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Defining the Nation: History, Identity, and Communism in Romania (1964-1966)

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IICCMER

This article analyses the development of the policy of sovereignty of the Communist Party and the position of the Romanian state in the former Soviet bloc and also the national identity and traditions in political and historical discourses. On this respect, during mid60's was consolidated Nation as a symbol of regime identity. In this way, political discourse joined epistemic practices. *Topoi* of emancipation, originality, pride and sovereignty generated a particular affirmation of Romanian communism, fact that involved integration of ideology, science and culture into national Stalinism. The Party became the historical agent that had to put to light national sovereignty, Romanians fought for during their existence. The process of emancipation from Moscow, which began in 1958, determined a renewal of the Party and its historical mission: the ethos of the communist revolution has turned into a national destiny.

In the same time, in the second part of the decade, the Stalinist community became Nation as a vivid historical organism. Having the example of *historical front*, this article debate on the process of interpenetration of Stalinist *palingenesis* and the conservative one, the last one supported by some Romanian interwar intellectuals. Scientism and the myth of progress are connected to the paradigm of organic palingenesis, fact that generate a clear understanding of egalitarianism, a superior physiognomy of socialism

As a result, Party built a new perspective on world, in which historical traditions of the struggle to assert the nation are mixed to the image of the "fighting community" (Peter Fritzsche), in order to obtain independence, cultural emancipation, economic prosperity and international recognition. In 1965, two eschatologies came together: one of the people that build socialism in one country, as in communism, and the other of a nation that rises from history. The result is a national-Stalinist synthesis.

Keywords: 1960's, emancipation from Moscow, national-Stalinist synthesis, Stalinist palingenesis, historical front, fighting community

I. Introduction

On July 1964, *The New York Times* declared that "the pursuit of independence and a national renaissance by the communist leadership of Romania appears to be developing with the precision and confidence of a

well-made symphony.”¹ The politics of sovereignty pursued by the Romanian Workers’ Party (RWP – at the IXth Party Congress its name changes to the Romanian Communist Party, RCP) had reached a climax that year through the publication of a declaration on the main problems of the world communist movement (April 26) that summed up the party line in intra-bloc, world communist, and international relations in general. It was the result of a steady accumulation of decisions, policies, and maneuvers toward regime individuality that had begun since mid-fifties. They gradually re-defined the identity of the communist regime generating a domestic formulation of national sovereignty.

Nevertheless, the developments of 1963 and 1964 were not a sudden break from the RWP line. Moreover, they did not characterize only the political and the economic realms. They were prepared by the evolutions between 1955 and 1963 and, even more importantly, they had a systemic nature, reflecting transformations within multiple layers of the regime. For example, by 1964, planned science in Romania had steadily become national, being an integral aspect of the RWP’s politics of sovereignty. According to Miron Nicolescu, the new President of the RSR Academy (since 1966):

*...I consider that we must all work together because we are members of the same chorus. I believe that the establishment of an atmosphere of mutual trust will contribute to the highest degree to an upsurge in the creative activities of the Academy. Only on the basis of mutual trust among the members of the Academy, between the academicians and the administration, we can ask from each of us maximum of effort without perceiving such request as a form of coercion.*²

Furthermore, historians, in concert with the RWP Central Committee’s Department for Propaganda and Culture (DPC),³ had formulated, in the second half of the fifties and the first part of the sixties, the basic tenets of a master-narrative of the Nation that gradually penetrated the political

¹ Apud Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley, California, 2003), p. 182.

² „Stenograma întâlnirii conducerii PCR cu membrii prezidiului Academiei” (27 mai 1966) in Alina Pavelescu and Laura Dumitru (coord.), *PCR și intelectuali în primii ani ai regimului Ceaușescu* (București, 2007), p. 62.

³ On the multiple avatars, transformations, and functionalities of the Romanian equivalent of the Soviet Agitprop see Cristian Vasile’s volumes *Literatura și artele în România comunistă 1948-1953* (București, 2010) and *Politicile culturale comuniste în timpul regimului Gheorghiu-Dej* (București, 2011).

discourse of the RWP leadership.⁴ What happened between 1964 and 1966 was the *consolidation* and *proclamation* of the Nation as master symbol of regime identity. Political discourse merged with epistemic practices. *Topoi* of emancipation, originality, pride, and sovereignty generated the specific outlook of Romanian communism that encompassed ideology, science, and culture into national Stalinism.⁵

Between 1963 and 1964, the RWP's position in the Soviet bloc crystallized into what it considered an insurmountable antinomy: the socialist nation-state versus a supra-governmental integration of the socialist camp (i.e., Khrushchev's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, CMEA). The RWP's version of national sovereignty coincided with its inalienable right to build socialism in one country:

Bearing in mind the diversity of the conditions of socialist construction, there aren't and there can be no patterns and recipients. No one can decide what is and what is not correct for other countries or parties. It is up to every Marxist-Leninist party. It is a sovereign right of each socialist state, to elaborate, choose, or change the forms and methods of socialist construction. [...] It is the exclusive right of each party independently to work out its political line, its concrete objectives, and the ways and means of attaining them, by creatively applying the general truths of Marxism-Leninism and the conclusions it arrives at from a careful analysis of the experience of the other Communist and workers' parties [...] No party has or can have a privileged place, or can impose its line or opinions on other parties. Each party makes its own contribution to the development of the common treasure store of Marxism-Leninism, to enriching the forms and practical methods of revolutionary struggle...⁶

The fundamental principles of the 1964 Declaration were: "national independence and sovereignty, equality of rights, mutual benefits based on

⁴ For a detailed account of these processes see my Ph.D. dissertation *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation. History-Production in Communist Romania 1955-1966* (Central European University, June 2010).

⁵ For a definition of the concept see Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for all Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, p. 33 and Vladimir Tismaneanu, "What Was National Stalinism?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (forthcoming, 2012).

⁶ „Declarație cu privire la poziția Partidului Muncitoresc Român în problemele mișcării comuniste și muncitorești internaționale adoptată de Plenara lărgită a C.C. al P.M.R. din aprilie 1964”, *Scînteia*, no. 6239, (26 aprilie 1964), p. 3.

comradely aide, non-interference in domestic affairs, the recognition of territorial integrity, socialist internationalism.”⁷ And, the vital attribute of the party-state was the state plan, which ensured the Romanian people’s well-being, cultural progress, and ultimate happiness.

The main tenets of the RWP’s Declaration were by no means new. Some of them simply echoed the theses of Moscow Declarations from 1957 and 1960; others were formulated during the intra-party or intra-bloc clashes prior to April 1964. Both the party newspaper *Scînteia* and economics journal *Viața Economică* responded extensively to the increasing literature in other CMEA countries that advocated coordinated international planning and the division of labor in economic production in the socialist camp. At the same time, the president of the Council of Ministers, I. G. Maurer, published in 1963, an article, first in *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, then in *Lupta de clasă*, in which he advocated for “the equality of brotherly parties” and contended that there were “no superior or subordinated parties”. He also considered interference in domestic affairs of communist parties unacceptable.

The peak of the debate in Romania was reached when an economist, of Bulgarian extraction, studying in U.S.S.R., E. B. Valev⁸ wrote an article about the creation of a specialized economic zone that comprised SSR Moldova, part of Southern Ukraine, Southeastern Romania, and the North of Bulgaria. This region was supposed to focus on the exploitation of oil and natural gas, on certain branches of machine-building industry, on agriculture, livestock, vine production and other areas of goods-production. The party leadership instructed C. Murgescu, the director of the Academy’s Institute of Economic Research, to respond to Valev’s article and to other texts that supported the idea of industrial complexes that did not take into account state borders. The Valev plan was interpreted by Romanian authorities as an attack against the territorial integrity of the country.⁹ According to Murgescu, the contribution of the Soviet economist “defies

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸ See Elis Neagoe-Pleșa, „Rolul lui Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej în elaborarea politicii externe și în direcționarea relațiilor româno-sovietice (1960-1965)”, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, Series Historica, 9/I, 2005, p. 231-240

⁹ Florin Banu and Liviu Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964 – „Primăvara de la București”*: Cum s-a adoptat „Declarația de independență a României” (București, 2004), p. lxxii and p. xlvi. Also see, Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communist Rule*, (Bucharest, 1998), pp. 141-143 and Mihaela Sitariu, “Balancing between East and West: Romanian Foreign Policy in the 1960s,” *Romanian Archives Review*, 2/2008, pp. 225-241.

Romania's sovereignty and proposes the dismemberment of the country, of its national economy."¹⁰

II. The April 1964 RWP Declaration: The Nation by Way of Lenin to Stalin

The 1964 Declaration was the result of the RWP Plenum from April, 15-22. The first time when the party discussed the possibility of issuing such a document was during a meeting of the Politbureau (*Birou Politic*) on February, 26-27, 1963, when the leadership discussed Al. Bârlădeanu's report on the debates within the CMEA's Executive Committee.¹¹ On April 2nd the same year, Gheorghiu-Dej told the members of the Politbureau about the importance and urgency of drafting a declaration that would clarify the RWP position both domestically and internationally. According to the party leader,

*...the document that we will be drafting must be comprehensive, well founded, and convincing. We must present in a thorough manner the mission undertaken by our party, even if we end up repeating some of the issues raised by either comrade Maurer's article or in other occasions. [...] Without pointing fingers, we must criticize those habits and unjust methods that have concerned us, which have been subject of apprehension for the leadership of our party.*¹²

During the discussions among party leaders and especially at the meetings between the party leadership and scientists, students, or intellectuals (as a generic term), it was clear that the RWP did not envisage the April Declaration only as a party document. To quote I. G. Maurer, "the party wishes to make this a document of the entire people."¹³ It was so, because, as Dej put it "in the nature of the socialist system there are no objective causes for contradictions between national tasks of socialist countries and their international obligations, between the interests of each

¹⁰ *Apud Mihai Croitor, România și conflictul sovieto-chinez (1956-1971)*, (Cluj Napoca, 2009), p. 294.

¹¹ For example, Maurer stated in 1963 that "there will be a time when we will have to take a stand in an article so that everybody could be clarified on our position." In July 1963, the Politbureau instructed the following members of the leadership to work on the Declaration: Gh. Apostol, E. Bodnaras, N. Ceaușescu, and L. Răutu. See Dan Cătănuș, "Declarația din aprilie 1964: Context istoric și ecou internațional", *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, an XIV, no. 52-53, 3-4/2006, p. 111.

¹² „Note din ședința Biroului Politic al CC al PMR din 2 aprilie 1964” in Banu and Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964*, p. 28.

¹³ „Stenograma adunării cu oamenii de știință care au dezbătut Declarația CC al PMR., *Ibid.*, f. 159.

country and the interests of the socialist community as a whole."¹⁴ As a consequence, during the May 8th discussion of the Declaration with scientists and intellectuals, Maurer declared that the party

*...considered that it had to respond to their internationalist obligation as communists, but, at the same time, it had to respond to their national duties as leaders of a people of which fate they were responsible for. [...] If the party of a certain country is tied to the people of that country and it is accountable for that particular people, then the party will consider and decide upon the way things should be done, if they are to be done. If these matters would be decided by somebody else than this party, such situation will determine until the end of things that society's existence.*¹⁵

It appears clearly that the RWP considered and argued that the Declaration responded to the Romanians' national interests. Their conviction was apparent from the fact that the principle of the *infallibility* of the national party line was invoked. Barbu Zaharescu, the Romanian representative in Prague in the board of the journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, empathically declared during the discussions in May 1964 that "our party adopted on these issues [those presented in the Declaration] a clearly formulated point of view, which cannot be rebuked theoretically. [...] The position of our party in problems of principle is unassailable."¹⁶

The transcripts of either the April Plenum or of the various meetings that followed also reveal an already developed sense of mission within the RWP. Referring to the Romanians involvement in the Sino-Soviet dispute, Al. Sencovici, the minister of light industry, sketched a topos that would make a long history in local communist mythology: "Our 'small' party played this beautiful, superb, historical role of true fighter, which shows to us the meaning of the great appreciation that our party enjoys. There are no happenstances in history. It is not by chance that our party was the one which played this role. This fills us with joy above all things."¹⁷ The myth of the small party vanquishing all obstacles to international prominence will be appropriated by the director of the RWP's publishing house (*Editura Politică*), V. Roman¹⁸ gave it a national coloring as well:

¹⁴ „Stenograma ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central al PMR din zilele de 15-22 aprilie 1964” in Banu și Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964*, p. 113.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 161.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 47.

¹⁷ „Note din ședința Biroului Politic al CC al PMR din 2 aprilie 1964” in Banu și Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964*, p. 205.

¹⁸ Valter Roman's statements in 1964 echoed his earlier position adopted during the November 30 – December 5, 1961 Plenum of the RWP Central Committee when

Some wonder abroad, how come a small country and a small party dared to intervene in a quarrel between two giants [China and the USSR, n.a.]? But principles are principles; if they are just, they will resonate with them and they will be accepted [...] Our party is widely popular. I believe, and I am sure that I am not mistaken, that we are the only party where the Central Committee is truly backed by all the party members and supported by the entire people [...] If the carriage of our history has always advanced with increasing speed through various events and turning points without falling over and with no jolts, and it took us to the radiant shores of our present days, this we owe to the fact that the party has been directed with great responsibility by the Central Committee headed by comrade Gheorghiu-Dej.¹⁹

V. Roman's intervention at May 1964 meeting contained, in a nutshell, the hubris of Romanian communism: a hunting inferiority complex that hid behind a master-narrative of glorious historical progress, the eschatological belief in the success of nationally building socialism (which will culminate in Ceaușescu era's myth of the Golden Age here and now), and the latent cult of personality (the demiurgic image of the Leader).²⁰ Nevertheless, the topos of the "small party playing a great role" nationally and internationally was officialized around the same time with the theme of the Romanians as a small people that performed great feats in history. This approach could be noticed in the four volumes of the *Tratat de Istorie a României*. Starting with

he formulated (along with others, from Gheorghiu-Dej himself to Petre Borilă, a Romanian of Bulgarian origin) the imperative of national belonging so that one would be a good communist in Romania. At the time, Roman stated that "I enrolled in the Romanian Communist Party, I am a son and a soldier of the communist party in Romania - this is my state. Oradea is part of Transylvania, so it is part of Romania." See "Stenograma plenarei CC al PMR (30 noiembrie - 5 decembrie 1961), intervenția lui Valter Roman," Dan Cătănuș, *A doua destalinizare. Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej la apogeul puterii* (București, 2005), p. 241.

¹⁹ „Stenograma adunării cu oamenii de știință care au dezbătut Declarația CC al PMR...”, ff. 157-158.

²⁰ Vladimir Tismaneanu excellently diagnosed these symptoms of Romanian communism in *Stalinism for All Seasons*. Kenneth Jowitt first formulated the thesis of the pariah syndrome of Romanian communism see Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development. The Case of Romania 1944-1965* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1971) and later Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder. The Leninist extinction* (Los Angeles, 1992). Also see Dragoș Petrescu, "Building the Nation, Instrumentalizing Nationalism: Revisiting Romanian National-Communism, 1956-1989," *Nationalities Papers*, 37, 4 (2009), pp. 523-544.

mid-sixties, it would proliferate, becoming an axiom of history-writing under communism. For example, one of the historians recuperated by and acculturated to the regime, P. P. Panaitescu, characterized the Romanians' struggles during the 15th century as "a glorious battle of a small people endangered by the policy of conquest pursued by the neighboring great feudal states."²¹ History-writing of those years was littered with similar remarks.

The 1964 Declaration was not only the proof of a party and people overcoming their physical limitations. It was also a testimony for the RWP's true Marxist-Leninist profile and for its righteous path to building socialism in Romania. During the visit of a Romanian delegation, headed by Maurer and Chivu Stoica, in China, in March 1964 (upon their return, they stopped in the Soviet Union and met with the Soviet leadership), Mao, slightly annoyed, asked the Romanians whether they belonged to the left or the right, if they were dogmatic or revisionist, or whether they decided to take a position in the middle. N. Ceaușescu's response was ominous and blunt: "We are Marxist-Leninists..."²² During the April 15-22 Plenum in 1964, the head of the DPC, L. Răutu referred to Mao's question, giving his own informed answer: "we have our own head, we follow, as comrade Gheorghiu said, Marx, Engels, Lenin - the colossal experience gathered by the entire communist movement, by our party. We only give our own point of view."²³

Indeed, in preparation of the Declaration, the party created a series of compilations of excerpts from the founding fathers' writings (Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin) on topics related to the main problems touched upon by the document. The most interesting, for the purpose of our analysis, was the one on sovereignty, national independence, and the ways of a rapprochement between nations. The fundamental reference here was a paraphrase of Lenin on the role of national particularities in history that appeared in the 1964 Declaration: "as Lenin has shown, the diversity of each country's specificities, of their national and state particularities, will remain for a long time, even when socialism will be victorious, if not in the entire world, but in most countries."²⁴ The exact quote from Lenin can be found in

²¹ P. P. Panaitescu, recenzie la *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare* (culegere de studii îngrijită de prof. M Berza), București, Edit Academiei RPR, 1964 in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.4, XVIII, 1965, pp. 939.

²² Croitor, *Romania...*, p. 266.

²³ „Stenograma ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central..”, *Ibid.*, p. 278.

²⁴ „Declarație cu privire la poziția Partidului Muncitoresc Român...”, p. 2. This reference to Lenin was discussed also in the April Plenum, see „Stenograma ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central..”, *Ibid.*, p. 184.

the compilation of quotes selected by the party ideologues in preparation for the Declaration:

As long as there remain national and state differences between nations and states – and these differences will last for a long time even after the accomplishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale – the unity of the international, communist working-class movement of all countries does not require the elimination of diversity, the effacement of national particularities (which would be an absurd dream at this moment). It does presuppose however a correct and detailed application of the fundamental principles of communism, their adjustment to the national particularities of each nation-state.²⁵

These lines became the core of the principle of sovereignty of the socialist nation-state in Romania after 1964. They however had a corollary in the DPC synthesis that came from Stalin's interpretation of Lenin. Stalin commented that

Lenin places the process of the disappearance of national differences and the merging of nations not during the victory of socialism in one country, but exclusively after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the entire world, that is at the time of socialism's victory in all countries. [...] Trying to accomplish the unification of nations by decree from above, by coercion, would mean that you are playing into the imperialists hands, that you are torpedoing the liberation of nations [...] The first stage [of the world dictatorship of the proletariat] will be the time when all national oppression will be eliminated, it will be a period of flourishing of nations. [my emphasis]²⁶

This is how the Nation re-entered the official political discourse of Romanian communism: from Lenin with stopover at Stalin. During the proceedings of the April Plenum, Gheorghiu-Dej expressed his admiration for Stalin:

You see how they deal with Stalin. Stalin indeed was a great Marxist, a leader of the international communist and working-class

²⁵ „Documentar cu referiri la suveranitatea și independența națională, căile apropierei între națiuni (cuprinde extrase din operele lui K. Marx, Fr. Engels, V.I. Lenin și I.V.Stalin, din Declarațiile consfătuirilor reprezentanților partidelor comuniste și muncitorești (1957 și 1960) și Programul P.C.U.S.)”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, 63/1964, ff. 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 19-20.

*movement, he brought a great contribution to the cause, but Stalin had his own faults. They themselves [the CPSU] gave the percentage of the mistakes: 75 percent his activity was correct, 25 percent it was unjust. We believe that such evaluations should not be made. We cannot agree with how they exaggerate [in this matter]. Stalin's place in history cannot be denied by anyone. We will not take Stalin's works in the public square to burn them saying that there are not worth a dime. [...] Lenin once said: show me one man who manages so many fields of activity the way Stalin does. Stalin was a worthy disciple of Marx and a close collaborator of Lenin.*²⁷

In the synthesis on sovereignty prepared for the Declaration, Gheorghiu-Dej underlined in red a thesis by Stalin that was already pretty much entrenched in both the discourse and the mentality of the Romanian communist: "the banner of national independence and sovereignty was thrown overboard. It is beyond any doubt that you, the representatives of communist and democratic parties, will have to pick it up, to carry it further if you wish to be the patriots of your country, if you want to become *the leading force of the nation*."²⁸ [my emphasis] Dej did not have time to emulate Stalin's declaration (he died of cancer on March, 18, 1965), but his successor, N Ceaușescu, moved rapidly to applying Stalin's dictum to the case of Romania.

At the 45th anniversary of the creation of the Romanian Communist Party (May 1966), the new party leader emphatically stated that: "The RCP continues the century-old struggles of the Romanian people for the country's independence, for the formation of the Romanian nation and of the unitary nation-state, for the acceleration of social progress and for

²⁷„Stenograma ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central..”, *Ibid.*, p. 66. Dej was not the only one who continued extolling Stalin's merits as a Marxist-Leninist after the XXth Congress and particularly after the XXIIInd Congress of the CPSU (October 1961). Two other examples will suffice. At the June 1957 plenum, during the discussion that led to the purge of Iosif Chișinevschi and Miron Constantinescu, N. Ceaușescu declared that "we can learn a lot from Stalin's works; they will have to be continuously studied taking, of course, a critical position toward some problems. But they remain valid. We did not do like others did by taking out Stalin's works from their offices and homes". See Tudor and Cătănuș (eds.), *O destalinizare ratată. Culisele cazului Miron Constantinescu-Iosif Chișinevschi* (București, 2001), p. 176. In March 1964, I. G. Maurer, during the Romanian delegation's trip to China, told his hosts that "we, too, believe that Stalin was a great figure of world revolutionary movement, a reliable [*de nădejde*] Marxist-Leninist, that his contribution at the development of revolutionary movement was tremendous." See Croitor, *România...*, p. 263.

²⁸„Documentar cu referiri la suveranitatea și independența națională..”, p. 21.

Romania's advancement to civilization."²⁹ By mid-sixties, the party had become one with the Nation because, following Stalin's call, the RCP had donned itself with the mantle of the national cause. Or, to paraphrase a participant at the meeting of May 8th, 1964, the party took on the great responsibility of the Romania's and its people's destiny.³⁰ The party was now the agent of history that finally accomplished the national sovereignty for which Romanians had struggled throughout their existence.

The discussions and preparations related to the 1964 Declaration also revealed the ideological basis of what in 1969, at the Tenth Party Congress, will be called "multilaterally developed socialist society." In a special issue of the *Revista de filozofie* celebrating twenty years since the "Romania's liberation from the fascist yoke", one of the contributors, Sergiu Tamaș (professor at the "Ștefan Gheorghiu" Party Academy, one of the regime's specialists in political doctrines) explained that "in socialism, the elimination of antagonistic classes is the most important step taken to the homogenization of society – the fundamental facet of strengthening the unity of the people."³¹ He was echoing one of Lenin's tenets that appeared in the synthesis prepared for the April Plenum, according which: "in organizing production without class exploitation, in ensuring the well-being of all members of the state, socialism creates the conditions for the complete manifestation of the populations' 'sympathies'." By "sympathies", Lenin meant the national will of a people, the criterion on which he formulated his concept of self-determination. Lenin's quote was accompanied by Dej's remark, "yes, indeed, very important."³² The fundamental overlap among "the sympathies" of the people, building socialism, national sovereignty, and people's unity through homogenization constituted the foundation of the RCP modernization project of "the multilaterally developed socialist society" (MDSS). The MDSS presupposed

The concentration of the people's effort on the crucial directions of material and spiritual progress, the unification and rational coordination, with maximum output, of the social forces in order to fulfill the Party Program. [...] [It presupposed] the rapid development of the forces of production on the entire territory of the

²⁹ „Expunerea tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR la adunarea festivă cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani de la crearea Partidului Comunist Român”, 7 mai, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, 29/1966, f. 4.

³⁰ See Aurel Mihale's intervention in „Stenograma adunării cu oamenii de știință care au dezbătut Declarația CC al PMR...”, f. 73.

³¹ Sergiu Tamaș's article from *Revista de filozofie*, an XI (1964), no. 4 was reviewed in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.4, XVII, (1964), p. 959.

³² „Documentar cu referiri la suveranitatea și independența națională..”, f. 10.

*country, the territorial and administrative systematization and organization.... [it meant] ...insuring equal life conditions for all of country's citizens according to the principles of socialist equality and the gradual disappearance of the differences between rural and urban centers. [...] [It required] the unitary leadership over all social and economic activity to be continued and perfected.*³³

But the essential element for the MDSS was the Nation. Following the path opened by the April Declaration, relying upon the existent fund of legitimizing segments from the founding fathers' works, particularly Lenin and Stalin, in 1965, N. Ceaușescu ultimately put the Nation at the core of the Party's program and implicitly of the entire communist polity. At the Ninth Party Congress³⁴, he famously proclaimed:

*For a long time to come the nation and the state will continue to be the basis of the deployment of socialist society. The development of the nation, the consolidation of the socialist state comply with the objective requirements of social life; not only does this not run counter to the interests of socialist internationalism, but, on the contrary, it fully corresponds to these interests, to the solidarity of the working people, to the cause of socialism and peace. The development and flourishing of each socialist nation, of each socialist state, equal rights, sovereign and independent, is an essential requirement upon which depend the strengthening of the unity and cohesion of the socialist countries, the growth of their influence upon mankind's advance toward socialism and communism.*³⁵

III. The Party and its People: Victory, Sacrifice, and Rebirth

In 1964, the RWP officialized another *topos* of the communist regime's identity narrative: the sacrifice of the people and of the party for attaining and preserving national sovereignty consummated into the victory of socialism in

³³ Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Programul Partidului Comunism Roman de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintarea României spre comunism", in *Congresul al XI-lea al Partidului Comunist Român*, (București, 1975), pp. 645-67.

³⁴ Vladimir Tismaneanu rightly argued that the Ninth Congress became of on the founding myths of the Ceaușescu's cult because it created a false image of a political reformer. I agree with Tismaneanu, who criticizes this myth by pointing to the fact that the Ninth Congress was the moment when "the most important ideological and political options of Nicolae Ceaușescu's socialism were defined." See Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons...*, p. 197.

³⁵ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Expunere la Congresul al IX-lea al Partidului Comunist Român* (București: Editura Politică, 1965), pp. 60

the country. This central theme originated in two crucial presuppositions: the continuous national struggle throughout history and the socialist revolution from within. As shown previously, between 1958 and 1963, the RWP developed a story about its history, growth, struggle, and eventual coming into power that was increasingly centered on the deeds of the group that had stayed in the country (what Vladimir Tismaneanu called “the prison core”) led by Gheorghiu-Dej. Others were added, either members of the former Comintern or veterans of the Spanish Civil war or the French *maquis* (at least from among those who were not purged). The Soviet role had been rapidly diminishing. With the April Declaration, the RWP made official its rebuke of the Comintern, Cominform, and assigned a secondary role to the Soviet influence during the Second World War, August 23, 1944 and its aftermath. The axiom of this new narrative was formulated by Dej at the April plenum: “the socialist revolution is not an import commodity.” The Declaration took this point further by clarifying the RWP’s position toward the Comintern and the Cominform:

Since the last period of the existence of the Comintern, it became obvious that the resolution of the problems of the working-class in a particular country by an international center did not correspond to the stage of development of the world communist and working-class movement. The wrong methods, the interference into the domestic affairs of communist parties went as far as the removal of cadres from the leadership of certain parties, of entire Central Committees even. These methods led to the imposition of leaders from outside, while various valuable cadres were repressed. Whole parties were blamed even disbanded. Our own party experienced this period, going through difficult trials. The interference in the domestic affairs seriously affected the party line, its cadres’ policy and the organizational work, its relationship with the masses. These practices generated by the cult of personality during the Comintern were felt in the Cominform as well.³⁶

³⁶ „Declarație cu privire la poziția Partidului Muncitoresc Român...”, p. 3. Romanian communists followed carefully similar discussions from other country in the socialist camp. For example, the Institute of Party History prepared for the leadership a synthesis of a debate in Poland on the role of the Comintern and its relationship with the Polish communist party. Interestingly, the main themes of the Polish version of a critique of the Comintern are pretty much identical with those of the Romanian one. See „Despre activitatea Internaționalei Comuniste. Discuții apărute în revista poloneză ‘Z pola walki’, no. 1 din 1966”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no. 11/1966, ff. 43-86.

Developing upon the historical narrative of the party's evolution as it had been formulated during the November-December 1961 Party Plenum, in 1964-1966, it was clear that the origin of the RWP/RCP's troubled experience lay at the Moscow Center. I. Popescu-Puțuri, the director of the Institute of historical and social-political studies, went to great lengths to show how the February 1933 strikes and 1944 insurrection were ignored by the Comintern and the CPSU, respectively. An important note regarding the February 1933 events: if initially there was a struggle over imposing the undisputed central role of Gheorghiu-Dej,³⁷ now it was important to situate them in the avant-garde of the European anti-fascist movement. And this was done in no hesitantly fashion: they were transformed into *the first antifascist movement* after the coming into power of Hitler. At the 1964 April Plenum, Popescu-Puțuri painted the following picture:

*another important moment ...was our contribution to international working-class movement through the events of 1933. Hitler had risen to power, there was that idea in Central Europe that once Hitler and fascism were in power, a progressive movement would not be possible...But, the February struggles led by our communist party invalidated that theory. [...] At the fifteenth anniversary of the Comintern, however, a report of all the working-class struggles up to that point left out [our] struggle from February.*³⁸

Puțuri's characterization of the 1933 was reinforced by several articles written by Titu Georgescu, at the time scientific secretary of the Institute of Party History, then its deputy director. The latter was more concise than his superior: "when the Romanian working class rose, in February 1933, for the first time in Europe after the coming of Hitler into power, against the forces of the extreme right in Romania, it proved that the latter's advancement could be stopped, that there were still numerous and powerful forces that would continue opposing them."³⁹ In other words, through their sacrifice, Romanian communists gave hope to Europe in one of its direst of hours. Georgescu went even further. He considered that the trial that followed (Gheorghiu-Dej among the chief defendants), was unique because it succeed in "concentrating almost all the attention of the masses and it put on the public agenda, before bourgeois justice, the most important needs and goals of the

³⁷ See Alina Tudor și Dan Cătănuș, *Amurgul ilegalistilor: plenara CC al PMR din 9-13 1958*, postfață de Florin Constantiniu (București, 2001) and Stelin Tănase's chapter on the topic in *Clienții lui Tanti Varvara* (București, 2004) .

³⁸ „Stenograma ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central..”, *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

³⁹ Titu Georgescu, „Nicolae Iorga împotriva hitlerismului”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, „25 de ani de la moartea lui Nicolae Iorga”, no.5, XVIII, (1965), pp. 1427.

people.”⁴⁰ The tensions and hopes of 1964 were projected in 1933. But now, these events were not only a myth of the party. They would be integrated into a national narrative: “the popular and representative character of the 1933 struggles deepened, in the consciousness of the masses, the belief that the proletariat was the unwavering agent of the Romanian people’s ideals of freedom and democracy.”⁴¹

The greatest stakes, though, lay on the interpretation of August 23, 1944. Until the Declaration, there already existed an established version of the events in which the RWP leadership held a central role in balance with that of the Soviet Union (again the 1961 Party Plenum is indicative of this narrative). But, in 1964, the story about August 23rd was publicly formulated against the Soviet narrative of the end of the Second World War. Various archival documents reveal the great frustration of the Romanian leaders with what they considered a constant belittling of their roles. At the April Plenum, Puțuri expressed a general opinion by arguing that

*they [the Soviets] did not believe that it [1944 insurrection] was the result of the internal forces, that it was our contribution [to the end of the Second World War]. They remained convinced that there was no party in the country, the events were explained through external factors [the Red Army, n.a.], which was utterly false...it was our accomplishment, it was not exclusively because of the presence of the external factors.*⁴²

The crucial addition to the existing narrative about 1944 and 1945 was the centrality of the events in Romania for the final victory of the Allies during the Second World War. Ghe. Matei, another deputy-director of the Party History Institute, officially articulated the thesis according to which August 23rd did not take place when the war was already decided: “the testimonies of those years demonstrate the fact that the decisive turning point accomplished by the Romanian people in August 1944 happened at a moment when the fate of the war was far from being clear.”⁴³ He then went on to present tens of quotations (from Soviet officials to Anglo-American politicians and officers) that seemingly proved his point. He also advanced an additional tenet: Romania’s entrance in the camp of the Allies was a

⁴⁰ Titu Georgescu și Fl. Dragne, „Procesul conducătorilor luptelor muncitorilor ceferiști și petroliști din ianuarie-februarie 1933”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.3, XVII, (1964), pp. 439.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 438.

⁴² „Stenograma ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central.”, *Ibid.*, pp. 163.

⁴³ Gheorghe Matei, „Insurecția armată din August 1944 – cotitura hotărâtoare în istoria poporului român”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.4, XVII, (1964), pp. 719.

watershed in the economy of the war. He then concluded: "the facts concerning the armed insurrection of August 1944 in Romania, its national and international significance, refute those erroneous and malevolent statements that were uttered during the years by various historians, politicians, and circles from abroad hostile to the Romanian people."⁴⁴ Domestically the enemy did have a name: the Pauker-Luca factionalist group, who did not believe in the strength and ability of the Romanian people. Externally, though unnamed, the fingers were pointing to Soviet historians and officials.

These theses will then be developed at nauseam in the party historiography from 1964 onwards. In 1965, a military historian, invoking a German colleague, argued that "from an economic point of view, it [Romania joining the Allies] was the hardest blow that the German central command could receive."⁴⁵ Besides the topic of August 1944, the historical narrative also encompassed the issue of the country's participation in the war on the Western front. The historians of the Party History Institute even came up with an estimate for Romania's financial contribution to the "anti-Hitler war": no more and no less than 1 billion dollars (at the 1938 exchange rate), four times the budget of the Romanian state between 1937 and 1938. More significantly, they presented this number and the thesis of the centrality of the Romanian contribution to the end of the Second World War in Moscow at the "Scientific Conference on the Anniversary of Twenty Years since the Victory over Fascist Germany" (14-16, April, 1965). The title of the Romanian report at this event expressed clearly the priorities and fundamental motifs of the RWP narrative: "The Armed, Antifascist Insurrection of August 1944 and Romania's Contribution to the Defeat of Hitlerite Germany: their Significance in the Romanian People's History." The report simply brought together the official interpretations of these events as they cumulated and crystallized from 1959 to 1965. It concluded that the accomplishments of the internal forces in 1944 and 1945 created the conditions for the victory of socialism in Romania.⁴⁶

The circle was therefore complete: the antifascist resistance, from 1933 until 1944, led by the Romanian communist party and supported by the people gave the internal forces the strength to rise against Nazi

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 723.

⁴⁵ Col. D. Tuțu, „Despre contribuția militară și economică a României la războiul antihitlerist”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.3, XVIII, (1965), p. 544.

⁴⁶ N. N. Constantinescu, „Participarea delegației române la Conferința Științifică de la Moscova consacrată aniversării a 20 de ani de la victoria asupra Germaniei fasciste”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.3, XVIII, (1965), pp. 693-696.

occupation and then to greatly contribute to Germany's final defeat. These accomplishments then generated a socialist revolution in Romania that brought the party to power. Once the revolutionary breakthrough was achieved, the RWP successfully built the groundwork of socialism in the country. There were only three actors in this narrative: the Party, its leader, and the people – a foreshadowing of the Golden Age trinity "Party, Ceaușescu, Romania". Moreover, this was also a story of exceptional abilities: the leaders stood out; the Romanians' contributions to antifascism were not only significant but trailblazing as well; and, the country and the party fundamentally influenced the course of one of the most crucial events in the twentieth century: the victory in the Second World War. To bring the point home, military historians even claimed a moral status of co-belligerence (*stat cobeligerant*) for Romania in the war.⁴⁷

The blueprint identitarian narrative of a party that successfully overcame the fallacies of the world communist movement, international dissensions, the repression of the "landowners-bourgeois regime", the rise of fascism in Romania and Europe, the dismemberment of the country, the Nazi 'occupation' in order to topple a fascist-military dictatorship, to free and re-unite Romania, to contribute decisively to the victory against Hitler's Germany, and ultimately to start building socialism was officially completed by 1966. Its main tenets will remain constant until the end of the communist regime. It will constitute one of its most important legitimizing discourses because this historical big-picture allowed the RCP to claim victory in the construction of socialism, to situate itself as the final and most glorious stage in the struggle for national independence, liberation, and progress. As Gheorghiu-Dej put it: "The present image of a free and prosperous Romania testifies that the RWP deserved the people's trust and that it always fulfilled its hopes."⁴⁸

In 1966, at the forty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the communist party in Romania, N. Ceaușescu formulated Dej's idea in a more eschatological fashion: "history granted today's generations the happiness of witnessing the fulfillment of their forefathers' most daring dreams and ideals, for they are those who are forging the golden future of the

⁴⁷ See Col. A. Petrei, „Participarea armatei române la acțiunile militare desfășurate pe teritoriul Ungariei”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.3, XVIII, 1965, pp. 547-564 and Lt.-col. I. C. Petre, „Acțiunile de luptă duse de trupele române pe teritoriul Cehoslovaciei (18 decembrie 1944-12 mai 1945)”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.3, XVIII, (1965), pp. 565-589.

⁴⁸ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, „A XX-a aniversare a eliberării României de sub jugul fascist”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.4, XVII, (1964), p. 686.

Motherland.”⁴⁹ The process of emancipation from the Moscow center that gradually evolved since 1958 produced a re-invention of the party and of its mission in history: the Millennialist ethos of the communist revolution gradually morphed into national destiny. Just like under Stalin, the victory of socialism in one country merged with the glorious fate of the Nation. Only that this time there was no federation to prevent the fusion [*sliianie*] of ethnic populations into one socialist nation⁵⁰. But, there was a dominant ethnic population with its own utopias and traditions of national salvation that had been repressed for more than a decade – the Romanians.

Victory could not be claimed without sacrifice. Sacrifice would only be measured in blood and through mobilization: the party’s, the people and ultimately the Nation’s. This motif appeared as early as 1960 at RWP’s Third Congress. Historical deliverance arrived only with the triumph of socialism:

*During the centuries, the Romanian people shed a lot of blood, giving countless proofs of their patriotic-revolutionary resources and ardor, of their fervent love for the Motherland’s independence and prosperity. Through their valiant and heroic struggles, the Romanian people many times defeated the invaders who came to conquer and plunder it. But the exploiting classes have always been ready to negotiate the country’s independence with foreign powers. This state of things has now ceased. The glorious insurrection of 1944 was a radical turning point in the life of the Romanian people.*⁵¹

Socialist patriotism was associated not only to such a lineage of hecatombic experiences on the path to self-determination and sovereignty. By 1965, it was also tied to a sense of belonging: being a Romanian increasingly became a moral condition that generated a heroic stand in history. For example, Romania’s contribution to the Western front in the Second World War was explained by the condition of being part of a people many a times tried by a painful history: “sons of a freedom and friendship loving people, which through its own experience knew the blight of foreign domination, Romanian

⁴⁹ „Expunerea tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR la adunarea festivă cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani...”, f. 89.

⁵⁰ Terry Martin argued that at the core of *korenizatsiia* (Soviet nationalities’ policy) lay the Bolsheviks’ belief that the national problem should be solved through a rapprochement of nationalities rather than their fusion into a Soviet nation. According to him, this is the explanation why Russification was rather a by-product of Stalin’s policies of homogenization and excision rather than the effect of concentrated state-policies. See Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, 2001), p. 394.

⁵¹ Gheorghe Matei, „Insurecția armată din August 1944...”, p. 701.

soldiers spilled their blood on the soil of a brotherly country in the name of the righteous cause they were fighting for.”⁵² Soon the Romanians would be presented as a people with a long history that had always fought just wars, for they never wished to conquer, but to defend or regain their national rights acquired during their existence: “throughout centuries, our ancient soil (*glie*) witnessed countless battles and wars. The general characteristic of the majority of all those battles of our people was that they were fought for noble goals: either for justice and social progress against oppression and exploitation, or for freedom and national independence.”⁵³

Through the praise of and identification with national sacrifice and belonging, the Romanian communist party was building what historian Peter Fritzsche called “a battle community” that “dramatizes the deleterious consequences of those [social, political, ethnic, etc.] divisions and eventually realizes the homogenizing project on the basis of their elimination.”⁵⁴ The people and the state became one on the basis of national allegiance and struggle. They ultimately united into one final victory: the construction of socialism. The unified, official version of these themes will be formulated by Nicolae Ceaușescu in his 1966 speech at the 45th anniversary of the party:

*Țara Românească, Moldova, and Transylvania have been, for centuries under foreign yoke. These periods were characterized by the plunder of the country's riches, by the ruin of its economy, the destruction of numerous material and spiritual goods. For a long time, this has slowed down the forces of production, the social and national development. They caused Romania to fall behind with over one hundred years compared to some other countries. [...] But the ideas of national community have mobilized the people; they have redoubled their forces for the defense and prosperity of the Motherland.*⁵⁵

A few paragraphs later, the party leader brought all the dots together in this narrative of suffering and belonging: the socialist revolution had put an end to the Romanians' plight by accomplishing “their interests and vital ideals.” The construction of socialism and communism was “the expression of the

⁵² Lt.-col. I. C. Petre, „Acțiunile de luptă duse de trupele române...”, p. 589.

⁵³ Col. C. Nicolae, „Din luptele armatei române pentru eliberarea patriei de sub jugul fascist (23 august-25 octombrie 1944)”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.3, XVIII, 1965, p. 307

⁵⁴ Peter Fritzsche, “Genocide and Global Discourse”, *German History*, 23, (no. 1, 2005), p. 109

⁵⁵ „Expunerea tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR la adunarea festivă cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani...”, f. 69.

will of the people."⁵⁶ Under the circumstances, "in the life of any country, the socialist revolution constitutes an era of *national rebirth*."⁵⁷ [my emphasis] In other words, the communist regime was a new, improved version of national life: "The transformations that took place, after the liberation, in the economic life and the social structure of the country, the victory of socialism in cities and the countryside, have created the conditions for the full consummation [*afirmarea din plin*] of the Romanian people's *national being* through the multilateral development and flourishing of our socialist nation."⁵⁸

IV. The National Being Returns as Socialist Nation

The entrenchment of the dichotomy of the people's sacrifice and victory generated the enrichment of the notion of what under Stalin the Soviet Union had been coined as the popular community – the archetypical form of socialist collectivity that came into being as socialism was built in a one country. The path the RWP had taken since the second half of the fifties emulated this form of identity-construction crystallized under late Stalinism. According to Erik van Ree, the latter was "an ideology that bluntly put *two* points of departure: nation and class, and *two* main goals: national development and world communism, next to each other".⁵⁹ It was "national in form, etatist in content"⁶⁰ and it relied on a diffuse concept of the 'people', which was "a popular community ... organized into a state, to which all individuals, all art and all science should dedicate themselves. It was this community that was expected to operate as a self-reliant, more or less closed unit in the world at large."⁶¹ Dedication to the common good meant that "citizens unite[d] with their fellows in all respects – in deed, in word and even in thought. In this state, community of purpose and community of action are among the most respected values."⁶² Or, to quote Gheroghiu-Dej,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 75.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 67.

⁵⁹ Erik van Ree, "Stalin as Marxist: the Western roots of Stalin's Russification of Marxism," pp. 159-180 in Sarah Davies and James Harris eds., *Stalin: A New History* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 178.

⁶⁰ D. Brandenberger and A.M. Dubrovsky, "The people need a tsar: the emergence of National Bolshevism as Stalinist ideology, 1931-1941", *Europe-Asia Studies* 5 (1998), 873-92.

