economic, diplomatic, demographic, educational, etc.

The research methodology used by the author involves the reconstruction of the past based on sources: both primary and secondary. Viorel Rusu uses mainly analysis, both quantitative and statistical analysis, this aspect being best outlined when detailing the situation of the diocese, with the related parishes. Also, another method used by the researcher is the comparison, it being used in the presentation of the internal situation of the Romanian Church United with Rome, between the parishes for example, but also for a comparative presentation of the Greek Catholic Church with the Orthodox Romanian Church.

Structurally, the book contains four chapters, following a chronological thread, being preceded by a section which reviews the Historiography of the researched subject, and succeeded by Conclusions, Bibliography and Appendices. The author doubles the chronological structure of the chapters, adding a thematic one, each of them having in itself a distinct objective that helps to achieve the broader purpose of the research.

Therefore, in order to see whether the purpose of the book it has been achieved and the author's expertise has been accomplished, I consider it necessary to analyze the quality of the demonstration in all four chapters. The first chapter is an introductory one, acquainting the reader with the situation of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Community from Maramureş since the 17th century, exposing the premises for the foundation of the diocese in Northern Transylvania. The second chapter is the most extensive in the research, following both the reconstruction of the diocese in its first decade of existence and the relationship with the Orthodox Community from the territory, and last but not least the very detailed presentation of the situation of the archpriestship in the diocese. We are therefore talking about a very large volume of information, but which the author manages to integrate in an organic way in the content of his research. Chapter three surprises the diocese between 1940-1944, exposing the difficulties that the Church went through in the years of the

Second World War, being under Hungarian occupation, dealing with a wide range of aspects: legal, educational, demographic and political. The last chapter captures a short chronological interval, 1945-1948, but abundant in events. And within this thematic unit of the book, Viorel Rusu makes all the necessary steps to offer an accurate reconstruction of the past through the scientific methods used. The purpose of the research is achieved through a broad exposition of specific, concrete problems, all included in a general framework, the latter having a straight line during the The Maramureş Diocese of the Romanian Church United with Rome.

Therefore, this book is a monograph that captures almost two decades of life of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Maramures, from its inception until 1948. Framing the work in a certain genre is not an easy task due to the complexity of research. We are talking first of all about a monograph on ecclesiastical history, but we also find elements related to the history of religious, social or even cultural life. The research undertaken by Viorel Rusu changes the local historiographical landscape, leading to the completion of the first monograph on the United Diocese of Northern Transylvania. The intended audience of the book consists primarily of specialists of the subject, researchers who have addressed this topic in certain studies, but at the same time, I believe that the Vasile Rusu's book can be attractive to a wider audience, such as students, or people interested in the subject.

The aspect that ensures the attractiveness of the book to a wider audience is the author's style of approach. Beyond the orthographic and grammatical accuracy, Viorel Rusu uses an accessible language, this aspect not affecting the scientificity of the book, managing to combine these two elements very well.

In conclusion, I encourage you to read this book because it is an important step forward for the historiography of the ecclesiastical history of the Romanian Church United with Rome. The work is very complex, dealing with various aspects, of course related to the main topic, going from the general to the particular and offering a lot of details, but still managing to remain easily readable and comprehensible.

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