⁶¹ Erik van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin – A Study in Twentieth-Century Patriotism* (London/New York, 2002), p. 189

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

“the moral-political unity of the people [...] became the unshakable foundation of our popular democratic regime.”⁶³

In Romania, the mid-1960s brought a novel facet to this popular community: the Nation as an organism living in history. It was no coincidence that this phenomenon was simultaneous with N. Iorga’s rehabilitation. During his activity as historian-politician, he had formulated this notion most clearly. According to him, “a nation is not just a piece of territory or a state or an economic necessity; nor is it a product of treaties (which created it), but a nation is a soul, an elemental, almost mystical being.”⁶⁴ He was far from being the only historian or for that matter Romanian intellectual who purported this principle; many of them did. Throughout the inter-war period, the dominant image of public discourse was the portrayal of the nation “as a living organism, functioning according to biological laws and embodying great physical qualities, symbols of innate virtues transmitted from generation to generation.”⁶⁵ Historian Marius Turda argued that the domestic origin of this phenomenon was a “conservative palingensis” that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century and which extolled the traditions of the past as the rejuvenation of the Romanian nation. Authors such as N. Iorga or philosopher Constantin Rădulescu-Motru⁶⁶ advocated “an organic community, completely integrated within its own natural space” that could constitute “a new national body amid alleged domestic spiritual decline and unfavorable international conditions.”⁶⁷ This group was indeed opposed to technological modernity, a

⁶³ „Pentru victoria deplină a socialismului în patria noastră, pentru pace și bunăstarea poporului!” (3 martie 1961), pp. 368-393, in Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole și cuvântări. August 1959 – mai 1961* (București, 1961), p. 381.

⁶⁴ *Apud* Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga. A Biography* (Iași, 1996), p. 325.

⁶⁵ Marius Turda, “The Nation as Object: Race, Blood, and Biopolitics in Interwar Romania,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Fall, 2007), p. 413. For extensive details on the debates over national culture, traditionalism vs modernism, see the two seminal studies by Zigu Ornea *Tradiționalism și modernitate în deceniul al treilea* (București, 1980) and *Anii treizeci. Extrema dreaptă românească* (București, 2008). Also Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român* (București, 1998).

⁶⁶ For example, Rădulescu-Motru was listed by the scientific secretary of the Institute of Party History, Titu Georgescu, among those intellectuals who adjusted their theories and beliefs in order to fight against fascism (others were Iorga, philosopher P. P. Negulescu and economist and high profile member of the National Peasant Party, Virgil Madgearu). See Titu Georgescu, „Nicolae Iorga împotriva hitlerismului”, *Ibid.*.

⁶⁷ Marius Turda, “Conservative Palingenesis and Cultural Modernism in Early Twentieth-Century Romania,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 2008, 9:4, p. 437 and p. 441.

fundamental element of the new civilization brought forth by Stalinism. But in their rehabilitation, the communist regime relegated this issue to the formula of “the limits of their epoch” or “the shortcomings of their class”.

For example, during N. Iorga’s recuperation by the historical front, his work was presented as “one of the fundamental sources for the history of Romanians’ unity and of the unitary nature of our entire national life.”⁶⁸ And, according to the president of the section of the historical science of the RPR/RSR Academy, C. Daicoviciu, “through his work, Nicolae Iorga appears to have imposed himself even more after his death, I would go so far to say *beyond death*.”⁶⁹ To lesser degree than Iorga, Rădulescu-Motru too became “a cultural leader”, a “rationalist thinker tied to the scientific spirit”, the author of “a philosophy with a national, autochthonous character.” But just like Iorga, Rădulescu-Motru, despite his fallacies, had always aimed to elevate the level of civilization in our country.⁷⁰ In the sixties though, just like in the case of the relationship between tradition and historical front, Rădulescu-Motru’s influence was more pervasive than his literal rehabilitation. In 1900, Rădulescu-Motru organized an inquiry on the main ethno-psychological features of the Romanian people. The questionnaire contained four questions:

I Which literary work expresses best the nature (fire) and the aspirations of the Romanian kin (neam)?

II Which is the dominant feature of a Romanian’s nature (fire)

III Which are the qualities and defects that distinguish the Romanian nationality as compared to other nationalities?

IV Which historical fact best revealed the qualities and defects of the Romanian kin (neam)?⁷¹

⁶⁸ Vasile Netea, „N Iorga istoric al unității naționale”, *Ibid.*, p. 1426

⁶⁹ C. Daicoviciu, „Nicolae Iorga și autohtonii”, *Ibid.*, p. 1227.

⁷⁰ Petru Vaida, “Constantin Rădulescu-Motru”, in Dumitru Ghișe, Nicolae Gogoneață (coord.), *Istoria filozofiei românești*, vol. II (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1980) *apud* Cristian Preda, „Un totalitarism peotriva sufletului românesc”, studiu introductiv C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Scrieri politice* (București, 1998), p.14. Motru was first partially rehabilitated in Nicolae Gogoneață, „Sistemul filozofic al lui C. Rădulescu-Motru,” in *Revista de filozofie*, XV, (no.4, 1968) and in Simion Ghiță, “Știința și cunoștere în concepția lui C. Rădulescu-Motru”, article in the collective volume *Filozofia și sociologia românească în prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea* (București, 1969).

⁷¹ „Chestionar privitor la psihologia poporului român” in Vasile Pârvan, *Scrieri*, text stabilit, studiu introductiv și note de Alexandru Zub (București, 1981), p. 51. Also see Alexandru Zub, *De la istorie critică la criticism. Istoriografia română la finele secolului XIX și începutul secolului XX* (București, 1985), p. 233.

In 1965, echoing this initiative, the president of the RSR Academy's section of economic and juridical science, Athanasie Joja, sketched the spiritual profile of the Romanian people. According to Joja,

*the moral physiognomy of the Romanian people is characterized by the following components: reason and rationality (in the broad sense), realism, a lively sense of nature, the melancholy of the doina, humor and vivacity, a deep national feeling, which is yet sober and allied with a spirit of broad tolerance, a remarkable capacity for absorption, a spirit of moderation and understanding of the concrete, and rejection of mysticism (...) We are of the view that these qualities in their entirety characterize the Romanian people and are peculiar to their profile among the great family of the peoples of the world."*⁷²

It is obvious that Joja never considered pointing to the defects of the Romanians or to compare them with other nations.⁷³ At the same time, if we are to adjust his characterization to Motru's questionnaire, the fundamental change consisted in the fact that Joja's main presupposition was that these moral qualities defined the people as a result of their *entire* history.

Motru's influence in the evolution of the characterization of the Nation under communism will soon become even more obvious. In 1971, the volume *Națiunea și contemporaneitatea*, written by a collective of authors from the Institute of historical and social-political studies (formerly the Institute of Party History), defined the Nation as an ethnic community. And, in conceptualizing a people's ethnicity, the authors appealed to Rădulescu-Motru's definition according to which ethnicity was "fixed in three states of a community's consciousness: of origin, of language, and of destiny."⁷⁴ Furthermore, once the idea of a national physiognomy of the Romanians was integrated, in mid-seventies, into the official political discourse of the regime, Rădulescu-Motru's more extensive rehabilitation was inevitable. In a volume published in 1984, Al. Cazan, described Motru's work as an "open synthesis of the life and understanding of the essential strata of the empirical and spiritual history of the Romanian people and of its destiny..."⁷⁵ For Iorga, Motru, and Pârvan, "the individual was merely the product of society and therefore only a collective ideology could configure

⁷² *Steaua*, Vol.16 (September 1965), pp. 3 *apud* George Schopflin, "Rumanian Nationalism," *Survey* 20:2/3 (1974), pp. 96.

⁷³ Nor did V. Pârvan when he responded, in 1900, to Motru's questionnaire.

⁷⁴ Ioan Ceterchi (coord.), *Națiunea și contemporaneitatea* (București, 1971), p. 25.

⁷⁵ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Personalismul energetic și alte scrieri*, studiu, antologie și note de Gh. Al. Cazan (București, 1984) *apud* Cristian Preda, „Un totalitarism...”, *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the national collective body.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, their emphasis on the imperative of solidarity, social discipline, and individual action subordinated to communal purposes came very close to the mobilizational ethics of Romanian communism.⁷⁷

Scientism and the myth of progress were two of the fundamental additions to this paradigm of organic palingenesis along with a deeper understanding of egalitarianism – the non-antagonistic classes of the communist society that gave the Nation its characteristic and superior socialist physiognomy. At the same time, Stalinism’s claim of hyper-rationality and historical determinism only deepened and worsened the effects of this specific form of nationalism. Its organicity, according to M. Eminescu, Iorga, the younger V. Pârvan, Rădulescu-Motru, or geographer Simion Mehedinți, was the expression of the people’s genius, of its eternal spirit. Furthermore, the authors endorsed and called for national

⁷⁶Balázs Trencsényi, „Conceptualizarea caracterului național în tradiția intelectuală românească”, in Victor Neumann și Armin Heinen (eds.), *Istoria României prin concepte. Perspective alternative asupra limbajelor social-politice* (Iași, 2010), p. 361. For Pârvan see „Ideile fundamentale ale culturii sociale contemporane”, Pârvan, *Scrieri...*, pp. 353-375. For Iorga see for instance, „Ce înseamnă astăzi concepția istorică”, *Leția de deschidere la Universitatea din București* (31 octombrie 1938) in Nicolae Iorga, *Generalități cu privire la studiile istorice*, ed. III-a (București, 1944), pp. 259-271.

⁷⁷ Both Iorga and Rădulescu-Motru had extremely harsh words for Bolshevism, though they admired the Soviet Union ability to mobilize the population and transform the social environment. The difficulty in the rehabilitation of Motru lay in the fact that he supported the war against the Soviet Union, admired Hitler, and backed Antonescu’s dictatorship. For an excellent historical contextualization of Rădulescu-Motru’s activity from King Carol II’s dictatorship until the coming into power of the communist party see Lucian Boia, *Capcanele istoriei Elita intelectuală românească între 1930 și 1950* (București: Humanitas, 2011). Iorga’s case was more ‘convenient’ for the communist regime. He was assassinated by the Iron Guard before the war began. Romanian historians also glossed over the fact that some could consider him one of the mentors of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and that his early writings were vehemently anti-Semitic (throughout his life, Iorga considered any Jew who would refuse assimilation to Romanian culture as a potential enemy) In both cases, their usage of the concept of race created difficulties of interpretation for interpreters under communism. See my discussion below on this matter in Iorga’s case. On the analysis of Iorga’s anti-Semitism and his nationalism’s influence over the Iron Guard see the chapter “Background and Precursors to the Holocaust” in Tuvia Friling, Radu Ioanid, Mihail E. Ionescu (eds.), *Final Report - International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania* (Iași, 2004), pp. 19-55, Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga...*, p. 301-307, and Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism : The Case of Romanian Intellectuals In The 1930s* (Oxford/New York, 1991).

collectivism. Motru famously argued in 1936 that “Nations are formed of individuals, but the individuals that make them up [*care le compun*] do not have a spiritual existence for themselves. They exist in relation to the achievement of national totality [*în funcție de finalitatea totalității naționale*].”⁷⁸ In contrast, Pârvan formulated his vision of the nation in an anti-political register, but its Millennialistic organicity was unmistakable in his inaugural lectures at “Dacia Superioară” University (between 1919 and 1920):

*Open thy wings, you soul of my nation, flap them widely and powerfully in the air of the world below and fly like an eagle to clear and pure horizons. From there your eyes will see ever more clearly the complete icon of the world and of life, but you shall not breathe the stench of the filth of matter brewing below which brings sleep, inertia and death. The serene solitude of the skies will teach you again the Olympian constant rhythm of eternity, untroubled by death, [the rhythm] of the eternal laws that belong to the infinite from which the everlasting light, irradiating to inter-astral spaces, reflects upon our soul ideas, spirit, and life.*⁷⁹

Under communism, in addition to this vision, the organic Nation (as both condition and process) became a necessary and fundamental element of the irreversible progress of History. And, because of historical materialism, its organicity could be proven beyond any doubt as unquestionable, scientific truth. Identity was no more just a category of Romanian inwardness traceable in its historical evolution. In a hyper-Rankean spirit, it was a hard fact produced by proof and logic. Again, Ceaușescu’s speech on May 7, 1966, gave the general outlines both for this syncretic reading of identity and for the tool to certify it:

History shows that the creation of the nation as a form of human community and the development of the national life of the peoples is a social, logical process, a necessary and compulsory stage in the evolution of all peoples. Formed under the historical conditions of the capitalist society, the nation manifested from the beginning a tremendous influence over economic and social progress, over the advancement of peoples. Marx has shown that the objective periods

⁷⁸ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Românismul, catehismul unei noi spiritualități* (București, 1936) *Apud* Marta Petreu, “De la lupta de rasă la lupta de clasă. C. Rădulescu-Motru” in Marta Petreu, *De la Junimea la Noica. Studii de cultura românească* (Iași/București, 2011), p. 145. In his later writings, as Marta Petreu correctly pointed out, Motru went as far as clamoring for “the absolute reality of national totality...negating the idea of universal history.” Petreu, *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁷⁹ „Idei și forme istorice. Patru lecții inaugurale”, in Pârvan, *Scrieri...*, p. 389.

*necessary to social development cannot be eliminated. At most they can be shortened. Life proves that ignoring this dialectic truth, attempting to circumvent the stage of the formation of the nation or preventing its development, can severely affect the interests of peoples and those of world peace.*⁸⁰

And

*History must ... start from the scientific analysis of social reality, to present the fact not on the basis of men's subjective desires, not according to immediate political needs, to conjunctural criteria, but [it must present the facts] as they actually happened in correspondence to the truth of life. The value of a truly scientific history lies in the objective exposition of the facts, in their just interpretation, becoming in this way a mirror of the people's self-conscience, of the classes, bringing together the life and struggle experience of the masses and their leaders. [my emphasis]*⁸¹

The appropriation of the vision of the “nation itself as a living being” with “its own inner evolution” (*mers lăuntric*), “a united body, one let’s say circulatory system through which the same live blood flows” (Iorga)⁸², by the communist regime in mid-sixties can be considered a watershed: one of the founding myths of the Romanian narrative of identity had been fully rehabilitated, basically re-vitalizing the RWP/RCP’s claim for legitimacy and transforming local communism into a national totalitarian movement.⁸³ Within the framework of the master-narrative of

⁸⁰ „Expunerea tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR la adunarea festivă cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani...”, f. 68.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, f. 7.

⁸² The two versions of the metaphor appear in various works of Iorga, but it is important to note that they are referenced by two articles in the special issue of *Studii* commemorating 25 years since the historian’s assassination: Andrei Oțetea, „N. Iorga – Istoric al Românilor” and Vasile Netea, „N. Iorga istoric al unității naționale”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, „25 de ani de la moartea lui Nicolae Iorga”, no.5, (XVIII, 1965).

⁸³ Gentile and Mallet defined this concept as “an *experiment in political domination* undertaken by a *revolutionary movement*, with an *integralist conception* of politics, that aspires toward a *monopoly of power* and that, after having secured power, whether by legal or illegal means, destroys or transforms the previous regime and constructs a new state based on a *single-party regime*, with the chief objective of *conquering society*. That is, it seeks the subordination, integration and homogenisation of the governed on the basis of the *integral politicisation of existence*, whether collective or individual, interpreted according to the categories, the myths and the values of a *palingenetic*

national identity, building socialism and being a socialist citizen equaled with a healthy existence. In the words of historian C. Daicoviciu: “when the entire country, when its farthest corner is mobilized (*angrenat*), when the blood flows through all veins then the entire body is healthy.”⁸⁴

In successfully creating the image of a “battle community” struggling for independence, cultural emancipation, economic prosperity, and international recognition, the RWP/RCP constructed a world-view with great tradition in the history of Romania’s struggles for self-representation. Subsequently, these motifs easily resonated both with a national intelligentsia and a population frustrated by Soviet hegemony. In the second half of the sixties, the imagined context for the narrative of sovereignty within the communist polity was strikingly similar to the encoding of the national condition that the nationalism of the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century created in Romania. The study of the historical front paralleled to the evolution of the political discourse of the domestic communist leadership brings forth a big-picture that increasingly resembles Amir Heinen’s overview of the turn of the century nationalism:

a new and young intelligentsia suffered because of the low prestige, not only abroad but also in its own country, of Romanian culture. That is why, she was interested in rediscovering the roots of a national and autonomous culture...a culture that would also consolidate the Romanians’ solidarity both in and outside the Kingdom, that could create a consciousness which would protect Romanianism from the risk of losing national identity and which would constitute the foundations of a unitary nation-state. Romanian “nationalism” found multiple points of reference. It took from Junimea the thesis of “forms without content”. It claimed its national sensibilities from the Liberal school of [Simion] Bărnuțiu, and, in their youth, Iorga and A. C. Cuza [another representative of the “conservative palingensis”, n.a.] sympathized with socialist circles. Even if it took some of their initiatives, it [this type of

ideology, institutionalised in the form of a political religion, that aims to shape the individual and the masses through an anthropological revolution in order to regenerate the human being and create the new man, who is dedicated in body and soul to the realisation of the revolutionary and imperialistic policies of the totalitarian party. The ultimate goal is to create a new civilization...” See Emilio Gentile and Robert Mallett “The Sacralisation of Politics: Definitions, Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism”, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 1, no. 1, (2000), pp.19.

⁸⁴ “Stenograma întâlnirii conducerii PCR cu membrii Prezidiului Academiei R.S.R.” (28 mai 1966) in Pavelescu and Dumitru (eds.), *PCR și intelectualii...*, p. 66.

nationalism] rose against liberalism, conservatism, and socialism. Organic development was opposed to rational order. [...] It was a reflex of the economic, political, and cultural transformations that Romania experienced at the beginning of the 19th century. [...] This new attitude originated in fears and doubts. [...] "Nationalism" compensated for the absence of social cohesion and the lack of the feeling of self-worth by means of identification with the nation. [...] The nation seemed a being in its own, with its own expectations and personality. It was located above the idea of individual liberty, which meant that it did not constitute on the basis of the will of its members, but it existed naturally beyond them. The meaning of each individual's life was given through and for the nation ... Inequality resulted from social division of labor and the conflicts resulting from it was reduced by the consciousness of national belonging.⁸⁵

Titu Maiorescu and his thesis of the "forms without content" will be fully rehabilitated in the second half of the 1960s. Bărnuțiu and his school were already part of the cultural Pantheon of the communist regime. The historical front already or was well on the way to recuperating the tradition of collectivism of this current of Romanian nationalism. Furthermore, personalities such as Iorga, Pârvan, and even sociologist Dimitrie Gusti⁸⁶ were employed as sources of arguments for the critique of the "landowners-bourgeois regime". Referring to the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, N. Ceaușescu defined the legacy of this period in Romania's history: "the intelligentsia of the country was formed because of the economic, scientific, and cultural progress; with all its contradictions in political matters, it played a great role in the social-political life of Romania."⁸⁷ The type of nationalism described by A. Heinen gradually became the source of tradition for the ideology of national-Stalinism on cultural, economic, social, and even political issues (particularly in reference to foreign policy). To put it differently, the political thought of the period in question now functioned as creative inspiration for the forging of socialist

⁸⁵ Armin Heinen, *Legiunea „Arhanghelului Mihail”: Mișcare socială și organizație politică. O contribuție la problema fascismului internațional*, ed. II, (București, 2006), pp. 73-75 [my translation from Romanian].

⁸⁶ See the review to Ovidiu Bădina, *Dimitrie Gusti. Contribuții la cunoașterea operei și activității sale* (București, 1965) in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, no.4, XVIII, 1965, pp. 962-964.

⁸⁷ „Expunerea tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR la adunarea festivă cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani...”, f. 12.

revolution within the Nation.⁸⁸ It substantiated the 1964 dictum that revolution can only be done from within.

Because of the specificities of the political discourse crystallized from 1964 to 1966, it can be argued that the RWP/RCP not only emulated Romanian *fin de siècle* nationalism, but it also adopted its Others: Hungary and Russia. To paraphrase Iver Neumann's thesis (on the role of Russian in the shaping of European identity), I consider that these two countries "in whatever territorial shape, by whatever name, as whatever representation," had a long history as Romania's main "liminars".⁸⁹ As it could already be noticed from monograph *Tratat Istoria a României*, from the RWP and Romanian historians' rejection of the idea of Central Europe, from the re-evaluation of the role of Tsarism in national history and increasingly convenient trump card of Bessarabia's historical status, in the ambivalent position toward the Soviet Union during the interwar period and at the moment of revolutionary breakthrough, or, ultimately, in the RWP/RCP analysis of the nature of the world communist movement, there was a permanent ambivalence between the Romanian self and the Hungarian/Russian/Soviet others.⁹⁰ Histories of crucial events in the history of Romania or/and the party became inextricably linked to the stories about these Others' projected identity. For example, would the formation of the Romanian people and language be possible in the absence of histories about the Hungarians or the Slavs during the same timeframe? Or the formation of the Romanian nation-state without constructing a mirror-image narrative about the Hungarians' national rights or about the demise of the Tsarist empire and the disarray of the newly created Soviet Union? From mid-1960s up until the demise of the communist regime (and many years after), the

⁸⁸ I am paraphrasing one of the remarks of Polish historian J. Kowalski made during a debate organized by the editorial board of *Z pola walki* the academic journal of the Institute of Party History in Poland (march 17, 1966). The topic was Marxist political thought on the problem of the nation and the state. Its main themes were very similar to what was being discussed in Romania, as Polish historians were grappling with the dilemma of national struggle versus class struggle and the Polish identity versus Polish chauvinism. See „Informare privind desfășurarea învățămîntului ideologic în rîndul oamenilor de știință, artă, al cadrelor didactice din institutetele de învățămînt superior din București”, 6 iulie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no. 37/1966, ff. 1-22.

⁸⁹ Iver B. Neumann, Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis, 1999) p. 111. For the concept of "liminar" see pp. 9-11.

⁹⁰ See chapters "National History: The People's Cultural Tradition" and "Socialist Integration versus Alternative Geographies of Science" in Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, especially pp. 259-413.

Romanian Nation could not be understood without either or both Others figuring highly in historical narrative. Again, it was not only a matter of tradition, but also of method. In adopting the principle of history as the great tribunal judging peoples and nations, history-production could construct stories of national identity only at the expense of those found guilty for offenses and crimes against the Romanian people.

V. Conclusion

Between 1964 until 1966, the Romanian communist regime developed what Peter Fritzsche called, for Nazi Germany, “the spectacle of national unity.” He referred mainly to public manifestations of popular support, of systemic strength, of social solidarity, and of national unity or greatness.⁹¹ In Romania, during the time-frame that I am dealing with such manifestations have yet to reach the megalomaniac dimensions of the seventies or the eighties. I am employing, though, Fritzsche’s phrase in order to describe the countless public meetings, gatherings or manifestations of support for the party line either in connection with the April Declaration or the Ninth Party Congress. Also, one should not overlook the concentration of anniversaries that were manifestly used by the party to prove and deepen its legitimacy. The spontaneous manifestation of support for the RCP and its leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, during the August 1968 condemnation of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia did not come out of nowhere. Its origin lay in tumultuous months before 1964 and in its feverish aftermath.

Moreover, at a time of struggle for national sovereignty, science, and the historical front in particular, was once again called upon to help Romanians consciously build their future. From this vantage point, history-production had to represent the genius of the Romanian people.⁹² National history, with the party included, became the story of the Nation’s exercise of its ancestral “vocation of unity.” (L. Boia)⁹³ At the core of it all was a hybrid

⁹¹ Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge/London, 2008).

⁹² At the Ninth Congress, echoing earlier statements of the party leadership (Dej included), N. Ceaușescu declared that scientific research was the manifestation of each people’s genius. He then went on to praise the exceptional talent, qualities, strength, and abilities of the Romanians as were proved on the scientific front. See also Al. Bărlădeanu’s closing remarks at the General Session of the RSR Academy (6-8 April 1966) in *Analele Academiei Republicii Socialiste România*, 100 (1966), seria a IV-a, Volumul XVI (București, 1967), p. 309, 313.

⁹³ By “vocation of unity,” Boia understands “the subordination of the individual in the face of the national organism and, at the same time, a strict delimitation of their own nation in relation to others” in the context of presenting the Romanians “united

understanding of organicity. On the one side, there was the organic development presupposed by historical materialism in which ideas, institutions, masses, classes, parties, and personalities have "a relative independence", their impact being the nature of response to the material life of society.⁹⁴ On the other side, there was the nationalism of late 19th and early 20th century nationalism with its understanding of the nation as a being with a destiny and a mission in history.

By 1965, two eschologies had met: that of the vanguard people successfully building socialism in one country thus inching closer to communism; and, that of the national being that emerges victorious from the birth-pangs of history. The result was a national Stalinist synthesis, what Robert C. Tucker called a "Sigfried nation". To paraphrase N. A. Gredeskul, one of the *smenovekhovtsy*⁹⁵ intellectuals in the Soviet Union, the RCP and its Leader now led a Revolution which was on a march to the end history that brought to final fruition all the best that was in the past.⁹⁶

throughout their whole history, united around the single party and the Leader." See Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest, 2001), p. 77.

⁹⁴ See the definition of historical materialism in R. Sommer, R. Tomoioagă, P. Vaida (coord.), *Mic dicționar filozofic* (București, 1969), p. 236.

⁹⁵ The category describes those nationalist intellectuals who accepted to work for the communist regime because they envisaged it as a valid incarnation of the nation-building principle. For more details about the *Smena vekh* group: Robert C. Williams, "'Changing Landmarks' in Russian Berlin, 1922-1924", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Dec., 1968), pp. 581-593; Mikhail Agursky, *The Third Rome: National Bolshevism in the USSR*, foreword by Leonard Schapiro (Boulder, 1987); Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power – The Revolution from Above 1928-1941* (New York/London, 1990), pp. 35-38; Hilde Hardeman, *Coming to Terms with the Soviet Regime. The "Changing Signposts" Movement among Russian Émigrés in the Early 1920s* (DeKalb, 1994); Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 9-15, and Finkel, Stuart, *On the Ideological Front. The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere* (New Haven/London, 2007).

⁹⁶ *Apud* in Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power...*, p. 63.

Idéologie, Parti et Nation – Légitimer la voie roumaine vers le socialisme

Alina Pavelescu

The National Archives of Romania

« - *Qu'est-ce que la liberté ?*
- *La liberté, c'est le dimanche quand*
il est permis de ne pas aller au boulot »
(6 ans)¹

The article analyses programmatic documents and official publications of the Romanian Communist Party in order to obtain a large perspective on the way in which, beginning with the 6th decade, the ideological symbiosis, as sign of Ceaușescu's regime, constitutes. Elements of continuity to the last years of Gheorghiu-Dej regime are reviewed and we also tried to explain political and ideological mechanisms by which the new direction initiated by Nicolae Ceaușescu managed to blend elements of national political culture, specific to the period before communism.

As a conclusion, we appreciate that the process of re-writing the history of Romanian communism, based on a new ideological scale, relied on the relationship between the history of the Romanian Communist Party and the Romanian nation, did not have a success within the Party and it was only partially compelling for the elite involved in this propaganda. However, it managed to change the political culture of the Romanian society.

Keywords: 60's, ideological symbiosis of nationalist communism, re-writing the history of Romanian Communist Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Un aspect qui pourrait donner lieu à des points d'interrogation multiples, quand on évoque la légitimation des régimes communistes, concerne les fonctions de l'idéologie. L'affirmation d'une ambition d'innovation idéologique représente, dans les régimes communistes, une partie structurelle de leur construction symbolique de la légitimité.² L'idéologie communiste a cessé assez vite d'être jugée, dans les analyses politiques, en fonction de sa cohérence ou de son potentiel d'innovation.

¹ Daniela Alexandru, Irina Nicolau, Ciprian Voicilă, *Experimentul Zaica*, préface par Andrei Pleșu, (Bucarest, 2000), p. 18.

² Nous suivons à ce propos le raisonnement d'Alfred G. Meyer, "The Functions of Ideology in the Soviet Political System", *Soviet Studies*, XVII, no. 3, (Jan. 1966), surtout pp. 279-283. Daniel C. Nelson, *Elite-Mass Relations in Communist Systems*, (New York, 1988), p. 74-75, qui souligne l'importance attribuée par les régimes communistes à l'idéologie en tant qu'instrument de légitimation politique.

Elle reste cependant significative de la perspective de son utilisation dans le processus de légitimation politique. Cette idéologie – qui se définit dès ses origines comme révolutionnaire – contient la justification primordiale des régimes de type soviétique. En terme de légitimité, elle offre la principale motivation des révolutions communistes et des constructions politiques qui les suivent.³ Dans cette optique, ce n'est pas l'idéologie en soi qui est signifiante, mais le rôle qui lui est attribué par chaque parti communiste. Le fait que cette idéologie est une construction utopique, parfois incohérente, qu'elle n'a pas beaucoup de chances de résister devant la réalité, ou qu'elle ne peut renoncer à sa rigidité initiale qu'au risque de devenir un bricolage difficile à manier, reste secondaire pour l'analyse de son rôle dans le processus de légitimation de ces régimes aussi longtemps qu'elle (l'idéologie) garde sa position de pilier dans l'articulation de leurs relations de pouvoir.

Cette problématique est d'autant plus intéressante dans le cas de Nicolae Ceaușescu dont les ambitions de réformateur idéologique du communisme ont été manifestement exprimées tout au long de son régime et elles ont été, dans une première phase, largement créditées par les médias occidentaux.⁴ La contribution idéologique de Nicolae Ceaușescu à la définition de la "société socialiste multilatéralement développée" et d'une "nation socialiste" devrait, par conséquent, être jugée de façon analogue. Son originalité ou sa cohérence est secondaire par rapport à sa qualité d'attribut symbolique du pouvoir. Elle représente, avant tout, un passage obligé vers la légitimation du nouveau leader du PCR en tant que dirigeant du Parti ainsi que vers sa légitimation en tant que dirigeant de tous les Roumains. D'ailleurs, l'insistance sur l'importance de la contribution à l'idéologie officielle du régime dans l'œuvre de légitimation d'une nouvelle équipe dirigeante ne constitue pas, elle non plus, un trait inédit du régime Ceaușescu. On pourrait invoquer dans le même sens et pour la même époque, l'exemple de Leonid Brejnev, dont le concept de "socialisme développé" a précédé l'effort de Ceaușescu de définir la "société socialiste multilatéralement développée"⁵. De la même manière, le concept roumain

³ Alfred G. Meyer, *op.cit.*, surtout pp. 55-62

⁴ Pour une vision largement partagée à l'époque dans les milieux occidentaux sur les éventuelles directions d'innovation politique à l'intérieur du régime Ceaușescu, voir Kenneth Jowitt, "The Romanian Communist Party and the World Socialist System: A Redefinition of Unity", *World Politics*, 23, no. 1, (Oct. 1970), pp. 38-60. Jowitt voit la clef de la future évolution du régime Ceaușescu dans le souci de préserver un équilibre entre les attitudes hostiles vis-à-vis de l'hégémonie soviétique et le devoir de fidélité à l'intérieur du bloc communiste.

⁵ Pour le concept de « socialisme développé » dans l'idéologie soviétique à l'époque de Brejnev, nous avons suivi la démonstration d'Alfred. B. Evans Jr.,

de "nation socialiste" a des correspondances plus ou moins directes tant dans la théorie titiste d'une "voie indépendante vers le socialisme"⁶ que dans le "nationalisme anti-impérialiste"⁷ de Mao Tse Dong ou dans le concept de "nation socialiste", théorisé dans les années 1970 par le régime communiste de la RDA⁸.

L'analyse que nous tenterons en ce qui suit se concentrera sur l'idéologie officielle du régime Ceaușescu, telle qu'elle est reflétée par les documents programmatiques du PCR et par les prises de position publiques de ses dirigeants. Cette précision nous semble très importante parce que, même à l'intérieur d'un régime comme celui de Nicolae Ceaușescu, dont la rigidité et l'orthodoxie du dogme politique sont des traits fondamentaux, le message idéologique n'a pas une seule voix et ne reste pas indifférencié en contact avec ses différents diffuseurs ou avec ses différentes catégories de public. Nous suivrons dans notre analyse la définition de l'idéologie officielle proposée par Alfred G. Meyer⁹ : "*le corpus doctrinaire utilisé par le Parti communiste dans l'œuvre de socialisation politique de ses sujets, des écoliers jusqu'aux cadres du parti, avec des variations en intensité ou de durée du processus éducationnel et avec des degrés variable de sophistication, d'intensité ou d'insistance sur les détails*"¹⁰ Suivant le raisonnement de Meyer, ce corpus doctrinaire comprend quatre aspects généraux : une philosophie – le matérialisme dialectique ; un corpus théorique comprenant des généralités sur l'homme et la société, le passé et le présent – le matérialisme historique ; une doctrine économique qui a le rôle d'expliquer les mécanismes économiques du

"Developed Socialism in Soviet Ideology", *Soviet Studies*, 29, no. 3, (Jul., 1977), pp. 409-428. Evans Jr. fixe les débuts d'une théorisation de ce concept autour de l'année 1967.

⁶ Pour une synthèse de l'idéologie spécifique du communisme yougoslave, voir Fred Warner Neal, "Yugoslav Communist Theory", *American Slavic and East European Review*, 19, no. 1, (Feb., 1960), pp. 42-62.

⁷ Cf. Edward Friedman, "Reconstructing China's National Identity: A Southern Alternative to Mao-Era Anti-Imperialist Nationalism", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 53, no. 1, (Feb., 1994), pp. 67-91.

⁸ Voir à ce propos Carl Pletsch, "The Socialist Nation of the German Democratic Republic or the Asymmetry in Nation and Ideology between the Two Germanies", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 21, no. 3, (Jul., 1979), pp. 323-345.

⁹ Cf. Alfred G. Meyer, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

¹⁰ Notre démarche ne porte pourtant pas sur l'analyse du binôme « cohérence idéologique » versus « consensus pragmatique », ainsi qu'il est décrit par Giovanni Sartori, "Politics, Ideology and Belief Systems", *The American Political Science Review*, 63, no. 2, (June, 1969), p. 409. Autrement dit, nous ne serons pas en position d'étudier le degré de solidarité engendrée par l'idéologie du régime Ceaușescu entre différents groupes ou membres des groupes à l'intérieur de la société roumaine.

capitalisme et de l'impérialisme, d'une part, et ceux de la construction socialiste, d'autre part – l'économie politique ; un corpus d'idées politiques, qui devrait éclairer les stratégies de la révolution communiste et fournir des solutions pour les problèmes politiques de l'Etat socialiste – le socialisme scientifique ; l'histoire officielle du Parti.¹¹

L'idéologie officielle se constitue, par rapport au message de la propagande, en point fixe de la construction théorique ; elle sert de référentiel à l'effort générale de mobilisation politique et représente également, pour ceux qui sont en charge de cet effort, la garantie de la pertinence de leur démarche théorique par rapport à ce qui est considéré l'orthodoxie du dogme communiste. Cependant, à l'intérieur de chaque régime communiste national, l'idéologie officielle n'est pas, elle non plus, un corpus immobile mais plutôt un ensemble de données – qui, à leur tour, se construisent d'une manière plus ou moins stratifiées – dont seulement une partie est représentée par le noyau dur du dogme marxiste-léniniste. L'autre partie, la plus intéressante parce que la plus soumise à des évolutions significatives, s'articule en fonction des intérêts spécifiques, définis – plus précisément, périodiquement redéfinis – par chaque régime communiste. C'est justement cette dernière partie de l'idéologie officielle du régime Ceaușescu qui nous préoccupera en ce qui suit.

Le signe le plus évident d'une continuité entre le régime Gheorghiu-Dej et le régime Ceaușescu est représenté par la politique d'indépendance du Parti communiste roumain à l'égard de l'URSS. En 1964, les communistes roumains franchissent une nouvelle frontière de l'obédience politique, en proclamant dans un document officiel¹² le droit de chaque parti communiste d'adopter sa propre voie vers le socialisme. Mais les actions de Gheorghiu-Dej et de son équipe dirigeante ne témoignent pas d'une volonté de passer au-delà des actions politiques pragmatiques, marquées par des prises de position plutôt prudentes et restreintes au cercle fermé de l'élite communiste. Pour l'ensemble de la société roumaine, la distanciation de Moscou est rendue visible plutôt à travers ses effets indirects, surtout dans le domaine de la vie culturelle, et non pas par l'articulation d'un discours officiel ouvertement antisoviétique. Au long des

¹¹ Alfred G. Meyer, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

¹² Il s'agit de la « Déclaration sur la position du Parti des Ouvriers Roumains dans les questions du mouvement communiste et ouvrier international », publiée le 22 avril 1964, connue surtout dans l'historiographie du communisme roumain comme « la déclaration d'indépendance » du Parti des Ouvriers Roumains ; cf. Florian Banu, Liviu Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964.- Primăvara de la București. Cum s-a adoptat « Declarația de independență » a României ?* (București, 2004), pp. 74-140.

années qui suivent la mort de Staline, le nouvel état d'esprit de l'équipe dirigeante de Bucarest à l'égard de Moscou est plutôt suggéré aux citoyens de la Roumanie à l'aide d'un message chiffré dans la clef spécifique de la propagande communiste ou par des actions menées contre les anciens kominternistes qui se trouvent encore dans les rangs du Parti des Travailleurs Roumains. Ce qui est le plus important – et scrupuleusement contrôlé par les dirigeants du Parti – c'est que l'attitude critique et le droit de mettre en doute les décisions provenant de Moscou constituent l'apanage exclusif des hauts dirigeants du Parti, les autres communistes ainsi que la société dans son ensemble n'ayant que l'obligation de suivre la nouvelle orientation politique sans trop questionner ses raisonnements.

Franchir la dernière barrière de la rébellion antisoviétique des communistes roumains et intégrer l'indépendantisme du parti dans le courant latent de l'antisoviétisme de la société roumaine représente, en 1965 autant qu'en 1956 ou 1964, une opération risquée pour plusieurs raisons : d'abord, l'histoire du mouvement communiste en Roumanie est toujours intrinsèque à l'histoire de l'expansion soviétique en Europe Centrale et Orientale ; ensuite, une telle attitude est loin de faire l'unanimité à l'intérieur de la direction du PCR et Nicolae Ceaușescu, en tant que principal promoteur de la nouvelle orientation, se retrouve dans une position plutôt vulnérable – étant donnée sa propre biographie politique, liée tant à l'histoire du parti dans la clandestinité qu'aux évolutions profondément prosoviétiques des années 1940 – devant ses adversaires¹³ ; enfin, sortir ce sujet du cercle fermé de la hiérarchie communiste et l'ouvrir à un débat beaucoup plus large – même surveillé de près par les instances locales du Parti ou par les différentes organisations professionnelles – représente un risque indéniable pour le monopole idéologique de la direction du PCR. Les raisons qui ont déterminé Nicolae Ceaușescu à courir ce risque à multiples volets sont à chercher avant tout dans sa propre culture politique et dans l'héritage ambigu des communistes roumains, surtout à propos de leur relation avec la question nationale. Mais elles relèvent non moins d'une nécessité politique, précisée déjà dès la fin des années 1950, de refonder la légitimité du communisme roumain par le biais de son indigénisation, dans

¹³ Un épisode significatif se produit en 1967, au moment de la condamnation des crimes politiques commises dans les années 1950: accusé d'être un des principaux acteurs de ces abus, Alexandru Drăghici, ancien ministre de l'Intérieur, demande à la commission constituée à cet effet d'enquêter les crimes de l'époque, y compris le rôle de Ceaușescu dans les assassinats commis pendant la collectivisation de l'agriculture ; cf. Marius Oprea, *Banalitatea răului. O istorie a Securității în documente. 1949-1989*, (Iasi, 2002), pp. 332-333.

une tentative de renforcer la position du régime communiste à l'intérieur du pays et la sécurité individuelle de ses dirigeants face à la fréquence des changements de ligne politique intervenus à Moscou.

L'œuvre de légitimation du parti communiste devant l'ensemble de la société roumaine, ainsi qu'elle est construite par le régime Ceaușescu, se poursuit dans deux directions principales : la réécriture de l'histoire officielle du parti et l'insertion de celle-ci dans une nouvelle version de l'histoire officielle de la Roumanie.¹⁴ Cette ligne d'action n'est pas sans rapport avec les évolutions enregistrées dans la deuxième moitié des années 1960, surtout celles visant la re-roumanisation de la vie culturelle et l'effacement des effets négatifs de la soviétisation. En 1960, dans son Rapport devant le IIIème Congrès du Parti (devenu en 1965 le VIIIème, conformément à la nouvelle numérotation proposée par Ceaușescu), Gheorghiu-Dej fait une mention brève et plutôt ambiguë du besoin d'articuler une nouvelle conception idéologique sur l'apparition et l'évolution du socialisme en Roumanie.¹⁵ Ses références à la nécessité de réécrire la version officielle de l'histoire du Parti restent pourtant conjoncturelles et sont loin de constituer le point fort du message politique.¹⁶

¹⁴ L'opinion formulée par Robert R. King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, (Hoover Institution Press, 1980), p. 124, nous semble particulièrement pertinente pour les besoins de notre analyse: "*Un des aspects les plus curieux de l'essai de lier le Parti Communiste Roumain à la tradition roumaine est représenté par la fait que l'effort d'interpréter les différents épisodes du passé national dans le contexte de l'histoire contemporaine n'est pas conçu comme un moyen d'investir le passé avec un sens mais il est utilisé pour illustrer ces choses que le Parti estime importantes pour le présent*" (la traduction de l'anglais nous appartient ; la variante originale : "One of the most curious aspects of this attempt to link the RCP with the Romanian heritage is that the effort to interpret various episodes of the national past in the context of contemporary history is not regarded as providing means of understanding the past, but is used to illustrate those things the party considers more important to present.").

¹⁵ Cf. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, "Raportul CC al PMR la Congresul al III-lea al Partidului", in Gheorghe-Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole și cuvântări. August 1959 - Mai 1961* (București, 1961), p. 177: "Conformément aux indications du Congrès, nos cadres du domaine idéologique devront contribuer à l'étude des problèmes de la construction du socialisme à l'étape actuelle. Leur travail sera fructueux et utile à condition qu'on prenne en compte les demandes objectives de chaque étape, qu'à la base de leurs travaux soit l'étude attentive des politiques et des activités pratiques du parti, de ce qui est essentiel dans l'expérience de la classe ouvrière" . (Ici et en ce qui suit, la traduction du roumain nous appartient).

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 177, on fait une référence passagère à l'apparition de nouveaux ouvrages concernant l'histoire du Parti et l'histoire du pays, phénomène considéré comme « résultat positif » des efforts de l'appareil de la propagande.

Le poids du sujet dans le contenu du discours officiel change radicalement en 1965, quand le Rapport de Ceaușescu devant le IX^{ème} Congrès insiste explicitement sur la nécessité de réaliser une nouvelle synthèse officielle de l'histoire du PCR, conforme à la nouvelle ligne idéologique du parti.¹⁷ Le caractère inédit de cette attitude ne tient pas forcément dans l'utilisation d'une historiographie bien surveillée comme méthode primordiale de propagande, parce que ce phénomène s'est produit de facto dans les années 1950 et la situation de l'historiographie roumaine en tant qu'annexe de la propagande est restée inchangée jusqu'à la fin du régime communiste en Roumanie. Mais en 1965, on constate pour la première fois dans le discours officiel des communistes roumains une volonté explicite d'intégrer dans une même vision – et surtout dans une même démarche idéologique – l'histoire officielle du Parti et l'histoire nationale de la Roumanie. La décision de renommer le parti – devenu du Parti des Travailleurs Roumains, le Parti Communiste Roumain – relève du même registre : présenter l'image d'un parti ouvert à tous les Roumains et représentant les intérêts de tous les Roumains.¹⁸ Le nouveau mot d'ordre dans la relation Parti communiste-société roumaine est synthétisé dans une phrase prononcée par le secrétaire général en début de son exposé idéologique : "Notre Parti communiste est le légataire (en roumain, *continuator*) des meilleurs traditions du combat séculaire du peuple roumain pour liberté nationale et sociale, il incarne les traits les plus progressistes du prolétariat et a des racines vigoureuses dans le mouvement ouvrier de Roumanie".¹⁹ Au-delà de la langue de bois²⁰ spécifique au discours communiste, cette affirmation apparemment sans suite porte en soi les germes d'une double négation : d'abord la négation de la primauté de la lutte des classes dans l'idéologie du Parti Communiste Roumain, une primauté encore très chérie par Gheorghiu-Dej en 1960²¹ ; ensuite, la

¹⁷ Cf. *Congresul al IX-lea al Partidului Comunist Român* (București, 1966), pp. 92-93: "Une obligation actuelle est l'élaboration de l'Histoire du Parti – oeuvre qui, en partant des débuts du mouvement ouvrier en Roumanie, doit présenter l'ensemble du combat mené par la classe ouvrière et par le Parti Communiste Roumain, organisateur et dirigeant de la lutte pour la libération sociale et nationale du peuple – directement liée aux réalités politiques, économiques et sociales à chaque étape du développement de notre pays."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁰ Cf. à l'observation de Françoise Thom, *La langue de bois*, (Paris, 1987), p. 19-20, la langue de bois a pour seule fonction de servir de véhicule à l'idéologie communiste; elle n'est qu'une série d'incantations magiques déguisées en axiomes nécessaires.

²¹ Cf. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, p. 167-169; pour Gheorghiu-Dej, la qualité de communiste était avant tout liée à la qualité d'ouvrier et la mission principale du

négarion du rôle primordiale de l'URSS dans l'arrivée au pouvoir du Parti Communiste Roumain. Le IX^{ème} Congrès de 1965 ne représente que le début de ce chemin vers une nouvelle construction de la légitimité des communistes en Roumanie. Pour briser la glace des doutes et des complicités à l'intérieur du parti, de l'hostilité et de la méfiance installées depuis longtemps dans la relation entre le parti et la société roumaine, Ceaușescu et son nouvelle équipe mettent en place une stratégie complexe, dont le travail sur l'idéologie officielle constitue seulement une partie et qui profite tant du contexte international que des attentes positives engendrées dans l'opinion roumaine par la succession de leaders à la tête du PCR.

L'œuvre de réinterprétation de l'histoire officielle du parti commence avec la séparation du passé kominterniste.²² Condamner le rôle négatif de Moscou dans les évolutions du PCR pendant la clandestinité représente d'ailleurs la partie la plus facile de l'entreprise politique menée par l'équipe Ceaușescu, parce que la plus consensuelle au niveau de la direction du parti. Les efforts de Gheorghiu-Dej pour assurer une position de force au groupement des « communistes nationaux » ont abouti vers la fin des années 1950 à une roumanisation réussie des échelons supérieurs. Pour les représentants de cette orientation, le Kremlin et le Komintern n'ont jamais représenté la mémoire d'or d'une époque héroïque, mais ils ont incarné plutôt la source d'une autorité punitive, inflexible et intangible, dont la sympathie et les privilèges étaient dirigés surtout vers ceux qui agissaient dans sa proximité ou directement sous ses ordres, comme par exemple les "moscovites" du groupement d'Ana Pauker. Faire passer devant cette catégorie de communistes frustrés – anciens prisonniers politiques dans la Roumanie de l'entre-deux-guerres ou leurs disciples récents, première génération de paysans roumains urbanisés, pour lesquelles les nouvelles convictions communistes co-existent avec les valeurs traditionnelles solidement enracinées dans leurs familles d'origine – l'image d'un

Parti était de faciliter l'entrée des ouvriers dans ses rangs et de veiller à la "pureté" de sa composition sociale. De manière significative, en 1965, le IX^{ème} Congrès du PCR décide d'enlever les restrictions pour l'accès d'autres catégories sociales dans les rangs du Parti et renonce aux stages de candidature, imposés depuis 1948 à tous les aspirants à la qualité de membres du PCR dont la durée était différenciée en fonction de l'appartenance sociale du candidat (cf. *Congresul al IX-lea...*, p. 76-77).

²² Les germes de cette séparation sont identifiables dans le même discours de Nicolae Ceaușescu au IX^{ème} Congrès du Parti, quand il souligne la nécessité d'admettre l'existence de certaines erreurs dans la politique du parti communiste durant la clandestinité et demande un « jugement objectif » dans la qualification de ces erreurs, dues à son avis exclusivement aux directives aberrantes de Komintern (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 92).

mouvement communiste roumain idéaliste et bien intentionné, doublement persécuté par les autorités de la Roumanie bourgeoise et par les envoyés ignorants ou directement hostiles d'un Komintern insensible à leur situation particulière ne devrait pas présenter beaucoup de difficultés.

Le moment symbolique choisi pour une délimitation explicite du passé est l'anniversaire des 45 ans de la création du Parti Communiste Roumain, en mai 1966. Une direction d'interprétation brièvement esquissée au IXème Congrès²³ est maintenant consacrée par un nouvel exposé du secrétaire général²⁴, inhabituellement long et qui, dans sa variante publiée, est accompagné par plusieurs notes explicatives représentant pour la plupart des citations des documents gardés dans les archives historiques du parti, jusqu'à ce moment inaccessibles aux historiens ou au le public. Le discours respecte le modèle classique de la critique/autocritique communiste²⁵, le référentiel restant également inchangé : le devoir individuel de fidélité à l'égard du Parti ainsi qu'à l'égard de son interprétation de l'objectivité historique. Ce n'est pas une révolution des formes utilisées pour exprimer la vérité officielle, mais un changement de paradigme de vérité. Le nouveau paradigme est construit autour d'une interprétation nationale de l'apparition et de l'évolution du mouvement communiste roumain. La création du PCR en 1921 est considérée, par conséquent, dans la perspective d'une "évolution objective" des conditions économiques et sociales de la Roumanie, et l'analyse menée avec les outils du matérialisme historique intègre non seulement les enjeux de l'histoire récente du parti, mais également les grands moments de la modernisation étatique roumaine au XIXème et au XXème siècle.²⁶ La tradition politique de la sociale-démocratie est elle-aussi

²³ Pourtant, les idées fondamentales de la nouvelle interprétation donnée à l'histoire officielle du parti sont comprises dans un seul paragraphe: "Dans le jugement de l'activité du Parti durant la clandestinité, on doit prendre en compte le contexte difficile dans lequel il a été obligé d'évoluer, l'influence exercée par la présence dans sa direction de certains personnages opportunistes, sectaires, étrangers à la classe ouvrière, ainsi que l'influence exercée par certains phénomènes négatifs du mouvement communiste et ouvrier international de l'époque."; cf. *Congresul al IX-lea...*, p. 92.

²⁴ Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Partidul Comunist Român - Continuator al luptei revoluționare și democratice a poporului român, al tradițiilor mișcării muncitorești și socialiste din România", in Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul desăvârșirii construcției socialiste. Rapoarte, cuvântări, articole*, vol.1, (București, 1968), pp. 335-415.

²⁵ Cf. les considérations de Claude Penetier, Bernard Pudal, eds., *Autobiographie, autocritique, aveux dans le monde communiste*, (Paris, 2002), pp. 15-39.

²⁶ Le nouveau paradigme de l'histoire officielle du communisme roumain est explicitement inséré dans un tableau général dominé par les références à l'histoire

traitée en clef matérialiste et intégrée dans l'histoire officielle du Parti Communiste Roumain.

Dans cette optique d'un mouvement communiste national, constitué comme conséquence directe de l'évolution historique spécifique à la société roumaine, la relation de subordination au Komintern est soumise à un travail de mémoire politiquement contrôlé qui aboutit à une nouvelle représentation du passé kominterniste comme maladie infantile du communisme roumain. Des noms comme celui du premier secrétaire du PCR, Gheorghe Cristescu, ou des communistes roumains victimes des purges staliniens des années 1930 sont réhabilités d'abord par leur simple mention dans un document officiel, après une longue période d'oubli volontaire et avant l'officialisation de leur réhabilitation administrative.²⁷

La critique de la position politique du PCdR de l'entre-deux-guerres dans la question nationale se produit dans ce contexte préalablement préparé à une appropriation exclusivement roumaine de l'histoire du parti. On commence de manière significative par relever le rôle négatif des anciens secrétaires généraux et des membres de la direction du parti dont l'origine ethnique était autre que roumaine et dont le seul fondement de l'autorité dans le parti a été représenté par le soutien du Komintern :

*"[Aux conditions difficiles de la clandestinité] on doit ajouter les effets négatifs des pratiques du Komintern de nommer des cadres dirigeants du Parti, y compris le secrétaire général, des personnes de l'extérieur du pays, méconnaissant la vie et les intérêts du peuple roumain (...) Si on se souvient qu'à l'époque, les dirigeants de notre parti ont été désignés des personnes qui n'habitaient pas le territoire de la Roumanie et qui ne connaissaient pas les conditions sociales et politiques du pays, on se rend compte des préjudices que cette pratique a provoqué aux luttes révolutionnaires de notre pays."*²⁸

Cette opération de délimitation des culpabilités restitue une légitimité exclusive à l'orientation nationale, plus précisément au groupement qui la

nationale: "De nombreuses pages de l'histoire de notre pays sont couvertes par les luttes révolutionnaires des paysans, des petits marchands, des ouvriers, des intellectuels, des couches les plus larges de la population, qui se sont opposées au long des siècles, pour plus d'une fois, à l'oppression et à l'injustice menées par les étrangers, [et qui ont lutté] pour la justice sociale, pour la liberté de la patrie"; cf. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

²⁷ On fait mention de leur position de rejet des 21 conditions du Komintern comme attitude positive et preuve de maturité politique, ce qui, en termes de pratiques communistes, équivaut à une réhabilitation de facto; *Ibid.*, p. 353.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 357-358.

représente à l'intérieur du PCR, dont Ceaușescu lui-même hérite sa position politique. Elle se révèle essentielle pour la crédibilité politique du parti dans le contexte d'une nouvelle construction de légitimité qui inclut comme élément principal la prise de distance par rapport à sa position de l'entre-deux-guerres concernant le caractère impérialiste de l'Etat roumain après 1918 et le droit à l'"autonomie jusqu'à la séparation de l'Etat" des provinces constituant la Grande Roumanie. Le changement de position est radical : non seulement le concept d'Etat national, unitaire et indivisible est réhabilité, mais il devient un des points clef de la vision politique du régime Ceaușescu.²⁹ Dans cette perspective, l'affirmation du rôle fondamental de la Nation dans le régime socialiste et de la mission du parti communiste de se constituer en avant-garde illuminée de la Nation devient soutenable à l'intérieur d'une idéologie qui se réclame toujours du marxisme-léninisme³⁰ et qui se prépare à exploiter ses chances de crédibilité dans le contexte particulier du régime communiste en Roumanie.

Les réhabilitations des communistes roumains condamnés ou même exécutés sous le régime Gheorghiu-Dej présentent un tableau plus complexe et beaucoup moins consensuel au niveau de la direction politique du PCR. Appliquer cette décision dans le contexte limitatif de la relégitimation nationale du Parti signifierait une simplification de l'interprétation de sa stratégie politique. En fait, les réhabilitations officialisées en 1968 concernent trois catégories de personnes, dont la situation dans le parti n'est pas toujours comparable et deux catégories de contextes politiques différents. Il s'agit, d'une part, des victimes des purges staliniennes des années 1930

²⁹ Le concept est également repris par la nouvelle Constitution de la République socialiste, adoptée en 1965 et dont le premier article fait une synthèse intéressante entre la définition de l'Etat de démocratie populaire, comme elle était formulée par la Constitution de 1952 et celle d'Etat national, affirmée dans la Constitution de 1923, première constitution de la Grande Roumanie.

³⁰ Les références à Marx et au marxisme s'enchaînent dans cet exposé de Nicolae Ceaușescu, ainsi que dans la plupart de ses discours des années 1960. Sur le sujet particulier de la Nation dans le socialisme, en 1966 tout autant qu'en 1965, le poids fondamental de l'argumentaire est fourni par le « caractère objectif » des processus historiques tels qu'ils sont expliqués par Marx et par le caractère de processus historique de l'évolution nationale : "Constituée dans les conditions historiques de la société capitaliste, la Nation a exercé une forte influence sur le progrès économique et social, sur l'évolution des peuples. Marx a montré que les périodes objectivement nécessaires du développement social ne peuvent pas être supprimées. La pratique a démontré que le fait de négliger cette vérité dialectique, d'essayer de sauter l'étape de formation de la Nation peut porter des graves atteintes aux intérêts des peuples et aux intérêts de la paix mondiale." (*Ibid.*, p. 395).

dont la réhabilitation publique ne pose pas des problèmes de consensus politique ; d'autre part, les réhabilitations de deux personnalités du PCR constituent le vrai enjeu et le point sensible des réhabilitations de 1968 : Ștefan Foriș, secrétaire général du parti dans les années de la deuxième guerre mondiale, destitué en 1944 et assassiné quelques mois plus tard par ses rivaux politiques³¹ et Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, exécuté en 1954 au bout d'un des derniers procès spectaculaires du camp communiste. Enfin, le cas d'Ana Pauker et de son groupement éliminé en 1952, même s'il fait l'objet des discussions dans la direction du Parti, ne constitue pas jusqu'à la fin du processus administratif l'objet d'une décision de réhabilitation publique.³² La signification politique des réhabilitations de Foriș et Pătrășcanu est à interpréter dans les responsabilités individuelles qu'elles mettent en question à l'intérieur de la direction du PCR. Des membres de l'ancienne équipe de Gheorghiu-Dej, tels Alexandru Drăghici, mais aussi Ion Gheorghe Maurer ou Gheorghe Apostol – participants directs aux événements et aux décisions politiques qui les ont précédés – sont directement concernés par cette décision de Nicolae Ceaușescu. Le traitement différencié appliqué tant à chacune des trois catégories de personnes réhabilitées qu'à chacun des membres de la direction du parti directement impliqués dans les abus politiques du régime Dej témoigne des enjeux multiples de cette stratégie politique.

L'intérêt de Ceaușescu pour les abus de la police politique roumaine qui ont directement affecté des membres du PCR se manifeste très tôt en 1965, après son élection comme secrétaire général du parti.³³ En novembre 1965, une commission dirigée par Vasile Patilineț, secrétaire du Comité central, est constituée avec la mission de mener une enquête sur les événements et les personnages impliqués dans le déroulement de ces événements.³⁴ La commission procède à des interrogatoires confidentiels

³¹ Le contexte de cet assassinat politique est documenté par Dan Cătănuș et Ioan Chiper, *Cazul Ștefan Foriș. Lupta pentru putere de la Gheorghiu-Dej la Ceaușescu*, (București, 1999).

³² Devant le rapport présenté par la commission spéciale constituée dans la direction du PCR, Ceaușescu décide: "Nous avons besoin de connaître ces événements, mais il ne serait pas bien de les déclarer publiquement"; cf. Marius Oprea, "Radiografia unei înscenări, Devierea de dreapta" *Dosarele istoriei*, I, no. 2, (1996), p. 52.

³³ Cf. Rodica Chelaru, *Culpe care nu se uită. Convorbiri cu Cornel Burtică*, (București, 2001), p. 133. Cornel Burtică, l'interlocuteur de Chelaru témoigne de cet intérêt que Ceaușescu a manifesté devant lui deux semaines après son élection comme secrétaire général.

³⁴ Cf. Marius Oprea, *Banalitatea răului*, pp. 333-334, confirmé par le communiqué final du Plénum du Comité central; voir *Epoca Nicolae Ceaușescu Partidul Communist Român, centrul vital al întregii națiuni. Documente ale plenarelor CC și ale CPEX al CC al*

d'un grand nombre de membres de la direction du PCR et d'employés de la police politique, interrogatoires qui se succèdent pendant deux ans et demi et qui aboutissent à la production d'un très vaste matériel informatif pour l'usage des membres du Présidium permanent du Comité central. Les informations présentées dans ce matériel – dont aucune ne deviendra publique avant 1989 – documentent l'usage généralisé de la torture et des pressions psychiques dans les enquêtes dressées contre les prisonniers politiques du régime Dej, une pratique instituée par les organes de la police politique avec l'accord et sous la surveillance de Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej et d'autres membres de son équipe dirigeante. Les débats du Plénum du Comité central de 22-25 avril 1968 – précédé par une séance secrète du Présidium permanent³⁵ – ne bénéficient que d'une médiatisation très limitée et strictement contrôlée.³⁶ Dans le texte final du Comité central³⁷, le cas de Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu semble constituer le noyau dur des discussions. Sa popularité parmi les membres du parti et dans l'opinion roumaine est mentionnée ainsi que son innocence par rapport aux accusations d'espionnage formulées contre lui en 1954.³⁸ La question des culpabilités des dirigeants de PCR dans l'affaire de son exécution est cependant maniée avec prudence. On relève la responsabilité directe de Gheorghiu-Dej, de Iosif Chișinevschi (déjà exclu du parti en 1957, comme proche d'Ana Pauker et membre d'un groupement qui a essayé d'éliminer Dej après le Rapport Khrouchtchev) et d'Alexandru Drăghici, rival de Ceaușescu à la direction du PCR, exclu de toutes ses fonctions politiques tant dans le Parti que dans

PCR. 1965-1985, vol.1, (București, 1986), pp. 191-204. Lavinia Betea, *Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu. Moartea unui lider communist*, (București, 2006), pp. 445-446 raconte une autre version concernant la constitution de cette commission en 1966, après une lettre adressée à Ion Gheorghe Maurer par un des condamnés dans le procès Pătrășcanu, Belu Zilber. Les incertitudes concernant le contexte dans lequel on a décidé de créer une telle commission témoignent du caractère secret de son activité dont la publicité ne pouvait qu'alimenter les tensions à l'intérieur de la direction du PCR.

³⁵ L'intervention de Ceaușescu à cette occasion est reproduite dans Marius Oprea, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-376. Ses accusations, dressées tant contre Alexandru Drăghici, ministre de l'Intérieur, que contre Gheorghiu-Dej sont vivement contrecarrées par Drăghici et loin de faire l'unanimité parmi les autres membres du Présidium permanent.

³⁶ De manière significative, la collection des discours de Nicolae Ceaușescu, *op.cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 177-208, le discours du plénum d'avril 1968 est remplacé par le discours tenu devant l'organisation PCR de Bucarest ; des interventions de Ceaușescu dans le plénum, on retient seulement celle concernant les questions de l'enseignement publique, *Ibid.*, pp. 157-176.

³⁷ Cf. *Epoca Ceaușescu...*, 1, pp. 191-204.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-200.

l'appareil de l'Etat ; les responsabilités des autres membres de l'ancien Bureau Politique, y compris Ceaușescu, ne sont pas mentionnées et on ne décide d'aucunes sanctions contre les officiers de la police politique impliqués dans l'enquête abusive de Pătrășcanu.

Le destin des œuvres théoriques de Pătrășcanu et la façon dont on gère la mémoire de son activité politique dans les années suivant sa réhabilitation restituent la signification politique mitigée de l'épisode. Pătrășcanu est resté jusqu'à la fin du régime communiste peut-être le personnage le plus populaire du communisme en Roumanie. Mais sa réhabilitation n'a jamais été suivie par sa sortie de la marginalité. Ses ouvrages de philosophie marxiste, même s'ils ont été republiés après 1968, sont toujours soumises à une censure fluctuante en fonction d'intérêts politiques conjoncturels³⁹ et ne bénéficient pas d'une diffusion dépassant les cercles avisés. Sa personnalité et sa contribution décisive à l'inclusion des communistes roumains dans la coalition royaliste de 23 août 1944 ne sont traitées que d'une manière superficielle dans les travaux de l'historiographie officielle. En fait, la réhabilitation de Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu n'est pas suivie d'un travail idéologique qui pourrait le promouvoir en image emblématique du communisme national parce que les intentions initiales de Nicolae Ceaușescu vont, dans ce cas, vers une toute autre direction. Il ne poursuit pas l'introduction de nouveaux personnages dans le panthéon du communisme national roumain⁴⁰, mais le démantèlement des réminiscences d'un culte de son prédécesseur à l'intérieur du PCR et l'élimination d'un adversaire politique dans la direction du parti. Le manque d'appétit montré par Nicolae Ceaușescu au sujet de la construction d'un panthéon du communisme national – habité par d'autres personnages que lui-même – devient évident surtout après la popularité qu'il obtient après août 1968. En termes de stratégie de légitimation du PCR, on pourrait établir une analogie entre la signification politique des réhabilitations de 1968 et l'épisode de la condamnation par les communistes roumains de l'invasion soviétique en

³⁹ Florin Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu*, (București, 2007), pp. 9-11, mène une analyse astucieuse de la censure appliquée à l'oeuvre de Pătrășcanu, dans les années 1980, pendant le conflit diplomatique entre la Roumanie et la Hongrie sur le sujet de la minorité hongroise de Transylvanie.

⁴⁰ C'est surtout à cause de ce manque de conséquences des réhabilitations politique, tant dans le cas de Pătrășcanu que dans celui de Stefan Foriș, que nous ne pouvons pas souscrire à la conclusion de Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons. A Political History of Romanian Communism*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles & Londres, 2003), p. 199, qui estime que la façon dont on mène les réhabilitations de 1968 transforme les deux, Foriș et Pătrășcanu, "pratiquement en des martyres de la cause communiste".

Tchécoslovaquie, quelques mois plus tard : les deux actions, apparemment relevant avant tout d'un effort de reconstitution du pacte de légitimité Parti-Nation⁴¹, finissent par être annexées à la construction du culte de la personnalité de Nicolae Ceaușescu. Ce type d'évolution qui, loin de représenter l'exception, constitue plutôt le mécanisme le plus utilisé pour le transfert de légitimité du Parti vers son leader, empêche le PCR de bénéficier à long terme de leur potentiel de solidarité nationale. Et ce type de réécriture de l'histoire officielle du Parti ainsi que la façon dont elle est insérée dans la nouvelle version de l'histoire nationale témoignent d'une image figée du PCR, prisonnier d'une indétermination qui l'empêche de devenir un vrai symbole de solidarité.

Le document représentatif de l'effort d'intégration dans l'histoire officielle du PCR d'une nouvelle synthèse de l'histoire nationale est le Programme du parti, adopté à l'XI^{ème} Congrès de 1974.⁴² Ce programme, dont le caractère singulier est mis en exergue par Ceaușescu lui-même, dans son Rapport devant les délégués au congrès⁴³, restitue la variante finale de la synthèse déjà suggérée dans les documents officiels antérieurs, notamment dans le discours du secrétaire général de 1966, entre l'histoire du PCR et l'interprétation communiste de l'histoire nationale. Le Programme de 1974 se propose d'offrir une vision complète du passé, du présent et de l'avenir de la Roumanie socialiste. Il établit à la fois les nouvelles significations officiellement accréditées des événements historiques et les objectifs à poursuivre dans la construction à ce qu'on désigne comme "l'étape suivante

⁴¹ La vague de solidarité populaire, sans précédent mais également sans suite dans l'histoire du communisme roumain, due à l'opposition du PCR à l'intervention soviétique en Tchécoslovaquie et à l'appel aux citoyens roumains à une résistance armée en cas d'invasion des Soviétiques en Roumanie, est bien illustrée par le récit de Paul Goma, dont la décision de devenir membre du parti communiste, après une histoire personnelle de protestation et de prison politique, est déterminée justement par cette attitude ; cf. *Dossier Paul Goma. L'écrivain face au socialisme du silence. Présenté par Virgil Tănase*, (Paris, 1977), pp. 15-16.

⁴² *Programul Partidului Comunist Român de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre comunism*, (București, 1975) .

⁴³ Ceaușescu souligne que ce programme est le premier document officiel du PCR "conçu pour illustrer les intérêts de tout la nation" et que, de ce point de vue, il pourrait être considéré "le programme du peuple roumain pour le progrès vers la civilisation communiste"; cf. *Congresul al XI-lea al Partidului Comunist Român* (București, 1975), p. 80. C'est une manière de mettre en exergue le rôle attribué à ce document par la direction du PCR, celui d'offrir une clef unique pour l'interprétation officielle de l'histoire nationale, dont le Parti représente l'acteur principal et la "finalité objective".

de l'histoire de la Roumanie socialiste".⁴⁴ Il représente aussi la nouvelle – et la plus complète – explication du paradigme de vérité officielle, qui devrait fournir le fondement de tous les travaux idéologiques (ou simplement historiographiques) à suivre.

La partie introductive du Programme offre une perspective extensive sur l'histoire de la Roumanie, en commençant avec la période préromaine. En accord avec l'interprétation matérialiste historique, on propose une nouvelle périodisation de l'histoire nationale en fonction de certains événements que le récit officiel choisit comme définitoires pour l'idée centrale de la nouvelle vision historique : la démonstration d'une mobilisation révolutionnaire quasi-permanente du peuple roumain, justifiant l'émergence du projet communiste et du PCR en tant qu'incarnation d'une « aspiration millénaire vers la justice sociale et l'indépendance nationale ».⁴⁵ Le Programme constitue également le point de départ d'un intense travail historiographique sur la nouvelle mythologie du nationalisme communiste : l'idée de continuité ininterrompue du peuple roumain dans un espace géographique circonscrit par le Danube, la Mer Noire et les Carpates, un des fils rouges de la propagande nationaliste roumaine, qui fournira dans les années 1980 la plupart de la armes idéologiques pour les polémiques roumaine-hongroise concernant la Transylvanie; la présentation de l'histoire des Roumains comme étant une quête incessante d'unité nationale et une succession de luttes pour la souveraineté étatique, en fait un discours sur la solidarité nécessaire, motivée par la tradition historique, contre l'ennemi extérieur ; l'image du Prince idéal, le Guerrier providentiel dont les actions et les vertus personnelles jouent un rôle décisif dans l'évolution de la communauté nationale.⁴⁶

Le Programme de 1974 structure la forme et le contenu du nouveau discours de légitimation, qui marie la tradition historique de la nation roumaine avec le projet communiste de développement du pays. Il fournit, dans les années 1970-1980 et jusqu'à la chute du régime communiste en

⁴⁴ La troisième partie du document porte ce titre significatif, qui rend compte de la vision linéaire, spécifique au matérialisme historique, d'une évolution interdépendante du PCR et de la Nation roumaine ; *Ibid.*, pp. 45-89.

⁴⁵ La justification fournie par le Rapport à l'XI^{ème} Congrès est significative en ce sens : "L'histoire de notre peuple, du prolétariat et du mouvement révolutionnaire – présentée dans le Programme – montre sans équivoque que le parti de la classe ouvrière, créé en 1983, puis le Parti Communiste Roumain, créé en 1921, ont continué à un niveau supérieur les traditions révolutionnaires des masses populaires, des forces progressistes, révolutionnaires du peuple roumain." ; *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴⁶ Dans l'identification de ces trois typologies, nous suivons l'analyse de Lucian Boia *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, III^{ème} édition (București, 2002), *passim*.

Roumanie, le référentiel de la propagande nationaliste communiste: ses grands lignes d'argumentation, les interprétations des faits historiques et les symboles qu'il valide deviennent le fondement d'un travail idéologique repris et institutionnalisé par les médias roumaines, par les manuels scolaires⁴⁷ ainsi que par une vaste palette d'ouvrages scientifiques illustrant le courant de l'historiographie officielle ; il fournit également la clef d'une nouvelle *historical correctness*⁴⁸ de la littérature patriotique.⁴⁹

Avec cette dernière observation, on se retrouve sur le terrain sensible de la multiplication par les différents moyens de mobilisation sociale du message contenu dans les documents officiels du Parti et, implicitement, sur le terrain de la préservation nécessaire – qui, sans être toujours réussie, est néanmoins toujours recherchée – du monopole idéologique du PCR. L'événement illustratif pour la stratégie de préservation du monopole idéologique est représenté, à notre avis, par ce que l'historiographie roumaine désigne comme "la mini-révolution culturelle" de 1971.⁵⁰ Cette dénomination couvre les deux exposés de Nicolae Ceaușescu, présentés devant la direction du PCR et des cadres responsables avec la propagande, en juillet et novembre 1971, ainsi que leurs effets dans les milieux culturels du pays. L'essence des deux exposés consiste dans le message de "normalisation"⁵¹ idéologique du régime: on fait comprendre les différentes

⁴⁷ Pour une analyse des avatars du nationalisme communiste dans les manuels scolaires des années 1990, époque de transition du manuel unique communiste vers une pluralité d'interprétations parfois difficilement acceptée, voir Mirela Luminița Murgescu, *Istoria din ghiozdan. Memorie și manuale școlare în România anilor 1990*, (București, 2004), surtout pp. 109-168.

⁴⁸ Nous osons employer ce syntagme dans le contexte particulier de la Roumanie de Ceaușescu par analogie avec la terminologie de Jean Sevilla, *Corectitudinea istorică*, (București, 2005), traduction du français par Anca Dumitru, surtout pp. 9-13

⁴⁹ Le travail d'interprétation du Programme commence très vite après son adoption, tant dans la presse que dans les revues scientifiques ; nous illustrons cette affirmation avec le contenu d'un article de Titu Georgescu, "Contemporaneitatea noastră socialistă în istoria milenară a patriei", *Anale de istorie*, XXI, no. 1, (1975), pp. 81-90, qui théorise l'existence d'une "cosmogonie unique du peuple roumain", allant du prêtre dace Deceneu au poète nationale Mihai Eminescu et dont le Programme de 1974 représente l'expression moderne. Ce numéro de la revue *Anale de istorie*, publication de l'Institut d'Etudes Historiques et Sociopolitiques auprès du Comité central du PCR, est d'ailleurs entièrement dédié à l'interprétation du Programme.

⁵⁰ Cf., entre autres, Ana Maria Cătănuș, eds., *Sfârșitul perioadei liberale a regimului Ceaușescu: minirevoluția culturală din 1971* (București, 2005).

⁵¹ Nous utilisons le terme "normalisation" dans le sens de Michael Shafir, *Romania. Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change*, (London,

acteurs de la vie publique que l'ouverture idéologique et culturelle qui accompagne la construction du nationalisme communiste en Roumanie ne signifie pas une aliénation de la nature profonde du dogme officielle, que l'antisoviétisme ne signifie pas un pro-occidentalisme sans discernement et que le devoir d'opérer la sélection des valeurs culturelles officiellement accréditées constitue l'apanage exclusif de l'instance politique. Les "thèses de juillet"⁵², dont le message anti-bourgeois et antioccidental a provoqué une vraie secousse surtout dans les milieux littéraires et artistiques⁵³, sont généralement considérées par l'historiographie du communisme roumain comme le moment définitoire pour la fin d'une période libérale du régime Ceaușescu.⁵⁴ Pourtant, nous n'embrassons pas cette vision et proposons une

1985), p. 55: le moment qui marque la fin du "changement simulé" et le retour à la rigidité idéologique à l'intérieur d'un régime communiste.

⁵² Voir la variante française de ce texte, Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Exposé à la Conférence de travail des cadres de parti du domaine idéologique et de l'activité politique et culturelle-éducative (9 juillet 1971)" in *La Roumanie aujourd'hui* (supplément), no. 8 (201), (AGERPRES, București, 1971).

⁵³ Un tableau général des conséquences des "thèses de juillet" sur le monde littéraire est esquissé par Eugen Negrici, *Literatura română sub comunism. Proza, I*, (București, 2002), pp. 57-59. Sa conclusion, intéressante, précise: "La peur des écrivains devant la possibilité d'un retour aux méthodes [de contrôle] de la littérature, surtout celle de nature coercitive, des années 1950 a représenté néanmoins un vecteur de cohésion et les autorités se sont retrouvés devant une résistance inattendue" p. 58.

⁵⁴ Un courant d'interprétation des événements de 1971 établit une liaison directe entre le début de la "mini-révolution culturelle" et les visites du couple Ceaușescu dans les pays communistes de l'Asie (1-24 juin 1971); notamment les contacts de Nicolae Ceaușescu avec les réalités du communisme chinois sont considérés comme la source principale d'inspiration pour les "thèses de juillet"; voir, pour ce courant d'interprétation, Thomas Kunze, *Nicolae Ceaușescu. Eine Biographie*, (Berlin, 2000); édition roumaine - *Nicolae Ceaușescu. O Biografie*, traduit de l'allemand par Alexandru Teodorescu, (București, 2002), pp. 238-239 et Adrian Cioroianu, *Ce Ceaușescu qui hante les Roumains. Le mythe, les représentations et le culte du Dirigeant dans la Roumanie communiste*, (București, 2004), pp. 74-78. Ce courant historiographique commence à être contrebalancé par une interprétation plus nuancée, qui accorde une place primordiale, dans l'identification des explications politiques de la "mini-révolution culturelle", aux évolutions internes du communisme roumain; surtout aux témoignages de deux anciens dignitaires communistes, ex-responsables de la propagande politique, ont ouvert le débat; voir le témoignage de Cornel Burtică, in Rodica Chelaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-103 et de Dumitru Popescu, *Am fost și cioplitor de himere*, (București, 1994), pp. 197-201. Une hypothèse originale est formulée par Florin Constantiniu, qui considère qu'à l'origine des "thèses de juillet" « s'est trouvée une pression [politique] de la part de l'URSS à laquelle Ceaușescu a répondu par

hypothèse qui permettrait de restituer la signification du moment 1971 dans le contexte général du travail de légitimation politique mené par le PCR après 1965. Nous considérons nécessaire de formuler quelques réserves concernant l'existence d'une période de vraie libéralisation dans le fonctionnement du communisme roumain, en proposant une démarche d'objectivation du modèle théorique par rapport aux perceptions générales restituées par les témoins de l'époque. L'analyse contextuelle de la mini-révolution culturelle de 1971 nous permet de nuancer cette hypothèse de travail et de lui fournir un nouvel argumentaire.

Le message initial des "thèses de juillet" est adressé avant tout aux professionnels de la propagande et constitue, dans sa substance, un appel à la préservation du monopole idéologique du parti. Ce type de discours à la tonalité choquante, en 1971, par rapport aux interventions antérieures de Nicolae Ceaușescu dans ses entretiens avec des écrivains et des artistes roumains⁵⁵, représente une constante dans les prises de positions officielles en commençant avec le IX^{ème} Congrès de 1965. Il accompagne en effet tout le travail idéologique de ré-légitimation par l'insertion du PCR dans une nouvelle représentation de l'histoire nationale.

Mary Ellen Fisher résume d'une manière pertinente le contenu idéologique de "la mini-révolution culturelle": la centralisation du contrôle sur la culture, l'éducation et les médias deviennent apanage du parti et de son appareil de cadres ; le développement de l'agitation et de la propagande dans les masses, surtout dans la masse des jeunes, qui devaient adhérer aux valeurs du patriotisme dans leur version socialiste; une synthèse spécifiquement roumaine du marxisme-léninisme et du nationalisme qui est supposée de fournir le fondement pour les activités de propagande et pour

l'initiation de la mini-révolution culturelle » (cf. Ana Maria Cătănuș, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 15 ; la traduction du roumain nous appartient). Constantiniu estime que les signes soviétiques d'hostilité, adressés à la Roumanie après 1968, notamment les exercices de l'armée soviétique à la frontière roumaine, se sont intensifiés pendant la visite de Nicolae Ceaușescu en Chine et que, dans l'effort de les atténuer, le secrétaire général du PCR a choisi d'offrir à Moscou une série de concessions idéologiques, retrouvables dans le contenu des "thèses de juillet".

⁵⁵ Une analyse comparative de ces discours est menée par Ana Maria Cătănuș, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-32. L'auteur remarque la constance du binôme libertés/limites qui accompagne la position officielle du PCR à l'égard des milieux artistiques roumains, malgré les différences de nuances et de langage. La conclusion d'Ana Maria Cătănuș semble soutenir notre hypothèse : "Nous considérons que les évolutions dans le discours de Nicolae Ceaușescu, dans les quatre occasions mentionnées [entre 1968 et 1971], laissent deviner, déjà dès 1968, une tendance de limitation de la libéralisation, tendance qui touche son point de maximum en juillet 1971".(p. 59)

les directions d'évolution de la vie culturelle.⁵⁶ Ceaușescu dresse une critique ouverte du "cosmopolitisme à tout prix" et du "servilisme envers la culture capitaliste décadente", tout en exigeant la valorisation des "réalités nationales" et des "intérêts de l'homme socialiste" par la littérature et les arts de Roumanie.⁵⁷ Ces exhortations, formulées dans un langage politique rappelant l'époque de la soviétisation, constituent la partie du discours qui a le plus grand écho dans l'opinion publique roumaine, une opinion pour laquelle la tonalité du discours communiste semble prévaloir – au moins dans la perception de ce moment particulier – sur son contenu. Pourtant, si on analyse le discours de Nicolae Ceaușescu au niveau du contenu, on constate que les idées qu'il exprime à cette occasion sont loin d'introduire une direction idéologique nouvelle. Le message de 1971 est d'abord parsemé dans la quasi-totalité de ses prises de position antérieures, à chacun des événements définitoires pour le processus de sa légitimation politique, dès le moment de son arrivée à la tête du PCR. A travers la réitération constante du rôle dirigeant du Parti dans tous les domaines de la vie politique, économique, sociale et culturelle du pays, les documents officiels du PCR transmettent la vraie signification de sa vision sur la stratégie de légitimation par l'intégration de la tradition nationale : cela ne signifie pas la subordination du Parti à la Nation, mais la subordination de la Nation à un projet politique défini et mené par le Parti. Les grandes lignes de cette vision dont les "thèses de juillet" 1971 consacre la portée nationale, sont déjà clairement précisées dans le Rapport au X^{ème} Congrès du PCR (août 1969).⁵⁸ La partie du rapport dédiée à l'éducation politique et idéologique contient *in nuce* les idées développées plus tard, dans "les thèses de juillet".⁵⁹ On fait mention de la nécessité d'un contrôle centralisé de la vie culturelle, d'une réforme requise par le système national d'enseignement et destinée à préparer ce

⁵⁶ Cf. Mary Ellen, Fisher, *Nicolae Ceausescu. A Study in Political Leadership*, (Boulder & London, 1989), p. 180.

⁵⁷ Voir Nicolae Ceaușescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-13. C'est surtout ce type d'affirmation qui a généré dans les milieux littéraires la peur d'un retour au réalisme socialiste; cf. Eugen Negrici, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁵⁸ Voir pour le texte français: Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Rapport au X^{ème} Congrès du PCR. 6 Août 1969*, (Bucarest, AGERPRES, 1969). Entre autres, ce texte résume en quelques phrases la formule officielle de la relation Parti-Nation : "Le parti représente le noyau autour duquel gravite toute la société et d'où rayonnent l'énergie et la lumière qui mettent en marche et assurent le fonctionnement de tout l'engrenage de la société socialiste. A son tour, le parti se régénère continuellement sous l'impulsion des puissants faisceaux d'énergie et de lumière qui se dirigent constamment vers lui des rangs de notre nation socialiste. Nous pouvons affirmer que le parti communiste remplit le rôle de centre vital de tout notre système social". (p. 90)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-107

domaine pour mieux répondre aux exigences de la nouvelle politique idéologique du parti, on annonce une intention de réformer le domaine des sciences sociales en accord avec les nouveaux commandements idéologiques et on définit sans équivoque les limites de la liberté d'action des écrivains et artistes roumains : "nous concevons la liberté de la création dans l'acception philosophique donnée par le marxisme à la nécessité historique comprise".⁶⁰ Ce document de 1969 dont les idées principales, notamment dans le domaine de l'endoctrinement politiques des masses, sont ultérieurement reprises à des différentes occasions, au cours de l'année 1970⁶¹, est pourtant loin d'avoir le même impact public que les deux exposés présentés en 1971, même si son importance et l'occasion officielle qui le produit pourraient représenter des arguments suffisants en ce sens. Malgré cela, la mémoire de la société roumaine a enregistré comme point final de la période libérale du régime Ceaușescu l'année 1971 et non pas l'année 1969. A notre avis, les causes de cette perception sont à rechercher dans les catégories différentes de publics auxquels les deux discours sont adressés. Le rapport de 1969, ainsi que les autres documents officiels qui le précèdent s'adressent strictement aux activistes du PCR. Même si leur médiatisation est plutôt bien menée dans la presse officielle et dans les assemblées des organisations communistes locales, la perception dans les milieux professionnels est que leur portée reste strictement dans les cadres du jeu politique. Les professionnels des arts et de la littérature qui savent utiliser le biais de la négociation dans leurs relations avec l'autorité politique⁶², ne se sentent pas, par conséquent, directement concernés par ce type de discours politique. Le déroulement des événements en 1971 confirme notre hypothèse: l'exposé de juillet, destiné exclusivement aux professionnels de la propagande du parti, reste relativement sans écho, tandis que le discours de novembre, devant le Plénum du Comité central (le 3-5 novembre 1971)⁶³ auquel participe un nombre significatif d'écrivains, fait naître une vive inquiétude, étant perçu comme le véritable début de la mini-révolution culturelle.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105

⁶¹ Voir, par exemple, Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Cuvântare la aniversarea a 25 de ani de la înființarea Academiei de Învățământ social-politic « Ștefan Gheorghiu » de pe lângă CC al PCR", in Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul desăvârșirii ...*, vol. 4, (București, 1970), pp. 660-670.

⁶² Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles & Oxford, 1991), mène une analyse pertinente de la relation PCR - intellectuels dans la Roumanie de Ceaușescu.

⁶³ Le sténogramme du plénum peut être consultée aux ANIC, *fond CC du PCR - Chancellerie*, dossier 127/1971, tome I-II.

⁶⁴ Cet état d'esprit est confirmé par les témoignages personnels de l'écrivain Nicolae Breban et du réalisateur de télévision Valeriu Râpeanu, in Ana Maria Cătănuș, *op. cit.*,

A la lumière de ces arguments, on peut affirmer que le terme de "mini-révolution culturelle", employé dans l'historiographie roumaine pour désigner les événements de 1971, n'a de pertinence que pour l'analyse de la perception publique des deux exposés de Nicolae Ceaușescu et de leurs effets sur la vie culturelle roumaine. Pour l'analyse de la stratégie de légitimation employée par le régime, ce terme est plutôt inadéquat pour autant que l'année 1971 n'apporte aucun changement significatif de son discours politique. Les idées de 1971 ne représentent pas des éléments de nouveauté dans la ligne idéologique annoncée par Nicolae Ceaușescu en 1965. Liée au modèle d'interprétation que nous avons proposé pour le régime Ceaușescu, la préoccupation pour une préservation rigoureuse du monopole idéologique dans les cadres de l'appareil politique communiste représente une évolution compréhensible. Sous cet angle, on doit remarquer que ce qu'on estime, au cours des années 1970-1980, être les effets directs de la "mini-révolution culturelle"⁶⁵, représente en fait une continuation prévisible de la stratégie de "changement simulé"⁶⁶ adoptée par le régime Ceaușescu dans sa relation avec la société roumaine. Le fait que la préoccupation pour préserver le monopole idéologique du Parti revient constamment – avant et après 1971 – tant dans les documents officiels que dans les prises de position publiques de Nicolae Ceaușescu⁶⁷ fournit un exemple supplémentaire de l'importance accordée au maintien du monopole politique dans le développement de la stratégie de légitimation nationale du PCR. Mais il montre également que l'effet de bouleversement produit par les précisions

pp. 64-93. Mary Ellen Fisher confirme elle aussi cette hypothèse, quand elle observe que "les thèses de juillet ont été prises au sérieux par le monde intellectuel surtout après le plénum de novembre 1971" (cf. Mary Ellen Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 180).

⁶⁵ La quasi-totalité des exégètes du communisme roumain estime que les effets de la "mini-révolution culturelle" n'ont pas été immédiats, mais ils ont commencé à devenir visibles à la fin des années 1970. Sur ce point, ils semblent partager l'opinion de Cornel Burtică, qui souligne que "la décennie 1980 a été influencé d'une manière négative par la mini-révolution culturelle de 1971 mais on trouvait encore des formules pour atténuer les excès. Après 1978-1979, avec la chronicisation de la crise économique, la mini-révolution culturelle a réussi : des mesures sévères de censure, la diminution des libertés d'expression, diminution du support de l'Etat pour la culture, etc." (cf. Rodica Culcer, *op. cit.*, p. 102)

⁶⁶ Cf. Michael Shafir, *op. cit.*, p. 55

⁶⁷ En ce sens, il nous semble particulièrement significatif qu'une réitération de "la mini-révolution culturelle" se produit en 1983 quand, à l'occasion d'une autre conférence des cadres communistes responsables de la propagande, Ceaușescu souligne une fois de plus la prééminence inconditionnée d'un contrôle centralisé, mené par l'appareil politique sur le message et les moyens de la propagande nationaliste ; voir le texte de ce discours in *Scântea*, LII, no. 12737, (le 5 août 1983).

idéologiques apportées au cours de "la mini-révolution culturelle" au niveau des buts suivis dans le développement de cette stratégie est quasi-nul. Les événements déroulés entre juillet et novembre 1971 constituent sans doute un moment psychologique difficile dans la relation entre le PCR – et surtout de Nicolae Ceaușescu – et certains milieux professionnels, dont la participation à l'œuvre de dissémination du message nationaliste est essentielle pour le régime. Néanmoins, leur signification dans le contexte général de la construction idéologique et politique du communisme nationaliste roumain est secondaire.

En guise de conclusion, observons que cette stratégie de légitimation du PCR par le biais du nationalisme n'a jamais abouti, jusqu'à la fin du régime Ceaușescu, à un consensus à l'intérieur du parti tout comme les prétentions de s'arroger un monopole idéologique n'ont jamais réussi à être complètement acceptée par l'élite intellectuelle roumaine. La grande synthèse de l'histoire du parti communiste en Roumanie – désignée après le IX^{ème} Congrès "tâche principale" de l'Institut d'Etudes Historiques et Sociopolitiques du Comité central – n'a jamais été publiée faute de pouvoir établir un consensus concernant l'interprétation officielle des événements qui ont marqué les débuts kominternistes du parti.⁶⁸ De la même manière, la nouvelle synthèse de l'histoire des Roumains, dont l'effort de rédaction devrait être mené dans les instituts de l'Académie roumaine, parallèlement à celui visant la rédaction d'une histoire officielle du PCR, n'a jamais été finalisée à cause des résistances tacites du milieu professionnel.⁶⁹ Ces échecs

⁶⁸ Des essais ponctuels ont été réalisés, par des historiens politiquement agréés, dont le plus notable est celui de Mircea Mușat et Ion Ardeleanu, considérés dans les années 1980 comme les éminences grises de l'historiographie roumaine. Les deux ont publié, entre 1983 et 1988, trois tomes d'une histoire générale de la Roumanie, allant de l'époque préromaine jusqu'à la deuxième guerre mondiale. Le deuxième volume de cette synthèse restitue un des récits les plus complets des rapports difficiles entre le PCR de l'entre-deux-guerres et le Komintern ; voir Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *op.cit.*, surtout pp. 153-216 et 560-666. Au sujet des mécanismes du contrôle politique sur les productions historiographiques, voir le témoignage de l'historien Ioan Scurtu, in Ana Maria Cătănuș, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-114, qui fait une mention expresse du rôle de Mușat et Ardeleanu dans le fonctionnement de la censure académique.

⁶⁹ Cf. Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și Istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români. 1944-1977*, (București, 1991), p. 150. Voir aussi Alexandru Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub dictatură* (Iasi, 2000), pp. 79-80. Comme le relève Alexandru Zub, la grande synthèse d'histoire nationale, jamais finalisée, a été remplacée dans les années 1980, par une synthèse d'histoire militaire en six volumes, coordonnée par le général Ilie Ceaușescu, un des frères de Nicolae Ceaușescu ; Voir Comisia Română de Istorie Militară, Centrul de Studii și Cercetări de Istorie și Teorie Militară [Commission

ponctuels au niveau des relations entre élites et même à l'intérieur de l'élite politique sont pourtant loin de signifier l'échec général du communisme nationaliste comme stratégie de légitimation du PCR devant la société roumaine dans son ensemble.

Roumaine d'Histoire Militaire, le Centre d'Etudes et Recherches d'Histoire et Théorie Militaire], *Istoria militară a poporului român*, vol. I-VI, ((București, à partir de 1984). La parution du septième volume a été arrêtée par l'effondrement du régime communiste, en décembre 1989.

“Searching for Identity”: The Political Instrumentalisation of Cultural Traditions in Romania, (1948-1965)¹

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Hard to avoid in a space perceived as specific for the collective mentality, traditional culture represented the central stake for the ideological discourse promoted by the communist regime beginning with 1948, being recovered and inserted into a large process of political instrumentalisation. On this respect, our study analyses the way in which relationships between political interests of the regime and the sensitive universe of the folk art were established. We also illustrate the fact that appealing to cultural tradition had as a goal providing identity elements that could give a local specific mark, to counterbalance artificial imported signs inappropriate for Romanian intellectual experience. By the help of Folklore Institute, Institute of History of Art, Institute of Literary History and Folklore and also imposing Marx and Lenin method of analysing cultural phenomena, the regime managed to gain the supremacy of interpreting folklore researching.

Anyway, famous folk researchers (such as Mihai Pop, Zeno Vancea or Sabin Drăgoi) managed to create connections to interwar intellectual period, superior to the regime expectations. We try to reveal both the official and the interwar tradition, to realize the way in which folklore became “a prototype of domestic life” (Ortega y Gasset). This ideological form of folklore will be a precondition of what Terry Martin called “popular primordialism”, an element of the cultural policy promoted by Nicolae Ceauşescu during 70s-80s, continuing the process of instrumentalisation the traditional creation.

Keywords: communism and traditional culture, folklore, national identity, instrumentalization of tradition, Marx-Lenin method of analyzing cultural tradition, popular primordialism.

An identity image of a community reflects the ineluctable perception of the past, on specific “roots” that convey the idea of cultural - national or local - individuality. The essence of this framework based on

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affinity is determined by a necessity to select the corpus of “traditions” - whether cultural, political or social -, by their invention or promotion, in order to gain a solid foothold from which to shape the relationships and ties between the members of the community. “Inventing traditions” probes the idea of the historical and cultural continuity of a community, while, at the same time, providing a pattern for social behaviour that is definitive in establishing the coordinates of the nation. However, in the context of totalitarian regimes, this mechanism of creating traditions is endowed with a series of special nuances, attributes, significations and functions meant to transform it into an unyielding tool of manipulation and propaganda. Our study engages the problem of the relationship between the political sphere and the cultural traditions, by analysing the strategy used by the Marxist-Leninist regime in Romania to instrumentalise and manipulate a series of themes from the folk culture - folklore, as well as the semantic reconfiguration of the conceptual framework that characterises this cultural compartment. Among the new forms used to ideologise the cultural life after 1948, an important role was given to the themes referring to “the progressive tradition”, “the historical legacy”, “the new folklore”, as well as to the relationship between “Old” and “New”. Engaged in the effort to build a new national community following the Soviet model, on a total break from the “degrading” past, the Marxist-Leninist ideologues have integrated in the suggested design a variety of themes that ensured a certain connection to the “lost world”². The 1950s and early 1960s represent a chronological segment that reflects the attempts to reconfigure the national community and to instrumentalise for this purpose the “cultural tradition”, supported by political and ideological considerations.

Relying on a series of epistemological interrogations, we will try to prove that the instrumentalisation of popular tradition and of the folklore sought to invest the regime image with “local/autochthonous” attributes that would obliterate the aspect of artificiality and foreignness, ensuring thus a continuity with a reinterpreted past, all concomitantly with

² The concepts that we are using, “tradition”, “legacy”, “popular culture”, “folklore” are often characterized in social sciences by a semantic inaccuracy. The term “popular culture”, that includes in its semantic area the other concepts mentioned above, is defined in relation to the “official culture”, detaching itself from the system of values and norms imposed by the state institutions to the society. It represents the “authentic” culture that is specific to the rural areas and integrates references to the *perception of the world*, the customs, beliefs and arts of the peasantry. See Balazs Lajos, *Folclor. Noțiuni generale de folclor și poetică populară*, Scintia Kiado, (Cluj Napoca, 2003). In our opinion, “folklore” refers to the folk artistic creation in all its forms: literary, musical, artistic, architectural.

transforming the folklore into a tool of propaganda and manipulation used in the space of rural communities. Also, by means of an institutional system controlled directly by the regime and engaged in the effort of "scientific analysing" the folklore and the popular culture, a monopoly on the interpretation of the national identity and on the cultural past was maintained. Nonetheless, in the research field of the folklore, a continuity, at least methodological, was ensured with the activity from the interwar period due to the "privileged" status that the idea of popular culture had in the regime's policy, as well as due to the collaboration of researchers such as Sabin Drăgoi, Zeno Vancea, Ioan Muşlea, Mihai Pop.

The antinomy determined by the relationship between the themes of "tradition", national folklore and the image of a "revolutionary" society of progress that is at the same time atheist and liberated from the "retrograde" conceptions of past times, was surpassed by the "dialectic ability" of the Marxist-Leninist ideology to "invent" and use the Past for the benefit of the totalitarian regime. Therefore, we ask ourselves how a theme as "tradition" was integrated within the Marxist-Leninist discourse, how the call to "folklore" cohabitated with the principle of class struggle and the proletarian internationalism, and what were the objective of this action.

The coming to power of the Communist regime in Romania has translated the revolutionary nihilism characteristic to the Bolshevik regime installed after 1917 in Russia into local political behaviour. It was completed by imposing a new institutional structure capable of mobilising all the resources available to the state into the objective of building a "new world". All the compartments of society that existed previous the instalment of the Marxist-Leninist regime had been de-constructed, the entire political and cultural elite decimated, and a basis for a new national community had been imagined following *in extenso* Soviet coordinates. The specific iconoclast-revolutionary phenomenon was endowed with political, educational and psychological attributes that had manifested themselves in extremely strong moments of violence and social disarray, while simultaneously offering the possibility to use some symbols of the past as surrogates and stimuli for identifying the representatives of the old world as "enemies of the revolution".³

The scale and brutality of the project to transform the fundamental structures of the society had attracted radical changes in collective mentalities, in what the social values and norms were concerned, and directly influenced

³ Richard Stites, "Iconoclastic currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and preserving the past", in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, Richard Stites (eds.), *Bolshevik culture*, (Bloomington, 1985), p. 2.

the system of their transmission. This “revolutionary strategy”⁴ of taking over the power has given to the political “elite” a chance to broaden its influence over all the compartments of society, alongside the introduction of a strict control over people’s behaviours and certain severe measures for social levelling, rebooting and reconfiguring the schematics of social articulations. A new society was thus born, whose essence is reduced to standardisation of (social, political, and cultural) behaviours that were being achieved through the action of certain “dominant instances”, which gave validity to specific values, which imposed sanctions, rewarded and punished⁵. In economy, the new authorities promoted the “ideal” of creating and enlarging the “Socialist sector” of the national economy, determined by the reductionist definition of modernization as industrialization, alongside with imposing the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as a form of political government. It is only at the level of the propagandistic discourse that certain coherence in the “progressive” tendencies of the Marxist-Leninists can be identified, and so the real life of the community was dominated by complete disarray that manifested itself by purges, terror, and implanting fear⁶.

“The Apology of the Past” and the political “capabilities” of cultural tradition.

During the Modern Age, the cultural traditions and the national folklore have been frequently used by the political and cultural elites from Central and Eastern Europe to substantiate a nationalistic discourse, often ensuring legitimacy for the course of action taken in order to achieve independence and organisation of their own national state. This tendency to instrument the use of folkloric themes and cultural traditions was perpetuated during the 20th century as the political leaders of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union had invested them with an obvious ideological and political value. The ideological differences and the specificity of the local traditions have determined the creation of thematic panoplies for each regime separately, a situation that allows us, at a synoptic level, to repeat the dichotomy between the “nationalistic” tendency proper to the Fascist and Nazi regimes, and the “anti-nationalistic” approach of the Bolshevik regime that was transferred to the new “popular democracies” after the Second World War.

⁴ Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), p.16.

⁵ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Conflictul social modern. Eseu despre politica libertății*, (Bucharest, Jassy, London, 1996), p. 40.

⁶ Alain Besançon, *Présent soviétique et passé russe*, (Paris, 1976), p. 12.

The German cultural environment of the 1930s sees the revival of a debate on German folklore and ancestral traditions with the purpose of providing arguments in favour of the Nazi concept of "Herrenvolk", which illustrated the image of a community whose members are united by means of certain mystical ties, i.e. blood and common language⁷. The Nazi propaganda took the interpretative model of the 19th century Romanticism that set the coordinates of the ethnic-cultural definition of the German nation by establishing a correlation between popular traditions and the spirit of the national community, but it also added strong racial elements. The regime's interest in the symbolic implications of the folklore, under the pretext of revitalizing the Germanic cultural roots, is reflected in the numerous publications funded by the Nazi Party between 1933 and 1940. These included the newspaper coordinated by Alfred Rosenberg - *Kulturgemeinde* - comprised particularly of North-Germanic folk literature, and the two important journals dedicated to folk art, Germanic symbols and peasant folklore - *Kunst und Volk* and *Volkstum und Heimat*⁸. The objective they so thoroughly sought to accomplish was the strengthening of the nation's cultural unity and it envisaged a diversified range of cultural and political activities able to mobilise the people through a call to the "glorious past" and to the moral obligation to preserve the national specificity. By drawing a theoretical model of relating to the past and to the folk traditions that allowed censorship and selection of those ethnic and racial themes needed by the Nazi propaganda, the regime tried to attract the unconditional support of the population, as well as to implant a new type of behaviour in accordance to the teachings of the Nazi ideology.

The interest shown by the Italian Fascist regime in recuperating the "cultural legacy" and a "past" reproduced in encomiastic terms follows a similar tendency to instrumentalise folk culture. The appeal to the folk creation, to cherishing the legacy of the imperial past became a means for the regime to promote the idea of unity and order among the people, representing one of the central elements of the indoctrination process and it was used to inculcate into the collective mentality "the pride to be Italian" and the vision of a glorious destiny of the nation. The strategies of indoctrination and the reconfiguration of the totality of cultural and social values insisted on the obligation to valorise and to cherish the traditional culture of the people, the folkloric legacy that reflected "the genius of the

⁷ Richard M. Dorson, "Current Folklore Theories", *Current Anthropology*, 4, No. 1 (Feb., 1963), p. 97.

⁸ Christa Kamenetsky, "Folklore as a Political Tool in Nazi Germany", *The Journal of American Folklore*, 85, No. 337 (Jul.-Sep., 1972), p. 222.

Italian people"⁹, with the aim of social mobilisation and strengthening of the regime's legitimacy. A vast institutional network of regional committees was thus created, that was involved in organising folkloric exhibitions and publishing collections of folk creations used by the regime to encourage the people to become aware of "their genius" as an obvious educational character was added to the effort to promote folk culture.

The social and cultural framework of the Soviet Union, marked by the interference of Marxist-Leninist ideological principles, determined an ambiguous reference to the cultural area of "tradition". This attitude initially manifested itself through the enforcement of a cultural policy destined to banish all "retrograde" traces of the past from the collective mentality. The insertion of the political factor in the circles researching the folklore and the folk traditions was less felt during the 1920s as in this period of relative freedom continued the ethnographical activity from pre-revolutionary times. However, the political transformations and the rigidity imposed by the start of the first Five-Year Plan towards the end of the 1920s affected the cultural space in its entirety, as it was incorporated in the efforts to build Socialism¹⁰. The reconfiguration of the Soviet cultural field in the 1930s implied an accelerated effort to retrieve "the progressive legacy of the past", while the political leaders from the Soviet Union became more and more interested in the benefits of instrumentalising the symbolic capital of folklore and traditions. Promoting insistently the idea that folklore is "the creative expression" of the working class, the Soviet ideologues defined a theoretical and conceptual framework so that the "cultural tradition" to become an influential part of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The 1932 Writers' Congress represented the institutionalisation of folklore in the area of the Socialist culture and clearly showed the regime's intention to politically instrument the folk creation: the Soviet propaganda imposed that all studies referring to "tradition" and folklore integrate the theme of class struggle within the narrative Pantheon of heroic legends and folk songs. One of the artisans of this distortion was Maxim Gorki, who laid down the elements for a paradigm of interpretation on folk traditions at the first Congress of the Writers' Union from the Soviet Union in 1934. The new connotations of folk culture referred to the close relation between folklore and real life – i.e. the work conditions of the people – and the study of cultural traditions should reflect the "optimism of life", an expression of "the moral aspirations of the

⁹ William E. Simeone, "Fascists and Folklorists in Italy", *The Journal of American Folklore*, 91, No. 359 (Jan.-Mar., 1978), p. 445.

¹⁰ Felix J. Oinas, "Folklore and Politics in the Soviet Union", *Slavic Review*, 32, No. 1 (March, 1973), p. 46.

working masses", as well as the ideal-type of folk heroes¹¹. Another specific moment in the reorientation of the Soviet regime towards the politicisation of tradition and folklore came in 1936¹², when a new model of perception and analysis of the "cultural legacy" is imposed to the academic environment, as the folklore became "an echo of the past, but, at the same time, also a strong voice of the present, (...) a reflection and a weapon of the class struggle"¹³. Thus, the folk tradition – representing "the hopes and the revolutionary activity of the working class from the past" – joined literature, arts and music in promoting the ideals of the proletariat, having at the same time the task of inculcating a new fundamental framework in the effort of bringing the Soviet nations closer in the form of the "Soviet folklore". Although they created a cult of the folklore, especially the Russian folklore, the cultural authorities from the Soviet Union promoted an "artificial folklore", reinterpreted so that the authentic folk culture was marginalized, sent to a secondary level.

The Conceptual Framework.

The thematic referring to the valorisation of tradition and the importance of studies about the autochthonous folklore ranges among the theoretical interpretations used in the intellectual field characteristic to the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It was invested with a considerable degree of legitimacy in the cultural and political discourse, as well as in the main directions of action set by the national cultural policies. As the essential characteristic of the Central and Eastern European space, the nation – in its cultural-ethnic interpretation – indicated a national community that was "unique" (in its essence), dominated by a national specificity shaped by particular traditions and customs. Transposed into the present, the tradition becomes the background needed by the beliefs and behavioural norms adopted by the community, being situated at the basis of any future direction of action. At the same time, the entirety of elements that compose the tradition imposes a series of behavioural limitations¹⁴ to the

¹¹ Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian folklore and pseudofolklore of the Stalin era*, (M. E. Sharpe, 1990), pp. 11-13.

¹² On this occasion, following an self-criticism imposed by Stalin's adepts, Y.M. Sokolov and Veselovsky Miller, two members of the Academy of Science, were forced to "admit" their failure in representing "the true social and class nature of the oral poetry and legends", insisting on the necessity of the clear application of the Marxist principle in the research regarding the folklore.

¹³ Felix J. Oinas, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

¹⁴ Mark Bevir, "National Histories: Prospects for Critique and Narrative", *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 1 (2007), p. 302.

members of society, by providing a clearly delimited and defined corpus of beliefs, customs, practices, and examples – identity elements in relation to which the community defines itself. An explanatory function¹⁵ is attached to the national discourse based on the resurgence of the thematic concerning tradition, meant to answer such questions as “who are we?”, “where do we come from?”, on the background of a selection process of those elements of tradition that can be used and incorporated into a coherent “guide” for the national community. Thus, the synoptic image of the nation shows a community that is “united” through shared traditions, often associated with ethnical and linguistic ties and a common past for all its members, strengthening the idea of an inexorable continuity in the nation’s historical evolution. The central role in this process of defining the national community fell to that group of intellectuals that were actively involved in the cultural and political life of the nation, engaged in an effort to identify, select and promote “authenticity” and national specificity that materialized in the structuring of a national History. Establishing the area of inspiration in the space of folk culture – folk traditions, customs, art, and literature, situated in a far away past –, the intellectuals, inventing the nation, tried to insert from within the collective mentality the idea of discovering the nation¹⁶. The traditions, regardless of their nature – cultural, political, or economic –, are rooted in the succession of generations, and their perpetuation is determined by an evaluative process, a critical approach often influenced by the social framework of the present period, leading thus to the selection of those practices and themes that are considered to be “superior” or necessary to the new context. The perpetuation of traditions is, therefore, influenced by a community’s disposition to an ordered social life, marked by a sum of “regularities” that provide the social actors with the possibility to make predictions, ensure the stabilization of social life by giving the people a clear idea of the possibilities and methods of action¹⁷. To this aim, the Marxist-Leninist regime in Romania tries to create a coherent, but recognisable image of itself by means of semantic reconfiguration, as well as instrumentalising “tradition” and themes from folk culture, in order to ensure its penetration into the collective mentality and to obtain people’s adhesion. Concomitantly, the ideologues’ efforts were focused on blurring the artificial and imported nature of the new Socialist society by identifying “roots” in the national community’s past.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Lucian Boia, *Doua secole de mitologie națională*, (București, 2002), p. 40.

¹⁷ Jacob Struan, "Tradition in a Free Society: The Fideism of Michael Polanyi and the Rationalism of Karl Popper", *Tradition & Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, 2, (2009-2010), pp. 14-15.

From all the reference literature, here included studies from sociology, psychology, political science and history, we can extract three main functions of tradition, determined by the role it plays within the national community: tradition as a form of communication between the past and the present; tradition as a "common property" of all the community's members – that ensures the basis for the group's unity and the necessary elements to the social dialogue both among members, and between them and the political power; and tradition as a form of ideology, reflecting the interpretative process that sets the directions for adapting and instrumenting traditions according to the principles of the dominant ideology.¹⁸ Also, a theoretical approach of the concept of "tradition" cannot ignore the semantic structure of "inventing tradition" suggested and incorporated into the flow of ideas by the historian Eric Hobsbawm. The expression "inventing tradition" refers to a series of practices meant to inculcate certain values and behavioural norms, and is defined as a process of "symbolising and ritualising" that, through the idea of "repetition", implies automatically continuity with the past¹⁹. Conceived on the background of the non-usage and unsuitability of the genuine tradition within the new socio-political context, the "invented traditions" could be classified into three fundamental categories: traditions that establish and symbolise the social cohesion of the members of a community; traditions that legitimise the functioning of political, cultural, or economic institutions and the relations of authority; and traditions whose main goal is socialization, inculcating the system's values, the beliefs and behavioural norms to the community²⁰.

To what extent can these functions and characteristics of "tradition" be identified in the cultural space of the Marxist-Leninist regime in Romania? How were they interpreted and inserted by the regime's propaganda? We must mention that the Soviet ideologues, although initially rejecting the idea of retrieving tradition, considering that it was characteristic to the feudal era, have managed to discover in the thematic of "tradition" useful tools for mobilising the masses, "purging them", ideologically contaminating them by merging folk themes with progressive ideas and promoting new texts about traditional examples²¹. This pattern of interpretation was adopted *in situ* by the Romanian ideologues, who

¹⁸ Dorothy Noyes, "Tradition: Three Traditions", *Journal of Folklore research*, (1 sept 2009), p. 236.

¹⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction", in Terence Ranger, Eric Hobsbawm (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 5-8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*.

²¹ Dorothy Noyes, *op. cit.*, pag. 240.

adapted it to an "invented past" composed of the entirety of historical themes imposed by the regime, comprising historical deeds invested with certain ideological functions and a new symbolism.

The Marxist-Leninist movement, promoting a total break from a past interpreted in negative terms, managed to overcome the problems represented by a strictly progressive teleological tendency and the necessity to identify a historical and geographical continuity of the community by creating and promoting a "specific past". Although rendering an artificially constructed past, the promotion of "traditions" ranges within the effort to "vernacularize" the image of the "Socialist society" and the project to build it. The "continuity" and "vernacularisation" of coordinates on the new community are guaranteed by the establishment of a behavioural pattern obtained by relating to the actions of the "progressive heroes" from the past – rendered through the interpretative perspective of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, underlining thus the idea of "quasi-compulsory repetition". Imposing their absolute control over the Romanian society, the Communist authorities claimed that their power derives from the social role of the working masses and that they were faced with structuring a discourse that would implant into the collective mentality the "heroic position and collective identity of the working class".²² The function of the corpus of "invented traditions" was to design a plethora of symbols so that to ensure social cohesion by appealing to the pantheon of "heroes" from the past, which would be integrated and highly used by the propaganda institutions in order to insert the principle of class struggle into the national identity-building, expelling thus the national determinism. The same symbols of the "progressive tradition", alongside the idea of retrieving and promoting the "popular culture" of the working masses, will be mobilised to legitimise both the authority status of the Party's elite posing as representatives of the working class, as well as the regime's new cultural policy aimed at outlining the framework for the socialization of the community's members based on the new ideological principles. For the period we consider (1948-1965), these functional aspects of the "progressive tradition" doubled the legitimising propagandistic discourse concerning the model-image of the "Socialist homeland", the "Soviet experience", the guiding status of the Soviet Union's example. They were determined to integrate the "proletarian internationalism" into the design of configuring the national community. Starting with 1965, however, the appeal to "progressive traditions" will hold the central role in the process of ideologically manipulating the population, of restructuring

²² Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power. Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1998), p.2.

the regime's general image, becoming a constitutive part of the ideologues' tendency to conceptually redefine the idea of nation by gradually eliminating the principle of class struggle in favour of emphasizing the ethnic identity element.

Within the Romanian cultural discourse during 1948-65, the themes of retrieving the "progressive legacy" and the "national folklore" took second place, behind the legitimising discursive strategies promoted by the regime's leadership, organised around the thematic stereotype of "modernising the society", alongside the appeal to the cliché of the people's "future well-being". The importance of the creative directions imposed by the "Socialist Realism", the praise of the urban-industrial environment, the appraisal of the past class struggle supported by the "working masses", the dichotomy between the "retrograde old" and the "progressive new" invested the discourse referring to the existence of a retrievable tradition in literature, theatre, art, music and of a folklore of the working masses, with an auxiliary status, that completed the main themes. The Marxist-Leninist ideologues related to the idea of tradition by building the structure of an interpretative paradigm that managed to insert the fundamental ideological principles, eliminating any reference to the national specificity and character from the semantic area of tradition and folklore. The process of semantic interpretation of the concepts of "popular tradition", cultural "legacy", and "folklore" takes place in a broader framework of conceptual transformations that concerned the entire project of building an idea of nation. In other words, the usage of terms (nation, patriotism, national culture) in a new form eliminates the meaning they had previous to the instalment of the totalitarian regime, but tries to maintain their psychological attachment. The ideologues' intention was to seize a terminological structure already incorporated into the collective mentality, on the base of which the national community had been built and imagined, but appropriating its semantic area and inserting it into the action of promoting "the progressive ideals of the proletariat".

The institutional structure - a side of the process of instrumenting popular tradition.

The entire cultural life was ideologised, being subordinated to the political commandments, so that the "new principles" of creation in the Romanian culture, inherent to the "Socialist Realism", lead to its degradation, to the development of a constant state of pressure and manipulation among artists and writers. Becoming an important component on the "road to Socialism", the specificity of the "new culture" copied, down to the smallest detail, "the Soviet experience" whose definitive moment was represented by the Soviet Writers' Congress from 1932, a moment that marks the outlining

of the new cultural themes and of the writers' new discursive behaviour. In this context, the importance of creating the Writers' Union, an entity that ensures a more intense supervision and an absolute control over the writers that became "engineers of souls", is underlined. Referring to this event, Sanda Cordoș considers the new image of the writer (engineer of souls) as exploiting "the authentic, traditional missionarism of the Russian literature, but, this time it's not that mission which the writer chooses at stake, but rather the task that the Party draws for him", and an independent conscience of the writers is forbidden.²³ In fact, the ideologues did not managed to structure a clear, constant or aesthetic theoretical outline, so the Socialist Realism meant only behavioural norms and discursive themes in which the subject became the pretext and legitimacy of "realist" art.²⁴ 1947 marks the year the Writers' Society from Romania disappeared, as it was reorganised into the Writers' Union from Romania, with Mihail Sadoveanu becoming the honorary president of this new institution situated in the centre of the process of planning literature and imposing new literary themes. Also, the fine arts were controlled and directed through the Artists' Union created in October 1950 with main attributions such as organising exhibits, setting the artistic thematic in accordance with the Party's directives, or organising "guidance sessions" for artists. The musical creation was coordinated through the Composers' Union from Romania that emerged in 1949 amid the de-structuring of the old Composers' Society and that comprised, like the other institutions of its kind, only members favoured by the regime²⁵.

In this context, the political instrumentalisation of folklore and popular tradition for propagandistic purposes was supported by creating some new institutions with the aim of researching the community's past and folk culture. The endogen specificity of these institutions reflects the regime's clearly expressed objectives and they were completely dependent to the decision-making factors in terms of propaganda and censorship.

Starting from the premise that political and cultural institutions represent a corpus of rules and organised practices that set goals and directions of action, imposing a certain logic to behaviour, explaining, justifying and legitimating the codes of behaviour²⁶, we will try to explore

²³ Sanda Cordoș, *Literatura între revoluție și reacțiune*, (Cluj, 1999), p. 70.

²⁴ Marin Nițescu, *Sub zodia proletcultismului*, edited by M. Ciurdariu, (București, 1995), p. 43.

²⁵ Cristian Vasile, *Literatura și artele în România comunistă. 1948-1953*, (București, 2010), pp. 200-202.

²⁶ James G. March, Johan P. Olsen, "Elaborating the "New Institutionalism"", in R. A. Rhodes *et alii*, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institution*, (New York, 2006), p. 3.

the institutional structure involved in analysing the past that was imposed by the Marxist-Leninist regime.

The process of institutional restructuring of the cultural space in Romania after 1948 directly targeted the Romanian Academy, the tender spot of the scientific and cultural activity. As a constitutive part of the new Academy, the Section for literary history and folklore had a large variety of attributions in organising the research on literary tradition and folk creation; in 1949 it was transformed in the **Institute for Literary History and Folklore** of the PRR Academy. The creation of this institute was part of the new cultural authorities' effort to impose control, planning and systematisation to the cultural space, its asserted goal being that of "setting new, scientific grounds for the research on Romanian literature"²⁷. Including in its Scientific Board writers and researchers such as George Călinescu, D. Panaitescu, Perpessicius, M. Beniuc, Zaharia Stancu, M. Novicov, I. C. Chițimia, T. Virgolici, it is assigned a central role in promoting the regime's cultural distortions. Its creation had been interpreted as following, in a definitive manner for the new cultural context: "Such an institute did not exist in our country under the past bourgeois-landowner regimes (...) Today, with the instauration of the people's democratic regime, the conditions were created for the existence of an institute in which the historians and folklorists to organise in a planned and systematic manner their entire activity of scientific enquiry and interpretation ..." ²⁸, where "planned and systematic" meant according to the Party's directives. The research activity attempted to realise a symbiosis between the Marxist-Leninist principles and the analysed cultural themes: the study of the literary past, the "re-examining of the classics" in the spirit of Marxist-Leninism, or the elaboration of monographic works and folklore anthologies. During the period 1952-1965, the percentage of studies on the "methodological aspects of research" in literary history and folklore impregnated by the principles of Marxist-Leninist ideology, as well as of those approaching themes imposed by the Socialist Realism, was counterbalanced by publishing studies that tried to maintain a certain distance from the complete interference of ideology; beside all these, so-called documentary texts were published, consisting in correspondence, text transcriptions, biographies, which in their genuine form avoided ideological considerations. In this way, the recurrent themes characteristic to the completely ideologised texts referred to the Romanian-Soviet literary ties, to the "problem of classifying and defining popular

²⁷ ***, Cuvânt înainte [Foreword], *Studii și cercetări de istorie literară și folclor*, no. 1-2, 1952, p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

literature", to "the specificity of literature", to "Leninism and the problem of the development of literature and art", but their presence diminished after 1956. The articles, in which the paragraphs specific to the ideological discourse and the valid scientific information could be separated, tackled subjects like "B.P. Hașdeu and the folkloric problems", "G.I. Pitiș and his research on folklore", "Teodor Buranda, folklorist and ethnographer"²⁹. Also, the documentary texts, organised under the direct supervision of George Călinescu, who became the Institute's director, introduced a series of unpublished material from the activity of past personalities integrated by the propaganda into the pantheon of retrieved "heroes": Anton Pann, M. Eminescu, I. Creangă, Al. Macedonski, Emil Gârleanu, G. Topârceanu, N. Filimon, Petre Ispirescu, Cezar Bolliac. Among the Institute's activities were also a succession of conferences, public meetings and presentations, organised especially in Bucharest with the aim of attracting public and intellectuals in the action of promoting the "new specificity" of the culture.

Alongside the Institute lead by George Călinescu, in the activity of retrieving the past was involved also the **Institute of Art History** created in June 1951 under the patronage of the PRR Academy. It was coordinated by the academician G. Oprescu and it was divided into five sections: folk art, feudal art, modern and contemporary art, theatre history and music history, having the mission of selecting what is more "valuable and typical for the different historical epochs". Oriented towards analysing folk art and artistic creation, the research conducted endured the publication of less ideologised texts, a fact that determined a harsh criticism from the periodical *Lupta de clasă* [*The Class Struggle*] concerning the Institute's "sectarian activity".³⁰ In the institute's publication, *Studies and Research of Art History (Studii și cercetări de istoria artei)* wrote K.H. Zambaccian, G. Oprescu, Radu Bogdan, Paul Stahl, touching on a large variety of themes, from decorative and architectural descriptions to the theatrical and musical activity beside the studies characteristic to the interference of ideology referring to the thematic of Socialist Realism.

In Bucharest functioned also the **Institute of Folklore**, whose activity, although under the direct control of the Direction for Propaganda and Agitation³¹, was less ideologised, as it focused strictly on gathering and studying folk creations. Its operating rules were outlined in a decision of the

²⁹ All these articles were published by I.C. Chițima, the coordinator of the Institute's section for folklore.

³⁰ Acad. G. Oprescu, "Progresele înfăptuite în domeniul artei și al cercetărilor de artă în cei 10 ani de la 1944 până astăzi", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, (1954), p. 9.

³¹ Cristian Vasile, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

Council of Ministers from April 1949 and it was integrated in the Ministry of Culture³². In the research activity, the main accent was put on the collection of folklore, of oral stories and legends, on the recording of music, dance and popular arts, on editing monographic collections and on the preserving of 'folklore archives' inherited from the institutions that were active in the interwar period – as was the case of the folklore archive of the Romanian Composers' Society and also of the phonogram archive of the Ministry of Arts. Supervised by the composer Sabin V. Drăgoi and by the ethnologist Mihai Pop, the Institute of Folklore had developed and adapted a methodology based on in-field research, highly influenced by the monographic approach specific to the D. Gusti's Sociology School in Bucharest. From 1956, it will begin editing a periodical, the Folklore Journal (*Revista de Folclor*), which included in its advisory board the above named collaborators, and also Ion Muşlea and Tiberiu Alexandru. The main purpose of the Journal was to bring together all the "popular creation in its syncretic ensemble"³³. The institute had succeeded to amass throughout its activity a huge folkloric "raw" material³⁴. The presence in the scientific board of Sabin V. Drăgoi, Mihai Pop and Ion Muşlea³⁵ had made possible some sort of continuity, mainly methodological, with the research in this field before 1948.

This vast infrastructure of institutions under the direct supervision of the communist authorities, alongside many 'amateur artist groups' affiliated to numerous institutions and industrial centres, reflected the importance bestowed upon the instrumentalisation of the 'progressive past', and also, the need to keep a monopoly on the interpretations of 'past' elements. This institutional form ensured on one hand the control of this segment of the academia, and also the implementation of directives from the Party forums that dealt with culture.

Between 'patriotic duty' and political calculations: the ideological instrumentalisation of 'popular traditions'. The Folklore and the Socialist Patriotism.

In the framework of the new ideological structure, the theoreticians had imposed a radical semantic transformation of the term 'patriotism', determined by a theoretical reconfiguration of the idea of nationhood and

³² C.S. Storeescu, "Din activitatea Institutului de folclor", *Revista de Folclor*, no 1-2, (1956), p. 297.

³³ Sabin V. Drăgoi, "Cuvânt înainte", *Revista de Folclor*, nr. 1-2, (1956), p. 1.

³⁴ Octavian Bubociu, Linda Dégh, Milenko S. Filipović, Milovan Gavazzi, "Folklore and Ethnography in Rumania", *Current Anthropology*, 7, no. 3 (Jun., 1966), p. 303

³⁵ Ion Muşlea, reinstated by the regime, took back the publication of *Arhiva de Folclor* whose apparition was stopped in 1948.

also by the need of a terminology that could allow the instrumentalisation of themes taken from the area of national constructs. 'The working people's patriotism', a cliché expression promoted by the propaganda, is encompassed in the limits of a legitimatised discourse of Marxist-Leninist leaders on the creation of a superior society, being understood as a product of a "new superior social conscience". As an ideological construct it was summarized as a "social phenomenon" that reflects the material conditions in the society, characterized by the "need" of the working class to love its own homeland and to protect the "victories of the working class people".³⁶ Situated in close correlation with the idea of "homeland", whose definition explains the iteration of class struggle at a semantic level, mainly because the homeland is understood as a "politic, cultural and social environment", it gets a double conditioning, both temporal and class-based. In the Marxist-Leninist interpretation, using a synoptic point of view, "patriotism" became deeply rooted in a "capitalist era", developed on the background of "struggles" against feudalism. But the thorough distortion operated on the history of human society by using economic determinism had allowed the segmentation of "patriotism" along the lines of social classes. And so "the unbeatable force of the working class patriotism resides in the limitless love of those who work towards the progressive traditions of the people, in the devotion toward the regime... and toward the party..."³⁷.

Previous to the Communists coming to power, the term "patriotism" was invested in the Romanian political culture with semantic characteristics that were related directly to the institutional form of a nation, being perceived as encompassing the sentiment of loyalty towards the nation state. However, by redefining the concept, the Marxist-Leninist ideologues have eliminated those "nationalist" connotations and appropriated the psychological effect of the concept of "patriotism", resulting in implanting the idea that people's devotion toward the new construct is synonymous with fidelity to the state. They succeeded in linking the concept of "patriotism" with the promotion of the proletariat's ideals that were decided and imposed by the Marxist-Leninist regime.

The importance of this discussion on defining "patriotism" is supported by our research premise which identifies interdependences between the "progressive traditions" and the idea of "patriotism"; the integration of the idea of "tradition" - recovered in the ideological scheme - is made by a semantic reconfiguration of patriotism. On the background of

³⁶ Elena Gheran, "The patriotism of working people, the movement force of development in our country on the road of socialism", *Cercetări Filosofice*, 2, (1954), p. 34.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

an inherent "national culture" dichotomy, an image specific to the Marxist-Leninist ideology used in presenting the period before the instauration of the regime, the "democratic culture" is retrievable as it "encompasses the needs of the people and its struggle for liberation"³⁸, and "the working class patriotism" is defined in relation to the accepting and internalizing this form of culture. Thus, the regime's propaganda tends to insert in the collective mentality the idea that valorising the "progressive tradition" is a patriotic duty, a position supported by the understanding that "the development of a new culture is not made upon a void space, but by means of a critical valorisation of the whole advanced cultural legacy of the past".³⁹

In the entirety of the process of ideological interpretation, of promoting Marxist-Leninist principles, a central role was given to the Institute of Philosophy of the P.R.R. Academy which had "a special place in the system of scientific research institutes and in the... ideological front"⁴⁰. In a report addressed to the Direction of Propaganda and Agitation concerning the Institute of Philosophy's situation, a special attention is given to its central purpose - "to elaborate papers, to organise debates, to take a stand in the main theoretical problems... to contribute to the materialist-dialectic orientation of scientific research in all fields..."⁴¹, including that of "valorisation of progressive traditions" and of defining a new paradigm for the nation-building idea.

In the 1950s, one of the main ideologues who promoted the theoretical outline of integrating folklore and traditions in the ideological space was Constantin Ionescu Gulian, whose discourse covers the entire plethora of ideological instrumentalised themes. As one of the theorists closest to Leonte Răutu, and as a member of the P.R.R. Academy since 1955 and director of the Academy's Institute of Philosophy, C. I. Gulian was very active, being the one who decided what is publishable and what is not in the field of Philosophy⁴². Gulian was mainly the one who, in the theoretical press of the regime, had debated the idea of retrieving a number of "progressive personalities" from the past. About Victor Babeş he stated that "his monumental scientific work, his valuable activity as a teacher and

³⁸ M. Frunză, I. Bălănescu, "Cu privire la problema închegării națiunii socialiste în R.P.R.", *Lupta de Clasă*, no. 2, (1952), p. 47.

³⁹ V. Nichita, "Înflorirea culturii naționale în Republica Populară Română", *Lupta de Clasă*, no. 8, (1954), p. 77.

⁴⁰ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (ANIC), Fond *Propagandă și Agitație*, file 9/1956, p.154.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Vladimir Tismăneanu, Cristian Vasile, *Perfectul acrobat. Leonte Răutu, măștile răului*, (București, 2008), p. 111.

organiser in the field of medicine, his tenacious fight for the protection of the medical well-being of the working classes, and his courageous attacks against the bourgeois-landowner regime and against the obscurantist official ideology, came from a deep patriotic feeling, from his love of the people"⁴³; the same perspective was expressed by Gulian also on a number of other intellectuals considered "progressive", such as Gheorghe Marinescu⁴⁴, Nicolae Bălcescu, Alecsandri, Russo, Negruzzi, Cezar Boliac, Odobescu, B.P. Hașdeu.

What do these intellectuals recovered by the regime have in common and what are the stakes of this propagandistic discourse? Basically, their image is structured in a series of related aspects, placed in a logical order determined by the Marxist-Leninist interpretation: these "positive heroes" have dedicated their entire cultural activity to the "well-being" of the people, they have fought for the political and cultural "elevation" of the society, and they were against the "bourgeois state of things". By associating these famous people from the past, deeply rooted in the collective mentality, the regime tried to ensure for itself a stable basis in its relation with the society, projecting itself as the continuer of a "tradition" oriented towards the cultural and politic development of the national community. The regime had thus succeeded to use an apparently paradoxical double-faced status of the "hero" – as an agent of social transformation and enforcer of stability⁴⁵ –, in an effort to convince and mobilize the society.

In 1955 C. I. Gulian publishes in *Philosophical Research [Cercetări Filosofice]*, the periodical of the Institute of Philosophy of the P.R.R Academy, one of his most consistent studies, that synthetised all the instrumentations used by the ideology in regard to folklore and tradition. The whole thematic of popular creation is invested with a pronounced class character as the collective persona – "the working classes" – was considered the main creative body.⁴⁶ Reluctant to the associations between "popular values" and "national values", Gulian tried to eliminate from the semantic area of the folklore all affinities of a national kind, supporting the tendency to use this term in a "sense highlighted by the moral qualities of the working classes"⁴⁷. He rejects the formula of "the soul of the people", which

⁴³ C.I. Gulian, Gh. Lupașcu, "Victor Babeș, un mare om de știință, patriot și gânditor progresist (la centenarul nașterii sale)", *Lupta de Clasă*, no. 7, (1954), p. 64.

⁴⁴ C.I. Gulian, "Asupra concepției filosofice materialiste a doctorului Gheorghe Marinescu", *Cercetări Filosofice*, 1, (1954).

⁴⁵ Al. Zub, "Prefață", in Thomas Carlyle, *Cultul eroilor*, (Iași, 1998), p. 9.

⁴⁶ Academician C.I. Gulian, "Pentru valorificarea creației noastre populare", *Cercetări Filosofice*, III, no. 4, (1955), p. 175.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

is associated with "the national character" and incites "a search of national and ethnic roots", considered a "reactionary" tendency that "diminishes the masses power to create and the ideological and artistic value of popular creations"⁴⁸. He also argued in favour of the necessity to approach "in a philosophical sense" the popular creation, stressing "the socio-political... conditions and the conception of the world implied in folklore"⁴⁹. The themes of reflection on which the folklorists and literature historians were forced to focus related to the ideas of: "the social character of the folklore", "the class hate", "the work and the value of man". In this context of delegitimising the national traits, the Marxist-Leninist interpretation imposes that the studies on folklore reflect "a critical realism", "an ideological content", "an essential presentation of a social phenomenon", and all elements of an analysis framework specific to the Socialist Realism that attached to folklore the quality of an "educative-politic" instrument. The folklore's status as an "educational instrument" proves the connection established by the ideologues between the behavioural model inherent to an "invented past" - as it is considered "an illustration and a source of moral values" - and the reshaping of behavioural norms among the community members after 1948.

"The New Folklore" - an instrument for indoctrination.

The ideologues have tried to attach the popular tradition to the effort of promoting a new image of the society, supporting in this sense the creation a "qualitatively superior" folklore, that could best reflect the transformations imposed after 1948. The "new" legends and "popular" poems created focused on themes such as: the dominant role of the workers' class in the past, "the progressive" heroes and/or leaders of Marxist-Leninist movement, the members of the collective farms, the workers from the construction sites and from heavy industries. The regime's effort to "encourage" the amateur folklore groups had the purpose of creating the illusion of general popular approval for the regime. The "amateur artists' movement" was a part of the regime's action of indoctrination and hence attached to the many different institutions created for this purpose: centres - cultural homes (cămine culturale), popular art museums, rural libraries. The archaic forms of socialisation in the rural space, such as "șezătoare" (sit-together) - mainly organised in smaller groups in which household work was done and the local problems were discussed - and "clăci" (working the land in common), were integrated as basic activities of cultural homes and

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴⁹ C. I. Gulian, *Sensul vieții în folclorul românesc*, (București, 1957), p. 6.

transformed in organised events with a frequency decided by the authorities and compulsory attendance⁵⁰.

In this context we could also integrate the “instrumental groups and artistic agitation brigades”, placed under the direct coordination of the regime’s propaganda agents. Unlike the local folklorists who promoted a local popular thematic and a genuine folklore, the agitation brigades were considered “efficient means of educating the popular masses and important factors in the creation and development of the new in folklore”⁵¹. Bestowed with an active “political role”, their mission was to render the utopic image of the social reality, of the regime’s achievements, and then presenting them in an “artistic” form at the many events organised. The regime’s directives imposed that this kind of propagandistic groups of the “new folklore” be highly mobile and operational, the number of members be limited, and their “artistic” programs be “combative and mobilising”⁵². Therefore, the activity of such groups was conducted following a clear methodology and objectives: “in choosing the place for future representations, 1-2 members of the brigade are to go to the location to get the necessary data for the programme. The results thus obtained were to be processed by a small creation group (that existed in any agitation brigade), with a clear view of the object in question...”⁵³. The effect of this “mise en stage” of the folklore ensured the dissemination of the new ideas on the popular culture, contributing thus to the regime’s effort of investing itself with a popular character.

Endowed with a new content and a special social function, “the new folklore”, although promoted in this form by the “amateur” groups, was considered a state matter. In this sense, to better control and coordinate this activity, the authorities created the so-called “Central House of Popular Creations”, whose main objective was to “guide and promote the talents of the masses”⁵⁴. They also created an extensive infrastructure of popular art museums, cultural homes and special “popular crafts” schools, all these reflecting the extent of instrumentation and manipulation of popular culture.

⁵⁰ Florin Georgescu, "Folclorul și mișcarea artistică de amatori", *Revista de Folclor*, no. 1-2, (1959), p. 100.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.102.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Acad. G. Oprescu, "Progresele înfăptuite în domeniul artei și al cercetărilor de artă în cei 10 ani de la 1944 până astăzi", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, (1954), pp 7-8.

A form of refuge and resistance - "The popular tradition" and genuine folklore.

The activity of this segment of the cultural area, preoccupied with recovering and reinterpreting popular traditions, was oriented systematically towards plastic arts, music, popular theatre, rural and religious architecture. On a theoretical level, the cultural authorities imposed a series of "methodological indications", taken from the "Soviet positive experience" in the field of popular culture research, in order to steer this activity on the course needed by the propaganda. Determined by two postulates: "the identification of the element" and the "explanation of the evolution and its function depending on the social-economic conditions, taste and mentality of the popular masses in the given era"⁵⁵, the studies focusing on the analysis of popular traditions were integrated in the promotion of "Socialist Realism".

Nevertheless, some of the published studies managed to avoid the interference of the ideological factor. Opting for description as the main method of research and in doing so avoiding analytical approaches, the researchers managed to preserve in their studies a real image, even if fragmented, of the cultural past. In the field of popular arts, the majority of studies had as subjects: "decorative elements" of rural houses from many ethnographic regions⁵⁶, details of costumes and local traditions⁵⁷. In this category, Paul Stahl and Paul Petrescu published a collection of texts centred on the presentation of "decorative elements of rural homes from the Bistrița valley"⁵⁸, "enamel pottery from Transylvania"⁵⁹, and "Romanian peasant houses with two levels"⁶⁰. These studies, and other works that addressed related subjects such as the specific of embroideries and popular sawing, popular pottery, or dances⁶¹, managed to promote the existence of a

⁵⁵ Florea Bobu Florescu, Paul Petrescu, "Metoda de cercetare a culturii populare în URSS", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, (1958), p. 15.

⁵⁶ Gheorghe Focșa, "Elemente decorative în arhitectura populară din zona etnografică a Jiului de Sus", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, (1954).

⁵⁷ Corina Nicolescu, "Locuințe domnești în cuprinsul mănăstirilor în veacurile XV-XVII", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, (1954); Ștefan Balș, "Vechi locuințe boierești din Gorj", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, (1954).

⁵⁸ Paul Stahl, Paul Petrescu, "Elementelor de înfrumusețare a locuințelor țărănești de pe valea Bistriței", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 1-2, (1955).

⁵⁹ *Idem*, "Ceramica smălțuită românească din Transilvania", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 1-2, 1956.

⁶⁰ Paul Stahl, "Locuințe țărănești cu două caturi la români", *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 1-2, (1957).

⁶¹ Alexandru Tiberi, *Instrumentele muzicale ale poporului român*, (București, 1956); Tiberiu Berdiceanu, *170 de melodii populare din Maramureș*, (București, 1957).

cultural specificity that could be associated with the notion of national specificity. In an article published in the journal *Studies and Research of Art History*, G. Oprescu, summarising the 10 years of “progress” in the field of popular tradition research since 1944, explained the need to retrieve popular traditions as following: “by knowing the elements that condition the popular artistic manifestations..., the research in this field contributes to the clarification of problems regarding the ethno-genesis and the formation of ethnic specificity”⁶²; this affirmation can blur the character of folklore as a social factor imposed by the ideology, rendering the importance of popular culture in the identity structure of the national community. Also, an intense activity of publishing and sorting the folklore collections was realized. This effort was mainly coordinated by the Institute of Folklore, whose research methodology manages to bypass the implication created by the sheer pressure of ideological principles. Retrieving the research hypotheses of Ovid Densusăianu, who considered the folklore as “the icon of the soul for every people”, and of Bela Bartok – interested in recording popular music –, the activity of publishing folklore collections was a refuge in the face of the threats represented by the ideological distortion operated by the regime.

Searching for Legitimacy: the relationship between political power and popular traditions.

After 1948, the Marxist-Leninist regime imposed a new paradigm in defining the nation, mobilising all resources necessary to this aim, so that the state – with already structured and functioning institutions – creates its nation. The Romanian Marxist-Leninist ideologues used the Stalinist model for interpretation, according to which the nation does not represent the expression of a racial or tribal community, although it is “historically constituted”, nor it is the product of people’s cohabitation for generations, but the main factor that determined the coagulation of the community is that of the economic relations established between the inhabitants of the same territory and speakers of the same language. The nation’s particularity and identity are given by its moral behaviour, its national character, expressed in the national culture.⁶³

In this context, the Communist leaders, posing as representatives of the working classes, invested a great deal into constructing an image that

⁶² Acad. G. Oprescu, “Progresele înfăptuite în domeniul artei și al cercetărilor de artă în cei 10 ani de la 1944 până astăzi”, *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, no. 3-4, 1954, p. 8.

⁶³ I.V. Stalin, *Marxismul și problema național-colonială (culegere de articole și de discursuri alese)*, (București, 1949), p. 12.

would represent them as guardians and supporters of the cultural life of the new society. Due to its symbolic and emotional values, popular tradition became one of the core elements in the plan to manipulate the society and it was transposed in the field of political stakes. As a characteristic of the ideological Manichaeism, the situation of the popular traditional culture previous to the instalment of the "people's democracy" is presented to be in ruins, neglected and even instrumented by the bourgeoisie in the detriment of the masses; so, it becomes the mission of the Marxist-Leninist regime to retrieve this "temps perdu" and guarantee the analysis, reintegration and development of the "true" popular culture by applying the "scientific methods of interpretation" represented by the Marxist-Leninist principles.

Why this interest for the traditional culture and what were its stakes? We consider that the regime tried thereby to prove its supposed "popular character", to legitimate its authority by promoting the idea of "the popular origin of the power". Although it distorted the symbolism and significations of traditional culture by transforming it into a "vector of revolt", by attaching nuances of class struggle to it, we believe that the agents of the regime sought, indirectly, to obtain a certain cultural coherence, alongside the attempts to "autochthonise" the imported coordinates of the "new society".

The traditional culture, deeply rooted within the collective mentality, represents the place where "identity is negotiated", where identity discourses are built and invested with the allure of calls to action.⁶⁴ The framework imposed by the Marxist-Leninist regime eliminated all tendency to negotiate and it seized all channels of promoting the identity discourse, attempting thus to fully control the cultural space. Therefore, the tendency towards creating a "hegemonic"⁶⁵ status gives the possibility for the representatives of the regime to assume the concepts of national identity, to interpret them and to impose a politicisation and ideologisation of the cultural thematic.

However, despite their quasi-total domination, the authorities did not succeed in overcoming a problem determined by the specificity of the traditional culture. Traditional symbols and themes are far too deeply rooted in the collective mentality, are already invested with significations

⁶⁴ Bennetta Jules-Rosette, Denis-Constant Martin, *Cultures Populaires, identités et politique*, Les Cahiers CERL, 17, (1997), p. 30.

⁶⁵ Our hypothesis is based on the concept of "hegemony" suggested by A. Gramsci, which indicates the manner of how dominant groups in society, by means of the intellectual space, attempt to impose their control and ensure the subordination of the other social groups.

that were passed on from a generation to another, are “authentic” and inherent to the collective behaviour. This aspect forced the regime, in its action to instrumentalise and manipulate the popular creation, to implement an extremely violent project concerning the collective mentality of the traditional society that implied building an extensive institutional network. This network was engaged in the effort to “re-examine” the past and organise public manifestations, as well as the action of certain agents of propaganda, such as “the agitation brigades” of popular artists. All this “popular” festivities, manifestations and performances organised by the authorities in the attempt to popularise among the society an image created by the ideologues had the role of implanting the idea that a unity existed between the regime and the people. In our opinion, the members of the traditional community, although they were the subjects of this incisive plan of indoctrination, have rejected the regime’s tendency to impose a “new folklore” and new cultural themes, considering that those were artificial, foreign elements, to the same extent they resisted the strategies to transform the rural space (the acts of resistance against the collectivisation of agriculture were quite numerous). In what the academic environment involved in the analysis of the traditional culture is concerned, as seen above, part of the intellectuals took refuge into publishing collections of folk songs, legends and poems in their genuine form, without making a “scientific analysis” and ensuring thus the preservation of the cultural specificity. The situation becomes more complex in the case of the groups of peasants turned into workforce in the industry, integrated within the urban space and within the control and manipulation forms particular to these settings. They had access to a completely redefined cultural environment, retaining at the same time their traditional-rural background, a fact that led to a clash between two cultural models. In this sense, the “new folklore” promoted by the regime by way of groups of amateur artists from different cultural and industrial centres had the mission of imprinting a coherent identity in accordance with the ideological principles, as well as ensuring social cohesion and stability.

The Nationalistic Discourse in Communist Romania. A General Perspective¹

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This paper offers a general analysis on internal and external political conditions that facilitated the inclusion of national problem in the political discourse of the Romanian Communist Party, on the one hand and also the way in which this evolution influenced the development of the communist regime, on the other hand. On this respect, our paper reveals also the main instruments used by Romanian propaganda in order to spread its nationalist message to the people.

The appeal to national discourse was mainly determined by the dispute between Romanian Workers' Party and Soviet Communist Party occurred in the beginning of the '60s regarding the Romanian strategy for socialist development. On this respect, the appeal to the nation and national interests was used by the Workers' Party to sustain the industrialization of Romania, for the leaders considered that industrialization is the only valid solution for development and socialist modernization.

During Nicolae Ceauşescu's regime, mainly after his speech in 1968, August 22, discourse about nation became a turning point for politics, culture and history. So the Communist Party and particularly Nicolae Ceauşescu were regarded as saviors of independence and national sovereignty, according to the patterns established by Marx and Lenin. In the same time, the insertion of the national theme in the official political discourse determined a new interpretation of the whole Romanian history regarding the popular conscious and ceaseless struggle for national independence. This offers to the Communist Party necessary reasons for defending the superiority of Romanian people, such as Protochronism and Tracology as a distinct branch of national history. Simultaneously, official projects as *Cântarea României* National Festival or *Daciada* were used to serve achieving the nationalist aims of Romanian Communist Party.

Keywords: nationalist discourse, socialist development, Nicolae Ceauşescu, Protochronism, *Cântarea României*, *Daciada*

A development that has stunned the observers outside the Romanian political scene in the communist period is related to the rehabilitation of the nationalistic discourse. This development led to the

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subordination of the official Marxist discourse to the one regarding the nation and the national values, resulting in an "indigenization of Marxism".²

Our paper will focus on identifying those internal and external political developments/evolutions that marked the emergence and development of a national theme in the political discourse of the Romanian Communist Party. In this respect, we will highlight the main political reasons that determined the inclusion of the national element in the party's official rhetoric and how these have influenced its thematic evolution. However, the thematic diversification of the nationalistic speech will be highlighted by the identification of the main organizational forms through which the Romanian Communist regime chose to publicize its contents.

The appeal of the Romanian communist regime to the nationalistic discourse was mainly determined by the evolution of the relations between the Romanian Workers' Party and the USSR's Communist Party ever since the 1960s. Without having the pretention of an exhaustive approach of this topic³, I will resume to the identification of the most important political events that marked the Romanian-Soviet divergences, as well as to their contribution to the theoretical foundations of the nationalistic discourse.

In June 1962, at the prime-secretaries' meeting of all communist parties within the Committee for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)⁴ from Moscow, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev presented the „The Basic Principles of the International Socialist Division of Labor”. The Soviet document forecasted the restructuring of the functions of this economic body of the communist bloc. In this way CMEA was about to transform itself in a super national planning authority, capable of imposing a coordination and specialization of the national development plans. The purpose of this Soviet proposal was the enforcement of the political alliances in the communist bloc by augmenting the mutual economic dependency between its member states. Within this predicted economical specialization Romania was attributed the status of agricultural country⁵.

² Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*, (București, 1994), p. 121.

³ For further details see for example, Jacques Lévesque, *Le conflit sino-soviétique et l'Europe de l'Est. Les incidences sur les conflits soviéto-polonais et soviéto-roumain*, (Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1970); Mihai Croitor, *România și conflictul sino-sovietic (1956-1971)*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2009)

⁴ For a detailed account of the Romania's participation in CMEA during lui Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's leadership see Liviu Țăranu, *România în Consiliul de Ajutor Economic Reciproc 1949-1965*, (Bucuresti, 2007).

⁵ For a detailed account of these developments, see Ghiță Ionescu, *The Reluctant Ally. A Study of Communist Neo-Colonialism*, (An Ampersand Book, 1965), pp. 51-83;

The rejection of the Soviet plan of economic integration as well as the public opposition of the Romanian leaders on this issue constituted the first important moment in introducing the „nation” in the official discourse of the party. The motivations behind the option of the Romanian leaders were dictated on one hand by the internal political context and on the other hand by the position which the discourse about the nation occupied within the Romanian cultural practices.

If at the beginning of 1950s the legitimation of the Romanian Workers' Party (hereafter abbreviated as RWP) was revindicated from the proletarian internationalism and its subordination to the Soviet Union, the disagreement between the two parties on the economic division in the communist bloc deprived the Romanian party's leaders of any political-symbolic support. Therefore, the RWP appeal to the nationalistic discourse firstly served to the legitimizing purpose of its leadership and at the same time it marked the beginning of a new step in the relation of the party with the Romanian society, one of *inclusion*⁶. As Katherine Verdery demonstrates, the option for this type of discourse was not entirely determined by the legitimizing necessities of RWP. The author mentions that the political rehabilitation of the nationalistic language was mainly linked to the party's awareness of its symbolic force that could engage and mobilize around the purposes of the regime both the masses of people as well as a part of the intellectual elite⁷.

The main element of the nationalist discourse promoted by the RWP instrumented the national interest argument in the support of the country's industrialization plans. In other words, from a Marxist point of view, such a model of internal development was identified as being the only viable option for the consolidation of independence and national development, respectively for the creation of a strong labor class, as a social support of the political regime. The same argument was repeated this time

David Floyd, *Romania. Russia's Dissident Ally*, (Frederick A. Praeger Publishers), 1965, pp. 77, 72-81.

⁶ The *inclusion* represents the last of the three main phases identified by Kenneth Jowitt in order to trace the evolution of the relation between a communist party and its society. During this phase, the main concern of the party is to integrate itself or to integrate its regime within the non-party sections of the society. The party is interested in legitimizing its own leadership and consequently, it replaced the domination, command and violence which had previously characterized its authority relationship with the society through manipulation and persuasion apud Robert King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, (Stanford, Hoover Institution, 1980), pp. 99-101.

⁷ Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență*, pp. 76-81.

in the particular context of the Romanian-Soviet disagreements in the *Statement on the Stand of the Rumanian Workers' Party Concerning the Problems of the World Communist and Working-Class Movement* from April 1964. In essence, the document's text mentioned that every Marxist-Leninist party, having the best knowledge of the realities in its country and having a responsibility towards the people, acquired the right and the obligation to elaborate, select and change the forms and methods of the socialist construction according to the national interests. This position implicitly denied the validity of some patterns or recipes offered by a "parent-party", referring to Communist Party of the Soviet Union (hereafter abbreviated as CPUS), in elaborating and implementing the strategy to build the socialism⁸.

Robert King mentions that in order to give credibility to the new nationalistic orientation PMR harbored an anti-Russian public attitude meant to diminish its image as a foreign party imposed with the Soviet help⁹. The publication of Karl Marx's *Writings about Romanians* which mentioned that Bessarabia was a Romanian land conquered by the tsarist empire followed the same line of thought¹⁰. To this volume it was added another one, *Lenin about Romania*, which included a telegram of this Soviet leader in which he recognized the existence of the Romanian treasury in Moscow¹¹.

Moreover, in 1964 it was published a letter written by Engels and addressed to the socialist Ion Nădejde at the beginning of 1888, in which the sender realized a harsh indictment of the Tsarist Empire's policy towards the Romanian territories, starting with the period of the Organic Regulations, the suppression of the events from 1848, the two times seizures of Bessarabia and continuing with the repeated violations to the independence of the country¹². In parallel it was conducted a campaign of de-Sovietization of the Romanian public and cultural life (1962-1964): the Russian language was no longer an mandatory subject in the school curriculum, a series of cultural Romanian-Russian institutions were closed

⁸ „Declarația cu privire la poziția Partidului Muncitoresc Român în problemele mișcării comuniste și muncitorești internaționale adoptată de Plenar lărgită a CC al PMR din aprilie 1964”, *Scânteia*, an XXXII no. 6239, 26 aprilie 1964, pp. 1-3.

⁹ Robert King, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

¹⁰ Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită*, (București, 1997), p. 64.

¹¹ *Idem*, *O istorie trăită. Memorii. II*, (București, 2003), pp. 54-55.

¹² *Presa muncitorească și socialistă din România, Vol. I (1865-1890)*, (București, 1964), p. 190 apud Florin Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu*, Bucharest, 2007, p. 280. The same letter will be also published in another collection of articles entitled *Contribuția revistei <Contemporanul> la propagarea concepției marxiste în România (1881-1891)*, (Iași, 1972), pp. 241-244.

or the Russian names of the streets were changed along with other names of institutes, cities¹³. Consequently, one can observe a diminishing role of the Slavic element, respectively Russian, in the writing of the new „historical truths”¹⁴.

The disagreements with the Soviet Union on the topic of the chance of achieving the industrial developmental model determined a reorientation in the foreign politics of PMR. Thus, taking advantage of the Sino-Soviet conflict, PMR tried to transform its relations with China, Yugoslavia or Albania into ideological alliances. These permitted the PMR to sustain indirectly the new internal political course, based on the affirmation of each party’s right to adapt its national strategy to the needs and the national requirements.¹⁵

This symbolic detachment from the Soviet line, founded on the disagreements on the subject of the Romanian options for its internal developmental plans was too optimistically interpreted by a part of the Romanian and foreign historians as the beginning of the independence politics of the RWP towards CPUS. In my opinion the divergent position towards the Soviet plans of economic integration didn’t result in an independent Romanian policy. This was due to the fact that the fundamental element of RWP’s „dissidence” aimed only at the restructuring of the relations between USSR and the socialist countries. This would allow the latter within the organizational framework of the Eastern bloc to affirm and to implement its own vision of transformation of the national structures according to the Marxist-Leninist coordinates. The national and anti-Soviet nuance which RWP embedded in its actions was meant to confer them that legitimacy and credibility necessary for their instrumentalization. This was done with the purpose of consolidating the regime’s political support.

What started as a strategic movement meant to harness the symbolic power of the nationalistic discourse in the support of the party’s new political orientation during Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s period was transformed during the leadership of his successor, Nicolae Ceaușescu, into a constant of the political discourse, determining what Katherine Verdery called an „indigenization of Marxism”.¹⁶

Therefore, the period between 1965 and 1989 marked not only a replay in an international context of the old theme of each party’s duty and

¹³ Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită*, p. 12.

¹⁴ Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români 1944-1977*, (București, 2008), pp. 47-53.

¹⁵ Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită. Memorii II*, pp. 26, 10; Ghiță Ionescu, *Comunismul în România 1944-1962*, (București, 1994), pp. 328-330.

¹⁶ Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență*, p. 121.

national responsibility to establish their own strategies of socialist development but mostly a theorizing framework in which the national values and the nation would be included and sometimes instrumentalized in the historical and current political practice.

For the purpose of my paper, which is tracing the main political coordinates that marked the apparition and the development of national communism, the period of Nicolae Ceaușescu will be divided in two distinct parts, while setting as a reference point his discourse from 21 August 1968.

The foreign affairs actions which preceded the moment of 1968 (such as the Romanian proposals expressed at the Treaty of Warsaw in 1966, Romania's position during the preliminary phases of the Conference of the communist and workers' parties from 1967-1968 or towards the evolution of the situation in Czechoslovakia) portrayed and supported the affirmation of the Romanian point of view according to which the adopting of a nationalistic trend by any of the communist parties represented its main inalienable and fundamental duty. This opinion was shaped by the fact that the respective party was the only one able to know best the conditions from that country and was the only one responsible for its activity "towards its class, towards the people and the nation from which it was part of and whose vital interests it represented"¹⁷.

In parallel with these actions, Nicolae Ceaușescu made the first steps towards the rehabilitation of the nationalist discourse and its instrumentalization with the purpose of coagulation of popular support for his leadership. Therefore, in his public pronouncements on this subject, the Romanian leader mentioned that the nation and the national state not only would they continue to exist during socialism but they would also lay at the foundation of the durable development of Socialist Romania¹⁸.

At the same time, the introduction of the national element in the party's rhetoric was followed by a reinterpretation of the recent past of the party, which suited its new status as the successor of the "secular struggles waged by the Romanian people for the independence of the country, for the formation of the Romanian nation and of unitary national state, for the acceleration of the social progress and Romania's advancement on the path of civilization". In the discourse presented on the occasion of the 45th anniversary from the foundation of PCR (7 May 1996), Nicolae Ceaușescu explained that during the interwar period the Communist Party's support

¹⁷ „Întărirea unității mișcării comuniste și muncitorești-îndatorire supremă”, *Scântea*, an XXXVI, no. 7266, 28 februarie 1967, p. 1.

¹⁸ Katherine Verdery, *op.cit.*, pp. 97-99.

for the dismantling the unitary Romanian national state created in 1918, was the result of the political line imposed by Comintern, arbitrarily and in total disregard of the national realities¹⁹.

The reflection in the public space of the national image of the party's leadership and of its leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, was identified in the actions organized with the occasion of the work visits during 1965-1968. The common element of these visits was represented by the selective reconstruction of the Romanian history from the perspective of the key moments of the Romanian people's struggle for the national unity and independence. Thus, the schedule of these travels included the visiting of the most important historically valuable objectives from the respective area and the staging of some artistic, theatrical representations which suggested the continuity of action of the great national heroes and the actual party leaders. Also, this simplistic exemplification of the national image of PCR's leadership was enhanced by its deference for symbols and for the memory of the local historical characters.

The description of the visit that the party leaders took in the region of Ploiești constituted an example of their direct association with the symbols of the national history. On this occasion the official convoy made a stop in Păulești forest where 368 years before, Michael the Brave settled his camp before the moment of the beginning of the military actions across the Carpathians mountains. The glade was full „of soldiers in historical clothing and military tents” and „which... border the camp on the four sides”. Saluted adequately, „by trumpeters and drummers”, the guests were greeted by Michael the Brave, accompanied by his captains and boyars 'council, who welcomed them in the camp. The historical play continued with the solemn moment of the „oath of faith through which Michael and his captains swear to gather under a single scepter, all the lands inhabited by Romanians”, oath repeated by the thousands of soldiers gathered in the glade²⁰.

As I have shown above, the deference shown to the memory of the great political characters linked to the local history also contributed to the construction of a national image of the Romanian party leaders. For example, on the occasion of visiting the Dealu Monastery, they deposed a

¹⁹ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *PCR—continuator al luptei revoluționare și democratice a poporului român, al tradițiilor mișcării muncitorești și socialiste din România. Expunere la adunarea festivă organizată cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani de la crearea PCR. 7 mai 1966*, (București, 1966), p. 5, 32-33.

²⁰ Gh. Badrus, Gh. Secuiu, Constantin Căpraru, Ion Zamfirescu, „Încheierea vizitei conducătorilor de partid și de stat în regiunea Ploiești”, *Scântea*, an XXXVI, no. 7340, (14 mai 1967), p. 2.

wreath of flowers along with a crown of bronze on the marble plaque that marked the place where was buried the head of Michael the Brave²¹.

While visiting the mausoleum from Mărășești, „this secret inside of the national heroism”, the members of the party’s leadership stopped „with emotion in front of the marble plaques on which it is engraved in gold letters the names of thousands and thousands of heroes” , and they deposited a wreath, keeping a silent moment at the Tomb of the Unknown Hero in front of the Mausoleum. At the end of the visit, Nicolae Ceaușescu addressed the participants with the following exhortations: „The sacrifice of those who at Mărășești didn’t spare anything, not even their life for defending the country, must constitute for the entire people, for the youth of the country, an incentive for the continuous ascension of our country on ever higher heights of civilization and progress. The best homage, the greatest gratitude that we can give to those who sacrificed themselves is to work and to do everything so the Romanian nation would keep ascending higher, free and independent, within the socialist nations and the nations of the entire world²²”. I reproduced this excerpt from the Nicolae Ceaușescu’s speech, because its content anticipated what would become a component of the nationalistic Romanian discourse: the invocation of the past’s greatness as a mobilizing and unifying element of the population’s efforts for supporting and participating in the country’s development programs elaborated by the party and its leader.

Nicolae Ceaușescu’s speech given in front of those gathered in The Palace’s Square (21 August 1968) through which he openly condemned the invasion in Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Pact, restructured the content of the party’s nationalistic discourse from three different points of view.

As I have shown in a different context²³, the gradual development of the Romanian Communist’s leader’s personality cult was influenced by the public position from August 1968 in the Czechoslovakian problem. More precisely, in this context, the emergence and the development of Ceaușescu’s personality cult was connected to the identification of the Communist Party’s general secretary’s person with the „independence” politics of the Romanian Communist Party (hereafter abbreviated as RCP)

²¹ Mircea Ionescu, Paul Diaconescu, V. Bărlădeanu, Mircea Moarcăș, „Vizita conducătorilor de partid și de stat în regiunea Ploiești”, *Scânteia*, XXXVI, no. 7338, (12 mai 1967), p. 2.

²² Paul Anghel, N. Vamvu, Al. Brad, Ion Meca, „Vizita conducătorilor de partid și de stat în regiune Galați”, *Scânteia*, an XXXV, no. 7103, (16 septembrie 1966), p. 3.

²³ Marin Manuela, *Originea și evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu 1965-1989*, (Alba Iulia, 2008), pp. 83-84

towards the Soviet Union. This „independence” politics was equated with the endorsement and implementation of a national solution, specifically Romanian, for constructing the socialism in the context of observing the principles of independence and national sovereignty. Precisely the invocation of the indigenous character of constructing a socialist Romania placed in the foreground the national element, the nation and the necessity to defend them. This position was determined by underlining the fact that the success of constructing the Romanian socialism depended upon the adoption or on its organic integration within the national realities. Also, this national metamorphosis of communism legitimized Nicolae Ceaușescu’s and the PCR’s rulership by invoking the nation as a guarantee of their awareness of their own historical and moral responsibility in front of a superior historical instance, such as the socialist nation.

The second perspective on which the nationalist discourse was restructured established that the national form of socialism was the only one capable of insuring the general development of the country and implicitly of the Romanian nation. Later, the evolution of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s personality cult would interpret his contribution alongside of the party’s, as being the only guarantee in this particular sense.

Thirdly, the nationalist rhetoric of the party would be oriented towards the cultivation and instrumentalization of a certain type of patriotism. This was founded on the simplistic reinterpretation of the entire national history from the perspective of a glorious succession of episodes about the fight for national independence. The main purpose of such a version of the national past had to be able to stimulate the participation of the population in the country’s development plans as conceived by the RCP. This especially since the national strategy of building the nationalism was presented by the party propaganda as being not only a condition to insure the country’s economic independence and implicitly the political one, but also the moment of the fully materialization of the Romanian people’s historical efforts initiated in this sense. However, the involvement of the population in the realization of the party’s and its leader’s political efforts aimed at a different issue, the one of military mobilization within the predicted „war of the entire people”.

I conceived this thematic breakdown of the nationalist discourse in order to explain and contextualize in a broad perspective my following options regarding its chronological and thematic reconstruction. Nevertheless, a separate approach of its three components wouldn’t offer but a unilateral and taken out of the context perspective of the moments that marked the evolution of the party’s nationalistic rhetoric.

After August 1968, the nationalist rhetoric would firstly concentrate on Nicolae Ceaușescu’s and the party’s image as defenders of the national

independence. As I have previously mentioned, the definition of this principle was adapted in order to support the Romanian point of view in the context of the disagreements within the Eastern bloc regarding the opportunity of finding a national way to build the socialism. In parallel with a theorization and an exemplification of the results of the Romanian position, the 1970s also marked the consecration in a rudimentary form as well as lacking any scientific basis, of a new version on the national history. This perspective confirmed the exceptional Romanian historical experience from the point of view of the affirmation of the continuous struggle for the realization of the unity and national independence ideals. The consecration of the millennial Romanian effort repositioned the entire nationalist discourse on emphasizing the superiority of the native element in all the stages of the historical evolution of the Romanian people. As I will demonstrate below, the Romanian communist regime instrumentalized the idea of the superiority of the native experience in order to legitimize the validity of its autarkical functioning by devaluation or rejection of any kind of external influence on the historical and contemporary development of the Romanian state.

At the foundation of all theorizing efforts of the socialist construction model in Romania by PCR and its leader Nicolae Ceaușescu, stayed the underlining of the necessity of unconditional adaptation of the Marxist-Leninist scheme to the national context, specific to each country. This idea was fully stated in the „RCP’s Program of Building the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society and Romania’s advance towards communism” adopted at the end of the PCR’s XIth Congress from 1974.²⁴

The multilaterally developed socialist society predicted by RCP represented a distinct period in the evolution of the Romanian socialism. It was characterized by the concentration of the national efforts towards improving the main socialist mechanisms regarding the conscientious and responsible preparation of the transition of Romania to communism. But, as it was noted in the preamble of RCP’s program and in homage materials published on the issue of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s contribution on the theoretical foundations of the developing directions of the country, the success of this type of socialist construction depended above all upon the adaptation of „the Marxist-Leninist general truths to the specific conditions of each people”. Moreover, the invoked argument for the adoption of such a long-term plan was the one connected to the defense and the promotion of the national interests. „It starts from the interests of the entire people, of the

²⁴ *Programul Partidului Comunist Român de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre comunism*, (București, 1975).

Romanian society's development, the flourishing of the country, of our socialist nation"²⁵.

The chapter from the RCP's Program dedicated to the national problem reaffirmed that strengthening the nation and the national state was „an integral part of the struggle to build the multilaterally developed socialist society and the building the communism in Romania”. However, the increase of the national element meant no abdication from the principles of the proletarian internationalism in relations between socialist countries, if their imposition didn't bother in any way the „welfare of the nation and of the national independent state”. At the same time, the programmatic text of the RCP further stated that the differential settlement of the specific issues of building the socialism, contributed to the achievement of the unity of the international communist and worker's movement.²⁶ This Romanian point of view which stated the correlation between respecting the independence and the internal development of any state will be encountered in the official positions of Nicolae Ceaușescu, on the role of *general* and *particular* element, respectively *national* and *international* in the process of building the socialism²⁷. In conclusion, repeating the Romanian arguments developed during the dispute with the Soviets in the early 1960s, the RCP's program mentioned that only by respecting the independence in the decision-making process of any communist or workers' party, it was able to ensure the success of the national versions of socialist construction. However, the focus on the national element did not diminish the referential value of the Marxist-Leninist general schemes or encourage the dissolution of the international community of the communist and workers' party.

The opportunity of the RCP' choice for a version of its own manner of building the socialism was confirmed by the official data which indicated an unprecedented economic and social development especially since the

²⁵ *Din gândirea filozofică a președintelui României Nicolae Ceaușescu. General și particular, național și internațional în revoluția și construcția socialistă*, (București, 1982), pp. 11, 52; *Programul PCR de făurire a societății socialiste*, pp.7-11, 25-26.

²⁶ *Programul PCR*, pp. 142-148.

²⁷ For the first mentioning of this concept, see Ion Șerbănescu, „Generalul și particularul organic îmbinate în politica PCR de construire a socialismului”, *Scântea*, an XLVI, no. 10761, (26 martie 1977), p. 4. I should mention that this theoretical contribution that underlines the role of the national element in the process of building the socialism and its influence on the strengthening the unity of the international communist and working-class movement was similar to if not identical to the Romanian Party's public pronouncements within the political context of the Statement of April 1964, of the preliminary stages of and during the International Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties during 1967-1969 and of the Romanian endorsement of the Czechoslovakian crisis from 1968.

election of Nicolae Ceaușescu's as the leader of the party at the 9th RCP Congress in August 1965. Thus, all the party documents that were presented during the conferences and the congresses of PCR recorded the full accomplishment or even the exceeding of the five-year plans. The official propaganda stressed that the completion of tasks related to the national development plans was the only way to build the material basis of the future communist Romania. Nonetheless, the country's economic advancement after 1965 was so great that this period was transformed into a "Golden Age", "the most fruitful, brighter in the existence of the Romanian people"²⁸, which "through the dynamism and density of events, reaches the intensity of a century"²⁹.

Although during the short duration of the contemporary history of Romania, the purpose of building the socialism was a "humanist" one, related to the general welfare of the people, the nation and the national interests continued to remain for the party's leadership the legitimizing reference points according to which they elaborated the plans for internal development. Most authors who have reached this issue have concluded that the two notions of people and nation are not identical. In this sense, people are defined as a human community (population), living on a territory administered by a national state. The socialist nation refers to a national community that shares the same set of values, beliefs, customs, and which distinguishes itself from which the communist propaganda called "cohabiting nationalities"³⁰. In comparison to these definitions, my perspective will be different. Thus, it will try to establish the significance which PCR attributed to its socialist-construction through the double reference to the *people* and the *nation*.

A well-known slogan mentioned that in Romania socialism was being built „with the people and for the people”³¹ under the direct

²⁸ „<Epoca Ceaușescu>, inaugurată de Congresul al IX-lea al partidului, o epocă de mărețe, luminoase înfăptuiri în anii socialismului. Pagini de glorie în istoria patriei”, *Scânteia*, an LIII, no. 13031, (17 iulie 1984), p. 1.

²⁹ Ilie Purcaru, „Două decenii neobosit la cârma destinului națiunii române printre furtunile vremii”, *Flacăra*, an XXXIV, no. 4, (25 ianuarie 1985), p. 2.

³⁰ Stelian Lambriu, „Națiunea și canonul istoriografic oficial în *Epoca de aur*: construcția conceptului de *națiune socialistă*” in Alexandru Rubel, Cătălin Turliuc (eds.), *Totalitarism. Ideologie și realitate socială în România și RDG*, (Iași, 2006), p. 186; Alina Tudor Pavelescu, „Le Conducător, Le Parti et le Peuple. Le Discours Nationaliste comme discours de légitimation dans la Roumanie de Ceaușescu (1965-1989)”, PhD Thesis, University of Bucharest and Institut d' Etudes Politiques de Paris, 2009, pp. 191-200.

³¹ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Din gândirea social-politică a președintelui României, Nicolae Ceaușescu. Umanismul socialist*, (București, 1979), pp. 11-12.

supervision of PCR. This kind of formulation attributed to the people the role of participant, respectively beneficiary of the activity of the country's development. Thus, the people become a collective, tangible actor, actively involved in the action of the country's socialist development. In this case, the coordinating role assumed by the PCR is considering finding those precise ways to organize the participation of the people/population to the country's socialist transformation. In conclusion, the significance of PCR's reference to the people is linked by the role of coordinator assumed by the party and which identified in the people a specific partner, viable through which it could realize its plans to prepare Romania's transition to communism.

As noted above, invoking the (socialist) nation in the official discourse emerged in the context of crystallization in the early 1960s of a distinct position of RWP towards the Soviet Union in regard to the priority given to the national option in identifying the ways of building the socialism. Following this, till the collapse of the Romanian communist regime in December 1989, the discourse about the nation would become a point of reference for politics as well as for Romanian literary and historical environment³².

RCP's reference to the nation as legitimizing instance for supporting its actions of socialist transformation of the country kept in view its redefining as "vital center of the nation". In principle, this new attribute refers to the aforementioned coordinating role of the PCR, but joining to it the term *vital* and placing it in direct relation to the nation it nuances the character of this relation. Firstly, the phrase confirms a link between the party, defined as center and the nation. Secondly, PCR's designation as vital center against the nation suggests a prominence given to the party in relation to the nation. Thirdly, the adjective "vital" describes this relation in terms of interdependence: the party is vital for the existence of the nation. Expanding the scope of my argument, not the party itself as political entity, but its program of socialist transformation of the country was presented by the official propaganda as being vital for the survival and the development of the nation. In my understanding, the nation appears in the nationalistic discourse as actual participant, active in the materializing of the party's program, which can't be said about the nation. According to my interpretation, the nation appears in the communist discourse as an abstract entity, timeless, which reunites and brings to a common number up to homogenization a community defined as national. This community shares a well-defined territory, a culture, a history, but also a common project for the

³² See Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență*, pp. 205-300.

future. In this sense the PCR's relation to the nation enriches the significance of its socialist-constructive action. Thus the party's involvement in the organization of the socialist transformation of the national structures doesn't represent just a construction of the present. It is equally the entire sum of all evolutions which marked the historical destiny of the Romanian people. Also, it is attributed to this socialist present the task of great historical responsibility to prepare the realization of that long dreamed communist future. It is in this context that the above mentioned affirmation must be understood regarding the invocation of nation as a guarantee of PCR's and its leader's awareness of their historical responsibility to the socialist present.

Approaching the issue of the socialist nation also involves the clarification of PCR's position towards national minorities. Without proposing a general assessment of the party policy towards the "co-inhabiting minorities" I will confine to reporting that its main purpose was the creation of the Romanian socialist nation. This position emphasized the distinction between the majority of the Romanian nation and the national minorities which inhabited the country's territory. After a relatively short period of time, during which the Romanian communist regime insistently promoted a political strategy favorable to promoting the national minority's rights, the 1970s-1980s marked the concentrated application of administrative measures to strengthen the homogenous character of the Romanian socialist nation. This homogenization aimed at the disappearance of any links based on ethnic and cultural affinities foreign to the Romanian fund and replacing them with an unconditional loyalty to PCR and its national project of a socialist society.³³ Moreover, as I show below, by overestimating the exceptional Romanian historical experience it legitimized a self-sufficient functioning of the Romanian communist regime, while also supporting the fantasy pretention of the party's leadership regarding the primordialism of the Romanians and their culture in the national and international space. This position which instrumentalized the feeling of national pride for the support of PCR's politics and argued on the basis of examples from the history of Romanian's fight for independence and national unity, the xenophobic orientation of the Romania's communist regime was not able to cultivate the affinity of the national minorities for the state and for the party nor for its socialist project.

³³ See Robert King, *Minorities under communism. Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkans Communist States*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973), pp. 146-169; Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economy and Society*, (Boulder, Colorado, 1985), pp. 158-168; Dennis Deletant, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea. Constrângere și disidență în România anilor 1965-1989*, (București, 1998), pp. 116-153.

The RCP program for building the multilaterally developed socialist society and for Romania's advance toward communism that was adopted at the end of the 11th Congress of the PCR in 1974 also established the main lines of interpretation of Romanian nation's history from the perspective of its relentless and consciousness struggle for national unity and independence. The roots of this confrontation came down to the age of Burebista and Decebalus, the banner of the national struggle being later adopted by the great medieval princes (Mircea the Elder, Stefan the Great and Michael the Brave) and the revolutions of the nineteenth century. The Union in 1859 and the state's independence since 1877 would have boosted the country's economic and social development process, leading to the completion of the national unitary state in 1918. After its creation, based on solid national and revolutionary credentials of the Romanian socialist movement, PCR took the initiative to organise the fight against fascism, which was identified as the main threat to the independent existence and integrity of the new Romanian State. During the Second World War, PCR has been involved in organising the anti-Hitler resistance movement, in order to build a coalition of all internal forces opposed to Romania's participation in the war alongside the Axis camp. After 23 August 1944, a moment of "anti-fascist and anti-imperialist national armed insurrection", the communist forces will contribute to the organisation of the romanian effort involved in the fight that was meant to bring fascism the its final defeat. The establishment of the communist regime in March 1945, and especially the socialist economic development policy, led to the full economic and political independence of Romania³⁴.

In conclusion, the PCR program made official a new version of national history in terms of a relentless and conscious struggle of the nation for unity and national independence. This new history paid attention only to those events or historical figures who could properly illustrate the traditions of this national struggle. From this point of view, one can observe a tendency to personification of the national history around two main characters: the collective actor of the nation/popular masses, and the great character, represented by PCR and the Romanian leaders from different historical eras. In the same time, this official document attributed PCR the role of a contemporary direct successor of the old struggle of the Romanian people for independence and national unity. The fact that the Party's program proposed that a "militaristic history, focused on conflicts and with a heroic character" of the nation³⁵ brings to light two ideas that will give a

³⁴*Programul PCR*, pp. 27-64.

³⁵Adrian Drăgușanu, „La commémoration des hérosnationaux en Roumanie par le régime communiste de Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965-1989)”, Thèse de Doctorat,

legitimate character to the policies of the Romanian communist regime in the following years. Mainly it is about the affirmation of the historical superiority of the Romanians, illustrated not only by a common and conscious aspiration towards a common and independent future, but also through the economic, political, cultural and military achievements that resulted from the consistent pursuit of this ideal. Secondly, the prospect of conflict that would have permanently marked Romanian's relations with the outside world justified their identification with some "permanent victims of history".³⁶

These two ideas will be instrumentalised by the Romanian communist regime to legitimise its decisions regarding domestic and foreign policy. In this context we should mention the appearance of the protochronist theories, which supported the ambitions of the PCR and its leader, providing them with pseudo-scientific arguments of the historical superiority of the Romanian nation. Furthermore, the autochthon oriented policy of PCR legitimated the organisation during the years 1970 and 1980 of several mass events designed to recover and fully engage in the internal activity of the so-called brilliant features of the Romanian people. Generated by Ceausescu's decision to pay as soon as possible the external national debt, the economic autarchy policy during the 1980s used also the arguments of the superiority of the Romanian people. The Party propaganda strongly emphasised that the external loan posed a threat to the national independence of the country and the Romanian people, led by PCR and its leader, had to find, as in the past, internal resources needed to counter it. Expressing full confidence in the superiority of the socialist system to involve all human and economic resources in order to solve the internal made inappropriate any type of external support in this regard, especially as it was associated with a direct threat to the existence of the Romanian state entity.

As I have noted above, the PCR's autochtonist claim was based on the affirmation of the superiority of the Romanian people throughout its history. This superiority was exemplified in all the activities of the Romanian communist regime by the introduction of some holidays that marked the passing of an important number of years since a particular historical event. A first type of such events was represented by the anniversary celebrations of some cities. Thus, using "more fantasy than science", the historians have attributed in 1974 Cluj, being renamed Cluj-Napoca with this occasion, 1,850 years of existence, 1750 years old to

Université Laval, 2002., p.138, Stelian Lambru, „Națiunea și canonul istoriografic oficial”, p.187

³⁶Adrian Drăgușanu, *op.cit.*, p.126.

Craiova and to Alba Iulia, where the first union of the Romanian political under the leadership of Michael the Brave, a record of 2000 years from its first documentary attestation.³⁷ The organization of this sort of anniversary highlighted the age, but also the degree of development that the Romanian population has known since its early history.

The same idea of the superiority of the indigenous civilization represented the starting point of tracology. This new branch of the national history appeared in the Romanian public space by 1971, with the political support of the highest bodies of the party leadership. Thracology identified in the Thracian culture the oldest European civilization. Thracians were identified as founders of the great civilizations of ancient Rome, Greece which has a Thracian origin, as well as the Macedonians, including their leader, Alexander the Great. The place of birth of this great civilization was considered to be the Romanian space, therefore the ancestors of the Romanians, the Dacians were thought to be Thracian. The Thracian civilization was glorified as one of the most advanced in the European space, keeping intact its characteristics even when it entered in contact with the Roman civilization or it had a civilizing influence on the migratory peoples who they came into contact with.³⁸ The peak of autochthonism and the priority given to the Dacian roots in the formation of the Romanian state structures was marked by the celebration in 1980 of 2050 years since the creation of the first unitary state led by King Burebista.³⁹ Moreover, the discovery at Bugiulesti in Oltenia, of the remains of the oldest man on the European continent, baptized *Olteniensis Australanthropus* accredited the idea that the anthropogenesis began even on Romania's territory.⁴⁰

In 1974, Edgar Papu published in the *Secolul 20 (20th century)* magazine an article entitled "Romanian protochronism". The ideas presented in this article will be further developed into a distinct volume *From our classics* published in 1977. The main thesis of Papu's protochronist theory emphasized the originality but especially the chronological primacy of the Romanian initiatives in the field of literature, science and technology compared to other Western similar initiatives. Analyzing the evolution of Romanian literature during the communist regime, Mircea Martin stated

³⁷ Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie.*, p. 62, N. Cristache, „Municipiul Alba Iulia, prima capitală a Țărilor Române Unite, simbol al existenței milenare a poporului român”, *Flacăra*, an XXIV, no. 21, (31 mai 1975), pp. 4-6.

³⁸ Vlad Georgescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-93.

³⁹ Constantin Preda, „Permanența unui măreț ideal-idealul unității”, *Scânteia*, an XLIX, no. 11778, (4 iulie 1980), pp. 1, 4.

⁴⁰ Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *The Ceausescu Cult: Propaganda and Power Policy in Communist Romania*, (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 163-168.

that not the idea of protochronism itself was harmful to the development of Romanian culture in the same period, but its political instrumentalization. In principle, the theory of Edgar Papu sought to change the Romanians' image of themselves and their culture. Thus, they should have been aware of the value of the Romanian culture and should have given up the inferiority complexes which the relation or the imitation of the Western worlds' achievements might have caused. The political instrumentalization of protochronism radicalized the idea of the growing confidence of Romanians in the value of their national culture. In this sense, chronological primacy and the importance of Romanian contributions to the world's cultural treasures were the arguments in support of the assertion of a national culture of its own. It had to recreate itself by setting its own values, independently of any external influence.⁴¹

The asserting confidence in the creative potential of the Romanian people and the rejection of any external influences, led to the organisation of competitions for the masses. They were meant, among other things, to rediscover the genial creative background of the Romanian people.

At the end of 1976, *Scânteia*, the RCP's official paper, published an article which mentioned for the very first time the creation of a cultural-artistic and technical manifestation for the masses, an event called National Festival *Cântarea României*⁴² (Song to Romania). The goal of this manifestation which had a national dimension was to make permanent the creative labour in the daily activity of an individual. S/He needed to prove their attachment to the socialist society, and not just by simply executing orders that were assigned to him/her as part of the collective effort. The new socialist individual needed to be aware of the value of his/hers native creative potential and hence to put it in the service of the socialist transformation of the society. Therefore, the two main parts of the National Festival *Cântarea României* included competitions in artistic and technical creation, designed to detect and exploit the genuine popular talents. The purpose of mass technical creativity promoted within the festival aimed, in principle, at the materialisation of local creative potential through a series of inventions designed to potentiate the development of national economy. But if from objective reasons, this area was somewhat limited in terms of the number of people involved in this type of events, the same cannot be said about the artistic side of the *Cântarea României*.

⁴¹ Mircea Martin, *Cultura romana intre comunism si nationalism (II)*, *Revista 22*, 31.10.2002, <http://www.revista22.ro/cultura-romana-intre-comunism-si-nationalism-ii-241.html>, last entry 26 noiembrie 2011.

⁴² „Festivalul național al educației și culturii socialiste”, *Scânteia*, (28 November 1976), p.1

In addition to a series of famous cultural events at a local or national level (such as "The Month of the Book", "The Days of the Socio-Political Book", "Youth Film Festival" in Costinești), the *Cântarea României* festival included activities such as competitions for interpreting and musical creation, fine arts exhibitions, art programs of the artistic propaganda brigades, literary circles meant to stimulate and exploit the native artistic talent. The political maneuvering of these types of events, which by their nature could easily accommodate the concerns and educational goals of various socio-professional and age categories, was motivated by two main considerations.

Such events could prove or support the official discourse about the creative genius of the Romanian people. Secondly, the National Festival *Cântarea României*'s artistic activities were meant to contribute to the creation of a new art style. It was supposed to be inspired from the socialist daily realities, from the national history and glorious past of the Party and the working class and last but not least, it was meant to fructify the national folk treasure. From this perspective, mass artistic creation not only contributed to the promotion of autochthonism, through exacerbating the value of the national creative background, but it also attributed to it the task to transform the Party's message from an artistic point of view. Thus, the new mass culture had to integrate the exceptional character of the socialist reality into the Romanian historical one. At the same time it was meant to create compelling artistic images of the latter, capable of giving a legitimate character to the mobilizing calls made by the Party. In this respect, the contribution of the new socialist man to the development of the socialist country was not only reduced to a material contribution. This had to be supplemented by individual involvement in creating a work of utilitarian art designed to support and intensify the general constructive efforts conducted by the PCR.

The centralised form of organising all local sports events under the official name *Daciada* was also instrumentalised to support the party's nationalistic discourse. Since the beginning of its governance, the Romanian communist regime was concerned with the *socialisation of the creative behavior*⁴³ that would ensure the infusion of cheap and numerous labor forces required for the extensive development model. In this context, the organisation of a mass sports movement in the late 1970s to contribute to the upbringing of a "generation of healthy, well developed physically and intellectually individuals, who were well-prepared for work and homeland defense,

⁴³ Michel Foucault, *Istoria sexualității. Partea I. Voința de cunoaște*, (Timișoara, 1995), pp. 22-23, 79.

according to current and future requirements of our socialist society"⁴⁴ was designed to maximize the effects of RCP's pro-birth policies. Thus, for the Romanian communist regime a healthy demographic growth from a biological point of view would have provided the labor force necessary to its construction projects. Their realisation was presented by official propaganda as a guarantee of strengthening the socialist and independent Romanian state. In other words, for RCP the construction of socialism involved not only a preferential allocation of national resources towards key sectors of national economy, but also a concern to ensure a workforce capable of physically supporting the successful implementation and completion of transformation plans for the socialist country. In the same time, as noted above, the official discourse of the party attributed to the national model for building socialism the leading role in defending and strengthening the economic and political independence of the country.

The concern for ensuring the physical health of the population was subject of the nationalistic discourse of the party from yet another perspective. After August 1968 and the formulation of the war of the whole nation doctrine, the Romanian communist regime established that the defense of the socialist motherland and its socialist achievements was the duty of every citizen of the country, and not just of those integrated into the professional military structures. In this respect, the introduction of compulsory military service and the participation of all categories of citizens at various forms of military training aimed at providing a physical and tactical training appropriate for their participation in actions to defend the homeland. However, in order to ensure that future combatants in the war of the whole nation participate in this military training activities and are able to cope with the constraints of a guerrilla war (under psychological pressure) which is the target of the Romanian military doctrine, they should be properly motivated to do so. Thus, the patriotic feeling was the main motivating factor that stood as basis of the organisation of educational activities (auxiliary to the military training). In this respect, the organisation of patriotic poetry recitals, meetings with war veterans or active military personnel, military oath, learning soldierly patriotic songs, etc. are just a few examples of actions designed to foster among the members of popular military formations feelings of love and attachment to "home, party and people".⁴⁵

⁴⁴ National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (hereafter CNSAS), Fond Documentar, dosar 11487, vol. 6, f. 186.

⁴⁵ Ari Chaplin, „The <Popular War> Doctrine in Romanian Defense Policy”, *East European Quarterly*, XVII, No. 3, (September 1983), pp. 267-278; Ilie Ceaușescu,

In conclusion, the 1970s have caused a radical change in the nationalistic discourse of PCR content. In this respect, the affirmation of independence of decisions with regard to solutions for the construction of socialism in Romania influenced the reinterpretation of national and PCR's history. This new version of the national past was to illustrate the historical continuity of the struggle for national unity and independence, which turned in the contemporary period into an action coordinated by PCR and its leader, an action for the country's economic development under the socialist model. Furthermore, the historical superiority of the Romanians, confirmed by their focused action on the creation of a common and independent future was associated with the image of a hostile external environment that would constantly be opposed to the materialisation of this generous ideal. In the context of the 1970s, the idea of the historical superiority of Romanians was expressed through the political practice of the Romanian communist regime: multiplying the festive moments that marked a record number of years from a historical event, affirming the physical and cultural promordialism of Romanians in European and world context, and not least, by organizing mass cultural activities aimed at confirming once again the creative genius of the Romanian people.

The significance of these changes, undergone by the nationalistic discourse of PCR, need to be deciphered in the broader context of political developments that took place during the 1970s. Firstly, the cultural and ideological changes in policy announced by the plenary sessions in 1971 and confirmed by the Congress of Political Education and Socialist Culture in 1976 formalised the beginning of the cultural and scientific isolation of Romanian from everything originating from abroad and especially from the West. The formal rejection of foreign values was motivated by the historical superiority of the Romanian civilisation. Thus, it is not a coincidence the fact that the nationalistic discourse of the regime was stressing during the 1970s the Romanian supremacy in Europe and at an international level, while transforming the struggle for independence and national unity in a constant topic of its mobilising and patriotic rhetoric. This was meant to disguise not only the beginning of the economic difficulties of the regime, but especially that the Romanian communist regime chose to overcome them through contracting external loans.

The 1980s were marked by Ceausescu's decision to pay in full and in advance the external debt. In this respect, the Romanian leader chose to

Războiul întregului popor pentru apărarea patriei la români. Din cele mai vechi timpuri până în zilele noastre, (București, 1980), pp. 379-449; Mihai Arsăntescu, Victor Deaconu (eds.), *Coordonate ale doctrine militare românești. Studiu politico-militar*, (Bucharest, 1986); Dragoș Drăgoi, *Tactica pe înțelesul tuturor*, (București, 1974).

cut the country's expenditures in foreign currencies by banning any imports, except for the purchase of raw materials for national industry. In parallel, Romanian exports were stimulated in order to supplement the resources of foreign currency. This policy of economic autarchy affected the imports of new technology, which not only canceled the chances of the industry to adapt to the new demands of world market, but at the same time it helped perpetuating the organisational downsides characteristics for the economic inefficiency of the socialist system⁴⁶.

As I mentioned before, during the 1970s, the party's nationalistic discourse outbid the so-called Romanian superiority and the idea of an eternal struggle of the Romanians for a common and independent destiny in order to mask taking external loans. In the context of the 1980s, the same considerations will be resumed, this time to justify the decision of the Romanian communist regime to pay the external debt. The Party propaganda invoked as arguments the danger that foreign loans would have for the national independence of the country, citing in this regard, numerous examples that the new version of national history offered. Hence, the reduction of national history to a series of victorious battles against hostile actions of neighbors not only projected a hostile image of the outside world, but at the same time it associated the external factor with a direct and imminent threat to the independence and national unity of the country. As in the past, the Romanian people were asked to trust the actions and measures taken by their leaders (the party and its leader), the only ones able to mobilise and employ those internal resources needed to counter any threats to the existence of the existence of the Romanian state entity. In this context, the position of the party focused on the capitalisation of the creative potential of the Romanian people, which not only had to prove its historical superiority, but also to supplement the lack of strategic imports to the Romanian economy in the context of economic autarchy conditions. The image thus created was that of a truly independent state, politically and financially, that using exclusively its own resources, provided a viable model for internal development. Moreover, the Romanian experience in this field was presented by official propaganda as having a universal value. It could be applied in other states that being in a situation similar to that of socialist Romania, were given a solution to solve internal problems of their economic underdevelopment.

The identity of the external factor viewed as potentially threatening for the existence of the independence and unity of the Romanian state was not only reduced to the evil character of foreign finance and decadent West.

⁴⁶ Silviu Curticeanu, *Meditații necenzurate*, (București, 2007), pp. 157-167.

It will also include the ideological allies of the RCP. The independence argument will continue to be invoked of Nicolae Ceausescu in his relations with the Soviet Union throughout the 1980s to justify the rejection of systemic reforms promoted by Mikhail Gorbachev. In justifying his position, RCP leader appealed to traditional anti-Russian feelings shared by some of the population. Also the existence of these feelings will motivate the public re-opening of the issue of Bessarabia as a way to resuscitate the Romanian communist regime's legitimacy eroded by the worsening economic conditions in the country.⁴⁷ Following this, the measures taken by the Ceausescu regime from the 1970s focused on ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the population. The most affected in this respect were the national minorities. In addition, the official rhetoric on the historical superiority of Romanians and their culture, along keeping a xenophobic sentiment caused by the association of any foreign element with a direct threat to the Romanian national state, caused not only a tacit hostility of the national minorities affected by the nationalisation policy of the regime, but it also led to protests from neighboring countries, especially the Hungarian state, concerned about the fate of their countrymen living in Romania.

The 1980s were also marked by the transformation of the national topic in the public life directly related to the development of the personality cult of Nicolae Ceausescu into a permanent aspect of the public life. Public appearances marked by a shy beginning in March 1974 with the RCP leader wearing a tricolor scarf over his chest and a scepter as a sign of the traditional political power on the occasion of his investiture as President of RSR, gradually turned into a true industry of homage actions. In this sense, historical commemorations, national holidays, works of art, lyrical creations contributed through specific means to presenting the PCR leader as a true national hero, similar to one of the great figures from national history. Historical genealogy headed by Ceausescu included a gallery of historical figures, great political leaders such as, for example, Burebista, Mircea the Elder, Michael the Brave, Stephen the Great, Al. Ioan Cuza, etc.. Including these characters in the personal pantheon of the PCR' leader took into account their contribution to the cause of defending and strengthening the sovereignty, unity and national independence⁴⁸. Ceausescu's presence

⁴⁷ Manuela Marin, *Originea și evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu*, pp. 538-539.

⁴⁸ Alice Mocănescu, "The Image of the Leader in Communist Period: The Romanian Case in the Ceausescu Era", MA Thesis, CEU, 1999 and "Practising Immortality: Schemes for Conquering 'Time' during the Ceaușescu Era", *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 10, No. 3, (2010), pp. 413-434; Adrian Drăgușanu, „La commémoration des héros nationaux en Roumanie”, pp. 143-154.

alongside these illustrious figures of national history was obviously related to his contribution to the independent existence of the Romanian state. But in his case, the issue of ensuring the country's political independence was not related to any particular military or political action. The continuation of the country's socialist development program, adapted to the concrete, specific conditions represented the emblematic contribution of Nicolae Ceausescu to the independent history of contemporary Romania.⁴⁹

Finally our work revealed these internal and external political developments that led to the inclusion of a nationalistic theme in the official discourse of the RCP. In this regard, we identified the main steps that have marked the evolution of the party's nationalistic discourse from a simple strategy designed to harness the symbolic power of nationalistic discourse in support of the new policy directions of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's leadership to an invariable of the political discourse the home and foreign political initiatives of Nicolae Ceausescu's regime. The thematic content of RCP's nationalistic discourse focused essentially on the idea of an independent existence of the Romanian state by choosing and implementing a national model of socialist construction. If initially this goal was one that concerned exclusively the RCP's and its leader's options regarding developmental strategies, after the events in August 1968, the task of the defense and consolidation of national independence became one of the whole people. The new rhetoric of the party stated that every citizen must prove his patriotism by participating effectively in the production; mass actions organized Patriotic and not least through its creative potential employed in the service of the socialist transformation of the country.

However, the party's nationalistic discourse aimed at creating a national image of the RCP. This was intended to erase the popular perception of a foreign party, imposed from outside with Soviet aid the party had in the early 1960s. In this sense, the transformation of PCR in the only defender of the national interests was completed by the intervention of the political factor for reinterpreting the national history. This new version described the historical existence of the Romanians from the exclusive perspective of the struggle for independence and national unity. This struggle has been completed by the party's contribution to overthrow the old regime and after, to the socialist transformation of the country, within national frameworks. The development of the Romanian Communist leader's personality cult gradually seized the meaning of the party's action, by identifying the source of all political initiatives that led to the

⁴⁹ Manuela Marin, *Originea și evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu*, pp. 568-575, 287-304.

strengthening and defense of national independence in the work of Nicolae Ceausescu.

The changes in the cultural and political ideology of the RCP in the 1970s, especially, its leaders' decision to pay prematurely the country's external debt in the early 1980s introduced a new theme in the nationalistic discourse of the party. Thus, the historical superiority of Romanians had once again to be confirmed by the identifying the solutions to ensure the independent operation or more accurately, self-sufficient of the country. It is to be taken into consideration that any influence or foreign aid was identified by the official propaganda with a direct threat to Romania's national existence.

An episode of the Romanian-Soviet differences: "The medium body weight of slaughtered pigs in Romania"¹

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The visit paid by Nikita Khrushchev to Romania from 18 to 25 June 1962, shortly after the beginning of the Romanian-Soviet economic dispute inside the COMECON, marked the beginning of the alienation of the Romanian Workers' Party from Moscow, and was fouled by countless tensions throughout the talks attended by the two delegations. The present study relies on Romanian archive documents and aims to reveal the main dissensions which marked this encounter, as well as their impact on the Romanian-Soviet relations.

Keywords: Romanian-Soviet relations, communism, Romanian Workers' Party, Nikita Khrushchev, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej

In July 1961, Bagaev, 3rd Secretary in the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the USSR acknowledged that the "Soviet Union enjoyed the best relationship with Romania among all the other people's democracies"². The statement of the official was entirely true considering the notorious obedience to Moscow of the leader of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP). Hardly a year before, in June 1960, when Nikita Khrushchev had attended the 3rd Congress of the RWP, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej announced the intentions of the decisional factors in Bucharest to pursue a massive industrialization, for which they had designed one six-year economic plan and one 15-year prospective plan.³ The approving attitude adopted by the Soviet leader at this congress was rewarded by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej by taking an openly anti-Chinese stance at the preliminary Conference of the communist and workers' parties, organized in Bucharest on 24-26 June 1960.⁴ Although the

¹ This research was financed through the project: "Transnational network for the integrated management of postdoctoral research in the field of Science communication. Institutional building (postdoctoral school) and the scholarship programme (CommScie)", POSDRU/89/1.5/S/63663

² Central National History Archives (hereinafter ANIC), Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos.32/1961, vol. I, f.5

³ See: „Directivele Congresului al III-lea al PMR cu privire la planul de dezvoltare a economiei naționale pe anii 1960-1965 și la schița planului economic de perspectivă pe 15 ani”, in *Congresul al III-lea al Partidului Muncitoresc Român*, (București, 1960), pp. 645-688

⁴ See: Mihai Croitor, *România și conflictul sovieto-chinez (1956-1971)*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2009), pp. 175-187

RWP leaders had refrained so far from adopting a clear-cut position concerning the Sino-Soviet split, the above-mentioned episode was very detrimental to the Sino-Romanian relations as the RWP leaders pleaded firmly in favor of the Kremlin. It was a decision which the Romanian authorities would come to regret later on.

From 31 July to 12 August 1961, an RWP delegation led by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej visited the Soviet Union and discussed with the Soviet authorities in Moscow, Leningrad, Tbilisi and Kiev.⁵ Soon after arriving in Moscow, the Romanian leader informed Khrushchev and Brezhnev about the decision of the Romanian authorities to implement the “six-year plan” whose major objective was to “complete the socialist construction” in Romania.⁶ Nikita Khrushchev himself, during the meeting of 11 August 1961 at the Great Palace of the Kremlin, stated: “Long gone are the days when Romania was said to be a backward agrarian country (...) today, backward Romania has grown into a modern country with a rapidly developing industry and a cooperative-based agriculture”.⁷ This statement flattered the RWP leader who was known to be a strong advocate of industrialization in Romania. Therefore, to nobody’s surprise, at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej unconditionally backed the aggressive tone adopted by Nikita Khrushchev towards the Chinese and the Albanian communist leaders, as well as the invigorated plans of de-Stalinization reiterated by the Kremlin. Back in Bucharest, the Romanian leader decided to organize, as usual, a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the RWP (RWP CC) in order to discuss the decisions made in Moscow. A few days before, on 29 November 1961, during the reunion of the Political Bureau of the RWP CC (which planned to discuss the report of the delegation that attended the 22nd Congress of the CPSU), Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej had informed that the future plenary meeting would focus on the “anti-party” actions of the troika formed by “Ana Pauker - Vasile Luca - Teohari Georgescu”.⁸ Back in 1956 the Romanian leader had interpreted Nikita Khrushchev’ de-Stalinization plans in the USSR as an attack against his own position in the RWP (a perception reinforced by the charges made by Iosif Chişinevschi and Miron Constantinescu). However, in the course of the plenary meeting organized from 30 November to 5 December 1961, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, now an incontestable leader of the RWP, blamed Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca and

⁵ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos. 32/1961, vol. I, ff. 78-83

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, f. 8

⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 242-243

⁸ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, dos. 52/1961, ff. 7-58

Teohari Georgescu (who were allegedly “actively supported by Iosif Chișinevschi and Miron Constantinescu”) for the propagation of “Stalin’s personality cult” in Romania and for introducing the “anti-Leninist practices which emerged subsequently”.⁹ It should be noted that the Kremlin did not reject the way de-Stalinization was interpreted in Romania.

The beginning of 1962 did not seem to bring major shifts in the Romanian-Soviet relations. On the contrary, on 3 March 1962, at Moscow’s suggestion,¹⁰ the decisional factors in Bucharest sent a bitter letter to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in which they condemned the repeated breaches of the principles included in the 1957 and 1960 Declarations of the communist and workers’ parties.¹¹ Yet, this idyllic picture of the Romanian-Soviet relations was altered by the economic differences which emerged inside the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). Essentially, in April 1962, Poland, advised by Moscow, suggested to the COMECON member states to support a rapid specialization inside this economic organization.¹² At the Conference of the COMECON member states in Moscow (6-7 June 1962), although Wladyslaw Gomulka spoke on a visibly milder tone than in April 1962, the RWP delegation led by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej did not reject outright the Polish proposal (which was Soviet in fact), but pleaded in favor of a “coordination of plans” instead of their “integration”.¹³ Lacking consensus on the question of specialization inside the COMECON, the Moscow Conference did not adopt any decision on this matter.¹⁴ It was under these tense circumstances that Nikita Khrushchev visited Romania over the week of 18 to 25 June 1962, a landmark episode which revealed a constant difference of opinions.

The official visit of the Soviet leader to Romania was carefully planned by the Romanian authorities who organized a rigorous protocol, which included: a formation of Romanian military airplanes to escort the CPSU delegation right after entering the Romanian aerial space; 21 gunshots had to be fired when the Soviet delegation arrived in Bucharest; the portraits of Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej and Nikita Khrushchev and the respective slogans written in Romanian and Russian had to be placed above the airport

⁹ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, dos. 54/1961, vol. I, f.106

¹⁰ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos.15U/1962, ff. 143-145

¹¹ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos. 9C/1961-1964

¹² ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, dos. 29/1962, ff. 174-226

¹³ Dan Cătănus, "Divergențele româno-sovietice din CMEA și consecințele lor asupra politicii externe a României, 1962-1963, II", *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, (3-4/2005), p. 82

¹⁴ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Cancelarie, dos. 30/1962, ff. 2-17

entrance, and so forth.¹⁵ However, eventually, the Soviet delegation arrived in Romania by train. During the official talks held on the evening of 18 June 1962, the RWP leader informed his Soviet counterpart about the conclusion of the collectivization of agriculture in Romania. Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej stated that 6500 Collective Agricultural Farms (CAFs) covering an average area of 1400 hectares were created.¹⁶ Unimpressed by the “enthusiasm” and the “accomplishments” of the RWP leader, Khrushchev pointed out to the fact that the average area of the CAFs was too large and recommended an optimum size of 700 hectares. At this point, the Soviet guest warned Dej that “giganto-mania is very dangerous”.¹⁷ Willing to satisfy his guest, the RWP leader stated that there had been CAFs in Romania which spread over 9000 up to 14000 hectares, but, he stated, “the Central Committee was unaware”, so the decisional factors in Bucharest rectified the situation immediately (as the CAFs “started to resemble a people’s commune”).¹⁸ When Dej mentioned the “people’s communes” Khrushchev started to ramble about the incorrect agricultural policies adopted by the Chinese over the period known as the “Great Leap Forward”.¹⁹ Here he referred to his visit to China from 31 July to 3 August 1958 when he warned Mao Zedong about the inappropriate creation of “people’s communes”. Khrushchev added:

“I had an extensive and elaborate discussion with Mao Zedong both standing and lying down because we went to the pool and sunbathed too (...) they took a path on their own and were ruined.”²⁰

The “informal” chat referred to by the Soviet leader insulted the Kremlin since the Soviet delegation had not informed Moscow in advance about the fact that Mao Zedong invited them to the pool in Zhongnanhai. Besides, the Soviet delegation had difficulties finding a life belt to prevent the Soviet leader from drowning.²¹

Once he ended the anti-Chinese rhetoric, followed by a severe indictment against the Bulgarians who had rushed into implementing the

¹⁵ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos.39/1962, vol. I, f.143

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, ff. 101-102

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 102-103

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ During the “Great Leap Forward” the approximately 700000 agricultural cooperatives had been reorganized into 20000 large “people’s communes”. For more details on this matter, see: Mihai Croitor, Sanda Borșa, *În numele revoluției: Mao și cultura politică chineză*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2008), pp. 158-165

²⁰ ANIC, the CC Fund of the RCP – External Relations, dos. 39/1962, vol. II, f. 111

²¹ For more details on this visit, see: Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, (London, 1996), pp. 261-262; Sergei Khrushchev (ed.), *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Statesman, 1953-1964*, vol. 3, (Pennsylvania State University, 2007), pp. 456-457

system of “people’s communes”, Khrushchev started to criticize the Romanian authorities, saying that: “I have certain information that slaughtered pigs in Romania weigh no more than 25 kilograms”.²² The statement of the Soviet leader urged a prompt reaction from Nicolae Ceaușescu who pointed out that it was forbidden to slaughter pigs “under 90 kilograms”. Ceaușescu’s answer, which was enforced by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, prompted Khrushchev to leave aside the question of the medium body weight of slaughtered pigs in Romania, at least for the time being. However, the discussion was resumed the next day, on 19 June 1962, when, referring to the events of the previous day, the Soviet leader said:

*“We created here an anti-Romanian fraction. Yesterday, I shared with you some data on the pig slaughtering and you all reacted vehemently rejecting them as invalid. Seeing your reaction, I apologized. Now, I am taking back those apologies.”*²³

Apart from the fact that Khrushchev had not actually apologized to the Romanian authorities, he based his accusations on the data provided by the Central Statistics Directory of the People’s Republic of Romania (PRR). According to these data, in 1961 the CAFs had sold 464454 pigs weighing 26072 tons in total, the average body weight per capita being 56.1 kilograms. Using “simple arithmetic”, as Khrushchev said, he deducted the number and weight of fattened pigs from the total number of pigs and obtained 253000 pigs (the equivalent of 54% of the total number of pigs) weighing 6228 tons, which resulted in an average body weight of 24.6 kilograms.²⁴ It should be noted that on 27 April 1962, at the extraordinary meeting of the National Assembly celebrating the end of the collectivization of agriculture in Romania, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej had said that in 1961 the state bought 23000 tons of pork from the CAFs (he did not mention the number of pigs slaughtered).²⁵ However, Khrushchev did not quote that information.

Referring to the official character of the data, the Soviet leader asked Dej to express an opinion concerning the medium body weight of slaughtered pigs in Romania. The answer of the RWP leader was prompt:

“Comr. Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej: Yesterday you said that the body weight of our slaughtered pigs is 24 kilograms, while today you are

²² ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos. 39/1962, vol. II, f. 114

²³ *Ibid.*, f. 46

²⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 46-47

²⁵ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Raport cu privire la încheierea colectivizării și reorganizarea conducerii agriculturii prezentat la sesiunea extraordinară a Marii Adunări Naționale, 27 aprilie 1962*, (București, 1962, p.25

talking about 56 kilograms. We are hoping you eventually admit that our slaughtered pigs weigh 90-100 kilograms.

Comr. N.S. Khrushchev: *My fellow comrades, I regret raising this issue, which is starting to take an unpleasant turn. Had I known it, I would not have brought it up at all.*²⁶

It seems that this episode affected Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej very much, since he recalled it during his meeting with the USSR ambassador in Bucharest (I.K. Jegalin), in the context of Khrushchev's setting down in October 1964.²⁷ Nonetheless, in the course of the official talks held on 18 June 1962 the objections of the Soviet leader went beyond the issue of the medium body weight of slaughtered pigs in Romania. He also challenged the predominance of the crops of corn grown for its grains at the expense of corn for silage, a situation which, according to the Soviet leader, delayed the autumn seeding. Also, Khrushchev criticized the Romanian authorities for harvesting only "two main crops: wheat and corn", while they disregarded growing more vegetables.²⁸ The Soviet leader also asked a question whose answer he most certainly knew already: How much meat per capita are you offering? The prompt answer he received (25 kilograms) given by Gaston Marin allowed Khrushchev to make a not very smart comparison:

*"The Americans are offering 90 kilograms. What will people say then? To hell with your socialism and communism if capitalists are producing more."*²⁹

During the 18 June talks, the Soviet leader could not refrain from reiterating his obsession with "growing corn in squares". Khrushchev insisted that "growing corn in squares" would significantly increase the agricultural output. The statement of the Soviet leader prompted a quite undiplomatic answer from Nicolae Ceaușescu: "Using our own method, 5500 kilograms (per hectare - A/N) were produced by the Institute (the Fundulea-based institute - A/N) while your method produced less than 5000".³⁰ Referring to other official data, Khrushchev stated that the Experimental Plantation in Mărculești yielded 2.2 tons of corn per hectare using the Romanian model of plantation in rows and 3.2 tons using the Soviet method. The Soviet leader also felt the need to add: "My fellow comrades, if you continue to use your method it will only hurt your

²⁶ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 39/1962, vol. II, f. 47

²⁷ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 6/1964, f. 80

²⁸ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 39/1962, vol. II, ff. 114-115

²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 116

³⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 117

economy".³¹ The rest of the Romanian delegation refrained from expressing opinions about "growing corn in squares". The Soviet leader too refrained from making other critical remarks about the agricultural policy pursued by the RWP. Essentially, to paraphrase Khrushchev, "the dose should not be given all at once".³²

Although the Romanian-Soviet talks were expected to last no more than two hours (from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.), for obvious reasons they were delayed by one hour and a half. Hence, the gala offered in honor of the Soviet guests at the Opera and Ballet Theater, although planned to start at 8 p.m., was delayed by 45 minutes. Moreover, during the entire visit to Bucharest, Nikita Khrushchev refused to accommodate as planned in the villa in Scroviște, preferring to stay in the guest house situated on n° 1, Ștefan Gheorghiu Street.³³

On 19 June 1962, after attending the meeting on the premises of the "Grivița Roșie" Factory, the Soviet delegation was invited to visit the Research Institute for Cereals and Technical Plants in Fundulea. Joined by Nicolae Giosan, Director of the Institute, Nikita Khrushchev visited the "first experimental lot" of corn in Fundulea and his first observation was: "This corn is sowed too thick".³⁴ When visiting the "second experimental lot" (non-irrigated corn), Khrushchev made a similar observation: "The corn is well-grown, but it is sown too thick".³⁵ At the end of his visit to the Fundulea institute, the Soviet leader criticized again the Romanian authorities for growing too much corn, while neglecting peas, which required lower costs and yielded twice as much per hectare as corn did. He then suggested a distribution of the crops. Khrushchev advised that corn for grains should be grown on 2 million hectares of land, corn for silage on another 2 million hectares and peas on 1 million hectares. Referring to the fact that Romania cropped more corn for grains than for silage (which was planted on 450000 hectares only) Khrushchev explained: "everyone has their own bumps on their heads".³⁶

In the afternoon of 19 June 1962 the CPSU delegation visited the CAF in Ceacu (Cuza Vodă commune, Călărași County). In the speech delivered to the members of the CAF, the Soviet leader did not mention the Romanian-Soviet arguments. And yet, when he discussed with milker

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, f. 118

³³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, f. 69

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, f. 51

³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 129

³⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 144-147

Florea Alexandru, Khrushchev mentioned a situation from the Ivanov Region concerning a kolkhoz where 300 cows were milked by two farmers, and exclaimed: "Give them machines and they too can milk 300 cows".³⁷ The next day, the official program included a visit of the CPSU delegation to the Rubber Plant and Refinery no. 10 in Onești and to the Chemical Plant in Borzești, where a meeting took place. In the course of the trip by train from Bucharest to Onești, Nicolae Ceaușescu and M.S. Sinița (member of the CPSU Central Committee) argued on the issue of growing corn (in squares or in rows). At one point, Sinița, breaching the rules of the protocol, uttered:

*"You are constantly boasting about your method being better than ours, but you are stuck at 1600 kilograms (of corn – A/N) per hectare. Unless you reach at least our average, you should keep your mouth shut!"*³⁸

Nicolae Ceaușescu, however, remained inflexible, insisting that "under our circumstances the method of growing corn in squares has not proved worthy".³⁹

The official programme for 21 June 1962 included a trip to the Iron and Steel Plant in Hunedoara and a meeting with the mine workers from Lupeni. On these occasions no reference was made to the Romanian-Soviet arguments, one possible explanation being the presence of Western journalists. On the train from Borzești to Hunedoara, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej mentioned the creation of the "Sovroms". The answer of the Soviet leader reflected his choleric behaviour. He characterized the Sovroms as a "foolish thing" created by Stalin at Anastas Mikoyan's insistence.⁴⁰

On 22 June 1962, the Romanian authorities invited the CPSU delegation to visit the "Electroputere" plant in Craiova. After the visit, the workers offered Khrushchev a miniature model of a transformer produced on the premises. Unimpressed by the gift, the Soviet leader described it as "Romanian cunningness" and, referring to its weight, expressed his regret for not inviting Yuri Vlasov, a famous weight lifter, to join the Soviet delegation.⁴¹ To the disappointment of the Romanian authorities, Khrushchev refused to inspect the Diesel locomotives produced in Craiova.⁴² Besides, lunch too was canceled as the two delegations rushed back to Bucharest.⁴³

³⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 124

³⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 49

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 57

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, f. 122

⁴² ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos. 5/1964, f. 51

⁴³ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos. 39/1962, vol. I, f. 69

On the evening of 22 June 1962, the RWP CC, the State Council and the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Romania organized a reception in the honor of their Soviet guests. On this occasion, Nikita Khrushchev resumed the question of "specialization" inside the COMECON, stressing that nationalism was the main reason for the failure of the June 1962 Conference in Moscow, as states continued to defend the "borders of their national economies". Plain and clear, it was a concealed attack against the position adopted by the RWP in June 1962 in Moscow. Stressing the idea that in the "peaceful competition with capitalism" the only valid option for the communist countries was to increase productivity (by means of specialization), the Soviet leader described the "Electroputere" plant as a "good factory, but (which - A/N) is still relying on craftsmanship", criticizing the fact that it manufactured only 50 locomotives annually.⁴⁴ It seemed that the Romanian food as well went down badly for Khrushchev, as he complained that after returning to Moscow he "would be forced to eat nothing but cabbage, and that was anything but tasty".⁴⁵

The relationship between the two leaders grew so tense that on 23 June 1962, on their way to Constanța, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej and Nikita Khrushchev did not exchange a single word.⁴⁶ According to the official documents, the group of mariners who greeted them in Constanța did not pay respect to the Soviet leader (as required by diplomatic customs). The mystery of this atypical behavior was explained by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej himself in a meeting with a Chinese delegation:

*"Then we take him to the seaside, to Constanța. What can I say, the entire town was standing, waving flowers and slogans, the local authorities had a guard of mariners greet him, there was music, delegates were holding bread and salt, it's our tradition when receiving guests. The train slows down; he looks out the window and sees the guard of mariners on the platform. Angered as he was, he shouted: 'what about the guard, are you trying to show off? The Soviet Union has hundreds of thousands more mariners than you do'. The man was the president of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. What was I supposed to do? In the train there was also the first secretary of the party region and I tell him to jump off the train, run to the guard and tell them to stand still, not to pay him respect (...)"*⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, ff. 53-54

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 137

⁴⁶ Lavinia Betea, *Alexandru Bârlădeanu despre Dej, Ceaușescu și Iliescu. Convorbiri*, (București, 1997), p. 138

⁴⁷ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 40/1964, f. 36

Although a meeting had been scheduled in Constanța, it was cancelled due to the tensions emerged between the RWP and the CPSU delegations. Dinner, which had been scheduled at the „Neon” Restaurant in Eforie resort, was cancelled as well.⁴⁸ In the course of the meeting of the two delegations, organized in Eforie on 24 June 1962, the Soviet leader could not hold back his complaints. The talks were opened by the Soviet leader who began to ramble about the imperative of specialization inside the COMECON. According to him, the aim of this specialization was to enhance serial production at lower costs. In respect to that, Khrushchev criticized the Romanian authorities for manufacturing short series of tractors and locomotives at high costs.⁴⁹ The second issue raised by the Soviet leader was the deficient organization of agriculture in Romania. In support of his statements, Khrushchev invoked the case of the Lipcani and Cărpineni counties (in Bessarabia) where the crops of corn per hectare reached 4.7 – 4.9 tons, whereas the output in the Romanian county of Bârlad was as low as 1.2 tons per hectare. What caused these huge gaps? The Soviet leader believed that the blame was on the Romanian authorities, who refused to “plant corn in squares”.⁵⁰ Khrushchev also made a sum-up of his visit to Romania saying:

“I visited your country now and I came to see many things, including how land is toiled here. Well, my fellows, you are toiling land like our great-grandparents used to do 30 or 40 years ago.”⁵¹

Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej refrained from responding to Khrushchev’s accusations, but said that the problems raised would be analyzed by the RWP leaders. However, to the surprise of those present, the leader of the Romanian delegation resumed another problem raised by the Soviet leader in the course of the discussions they had on 18 June 1962: the medium body weight of slaughtered pigs in Romania. Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej informed his Soviet counterpart that the data he had quoted during that meeting were invalid, because the average body weight of the pigs slaughtered in Romania was 90-100 kilograms. He even offered to send Khrushchev a detailed report on this matter in the near future. Khrushchev, however, refused the offer and the meeting ended abruptly.⁵² Back in Bucharest, Khrushchev attended a meeting where he reminded the advantages of

⁴⁸ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR – Relații Externe, dos. 39/1962, vol. I, f. 69

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, ff. 63-66

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 67

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, ff. 69-72

growing corn in squares⁵³ and the next day, after a tense week in Romania, the Soviet delegation flew off the Băneasa Airport, enjoying the same protocol as they did on arrival.⁵⁴

In retrospect, the trip of the USSR delegation to Romania from 18 to 25 June 1962, "made official" the gap which had emerged between the two countries at the beginning of that same month during the Conference of the COMECON states in Moscow. Thus, from the point of view of the Romanian-Soviet relations year 1961 can be described as "annus mirabilis", while 1962 acquired more and more the definition of "annus miserabilis". In June 1964, in a discussion with Liu Fang, China's ambassador in Romania, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej described Khrushchev's visit in the following terms: "He treated us like he was a landlord in our country"⁵⁵. Far from being impressed, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej remained implacable concerning the economic integration plans promoted by the Soviets when they were resumed in September and November 1962.⁵⁶ Therefore, the strategy adopted by Nikita Khrushchev in Bucharest did not yield the expected results. On the contrary, although the RWP leaders had fully backed the Kremlin in the Sino-Soviet dispute, the latest events prompted the authorities in Bucharest to reconsider their attitude and take diplomatic measures in order to foster a Sino-Romanian rapprochement. In this endeavor, Romania was successful and the Kremlin lost an ally on whose obedience it relied before the June 1962 visit of the Soviet delegation to Romania.

⁵³ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 5/1964, f. 53

⁵⁴ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 39/1962, vol. I, f. 70

⁵⁵ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 5/1964, f. 51

⁵⁶ ANIC, Fond CC al PCR - Relații Externe, dos. 28/1964, vol. II, ff. 129-130

Romanian Historians under Communism. An Oral History Inquiry.

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The aim of my paper is to describe, analyze and interpret not only the contents, rules, preferences, style, methods and themes engaged by the canonical socialist historiography but also to discuss history and historian's place, role and basic functions inside the socialist society, by interpreting a series of interviews with the most representative Romanian historians, interviews which I have conducted during 2009-2011. From this perspective, my interest is not focused upon questions such as *what type of historiography has been produced then?* but rather *how* it was produced, by whom, in what conditions, under what circumstances, auspices and preconditions.

My approach starts from two assumptions: a) history stands for one of the constitutive element of the sociopolitical system since the beginning of the communism in Romania till its crash in 1989; b) in the new epistemological context of social sciences and theory of historiography, the self discourse means not only a real way of historical knowledge, but also a process of "negotiation with history" where intermediaries between the past and the present are really involved, a process able to transcend the limits of traditional historical narration and to bring to life subjectivity as a way of knowledge.

Keywords: oral history, Romanian historians, self historical discourse, biography and history, negotiation with history, alteration of historical discourse.

Introductory Remarks

It has often been said, and not without reason, that the 19th century has evolved under the sign of History. The 20th century, especially in the case of societies where history has been an "affair d'Etat"¹, has evolved on very similar coordinates because of a very evident fact: the legitimacy of the ruling party had been one constructed upon and reinforced by historical discourse. Assuming the role of vanguard of a social class mandated by History with the task of ruling the entire world, the party itself has become, after taking power, a center from which a new type of historical discourse

¹ Marc Ferro, *L'histoire sous surveillance. Science et conscience de l'histoire*, (Paris,, 1985), pp. 29-30.

started to disseminate, a discourse adapted to different momentary political imperatives. Inside these societies, just as it had been during the Middle Ages, History was situated in the proximity of (or even linked to) the rituals of power.

"It seems to me that we can understand the discourse of the historian as a sort of ceremony, oral or written, which must, in reality, produce both a justification of power and a reinforcement of it. It also seems to me that the traditional function of history, starting from the first Roman annalists until the late Middle Ages, and perhaps even later, during the seventeenth century or later, was to enforce the right of power and to intensify the luster of power"². Although this statement made by M. Foucault refers to the condition of historical discourse during Classical Europe, I believe it is at least equally true in regard not only to the Soviet Union³, but both to the states of 'real socialism' in Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 20th century.

After 1989, the alienation of historical discourse during the communist era and the catastrophic consequences of the intrusion of communist ideology in the writing of history have started to be discussed in a time when the methodological and conceptual remanences still continued to be felt in post-socialism. Historians like Alexandru Zub⁴, Șerban Papacostea⁵, Radu Popa⁶ or Keith Hitchens⁷ have conducted research concerning various topics related to this problem. Their results, embodied in articles and studies published in Romania, the United States of America or the United Kingdom, have become points of reference, especially because they, independently, come to similar conclusions: although there were a few professionals who were not subject of commands coming from the political sphere, in general lines the discipline of history gave way to politics. Objectively speaking, in a political system such as the Romanian one, things could not be otherwise.

² Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended". *Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*, (New York, 2003), p. 66.

³ Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism. Its Origin, Growth and Dissolution. Volume III The Breakdown*, (Oxford, 1978), pp. 92-101.

⁴ Alexandru Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub dictatură*, (Iași, 2000).

⁵ Șerban Papacostea, "Captive Clio: Romanian Historiography under Communist Rule", *European History Quarterly*, (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi), Vol. 26 (1996).

⁶ Radu Popa, "Arheologia română sub presiune. Activiști și securiști în templul lui Clio", 22, I, 1990.

⁷ Keith Hitchens, *Mit și realitate în istoriografia română*, (București, 1997).

The mechanisms that made possible the production and distortion(s) of history have become increasingly visible in the years that followed, due to fundamental contributions made by specialists who require no additional disclosures: Katherine Verdery⁸, Frederick Kellogg⁹, Anatol Petrencu¹⁰, Lucian Boia¹¹, Ion Zainea¹², Florin Müller¹³, Andi Mihalache¹⁴ and Gabriel Moisa¹⁵. A distinctive category of contributions related to this subject – but which do not claim to achieve what N. Iorga has once called the ‘severe summit of truth’¹⁶ – are represented by autoreflexive literature elaborated especially in recent years by professional historians who have been active during the years of the People’s Republic and Socialist Romania. Without being an extensively cultivated historiographical genre in our country, among these ego-historians one may count Florin Constantiniu¹⁷, Alexandru Zub¹⁸, Serban Radulescu-Zoner¹⁹, Apostol Stan²⁰, Dinu C. Giurescu²¹, Titu Georgescu²² and Gheorghe I. Ioniță²³.

The aim of my paper is to describe, analyze and interpret not only the contents, rules, preferences, style, methods and themes engaged by the canonical socialist historiography – as most researchers have done up until now – but to discuss history and historian’s place, role and basic functions inside the socialist society, by interpreting a series of interviews with the most representative Romanian historians, interviews which I have conducted since 2009. From this perspective, my interest is not focused

⁸ Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*, (București, 1994).

⁹ Frederick Kellogg, *O istorie a istoriografiei române*, (Iași, 1998).

¹⁰ Anatol Petrencu, *Învățământul istoric în România (1948-1989)*, (Chișinău, 1991).

¹¹ Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, (București, 1997).

¹² Ion Zainea, *Cenzura istoriei, istoria cenzurată (1966-1972)*, (Oradea, 2006).

¹³ Florin Müller, *Politică și istoriografie în România (1948-1964)*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2003).

¹⁴ Andi Mihalache, *Istorie și practice discursive în România democrat-populară*, (București, 2003).

¹⁵ Gabriel Moisa, *Istorie și politică în România comunistă*, (Oradea, 2008).

¹⁶ Nicolae Iorga, *Oameni cari au fost. Copilărie și tinereță*, vol. I, (București, 1934), 39.

¹⁷ Florin Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu*, (București, 2007).

¹⁸ Alexandru Zub, *Oglinzi retrovizoare. Despre istorie, memorie și morală în România*, (Iași, 2003).

¹⁹ Serban Rădulescu-Zoner, *A fost un destin. Amintiri, mărturii, dezoăluiri*, (București, 2003).

²⁰ Apostol Stan, *Istorie și politică în România comunistă*, (București, 2010).

²¹ Dinu C. Giurescu, *De la Sovromconstrucții nr. 6 la Academia Română. Amintiri, mărturii*, (București, 2008).

²² Titu Georgescu, *Tot un fel de istorie*, vol. I și II, (Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 2002).

²³ Gheorghe I. Ioniță, *O viață, un destin. Istorii știute și neștiute*, (București, 2007).

upon questions such as *what type of historiography has been produced then?* but rather *how* it was produced, by whom, in what conditions, under what circumstances, auspices and preconditions.

The current article undertakes to supply at least a brief overview of these issues, starting from the basic assumption that the discipline of history has been a constitutive element of the Romanian sociopolitical system, from the very beginning of Romanian communism until its final collapse. This fact alone has predetermined and preconditioned many processes internal to the discipline itself, and also its relationship with other state and social institutions. For instance, as Russian historian Iuri Afanaseev already noted when he discussed the phenomenon of Soviet historiography²⁴, the political power was extremely successful in breaking with the tradition of autonomy gained by academia during the previous century. The regime has, thus, "turned scholarship into a state and political mechanism"²⁵ which has simultaneously been *merged* with ideology and politics. One of the fundamental consequences of this phenomenon, I believe, was not only the new type of historical discourse imposed by the power, but even the *new type of historian* which eventually the system managed to create: this historian of a new type was a state-employed man (either researcher or professor), a *bureaucrat* that is, hired and paid by the (socialist) state. He had no other available option to exist and, in consequence, was obliged to play a role inside the system and help its maintenance, regeneration and perpetration.

As I already mentioned, for the present article I have conducted a series of oral history interviews with the most prominent contemporary Romanian historians, between November 2009 and April 2011. From the perspective of their profession, they all have been active both before and after 1989. Their current ages are situated between 66 and 84 years old. Three of them had the chance to graduate immediately after the Second World War (that is, in a pre-communist Romania) the universities of Bucharest and Cluj, another three had graduated in Bucharest and Iași during the '50s, and again, another two have finalized their studies during the early, respectively, late '60s in Bucharest. Four were researchers hired by the Institutes of History from Bucharest, Cluj and Iași, while the other four were assistant lecturers, lecturers or even assistant professors in Bucharest and Cluj. Two of them had suffered political detention during the

²⁴ Iu. N. Afanas`ev, "Fenomen sovetskoi istoriografii", *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, (1996, no. 5), p. 148, (English translation, 2001, by I.M. Sharpe, Inc. "The Phenomenon of Soviet Historiography", *Russian Studies in History*, vol. 40, no. 2, (2001), pp.32-64.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

'50s, and another one had what during that era was called 'improper file' - a member of his family has been incarcerated in the Sighet penitentiary. Only one of them has published an autobiography, while two others were subjects of *entretiens*.

Undoubtedly, the objection according to which the number of historians interviewed is insufficient, inconclusive or statistically unrepresentative for the national historical discipline is one of the first that should be unmounted. According to one of the world's greatest oral historians²⁶, this alleged objection indicates only a false problem that masks one of the main stakes of oral history as a distinctive historiographical approach: respondents are chosen not to represent abstract statistical figures, but to characterize the phenomenon or historical process itself from their own subjective perspective. Responses are, thus, relevant in the light of information received from the witness' own subjectivity, a subjectivity which oral history deliberately assumes. Individuals are (or should) not be perceived as *epistemic* cultural agents, producers of symbolic goods in a highly centralised cultural field, but rather real, *empirical* individuals occupying distinctive places inside the symbolic hierarchies of power structured during the real socialism²⁷

The Sunset over the Age of Reason: Experiencing the "Nadir"

The benchmark for the study of the Romanian history in its purest Stalinist manner between 1947 and late '50s has been a textbook coordinated by academician M. Roller, and entitled "The History of the People's Republic of Romania". The title itself suggests how the national history was interpreted, in 768 pages, by those who believed, following the example of the Soviets²⁸, that they have been designated by History itself to lead, to dictate and to oppress the others without any responsibility. Surprisingly, this synthesis was not known by those whom it was addressed immediately after its publication: "I have not read it during my studency because in 1947-1948 we were still following the traditional syllabus of the Faculty of History and thus I had nothing to do with Roller's book"²⁹. More, in highschoools

²⁶ Ronald J. Grele, "Movement without Aim. Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History", Robert Perks, Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London & New York, 1998), p. 41.

²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, (Stanford, 1988), pp. 31-2.

²⁸ Robert Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism*, (Cambridge Massachusetts, 2007), pp. 473-74.

²⁹ Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu made by author in Bucharest, on December 4, 2009.

located in other parts of the country than the capital city of Bucharest, the same history textbook could easily be avoided even during the next decade, by teachers who had been formed before the communist takeover: "our teacher Aurelian Rotundu has told us that this is the manual, I do not want you to learn from it because it is very difficult, so I ask you to learn from my own lessons."³⁰ On the other hand, at university history courses professors had had the burden to follow this unique stalinist synthesis, but when (and if) they could, they "more or less amended the exposure"³¹, especially if they came from the small minority who kept their posts after 1947-1948. Note that in 1948, from the entire teaching staff of the Faculty of History and Geography in Bucharest, only 30 percent had had a seniority at work higher than three years.³²

In any case, immediately after 1955, probably in the line with both the so-called "spirit of Geneva" which apparently had consequences in historical field³³, and with the soviet leaders` intention to dispose of the Stalinist legacy even in historiography³⁴, the "dictatorship over necessities" performed by Roller and his team in University, Academia and the only national Institute of History – a dictatorship which seemed to last eternally – has began to lose its force and the manual was soon to be officially abandoned³⁵. Roller`s dictatorship over needs may be exemplified by an episode whose witness was the young student Zoe Petre: "I was still in lower secondary school when Roller came to visit Histria and he promised the State Prize – a prize which consisted of 50.000 lei, about 50 times an average salary! – to whoever will find evidence of a slave rebellion. Even I realised that this was almost impossible"³⁶.

In his attempt to offer a Soviet face to Romanian historical science, following "the example of the country with the most advanced science in the

³⁰ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu made by author in Bucharest, on October 20, 2009.

³¹ Interview with Professor Șerban Papacostea made by author in Bucharest, on June, 3rd, 2010.

³² Lucian Boia, *Capcanele istoriei. Elita intelectuală românească între 1930 și 1950*, (București, 2011), p.301.

³³ Alexandru Zub, *Clio sub semnul interogației*, (Iași, 2006), 225-238.

³⁴ Roger D. Markwick, "Thaws and Freezes in Soviet Historiography, 1953-64", in Polly Jones, ed., *The Dilemmas of Destalinisation. Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, (London & New York, 2006), pp.173-89.

³⁵ See Pavel Țugui, *Istoria și limba română în vremea lui Dej: memoriile unui fost șef de secție a CC al PMR*, (București, 1999).

³⁶ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre made by author on March 9, 2010.

world³⁷, M. Roller had been accompanied by a group made up of pure communist apparatchiks who became, *rolleri gratia*, historians, as rightly has once stated a student whitewashing those years³⁸. Another example would not be, I believe, superfluous. In 1951, a young assistant-researcher hired at the Institute of History in Bucharest – the most powerful research center in the country – has participated at a colloquy presided by M. Roller: "I had the privilege to assist a meeting where the great medievalist P.P. Panaitescu gave a lecture regarding the Bulgarian dominance at the North of the Danube river during the early Middle Ages. He argued his vision, a vision which he had argued earlier [...] a vision supported both by him and Gheorghe Brătianu, and contested by Iorga and Bănescu [...] Roller was not satisfied with this, I was there, and asked Panaitescu to declare that Christian religion came as well to Romanians from the Slavs – which was false [...] Panaitescu, honored by his memory, has not let himself be pushed on this slope and there was a serious confrontation between the two, until Roller, a character otherwise even physically extremely repulsive, suddenly exploded and made allusions to the past: 'This is not a coincidence comrades! Elements who in the past have played a role in...' in order to intimidate Panaitescu. He was not intimidated, and thus the meeting has ended"³⁹.

After 1955 when he was no longer needed, the party brutally withdrew the support of a weakened and quickly-aging Roller who committed much too much recklessness, both on political and scientific grounds. It promptly sanctioned him through its chief-ideologist Leonte Răutu⁴⁰. Almost simultaneously, the new director of the Institute of History of the Academy, Andrei Oțetea⁴¹, took public attitude against him during a joint Romanian-Soviet meeting. A few days later, on the 21st of June 1958, he committed suicide.

Generally speaking, the scientific background of the lecturers, professors and researchers recruited in universities and research institutes immediately after 1948 was extremely poor and situated in an inverted ratio

³⁷ Petre Constantinescu-Iași, "Despre activitatea din domeniul istoriei și literaturii – Analele Academiei R.P.R.", Seria C, Tomul I, Memoriul I, (București, 1948), 2.

³⁸ Florin Constantiniu, *op. cit.*, p.132.

³⁹ Interview with Professor Șerban Papacostea.

⁴⁰ See Răutu's speech of demascation directed against Roller in Dan Cătănuș, Alina Tudor, *Amurgul ilegalistilor. Plenara PMR din 9-13 iunie 1958*, (București, 2000), pp.134-5.

⁴¹ See Oțetea's public condemnation of Roller performed during the mixed Romanian-Soviet history workshop which took place exactly the same days in Bucharest in Șerban Papacostea, "Andrei Oțetea, director al Institutului Nicolae Iorga", *Revista Istorică*, vol. V, no. 7-8, (July-August 1994), pp. 631-632.

with their intransigence and ideological zeal.⁴² The political merits were the ones which (apparently) prevailed always⁴³. But only apparently and, in fact, not always. For instance, the legionnaire rector of the Bucharest University, Petre P. Panaitescu, had been reintegrated in academic life as early as 1951 by M. Roller personally because, Panaitescu being the most qualified researcher of the history of Slavic peoples, M. Roller needed his skills⁴⁴. Thus, the statement made by Maria Someșan, that during those years *everything* depended on the capacity and will of professors to surrender in front of (or submit to the) omnipresent and attacking ideology, is a too general one: even during the "nadir" represented by the high Stalinism, a whole Byzantine-style network(s) of personal relations and incentives existed and functioned, networks which could protect or, on the contrary, cause much problems to each and every individual⁴⁵. However, in the eyes of students with a medium cultural background the imposture of the new lecturers was evident: "distance between academics like Ion Nestor and Andrei Oțetea, Dionisie M. Pippidi or Mihai Berza on one hand, and those who obtained, in ways only by them knew, some degree of aspiring or candidate in sciences in the USSR, as Ion Gheorghiu or Vasile Hurmuz on the other hand, was immeasurable, not to mention the assistant lecturer Sașa Mușat, who had no baccalaureate, or Solomon Știrbu, who claimed that Tudor Vladimirescu had been assassinated by the Intelligence Service and the CIA"⁴⁶. In addition, in other universities this phenomenon has evolved on similar coordinates: "in those times the political authorities were trying to insert among university professors a number of professors who lacked the proper qualification but who were desirable on political grounds; we could not respect such people"⁴⁷. Years later, on the occasion of evoking the personality of his magister Andrei Oțetea, director of the Institute of History from Bucharest – the largest and most important research center in communist Romania – Șerban Papacostea has made a distinction between different selection criteria which presided over the recruitment politics of this institution during the 50s, concluding that, even many years later,

⁴² Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

⁴³ Maria Someșan, *Universitate și politică în deceniile 4-6 ale secolului XX: episoade și documente*, (București, 2004), pp. 265-74.

⁴⁴ Lucian Boia, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, the case of historian Prospero Dobre (the literary correspondent of Barbu Cîmpina) presented in the novel written by one of his friends: Petru Dumitriu, *Ne înțîlnim la Judecata de Apoi*, (București, 1992).

⁴⁶ Interview with Zoe Petre.

⁴⁷ Interview with Academician Camil Mureșanu made by author in Cluj-Napoca on January 20, 2010.

"forefront scientific personalities have coexisted in the institute with activists and party propagandists whose only role was political, namely to ensure the political supremacy in relation to values of science. Aware of this inequality, Andrei Oțetea proceeded, in his moments of respite, to categorize the members of the institute distinguishing among values, utilities and useless researchers, observing that the latter ones exceeded in number the first two categories put together"⁴⁸.

Historians whom I interviewed, without exception, have remembered and talked about the '50s in depreciative terms, as one of the worst periods for Romanian historical science. The ones who experienced, even for a few years, the pre-war democratic regime were not prepared to enter the new world which began in 1948, a world where "to tell that Constantinople has fallen under the Turks in 1800 was less problematic in comparison to even the smallest deviation from the marxist-leninist principles"⁴⁹. Though he had been inclined to the political left even before the Second World War, David Prodan – a professional historian propelled, as many others, by the Communist Party immediately after 1948 – remembered, in 1978, that after 1947 "we were entering a world which we did not foresee before, into which I could not integrate myself any more. My utopias from youth were dismantling in front of a real life which found me completely unprepared. Class struggle, revolutionary combativity, vigilance, critique and the self-critique had to work by all means. Awkward were those first years of the new world [...] Heroism then was not an option, it could only serve one's own elimination. You woke up in the morning fearing what might happen to you that day, you went to bed in the evening fearing what the night could bring you. You startled at every door-knock, at every phone-call; you opened the door of your home fearful. Our revolution had become a terrible trick"⁵⁰.

Whether they were students, recent graduates or researchers, most historians were able to directly experience the military-like bureaucratic Stalinist system of constraints, based upon uniformity and coercion. "I became student in 1957 when the atmosphere was very tense, because of the predominance of the political factor: in faculty I was surprised to see that our professors read... typed courses, and later I found out that these courses were discussed in the department, approved and the professor was not allowed to raise his eyes from the papers that he had in front of his eyes"⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Interview with Professor Șerban Papacostea.

⁴⁹ Florin Constantiniu, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁵⁰ David Prodan, *Memorii*, edited by Aurel Răduțiu, (București, 1993), pp. 54, 66, 68.

⁵¹ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

Thaws and freezes detectable at the high level of politics, as evoked by Pavel Ţugui and Florin Constantiniu, thus, had not been felt at the grassroots of historical research: "After the initial period which lasted until the early 50s and when it was still quite a breathable atmosphere, the situation gradually worsened: between 1950 and 1960 the historiography produced was offending absolutely every feeling, there was a historiography in which everything was subordinated to a foreign vision"⁵². In terms of professional possibilities, even after Roller had lost his academic positions and, partially, his disciples - "two of them quickly allied with the `old` professors and took attitude against the quacks: Eugen Stănescu and Barbu Cîmpina" - the situation has not improved significantly: "I have graduated in 1962 and I can assure you that an authentic thaw was not felt until then".⁵³

The reasons why the so-called "second freezing" did happen - especially in the cultural field - are very complex and occupy a consistent part of the literature devoted to the political evolutions of Romanian communism. Without insisting, one may count the reaction of the Romanian communist leadership towards the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in June 1958 or the will manifested by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to remain in power by all means, against his potential adversaries from within the party.⁵⁴ The convergence of these three factors is equally probable. For the moment, let us just note the fact itself and its immediate consequences: research institutes, their chiefs and the editors of scientific reviews were once again displaced and replaced with more obedient and trusted persons⁵⁵. Inside the Faculty of History in Bucharest - and not only - took place a series of purges directed against students and professors suspected of lacking firmness in terms of ideological commitment: "criticisms were of the most diverse: they have listened to Radio Free Europe, they do not participate actively in political education, and other such things"⁵⁶. The fact that lecturers were reading courses in 1957-1958 may be explained also in this way, because, as Zoe Petre noted, "during the very difficult years of Stalinism and of the `second frost` as you correctly named that period, the Faculty of History in Bucharest undeniably had the highest concentration of specialists of European caliber"⁵⁷. Behind the fraudulent maneuvers of "unmasking" that

⁵² Interview with Academician Camil Mureşanu.

⁵³ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

⁵⁴ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism pentru eternitate. O istorie politică a comunismului românesc*, (Iaşi, 2005), 193.

⁵⁵ Florin Constantiniu, *op. cit.*, 192-193.

⁵⁶ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

⁵⁷ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre.

took place during the years 1958-1959 was hidden again, just as in the period when Stalin was alive, the same constituent paranoia of the communist establishment, which felt and proclaimed itself to be victorious, eternal and immutable, but at the same time always threatened by the scheming and subversion of the class enemy's infiltration and disguise. Such "unmasking" episodes are stored in the memory of many respondents, whether they were affected by them indirectly – "my father was summoned to a meeting of exposure, that happened in 1958 somewhere in Law Faculty, in a large room with plenty of audience, and where among others Zaharia Stancu exhorted flames against reactionaries"⁵⁸ – or even had the chance to be witnesses: "the penalization of university professors for political deviationism was followed by a phenomenon of massive expulsions among students which culminated with the sinister plenaries of 1958-1959. I have already described with more details the trauma provoked not only to me, but to many of my colleagues the infamous `plenary of 303` which took place in April 1959 and when many of my colleagues and friends had been expelled, and when even our most respected professors were about to be fired from the university"⁵⁹. The scenario of these "show-sessions" was approximately the same in every case: a gathering of students, usually held at night, fulfilled a ritual of unmasking of a fake student who, although was claiming he just wanted to study just as everybody else, was in fact a class enemy, an element impregnated with reactionary, retrograde, bourgeoisie conceptions, or even an agent of foreign imperialism. The audience, rightly impressed, generally demanded the dean of the faculty to get rid of such an element. Again generally, the dean had no choice but to obey the decision took by the majority of the faculty's students.⁶⁰ Ideological and political pressures which were exerted, therefore, upon research and researchers during the first decade of 'real socialism' in historical field, as well as the mechanisms of selection and promotion which functioned at that time have maintained a much higher intellectual isolation than in other academic disciplines or fields. The fact has become evident after 1964, especially in the first years after the death of Gheorghiu-Dej, when a number of Romanian historians have had the opportunity, for the first time, to establish professional contacts with their Western colleagues. Those who attended such meetings have told me, essentially, the same thing: Romanian historiography as a whole, "was not quoted at a very high level... which could make us respected among general historiography" but, however,

⁵⁸ Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu.

⁵⁹ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre.

⁶⁰ Zoe Petre, "Scris și oral în istoria recentă", în *Istoria recentă în Europa. Obiect de studiu, surse, metode*, (București, 2002), p. 208.

Western historians "really valued the Romanian historians who were real professionals, I mean those who did not belong to the party propaganda"⁶¹.

The Thaw

Following the social and political context within (inside which, or by whom) it is produced⁶², historical discourse entered a new phase approximately during the middle '60s. So did the condition of professional historians. Conventionally, I will call this period – a period of five or six years of cultural 'relaxation', situated somewhere around 1964 and 1971 – 'the thaw'. All interviewed historians agree on one aspect, namely that 'the thaw' has been a time when a feeling of freedom, even if partially felt, led to an optimism able to get them to believe that things will return somewhat or somehow to 'normality': "Indeed, between 1965 and 1971 we could hope and imagine many things"⁶³, it was a time "when I could buy 'Le Monde' at the kiosk in front of my house; some years before I could have got arrested if I was caught reading 'L'Humanité'!"⁶⁴. A student who was admitted by the Faculty of History in Bucharest in 1962, at a moment which permitted him to experience 'the thaw' in its entire evolution, remembers: "[the atmosphere in the Faculty] was not so miserable as it had been a few years earlier because 1962 means the beginning of the period [...] I had experienced an incident in 1964: there was the 20th anniversary of August 23 and there was a great celebration, a great rally and we had to go somewhere over the seaside to do exercises with the athletes; this was a big lie because they wanted to show that a large number of Romanians practice sports, which was a lie [...] Well, I did not go to this thing because I was in Cîmpulung with my family; I was a little bit nervous because I did not know what to expect, and indeed, I was criticised in the autumn of 1964 for this and the UTC proposed to give me a written reprimand but the general assembly of students, who had to vote for this, voted against. So that's interesting: a vote against an official proposal, and I never received the sanction then"⁶⁵.

'The thaw' was also perceived on professional grounds. After a number of years when the publication of a book had been postponed for practically no reason, in 1964 "the same man who had kept me waiting for

⁶¹ Interview with Academician Camil Mureşanu.

⁶² Alexandru Zub, 'Cum să privim trecutul', *Clio sub semnul interogaţiei*, (Iaşi, 2006), p. 42.

⁶³ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre.

⁶⁴ Interview with Professor Şerban Papacostea.

⁶⁵ Interview with Professor Lucian Boia made by author in Bucharest on April 13, 2011.

five years and who was editor of the Scientific Publishing House came to ask me to make my second edition of "Prince John". Why? The politics had changed. After 1964 the atmosphere has relaxed very much, there were international congresses, my father was back in business, Berza was again in Faculty, of course, Oțetea was there too, so, an amount of representatives of traditional historiography were there, so things have entered a stage of normality for historians. Also, the Institute of History of the Academy started to integrate a number of people who previously had been in jail. Without doubt, I felt that we were entering into some kind of normality even in the field of history"⁶⁶. The policy of 'nationalization' of history, which the party developed after 1965 assumed the cooptation of professional historians, even the ones up to that moment marginalized, including political prisoners and 'formers' like George Fotino or Constantin C. Giurescu or even non-members of the Communist Party: "the years of liberalization to which you refer have meant also the hiring into academic institutions of scholars who were not members of the party, and even into the Academy"⁶⁷. In what regards the rehabilitation of 'former people', I believe an illustrative episode is the following one. After being liberated from jail in 1955, former university professor C.C. Giurescu had been summoned by the President of the Presidium of the National Assembly in person: "in January 1956 my father is called by comrade Petru Groza and he is introduced into his office, an extremely large office, and from the opposite door Petru Groza enters smiling and tells him 'Professor, do not be upset, I know everything that happened, but you must know that from now on everything will be well!' 'Sure, I know, it was a whole revolution, this is it, I felt on the wrong side, thank you for your time' and he assured him things will be fine from then on. Indeed, they were fine, but it took him eight years, from 1956 to 1964!"⁶⁸

Without insisting, one may argue that for many historians, the period between 1964 and the beginning of the following decade has been the most auspicious in terms of ideological relaxation, of the possibilities to research and publish, of course, on the 'line', but with more discreet political interferences. The possibility to exchange ideas and books with colleagues from the West and the diversification of themes were also undeniable realities, so "it can be stated that during the late '60s and early '70s, our historiography had undergone a process of recovery, of course, without the benefit of the free spirit, openness, and the width of information which a

⁶⁶ Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu.

⁶⁷ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre.

⁶⁸ Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu.

truly free historiography naturally possesses"⁶⁹. Very briefly, it was "a liberalization in a given framework"⁷⁰ because, as professor Lucian Boia has asked me, "how much can a communist system normalize itself?"⁷¹. The limits of 'normalization' may be understood or exemplified through the following episode: "I remember that once was a meeting at the Ștefan Gheorghiu Academy, there, at their new headquarters, and it was attended by history teachers and scientists, and one of the professors of the Faculty of History, I would like to cite his name but I am afraid for naming him wrong, was asked – it was a large room, in a plenary session, we were hundreds – and he was asked about the campaign [of the Romanian Army in Budapest] of 1919. He refused to answer! Three times he was asked, 'but tell us what you do know, nobody is typing, nobody is recording you!'. He just refused to give an answer!"⁷².

Given the deficit of nonideologized information – and also the limits of interpretation – regarding especially what, starting from the sixties, has been called the 'contemporary history of Romania' (a period which started in 1918 and included the stage of the construction of socialism), by far the most instrumentalized and ideologically-perverted field of national history, the oral transmission of memory between academics began to play a role, of course limited, but no less real. It is, of course, a private memory, centered on anecdotal or extraordinary, which filled-in some of the gaps in recent past with authentic knowledge coming, in some cases, from first-hand sources: "in the reading hall number three there were former political leaders, ministers Slăvescu, Zane, Ghibu, and still others, and of course, we started to talk"⁷³. In most cases, given the fact that this memory was belonging to public figures from before the Second World War, they could not become some sort of *maîtres à penser* for young scholars, but still, it contradicted the official propaganda related to the then-recent past. However, the chances for this memory to leave such restricted intellectual circles were extremely poor.

History, Historians & the Real, Existing Socialism

The story of Romanian intellectuals who produced symbolic goods during the '70s and '80s is far from being an impressive one. In what regards the particular case of historians, one may argue that the whole guild

⁶⁹ Interview with Academician Camil Mureșanu.

⁷⁰ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

⁷¹ Interview with Professor Lucian Boia.

⁷² Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu.

⁷³ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

has completely yielded to 'communism', given the fact that from the very beginning they were not able to negotiate an autonomous status in relation to political power, or, better-said, the systems of power structured in cultural field⁷⁴. Unlike their colleagues from other European socialist countries⁷⁵, Romanian historians have not been able to develop an autonomous course in their relationship with the Communist Party. Just immediately after taking power the communist elites had engaged themselves in a very ambitious and complex process of political, economic and cultural 'breakthrough', which aimed to alter to the highest point the pre-revolutionary system of values (obviously, including the societal ones). It is evident now that they have made great efforts towards a settlement of social agents upon a pre-ordered path. In fact, agents of political socialization were the first that had to be de-socialized and then re-socialized in accordance with the new Leninist-Stalinist political culture.

When the Communist Party took over the political power in Romania, it faced a seemingly unsurmountable problem: its elites were being associated (and identified) in public view not only with the national defeat following the end of the World War Two, but especially with the Soviet occupant. Because of both ideological and circumstantial reasons, during the process of "breaking-through" the legitimacy of the regime – initially almost zero – could not be built otherwise than *extrasistemically* and in a *derivative* fashion, *ie*, on one hand by an obsessive (and obsessively) call for the necessity to destructure the old political, social and cultural structures and values upon which competitive counter-elites could have organized⁷⁶, and on the other hand by noisily claiming the righteousness of a doctrine universally applicable, emanating from Moscow, which proclaimed itself to be the fulfillment of universal History.

During the second stage in the evolution of the system, that of the 'accommodation' with society which developed during the '60s, a process of re-socialization of the creative intelligentsia in order to construct a new type of legitimacy for power is easily detectable. Intellectuals formed both before and after the the war – obviously, those who survived the initial repression and came out from prison – were allowed to reintegrate and play a part inside the system: for example, one may consider the cases of C.C.

⁷⁴ Mihai Dorin, "Sub specie ludi. Istoria culturii ca soluție libertară", *Historia sub specie aeternitatis. In honorem magistri Alexandru Zub*, (București, 2009), p. 78.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "The Rise and Decline of Official Marxist Historiography in Poland, 1945-1983", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Winter 1985), 663-80.

⁷⁶ Mihail Roller, "Pe drumul revoluției noastre culturale", *Lupta de clasă*, No.2, (October-December 1948).

Giurescu, A. Marino, Al. Zub, C. Noica, G. Zane, S. Dragomir and many other 'formers'. At this time, a time characterized by a visible 'reconciliation' between party and society, the aspect upon which I consider necessary to pay particular attention is the following one: the intellectuals' disponibility to adapt the *status-quo* - and thus to 'collaborate' with the system. Their disponibility was, with some notable exceptions, one of the highest in East-Central Europe. This fact, I believe, really helps to understand the poor status of intellectuals in their relation with the system during the eight and ninth decades. Potential reasons or explanations are many, anyway, it is not a single-cause phenomenon: this attitude may have been generated by a presumably Eastern tradition of conformism and good relations with the political power (whatever its nature was), fear, opportunism or, more likely, a feeling A. Marino has named the myth of the irreversible situation, that is, the belief held by most intellectuals that the system was immutable and meant to last forever - "no one believed that he would live up to see the end of communism"⁷⁷ professor Lucian Boia has assured me. At the same time, while the party was accomodating with society, intellectuals were not only allowed to become party members, but in fact they were even encouraged to do so - empirical data⁷⁸ testify this fact. Of course, the party assigned them a new role.

"I remember how the July theses were perceived in 1971. Most of us have not taken them seriously, we did not want to believe in their seriosity or in the toxic consequences they might have. The more so as they came after several years of liberalization which now, for most Romanians, seem to have been a time of hope. Anyway, in 1971 I heard everywhere the belief that a miracle for Romanians lasts only three days, in other words, that the theses were nothing but words blown into the wind, which nobody will take into account and implement. Indeed, the cultural revolution was dubbed "mini", or insignificant, with no further action."⁷⁹

However, Ceaușescu's speeches held on 6th and 9th of July 1971, immediately published in the pages of *Scînteia* under the long, crabbed and unprepossessing title of "Proposed measures to improve political and ideological activity, Marxist-Leninist education of Party members, of all working people"⁸⁰ had been approved unanimously by the Executive

⁷⁷ Interview with Professor Lucian Boia.

⁷⁸ Eric Hanley "A party of Workers or a Party of Intellectuals? Recruitment into Eastern European Communist Parties, 1945-1988", *Social Forces*, Vol. 81, No. 4, (Jun. 2003), pp. 1073-1105

⁷⁹ Vlad Georgescu, *România anilor '80*, (München, 1994), p. 220.

⁸⁰ Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Propuneri de măsuri pentru îmbunătățirea activității politico-ideologice, de educare marxist-leninistă a membrilor de partid, a tuturor

Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. They have had disastrous consequences in what regards the cultural field. The moment represents a milestone in the evolution of the national-communist ideology in Romania and, although at that time it would have been extremely difficult to speculate about future developments, the "theses" simultaneously marked the turn to a nationalism which was about to grow up during the second half of the seventies⁸¹.

During the years that followed the moment 1971, the tone of the Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party in matters regarding historical research became gradually more and more inflexible. He no longer limited to ask the strengthening of revolutionary combativity of the so-called 'historical front' or to condemn, just like Stalin once did, the 'cosmopolitanism', but he begins to recommend (obsessively) the main national history problems that were to be studied - from prehistory up to the era of the building of socialism - and even to describe the manner in which the research should be made.

Ceaușescu's vision of the past has been systematized and codified in the pages of the party programme adopted in the mid 70's. On December 18th, 1974, a plenary session of the Central Committee adopted the final form of what was going to become, after the 11th Party Congress held between 25 and 29 November 1974, "The Romanian Communist Party's Programme for Building the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society and Romania's Advancement Towards Communism"⁸². Noteworthy is that the programme, whose first pages describe (or codify?) the history of the Romanian people from the Thracians to Ceaușescu, has been drafted under the auspices of the Secretary General himself, by a special commission led by him. In the history of Romanian communism, this is the first time when the content of a document produced by the party includes a full version of national history, a veritable *Summa Historica* written, obviously, by some historians situated in the proximity of N. Ceaușescu. According to the American anthropologist Katherine Verdery, the adoption of the 1975 programme represents the "unequivocal sign of the apotheosis of history"⁸³ for the Romanian communist regime.

oamenilor muncii", *România pe drumul construcției societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate. Rapoarte, cuvântări, interviuri, articole*, vol. VI, (București, 1972).

⁸¹ Alexandra Tomiță, *O istorie „glorioasă”. Dosarul protocronismului românesc*, (București, 2007), p. 16.

⁸² *Programul Partidului Comunist de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și de înaintare a României spre comunism*, (București, 1975), 221 pages.

⁸³ Katherine Verdery, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

Undoubtedly, Ceaușescu did not discovered his (previously unmanifested) hobby for history only in the mid 70's: for instance, during a speech held in the city of Cluj on August 30th, 1968, N. Ceaușescu surprisingly placed - for the first time - the Romanian Communist Party in the descendance and in continuity of the great medieval princes Stephen the Great, Mircea the Elder and Michael the Brave⁸⁴. Still, up to mid '70s, he was happy only to offer 'precious advices' to the historical front in matters regarding especially the history of the party and of the labor movement, or to formulate (bizarre) general conclusions, such as the statement he made in 1966 when he proclaimed that "the Romanian Communist Party is the continuer of the secular struggles undertaken by the Romanian people for defending the independence of the country, for the formation of the Romanian nation and the Romanian national state"⁸⁵. In 1974, however, the condition of historian and history inside socialist society is explicitly equated by the same Secretary General with the one held by party activists, respectively, with that of the propaganda and the communist ideology. In Ceaușescu's view, the historian should become an activist and history - pure propaganda: "We must liquidate once and for all with the anarchic, petty-bourgeois mentality, according to which problems of history are only narrowly specialized problems. These are problems of communist theory and ideology, and they can be handled only by those who acquire and apply the communist ideology and communist conceptions regarding the world"⁸⁶.

The year 1971 is remembered by most historians as being a key-moment in the evolution of Romanian socialism and, in all cases, extremely negative valued. It is perceived, thought and interpreted as the cause of a series of grim consequences that they and the historical discipline had to support: "Of course, I had a shock when I found out the content of those theses, rightfully nicknamed 'the mini-cultural revolution'⁸⁷; "I read them and felt sick"⁸⁸. Historians felt that the ideological control was gradually increasing: "until the '78 - '79 I have not felt it directly, but the screw was tightening, especially after the adoption of a new party programme in

⁸⁴ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul desăvârșirii construcției socialiste: rapoarte, cuvântări, articole, ianuarie 1968 - martie 1969*, (București, 1969), p. 478.

⁸⁵ Nicolae Ceaușescu, "PCR - continuator al luptei revoluționare și democratice a poporului român, al tradițiilor mișcării muncitorești și socialiste", *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, vol. 1, (București, 1966), p. 335.

⁸⁶ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, vol. 11, (București, 1974), p. 96; See also Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Istoria poporului român*, (București, 1988), p. 39.

⁸⁷ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre.

⁸⁸ Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu.

1974⁸⁹. This was the time when N. Ceaușescu, after becoming the first president of the Romanian Socialist Republic – holding a sceptre in his hands – discovers, "probably under the influence of Ion Popescu-Puțuri, the director of the Institute of Party History"⁹⁰ his interest in the national past. Just as it did during the `50s, the canonical historical discourse therefore adjusts itself again, but this time, "in a sense of subordination to a stupid lozincarism that on the one hand was politicised, on the other it wanted to be national and patriotic"⁹¹. In fact, by following the indications of the President, almost all issues, phobias, obsessions, clichés and sophisms shared by the Romanian pre-war far right were reactivated and incorporated into the official discourse of the past, a discourse which, as some analysts⁹² have already noted, gradually began to acquire the image of an unprecedented, bizarre and paradoxical stalinist-fascist baroque.

The metamorphosis the party from the 'vanguard of the proletariat' into 'the vital center of the nation', clearly completed during the last decade when it monopolized power, was made following the same immutable Leninist dogma of *partiinost`* - according to which only the party had the leading role in society. Frozen in its degenerated and senile Bolshevism, the party, guided by an ideology that for some time combined both fascist and Leninist-Stalinist symbols, has only constituted the reason for a group of incompetent and corrupt political scoundrels, as the famous Polish dissident Adam Michnik has called the *nomenklatura* members, to perpetuate their privileges and power. So, while the apparatchiks were as active as during the Stalinist period in terms of severity with which they exercised ideological control and censorship, they did not act any more – like their true Stalinist predecessors – by virtue of a messianic belief in a better (or perfect?) future world. No, the belief has now been replaced by mimicry and the will to conserve their own condition. By becoming subjects of a sharp political pressure again, the full integrity of historians was extremely difficult to keep: "you could not live and not make concessions in such a society... the society obliged you to make concessions, it was a society which obliged you to lie"⁹³. To put it in a nutshell, "it was a time when you either made concessions, or you waived your every professional aspiration"⁹⁴.

⁸⁹ *Idem.*

⁹⁰ *Idem.*

⁹¹ Interview with Academician Camil Mureșanu.

⁹² Monica Lovinescu, *Etica neuitării*, (București, 2008), pp. 254-55.

⁹³ Interview with Professor Lucian Boia.

⁹⁴ Cecilia Caragea, *Dialog cu Zoe Petre*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2000), p. 28.

As I stated above, during the '70s and '80s the principle described by Adrian Marino as 'the myth of the irreversible situation' has worked fully. No one could presume that eventually the communist system will fall. The same idea was synthesized by Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski in the sentence 'the day of tomorrow will be extremely similar to the present day. Was compromise the most desirable and rational attitude in such a society? What could historians possibly have done in such a society?'

The distinction between historians-activists and activists-historians made by Vlad Georgescu in 1977 is certainly relevant and useful, but it requires some nuances. In 1974 the last of the professional historians formed during the interwar period had been retired and thus became unable to exercise any influence in research institutes and universities. Their place was taken by both the activist-historians and the historians-activists. According to Vlad Georgescu, the first category was represented by historians whose condition was closer to that of the political activist than the actual historian. Professor Ioan Scurtu remembers: "Well, things were as follows. There was a Faculty of History at the Ștefan Gheorghiu Academy, there was a Faculty of History at the University. There was an Institute of History at the Academy, there was an Institute of Party History. And the differences begun in matters of income, which was two steps higher at the Ștefan Gheorghiu Academy and the Institute of Party History. There was a rivalry and, how should I say... sometimes a silent, sometimes a direct competition [between us and them], because historians from Ștefan Gheorghiu and from the Party Institute could publish very easily; of course, they were interested in such issues like the history of the labour movement, the Communist Party, comrade Ceaușescu and so on. But we, [historians] from the University and from [Nicolae] Iorga [Institute] were thought to be people who did not want to engage in party politics, who did not want to address issues that were in the party programme, because we approached subjects like the bourgeois parties, the landowners, and so on. And of course, when a researcher from Iorga and a researcher from the Institute of Party History were compared, the one from the Institute of Party History was always better seen and appreciated"⁹⁵.

The professional value of these activist-historians has been a poor one, unlike their place inside the symbolic hierarchies of power. On the other hand, the second category, the historians-activists, seem to include the whole guild except the activists. During the 9th decade, the share of ideological education in the Faculty of History's curriculum represented one third from the total package of courses, the publication of every history book was supervised, checked and censored on several levels – including by

⁹⁵ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

the Central Committee through the two well-known activists Mircea Muşat and Ion Ardeleanu - , research institutes conducted their planned activities based upon working-plans similar to those from factories⁹⁶, while, for example, the Faculty of History from the University of Bucharest "was being dominated by political activists who occupied almost all leading posts, and those of us who were respecting the standards inherited from our great professors were being kept in subordinate positions, generally lecturers, with no other perspective than retirement"⁹⁷. Under these circumstances, professional historians had no chance than to become themselves, formally, political activists: "there was that obligation that one could not open a conference without mentioning his name [the name of Nicolae Ceauşescu] at the beginning or in the end; we obeyed, the auditors were obeying too, without much enthusiasm: they knew this was the rule of the game"⁹⁸.

Gradually, Ceauşescu became a mandatory point of reference to almost all historians. But, as we shall see, not only Nicolae; his wife Elena became too. Quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin - and not to mention Stalin - had been totally abandoned in favour of Ceauşescu's name. For example, during the '80s, a work dedicated to Romanian Monarchy was not given approval by the editor to be printed because... "it did not included any quotes from Elena Ceauşescu"⁹⁹. Anyway, the second category of historians has not honestly assumed the ideology, and felt no attachment for Ceauşescu. The same applies, of course, for the first category too, but note that voluntary association in this category was often followed by a series of benefits such as higher wages, higher functions, the possibility to travel across the iron curtain, and, in some cases, even housing¹⁰⁰. Unable not to make compromises - although undoubtedly there are compromises that do not compromise - professional historians have adapted and tried "to do their best under the given circumstances"¹⁰¹ in compliance with the official formalities and, with some exceptions, always careful not to adopt attitudes that could clearly be considered hostile by the regime: "It was not a solution

⁹⁶ Gabriel Moisa, "Despre manipularea istoriografiei în comunism", *Studii de istoriografie românească*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2008), p. 108.

⁹⁷ Interview with Professor Zoe Petre.

⁹⁸ Interview with Academician Camil Mureşanu.

⁹⁹ Interview with Professor Ioan Scurtu.

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Academician Dinu C. Giurescu.

for me to stand against [the regime] because certainly, I would have not accomplished anything"¹⁰².

The possibility for 'salvation', under these circumstances, were represented only by options assumed at a purely individual level. According to a classification of the general options available, a classification proposed by Alexandru Zub¹⁰³, historians have had several distinct possibilities for professional survival. These possibilities, similar in their basic features with the ones available in the Soviet Union¹⁰⁴, were the following:

- a) a total, entirely and voluntarily conformity subservient in relation to power
- b) a rejection of any compromise; attitude rarely manifested because almost certainly it led to social and professional marginalization, exclusion or failure
- c) a conformism which may be placed between (a) and (b) and which could give the possibility to "do what could be done under the given circumstances"¹⁰⁵.

With an extraordinary intuition, the essence of this phenomenon has been described, of course, in other terms, by the great German writer Hermann Hesse in his last novel: "Indeed, in those days there was not an honor any more to be a scholar: whoever put himself in the service of the rulers and of the official slogans obtained, it is true, a job and a bread, but also the contempt of his best colleagues and, in many cases, the torment of his own conscience. Who refused to collaborate had to starve, live like birds in the sky and die in misery or in exile. There was a terrible, previously unthinkable selection. Not only scientific research has declined, but also education"¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰² Laura Toma, Sidonia Silan, "Lucian Boia: după '89 mi-am zis că nu o să mai mint" *România liberă*, 12 iunie 2009, stable URL: <http://www.romanalibera.ro/exclusiv-rl/dezbateri/lucian-boia-dupa-89-mi-am-zis-ca-nu-o-sa-mai-mint-156790.html>

¹⁰³ Alexandru Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub dictatură*, (Iași, 2000), p. 77.

¹⁰⁴ Iu. N. Afanas`ev, *op. cit.*, p.51.

¹⁰⁵ Adrian Marino, *Politică și cultură. Pentru o nouă cultură română*, (Iași, 1996), pp. 89-90.

¹⁰⁶ Hermann Hesse, *Jocul cu mărgelile de sticlă*, (București, 2008), p. 412.

The road almost taken – Methodological approaches and elements in the study of prewar totalitarian public space

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In an official propaganda story from 1956 called *A great force of citizenship* some women are given as example of what it is to be a great communist: *In the Capital* (of the region o.n.)...*in just about 5 months, almost 200.000 women have participated to a number of citizen activities as: mending and electrification of the streets, a good management of children and medical establishments, of parks and other green spaces etc. ... As a result, 380 women's committees and almost 5.000 group delegates were trained for patriotic games as to mobilize their own in the plowing campaign, the growing of vegetables and of silkworms.*¹

The universe thus described, by this kind of activities is by itself a social one, taken in a *whole* from which work, party fidelity, a care for the future and for an imagined now is are all present. The women live in a public space, but as a mobilised to mobilise element, simple followers of decisions taken at face value as being true. An abnormal space, inscribed in conscious activities, settled and ruled by the all-knowing party power.

We begin from the idea that, in using the public space, the party power – named simply from thereafter as power – takes not just the elements regarding control – such as *keeping order and a measure of public civility* but also try a rewriting of human typologies, as the target to be congruent to communist policies. Even if a work plan and a final utopic ideal exist in theory, the real inner workings of the mechanism are those best suited to indicate success or failure. Or, on another way to put it – the distance between the theory and practical applicability is greater as the moment of utopic finality comes closer. How do we know that?

This is the place where the idea of public space comes into place. Starting with some empirical definitions, followed by some concrete aspects we will try to reason if this elements is or it is not annexed to the communist regime.

Keywords: public space, communism, space organisation, social theory, social structure

What is the idea of public space? Some elements in the battle Historiography vs. Theory vs. Private Space

The Public Space had represented in the fields of humanities a hard-core element, an intellectual environment in conflict, complementarity or

¹*Activiste pe tărâm obştească : (din activitatea comisiilor de femei de pe lângă Sfaturile Populare)* (Bucureşti: Editura de Stat pentru Literatură Politică, 1956) (p. 73).

opposition to the term Private Space. Not being a statistical element, not even in the aspects regarding urbanism, space usage, spectacle where some sort of quantification would have been possible, we are forced to use some an empirical approach.

We start by considering that because consistent theories that could be limited to the communist public space are hard to find, we have to use two different ways of approach.

The first is the classical theoretical one. Lacking an unified element that could eliminate the need for continuous explanations of the term, we have chosen for this article the model proposed by Giovanni Sartori in the creation of concepts in the political sciences.² Sartori proposes three levels of abstraction when we try to define a concept such as that of public space. Those are the *high level categories or Universal Conceptualisations (cross area comparisons)*, *medium level categories of General conceptualisations and taxonomies (intra-area comparisons)* and finally, *low level categories or Figurative conceptualisations (country by country case studies)*.

This model although not a universal accepted one permits us a series of simplifications, as to better explain a sort of historical advancement of the Public Space. We refuse a more celebre interpretation of Habermas who talks of Public Sphere when studying the propagation of opinions in a known space - a public one, because, although the theory is substantial - Public Sphere betrays its own ideals, the advancement of knowledge brings forth more limits and more limitations and so, not democracy.

Proposed initially by Adorno, this interpretation is discarded in the final years even by Habermas. It does not stand for us because: I: it talks of Public Sphere - about the propagation of ideas and ideals, and not of Public Space - the place encompassing Public Sphere; II it does not speaks about present, nor does it make distinctions between regimes and ideals, ideas etc. and III is based on the literary and philosophical arguments accessible to a perceived high and middle class, at the same time speaking in the same terms about the lack of culture in the poor class. It senses a particular bourgeois mood, sometimes auto-flagellator other times elitist but not the pulse of the street. So, using it we risk limiting ourselves from the core of the applications of communist utopias - class based(!), at the same time inflating on the virtues - literary, propaganda based or philosophical of a few intellectuals accepted by the regime.

For this paper we will use only Sartori's first level of conceptualisation - as to define the Public Space by what is not perceived as

² Giovanni Sartori, 'Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 1970, pp. 1033-53.

such. Public Space becomes a global term, used everywhere, anytime, about everything, a totality that is limited in a false sense by a Private Space. And we must begin to grasp its understanding.

First element of limitation could be defined as any element that implies norms of behaviour non-intimate, implies a public and so a Public Space. In this context the regime understood as a political form of government is non-existent, but the opposition element is.

The first to coin this element is Levi-Strauss³. His studies based on primitive societies, manage to explain a passing of mental elements from an individual, intimate frame to one based on perceived and personal realities. The primitive communities can be differentiated by this specific *trait* that differentiates them from other culture with different specific *traits*. It is the first case of some particular elements that pass into the public – understood here more as a collective than an aggregate society. This is important for Levi-Strauss, as he makes a clear distinction between prehistoric and primitive⁴, thus being reserved in seeing the second one as un-tainted by contact to the anthropology researcher and the society he represents.

Historically, the Antiquity by its two most noteworthy forms of collective society – the city state and the empire is the first to come to understanding the public space. Alongside the differentiation myth – or the myth of the Other, the political element comes into form. The Greek Agora, or the Roman Fields of Mars are in fact sums of the above elements: a place where the masses became public: spectator, participant and creator in the political game. As the consecrating frame is religious, and all the others are perceived as being in a way or another annexes of this man to gods first contract, the expansion of the Public space from a simple place to one of cults, festivals, theatre, mysteries, leaders as gods indicates an explosion of a space and it is perceived as such in an auto-inflammatory sense of Babylonian, Greek or Roman *civilised* superiority. For the first time, this consumption of cult and politics creates a need to imitate the power – by *fashion*⁵ – to copy the appearance of the day's leaders.

The mimetic that precedes the need for publicity is opposed to the contemporary Marxist view that fashion is the imposed unto us by a corporatist society and also explains why the communist regimes had no

³ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Les Structures Elementaires de la Parente* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1947 (2002)).

⁴ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Race and History* ([n.p]: Bibliobazar, 1923 (2011)).

⁵ Cornelius C. III Vermeule, 'Roman Art', *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 1984, vol. 20 (1), 62-77.

lack of fashion searchers. This explains partially the most important Greek innovation for the public space was the slow but steady victory by culture.⁶

The Middle Ages knows a separation of the public in three distinct elements. The primary role being that of the Church in her many forms (Christianity, Islam etc.), it was only normal that her influence towards the control of the Public but also of the Private to be the most important. Submissions to the will of an almighty God, respect towards the consecrated authority are seen as ideals that could and should control the people, blurring the line between public and private. The intimacy represents not a solitary space, but one where a second communion with the divine must take place.

This has also a downside that anticipates a rupture between the laic and the secular public space. As the Church uses traditions rooted in the antiquity, so does the populous. The carnivals, jousting games, even executions, are a part of the public sphere, just as much as the religious processions or great holidays as Christmas and Easter.⁷

The third medieval element and the most important in our approach is that of the private. A model of chaste and modest family that will be most easily observed in the protestant world will become in time the basis for a Christian-Democrat ideology.⁸ This is important, as its competition will come from the streets, and from a more laic understanding of the role of man in the society - usually associated with the political left.

The period that started just before the Reformation, the Counter-reformation and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution are known for a privatisation of some spaces, which will in time become public spaces. The parks, villas of the day's potentates, the palaces, and a rush for a particular

⁶ Ando Clifford, 'Was Rome a Polis?', April 1999, pp. 5-34.

⁷ Johan Huizinga, *Amurgul Evului Mediu* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2002).

⁸ Tony Judt, *Postwar, a history of Europe since 1945* ([n.p]: Penguin Books, 2006). I have chosen a *post hoc* explanation, using the ideas of Tony Judt, as they explain why the Postwar triumph of the Christian-Democrat parties in Europe are based on a tradition that comes from this understanding of the role of man and family in the society. The homes, patriotic duty towards the nation, the role of a united Europe are elements that resonate in broad layers of society. Hence, our conclusion, that some public behaviours, as this electoral component are deeply rooted in the minds of the citizens. Is yet to be decided if, this is because a fear of a possible communist triumph, or, because of a resurgence of fascist themes, Nonetheless it is clear that the Christian-Democrat ideals have a basis in this understanding of the society, on the lines of repeated separations-unifications of private and public, and that is why the anti-socialist, anti-communist or anti-anarchist sentiments are obvious for them (the left is seen as the enemy of State, Family and Church).

type of luxury, a taste for gossip, the publicity of scandals, dubious morals and a complete folly in the way of future social disasters are evident. They will be a part of the society from the Thirty Years War to the French Revolution and beyond. This is because the elite are searching a complete differentiation from what they perceive as the mob. A pertinent critic could say that on the other hand a public element of integration existed from the Renaissance Courts to the Illuminist Ones. This is so, but in an extreme limited frame, as the nobility tries a clear separation from the poor, the Court being not a public space, but a privatised one, no matter if we talk about the Pope Alexander VI and his subsequent followers⁹ or the French King Louis IV.

The American and French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire know a complete transformation of the dichotomy public-private. To the term public a new opposite makes its way: that of particular. Meaning in the same time citizen and the space reserved to a world separated by the street, the particular that defines in cultural, aesthetic and geographic ways a different space is also one of the main elements of liberal thought. As, just before the American conundrum William Pitt declared: *the poorest man in his cottage may bid defiance to all the force of the Crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storms may enter; the rain may enter – but the King of England cannot enter; all his forces dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement!*¹⁰

This is a clear rupture from an era of State and Church power, a first crack in a semi-absolute power that emanated from those two consecrated elements.

The second direction of attack towards the public is from an expansion of intimacy. If particular has a more juridical understanding, intimate has a more sensible, humane one. The evolution of this second enemy of the idea of public is in direct correlation with new discoveries in science that improve the life quality, the volume of goods that could be accommodated in a home and they lead to a sense of relative wellbeing. This element will define the XIX century in what could be called the rise of the bourgeoisie. The need for intimacy, for private is related to this fondness to a newly discovered need for new attainable house objects, trademarks of fashion and practicability.¹¹

⁹ W. Barbara Tuckman, *The March of Folly. From Troy to Vietnam* ([n.p]: Balantine Books, 1985).

¹⁰ Univ. Groningen Dep. Alfa-Informatica, 'The American Revolution' < HYPERLINK "<http://www.history.org/almanack/life/politics/pitt.cfm>" <http://www.history.org/almanack/life/politics/pitt.cfm> > [accessed 2012]

¹¹ Bill Byson, *At Home. A History of Private Life* ([n.p]: Doubleday, 2010).

Another form of space is that of Coffee shops and literary saloons. Habermas names them as being both public and private, in the sense that offers the possibility of refined discussions and what, in the same time being a non-restrictive one, being absolved by political and economic requirements. The saloon society is untainted by the contact with the divine or secular authority, an almost bourgeois and public.

Some elements are beginning to re-emerge from the private to the public, as a parallel movement to this atomisation of intimate spaces. Other elements are created especially to attract the newly found public taste. The first and most important is the public square, followed by the street and its annexes – the sidewalk and the shop window.

The most noteworthy attempt to reconceptualise the public square, putting it in a whole new understanding of large spaces is the restructuring operated by the architect Haussman, in Paris after 1851. Napoleon the III-rd., needing on one hand a reconfiguration of the city that could allow the rapid and decisive suppression of any kind of revolt, and on the other the creation of a modern civic centre, manages to align the architectonic modern requirements to what was already happening in the field of mentalities. Broader implications of the role of women in the public space, the expansion of bourgeois business model, a need for *loisir*, are elements characteristic to the modernity. For all of those the street restructuring and the convergence to great gathering spaces is created.

The control as an implicit idea in this reconstruction of urban spaces, and the need for control of the opposition's busts of revolt are proof of a monopoly on violence and a limitation of it. This was successfully demonstrated in the collapse of the Paris Commune in 1871.¹²

Other than the militarist aspect, specific to this period, another much more practical help in the configuration of the sidewalk as a promenade place. His utility is not given, as it was wrongly considered, by the need to regulate the ever increasing traffic. Proof of this is that Hausmann's plan and even an older one of Valadier for the Piazza del Popolo had not included sidewalks. In the both cases they would have been more than welcomed, but not if the utilitarian considerate if false. They do appear at the same time as the shop's windows. The promenade was not just a walk, but the walk to be seen and to see the things new: as from the street to the shops or from the shops to the street. The mercantile correlation is implicit and direct.

Besides the sidewalk, the other space by excellence of the promenade is represented by the park. Kept by public spending, or by

¹² David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003) (pp. 102-11).

private donations, it explodes as a preferred place for a walk at the end of the 1840's, after a log pay-per-walk period in England. Thackeray speaks in one of his novels, *Vanity Fair* of the long Sunday walk of the gentry or nobility, and even of lesser social categories for a modest entry fee. In real life, Princess Park in Liverpool is the first one build in 1842 with the sole purpose to be a free place for public walking.

The walk implies certain behaviours, some rules of addressing, courtesy, a particular line of clothes and a series of habitudes that are all fashion based in an effort to copy the high life of the city. It is impossible to make a distinction between these habitual processes and those required in a more intimate space, as let's say at a home visit, as it seem as the public and private are intertwined here. The fix fact is that a certain civility, a gentleman's or lady's spirit is discovered in this new facet of the public-private struggle.

The last two elements specific to the public space in the XIX century are the public square as a part of political game and as a revolutionary actor. They come in last because they could be considered as public spaces by excellence. In the case of revolutionary public space, the most consistent study remains that of Mona Ozouf, even if his subject is related to the French revolution.¹³ The author is presenting the overnight reconfiguration of a Catholic tradition that has gone for centuries by replacing the top elements with those celebrating Reason not God. Is not the first recorded case of a rapid challenge on established dogmas, Akenaton's reforms in the middle period in Egypt and the rise of Christianity are being known for this kind of behaviour. But, a popular opposition to the pharaoh's reforms had completely erased any trace of his endeavours, and, in the case of Christianity, the collapse of the Vest Roman Empire, the great number of followers and an all present fear of barbarians had together stabilised the cult. The French case is a little bit strange, at least in its republican form, the reconfiguration suffered by the Church being Public, accepted and assumed, all this could be considered an *avant-le-lettre* experiment in totalitarian regimes. The religious-like ecstasy, atheism, a cult of state and the need to sacrifice all for him are already present.

The other case, that of the public square as part of a broader political game, should contain the strikes, political meetings, public discourses etc. A degree of voluntary activism, to oppose or confirm the state power or for a declared purpose, are elements that unite this separate elements of political public space.

¹³ Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire, 1789-1799* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

The extreme usage of the public space after World War I. The totalitarian experiments.

The first effect of the disaster that was the First World War has been a need for implicit humanity. *Never Again* became a symbol of a failure blamed in part on the pre-war society – a society of forward march and wellbeing. The war, the subsequent economic Crash, the losses both human and the straining of human tolerance created a generation opposed to everything – the Lost Generation.

But this was not the only way, and in a few years, not the preferred one. The bellicosity of those who considered themselves betrayed, who were afraid of a communist menace or a fascist one grew to a point that little by little, the worst forms of political participation ensued in gaining power. This understanding of a public space as a part of an inherent imagined community, as Benedict Anderson named it, made possible a transformation of political utopias from a *nowhere* to a *someplace*, an abstract that makes people totally different responsive towards it. The theme of Anderson in placed on the idea of nation in its communitarian form no matter if in an imperial or totalitarian one – based on nation, race, class – that finds or invents its own symbolic elements.¹⁴

The museum, monuments, the memory spaces are taken by a sort of extremist message, that places the failure and trauma of war on a fight betrayed or unfinished. Mussolini's contempt for the Versailles Treaties, the German revenge spirit or the need for a soviet international revolution are the most studied elements, but not singular. Action Francaise in France¹⁵, Oswald Molesy's British Union of Fascists¹⁶, the Romanian Iron Guard¹⁷, etc. are at the same time carriers of fear of capitulations in the face of an all present but at the same time variable enemy. Anderson uses in his analysis Sartori's first stage element – a definition by antithesis, by considering a national-tip group that considers itself as an exponent of an universalistic idea and message, as being in a perpetual opposition with its declared enemy.¹⁸

Therefore, an analysis of the three main extreme ideologies – Fascism, Communism, and Nazism – and their impact onto the public is needed.

¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Comunități Imaginate* (București: Integral, 2000).

¹⁵ R. E. Balfour, 'The Action Francaise Movement', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 1930, Vol. 3, No. 2, 182-205 (pp. 182-205).

¹⁶ Oswald Mosely, *My Life* (Londra: Nelson, 1968).

¹⁷ Francisco Veiga, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier, 1919-1941: mistica ultranaționalismului* (București: Humanitas, 1995).

¹⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Comunități Imaginate* (București: Integral, 2000) (pp. 131-32).

In the fascist case, Mussolini uses the social militarisation as a way of controlling his form of perceived society. From the usage of the Latin Empire, as a symbol of recovered greatness, to a catholic tradition where the obedience towards authority and the respect for the king, are transformed in the public place as concrete and clear images. In the case of the imperial tradition – or a Latinity under fascist rule – the successive diggings from 1920-1930 that will unveil a great portion of the Roman Forum¹⁹, those at Ostia²⁰, but especially the excavations at Nemi²¹, where the discovery of a ship from the times of Emperor Caligula became fast an opportunity for national pride, are all part of this episode on the reincorporation in the public circuit of a long past greatness but revived by the fascist leader. The roman spaces and the fascist Italy became one in a true frenzy for the antique – to be read as for legitimation.

In the matters of Church, two examples come into mind and are the most used. Models of reconfiguration of the public space, in fact to explain the new social realities. The first one is the Via Della Conciliazione Boulevard, build after the plans of Marcello Piacentini that links the Vatican City with the Castel Sant'Angelo. Trying a mix of open and closed spaces that will soon become symbols of fascist architecture – futurism, the Piacentini's plan has a prime purpose the easing of traffic from and towards the Holy See. It represents a dual image of power, but, because the plan is State made, its superiority towards the Church in day to day matters is apparent.

The other more evident case is represented by the configuration in space of the EUR zone in Rome, build to house the monumental buildings of state administration and as a preamble for the 1942 exposition, which will never take place. The most striking complex in the duality Church-State is represented by the face to face placement of the Museum of Military Branches (today the Central Archives Building) and the Church of St. Peter and Paul. On the same axis, but at different ends the two buildings seem to look at each other. Being an administrative neighbourhood the Army-Church opposition has a particular symbolic aspect, on top of which comes Mussolini's wish to make the Army museum a few inches taller than its counterpart. The project was yet again a Piacentini one but under the banner of a broader group of architects, known as EUR 42 and, after 1939 EUR.²²

¹⁹ James, E. Packer, 'Report from Rome: The Imperial Fora, a Retrospective', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 1989 Vol. 93, No. 1, 137-41.

²⁰ W. Rollo, 'Ostia', *Greece & Rome*, 1934 Vol. 4, No. 10, 40-53.

²¹ 'Notes on the Architecture of Some Roman Ships: Nemi and Fiumicino', *Hellenic Institute for the Preservation of Nautical Tradition*, 1985 aug/sept, 37-53.

²² Insolera Italo and Luigi di Majo, *L'EUR e Roma dagli anni Trenta al Duemila* (Roma: Laterza, 1986).

In the case of Nazi regime, the public space is instrumented to create the impression of a German work unity. The image used is also a grandiose one, such as is the case in the previous fascist model to create an organic whole between the People, Fuhrer and Nature-Landscape. For the unity element, the Albert Speer projects could be integrated in an excessive neoclassicism with the sole purpose of declaring the superiority of a race – in doing so using hard materials as granite, marble and of gigantic proportions.²³

The second case is more interesting, as the organic element in the presentation of images being an innovation specific to the Nazi art. Leni Riefenstahl's movie, *Triumph des willens*²⁴ succeeds in presenting a part of a perceived German spirit as understood in the 1930's, what The Economist named *in the same time diabolic and erotic*²⁵. The essence of the message is related to the watchers subconscious mind. Film takes us above Germany, in the clouds, then the burgs became visible as the sun rises and the Fuhrer makes his appearance. Until the leader is visible to us, almost an out of German land and its people are presented. The Messianic image mixed with one of a modern superstar, the delirium of the public, a cult for work, an accent to the human body – more poignant in *Olimpia*, the other celebre creation of Leni Riefenstahl²⁶, - gives the impression that a new type of human has been created already. This illusion, characteristic also to the soviet man and soviet art is part of a leader's cult and the all-knowing hero.

The third case is that of the soviet public space. The initial post-revolutionary directions – I am talking here about the NEP – in which art could at least found new forms, free or at least semi politicised vanish once Stalin comes to power.²⁷ The NEP is important as it directs the socialism towards some corners little studied until today. If the classical school of thought about the socialist realism had a few and clear terminological directions: art must be inspired by day by day activities, from the proletariat struggle against the oppressing classes, from the hardships of workers class, we see that this approach is not relevant for the first part of the socialist regime, under de semi-liberalisation of the NEP. Then the principal propaganda materials: the poster and the press seem created after a

²³ Paul B. Jaskot, 'Anti-Semitic Policy in Albert Speer's Plans for the Rebuilding of Berlin', *The Art Bulletin*, 1996 Vol. 78, No. 4, 622-32.

²⁴ *Triumph des Willens*, dir. by Leni Riefenstahl (1935).

²⁵ Leni Riefenstahl. Hand-held history.', *The Economist*, 11 april 2003.

²⁶ *Olympia*, dir. by Leni Riefenstahl (1938).

²⁷ Alan M. Ball, *Russia's last capitalists: the Nepmen, 1921-1929* ([n.p]: University of California Press, 1990).

different model. Alexander Rodchenko and the group named after 1921 *Productivist*, kept in high regard by the soviet authorities, thought that art must be a part of day to day activities and not just emulate them. The numerous collages like the famous *Attention, books are coming!* or *Mayakovsky!* series deeply influence the avand-garde currents, Rodchenko being in the privileged position of Director of the Museum and Museum Acquisitions Office. Once the NEP is over, his collaboration with Mayakovsky intensifies, the series of portraits made for the poet being greatly appreciated in the final years of the 20'es. The final hit of Rodchenki is his $5 \times 5 = 25$ collection from Moscow, on whose manifest, the author insisted on *the reduction of art to its logical conclusion*, an expressionless minimalist art and implicitly narcissist, in full contact with the communist utopia, as understood then.²⁸

The failure of the *Productivist* project, the subsequent victory of the socialist realism and the beginning of the Terror reorganises the soviet art towards the photography as the day's fashion.

Before we can go past the extreme episode represented by the avant-garde soviet art currents, we must mention another collaborator of Rodchenko, for who the photographer/director/painter will make the poster for his latest 1926 film *The Potemkin Cruiser*. His name was Sergei Eisestein. Accused by depression, insanity and even the grave anti-Stalinist tendencies and ideas non-conformed with the socialist realism, Eisestein makes in a few films, who attained worldwide celebrity as *The Strike* (1925), and *October* (1928) to keep some elements of the period just before the soviet unilateral model was adopted, being at the same time an obedient executant of orders and commissions from the above. His international celebrity did not save him from rough internal criticism (the movie *Ivan the Terrible III* being even destroyed) as Eisestein gradually enters the soviet Pantheon and the public conscience.²⁹

Why are Eisestein and Rodchenki important in the discourse about the public space? Because their art is not just a part of it, but it models it. Rodchenko's posters are on all the walls, from creation unions to army's garrisons, on all the magazines, books etc. He transforms the collage, making it an art; late in the 1980's magazines were having his models.

On the other side Eisestein transforms the image of pre-socialist Russia, making it great, and on top of it placing the ideals of the Revolution. The masses lead, attack, dominate, the negative personages being

²⁸ Arifa Akbar, 'Drawing a blank: Russian constructivist makes late Tate debut', *The Independent*, 27 January 2009.

²⁹ Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein: A Biography* (New York: A. A. Wyn, 1952).

eliminated. The central theme of the historical hero, as is the case of Ivan the Terrible charges the soviet art with an abnormal nationalist element, but specific to war times and the need to see in a providential leader a source of power – it creates an implicit reference to Stalin. The soviet mentality, the one tempted to make peace with the regime, and also the one in conflict with it found paradoxically the same source of inspiration, but on different lecture keys in the art of the two.

The usage of art as an element of the public space is justifiable by the need of the regime to present itself as a power centre to the public. We are not using the term of art, to present the forms of artistic manifestation under totalitarian regimes but that of total art or total realism, as it was seen in the Soviet Union after 1932. It is impossible to distinguish it in clear conceptual patterns, but to separate it from the propaganda. Having its roots in elements specific to modernism, without which it could not have been possible and form the fascist experiments, as Golomstock defined it, the total art is at the same time a creation of an artist (sometimes highly experienced and talented) attuned to the day's requirements, and a part of the dictatorship of taste imposed by the leader. Golomstock also considers the total art as being so stylised and respecting the rules that even the children could recognise the accepted patterns.³⁰

In least than a decade, the transition from the experiments of the word for art groups to the grandioso required by Stalin is complete. The strategic ossification – without which the artistic or even physical survival of the artist is impossible – leaves the decisive power in the hands of propaganda masters. Stripped of individualism, the Soviet man enters the political Leviathan. Stalin's great five year projects absorbed the public space, from the plans for great canals to the Magnitogorsk factories.³¹ The imposed transformation of the rural society in an industrial one, and non-necessarily an urban one is a clear indication of this prioritisation of public good before the personal wellbeing. The required sacrifice has an acceptable price when the success means the realisation of communist utopia.

Those years of Terror and industrial construction by the generations who will be engage in the Second World War will be remembered in terms of partial amnesia. Victory and drama found each other, the realism requires this kind of intrigue, and always the final is victorious. The superhuman effort, the barbarism, close to military slavery will have a deep impact on

³⁰ Robert Chandler and Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art: In the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the People's Republic of China* ([n.p]: The Overlook Press, 2011).

³¹ Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic mountain: Stalinism as a civilization* ([n.p]: University of California Press, 1997).

the soviet army, already in a sense recruited in the years before the war in the wars on the *economic front*. The violence of the soviet army could be explained also in this militarisation that precedes the conflagration and dominates the public space. The complete lack of intimacy, the dependence on the hierarchical superior's goodwill, an extreme survival instinct creates a symbiotic relationship between the workers-soldiers and the state.

This is not, as has been proposed, a kind of natural submission to terror and authority, but the effect of passing an impassable obstacle. Following on this logical road, the nationalism and an over evaluation of soviet strength after the Second World War is least the effect of a resurgent nationalist sentiment of the effects of victory against Nazi Germany, and more a resurfacing of the image of that recurrent impassable obstacle, the psychological element that dated from the great projects of the 1930's.

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Reviews:

Genocide: An ongoing debate in the works of Adam Jones and Norman M. Naimark

*"Despite all the lunacy of the last century,
all the absurdity of war and genocide,
we believe that humans being are
rational and are made to seek the truth."*¹

Timothy Racliffe

From the beginning it must be said that the goal of this review is not to reshape the way "genocide" is defined or interpreted. My objective is to analyze the theories expressed in two landmark works (*Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction & Stalin's Genocides*), by two respected scholars in the field of Genocide Studies. My intervention will focus on their interpretation of the term "genocide" and what this implies by referring it to the "Soviet crimes" debate.

Mankind's encounters with the phenomenon named "genocide" are not as recent as many would like to believe. In fact such actions have been part of man's existence since the dawn of history. It is not difficult to think of examples dating since Antiquity, one such case is that of the destruction of Carthage by the Romans. The field of Genocide Studies is not one which must be entered lightly as its subject of study can take its toll on the soul and mind of the individual. The researcher has to work with the darkest parts of the human species, the murder of countless people by other people. In 1948 the term genocide was legally invented and a definition offered, but as time passed by, that interpretation would prove to be either insufficient or too constraining. Thus a myriad of scholars have tried to come up with different interpretations which might offer a broader understanding to the phenomenon and what it implies.

Adam Jones of the University of British Columbia Okanagan in Kelowna has dedicated the first part of his book, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* to the history and theory of defining genocide. He does so by making a parallel between the theory and the events which have marked our history. Jones argues that it is in the nature of mankind to harbor conceptions of social difference which lead to a sense of in-group versus out-group, which in turn leads to a number of types of hierarchies. One important argument he brings up is that when we think of genocide we must see it not only as a form of physical extermination, it can also take on the shape of assimilation, as sort of a cultural death of a people.²

¹ <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/genocide.html> , accesat la data de 08.04.2012

² Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, London & New York, pp. 4-5

Before the horrors and destruction of the Second World War there was no name for such a heinous crime. A Polish-Jewish jurist, also a refugee in the face of the Nazi onslaught, Raphael Lemkin would be the first to coin it. What he did was to create a completely new word, using two words from the Ancient classical languages. He took *genos* ("geno") from Greek, which means race or tribe, and from Latin *caedere*, ("cide"), which means killing. The end-result was a term known today to everyone, "genocide". But having the word was not sufficient, a definition was needed, and here is where the debate began and has yet to reach a conclusion. Lemkin defined "genocide" as the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group³. Indeed, such a definition leaves a number of target groups out of the equation and I will hover over this in the next part of the article.

An advocate for a more comprehensive definition is Norman M. Naimark, professor of Eastern European Studies at Stanford University. He argues that "contemporary scholars overlook the fact that Lemkin continued to advocate a broad and flexible view of genocide, considering different kinds of cases within the purview of the term"⁴. Adam Jones does not dispute such an assertion, but he does point out the fact that Lemkin's main focus was on nationality and ethnicity. Naimark also believes that during the 50's Lemkin had extended his vision over the soviet crimes as well. As Adam Jones has put it "the reality of modern times is that the vast majority of those murdered were killed on the basis of a collective identity"⁵. He also admits that there are three big elements which have been omitted from the Genocide Convention: political, social, and gender groups.

Naimark's book, *Stalin's Genocides* has at least one advantage, it takes a closer look at the history of 1948 Convention, when the official interpretation of "genocide" was decided or chosen⁶. Adam Jones mentions this event in his book, but does not deal with the details, which are in this case particularly relevant. Naimark does what few dare, he analyses the involvement of politics in the formulation of the final interpretation. He points out that the initial definition included religious, racial and political groups, but that the Russians did not agree with this version, because, "political groups" were too difficult to define. Since this argument did not convince the other powers to see as they did, the Soviets referred to blackmail. They proposed the introduction of "national-cultural genocide". Their target had been the United States and its policies towards satellite states. The end result was a truce between the two sides, the Soviets did not get "national-cultural genocide" and the rest did not get

³ <http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/AxisRule1944-1.htm> , accesat la data de 08.04.2012

⁴ Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides*, Princeton University Press, United States, 2010, p.17

⁵ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, p. 12

⁶ I leave it up to the readers to decide which term applies better

“political groups”.⁷ Still one cannot accuse Jones of superficiality as he does approach this topic. He argues that “genocidal targeting is always the result of a blurring and blending of identities”⁸.

Obviously, an official definition did not impede scholars to look for their own interpretations. Adam Jones lists some of the most important ones, starting from Peter Drost, going through such names as, Leo Kuper, Yehuda Bauer, Irving Louis Horowitz, Mark Levene, and ending with Donald Bloxham. He characterizes the elements of definition as being either “harder” or “softer” positions. One could say that Naimark is on the “hard” position, because of his view on the Soviet crimes, which I will approach later on in this review.

When approaching a topic such as the Soviet crimes against its people, one threads on thin ice, as the topic is still sensitive and there is no common view. If we analyze them from the perspective of the Convention’s definition then we cannot assert that it was “genocide”. Most scholars have chosen to disagree with this interpretation. For instance, Adam Jones has included them in the case study of his book. But since was not the main topic of the work, the number of pages dedicated to the subject is small. He does not try to convince de reader that they were acts of genocide, but rather chooses to narrate the story.

Naimark has a different approach. He asserts that Soviet crimes were nothing more than deliberate acts of genocide against well-defined groups. Over the span of four chapters he takes each crime individually and brings arguments in support of his theory.

The first one he tackles is “dekulakization”. His main argument is that “the kulaks became an imagined social enemy”, for which the communists created a stereotype so as to transform them into an individual group and dehumanize them. By doing so they created scapegoats. He also asserts that this was in fact the end result of the communist’s “war” on peasantry. One could support the idea that there was systematic mass killing, as in the case of the Holocaust, but such a theory would crumble under the number of deaths caused by the deportations. There was no need for extermination camps, the barren lands of Siberia worked just as well. For this type of crime, Adam Jones mentions Michael Mann’s term “classicide” which means the mass killing of entire social classes⁹. So in the end, it is up to the reader to judge what Naimark’s “dekulakization” was.

The Holodomor¹⁰ probably is the strongest pillar of the accusation of genocide. Naimark argues that although there were multiple ethnic groups who had suffered, its main target were the Ukrainians as their death toll was huge.

⁷ Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin’s Genocides*, pp.22-23

⁸ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, p.34

⁹ Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy. Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, p.17

¹⁰ It means „killing through hunger”, also known as the „terror-famine of Ukraine”

Why does this count as genocide? The Holodomor was an orchestrated famine and not the result of a natural disaster. "Roadblocks set up by the authorities prevented Ukrainian peasants from entering the cities, where food was sometimes available, though far from plentiful".¹¹ Also he emphasizes the fact that Soviet grain exports did not diminish during this time, but were kept at a normal level. All these facts do indeed indicate intent to commit genocide.

The other two chapters deal with "Removing Nations" and with "The Great Terror". The first one revolves around the sufferings of a number of ethnic minorities which populated the vast territory of the Soviet Union: the Koreans, the Ingush, the Chechens, the Poles, and the Germans. These people were removed from their native lands, on the basis of false accusations and relocated in barren regions. This ultimately led to the death of most of them. The other chapter delves into Stalin's purges. In essence Naimark, argues that they had a similar character to the "dekulakization" and once more emphasizes on the importance of placing political groups under the protection of the Genocide Convention. Adam Jones also approaches these problems, but just as before he does not enter the debate over the nature of the actions.

Reading Naimark's *Stalin's Genocides*, one realizes that he is in fact correct, and that the victims of Soviet crimes, were indeed the victims of "genocide". Thus a new question arises: why are authorities so slow to denounce these atrocities and issue official apologies to the survivors and their families? Adam Jones dedicated a substantial part of his book to analyzing this phenomenon.

In the case of Russia, the fall of the Soviet Union caused a "psychological dislocation and humiliation"¹². The Russians have basically suffered from a case of falling down from grace. The denunciation of Soviet crime began with Gorbachev's liberalization and has continued until present-day. "Both Putin and his formal successor, Medvedev, have paid public tribute to Stalin's victims."¹³ So the political class has shown its willingness to admit the crimes of the past. Then what has been cause of lack of official condemnation? The answer might come as a surprise to many; it is the people of Russia, who continue to admire Stalin. The "Man of Steel" has been voted as the third-greatest Russian of all time. This has obviously determined politicians to adopt an ambivalent position.

As I reach the end of my review I will try and elaborate a fitting conclusion to such an interesting topic. "Genocide" was, is, and most probably will be a continuing source of debate among scholars. Defining it poses a series of problems (vanity, fear, arrogance, or other politics) which impede a consensus at an official level. Even though this article has mainly focused on the

¹¹ Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides*, p.73

¹² Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, p.509

¹³ *Ibidem*, p.510

Stalinist crimes, there are other similar events in history which have yet to be recognized as an act of “genocide”.

There is no doubt that the works of Adam Jones and Norman M. Naimark have played a key role in the theorization of Genocide Studies. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, can be seen mostly as a manual for those interested in the topic. It has a broader approach on the subject as it tries to cover the interpretation, the history and the effects of “genocide” on modern society. Naimark’s book, *Stalin’s Genocides*, on the other hand has a narrower approach as it focuses solely on the Soviet crimes perpetrated during Stalin’s rule and tries to demonstrate that they constitute an act of “genocide”.

VLAD ONACIU

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Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia*, Princeton University Press, 2005, 304 pp.

For American sovietology the seventies represent a turning point. This is the moment when a second generation of social historians challenged the then-prevailing “totalitarian model” elaborated mainly by political scientists immediately after the Second World War, and started to use new keys in order to “unlock the mystery of Stalinism”¹⁴. Undoubtedly, one of the most prominent of these new social historians is Chicago University’s professor Sheila Fitzpatrick. Through her books and studies such as *The Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1931*, Indiana University Press (1978); *Education and Social Mobility in*

¹⁴ *Stalinism. New Directions* (ed. by Sheila Fitzpatrick), Routledge: London & New York, 2000, 2.

the Soviet Union 1921-1934, Cambridge University Press (1979); *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*, Oxford University Press, 1994; *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford University Press, 1999; *The Commissariat of Enlightenment. Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, 1917-1921*. Oxford University Press, 1970 she proposed new patterns of understanding both old and new issues regarding Soviet (social) history. Her concerns as social historian regarding the evolution of the ordinary individual's universe inside the mighty machine set in motion by the first two supreme leaders, Lenin and Stalin, starts as she openly claims, from what the education of *homo sovieticus* really meant and ends up with such diverse aspects as communal living inside the crowded dwellings much too common in the towns scattered throughout the Union. The process of education and its evolution, the formation of the culture of a new type, the adaptation of ordinary men and women to the transformations which Russian society had to bear during the first half of the twentieth century, the relations between these ordinary people and the political leaders had been all reinterpreted and put in a new light by Dr Fitzpatrick's research conducted during the last 30 years. One of her recent project, entitled *Tear off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* published by Princeton University Press in 2005, falls in the same paradigm, or pattern of interpretation and analysis.

Despite the fact that the book is constituted from studies and articles previously published (except Chapter 12 - "Wives' Tales), upon she had brought the necessary corrections and improvements, this work appears to be an excellent analysis of a great number of aspects concerning the life of ordinary people living in the Soviet Union during and after the strict historical period labeled as "Stalinism". The unity of the materials gathered in this book is represented mainly by the common theme relating them, namely, the social identities of common groups of people - workers, wives, impostors, peasants, neighbors, intellectuals, and so on - reflected or shaped by the new political realities. Everything in this volume revolves around the question of identity: from its construction, reinventing and reimagining after 1917, up to the discovery of a normal, individual identity since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The main actor of the book is represented by the ordinary Soviet individual, pursued over a long period of time in diverse hypostasies such as worker, farmer, wife, worker, soldier returned from the battlefield or even candidate for divorce, and the ways in which he understands how to reshape his identity. Dr Fitzpatrick examines the ways people choose to build new identities in order to meet the standards required by the political power, and especially what kind of social consequences these permanent reinventions have inside a fluid society capable of extreme changes in very limited periods of time. In a society which was organized and structured according to a principle based

upon class membership, the *us vs. them* dichotomy was invested with excessive significance: the individual is obliged to assume a number of social practices capable of giving him the right to enjoy the privileges of the class he was part of. In other words, the author follows the manner in which the double identity and imposture has taken shape and has become a daily life reality. It should be noted that this analysis is done from the perspective of how individuals choose to build new identities and not from the state's point of view – there are no references to the formation of identities through propaganda, the press, education in schools or through different socialization groups such as the young pioneers or the Komsomol. Of course, the process of identity remodeling entailed an increased degree of vigilance manifested not only by party and state institutions, but also by the ordinary citizens. Thus, the which-hunt phenomenon, so characteristic during the medieval times, had began to grow in the second half of the '20s and over the '30s.

As the policy of encouraging individuals to transform into new persons became an obvious concern for the regime, the reverse of the coin started to be visible: more frequent complaints about the identities that certain individuals claim to possess have started to be made. The denunciation for claiming a false identity represents a tearing off the mask, to which the title of the book makes reference. The fight against falsehood and imposture had become during the '30s a fact of daily life, a routine, but also a constant concern for the whole society. Suspicions about the true face of the man next to you, shadows of class enemies, were all constantly and deliberately amplified by the policy of suspicion the regime was careful to cultivate and spread among the population.

The author points out that during the Stalinist era, the process of shaping new identities has not been possible without recourse to imposture, a humbug which in her opinion may be classified as *political* (Party deception, concealment of true identity and claiming a false one, p. 19) and *criminal* (claiming a false identity in order to gain, p. 20). Now, being able to penetrate deeply into the realities of Stalinist and post-Stalinist regime due to numerous research conducted in archives in Moscow, the question of whether this classification of imposture does still serves any purpose. Indeed, on one hand we talk about accepting a new identity in order to gather, on the other hand we have the identity modeling in order to survive, but if you look at the purpose of accepting the masks the conclusion is the same: mere survival.

Despite the fact that through the title of the book the author wishes to cover the entire history of Soviet Russia, it is obvious that she prefers to focus mainly upon the Stalinist period, with short overviews of both previous and post-Stalinist evolutions. The space destined for various stages in Soviet history is not equal: except Chapters 12-15, which are devoted to the postwar and post-Soviet time-frames, the other units treat issues related to identity-reconstruction in the aftermath of 1917 and the Stalinist years. It would have been interesting to analyze how after 1953, during the "thaw", the remodeling process has

intensified, and how after the collapse of the USSR these same people had to learn to adapt again and to accept a reversed pattern of thought.

Regarding the sources, the whole discourse which the book proposes is constructed mainly upon reports discovered in Moscow archives, and especially private letters written by common people. Most of the letters had been found in the secret funds of the Russian state archives despite the fact that their content often had no direct political implications. Being written following or using the characteristic stereotypes and habits of language specific to that era, Dr Fitzpatrick has successfully managed to read them between the lines and interpret their content in order to reveal extremely valuable information capable to offer new perspectives upon what Stalinism has meant at the grass-root level of the Soviet society.

IOANA COZMA

Michael Geyer, Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, Ed. Cambridge University Press, 2009

Coming up to referring to this book as another try of comparing the two totalitarian regimes that have had a great influence on the 20th century history, made the subject of the authors and editors of this volume. But, as so confirmed by Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, taking a glimpse over the common, somehow similar characteristics of the two regimes –Stalinism and Nazism – it comes to a greater deal of understanding and finding the common aspects of this two political systems.

Beyond Totalitarianism does not come as a contribution to the defining process of what totalitarianism means, but to what a totalitarian political system is, looking or understanding *beyond* the political aspects of a regime, seeing how the ideological discourse has influenced and became a tool of operation in justifying and implementing some of the decisions taken and put in action by the totalitarian regimes.

The two professors from the Chicago University, editors of this collection of essays, have come together to put in parallel their own fields of expertise in history– with the contribution of other research contributors –, to find and define, as so mentioned, the comparison of the two *political religions*. In their analysis, the authors had in mind the four major aspects of this two ideocracies: governance, violence, socialization and entanglements between the two political regimes, aspects that made the subjects the four chapters of the work.

In the introduction of the book, Michael Geyer makes a long exposure based on what comparing totalitarian regimes implies, the difference and limits of what *totalitarian* and *totalitarianism* shall be pointed out, when inferring to an extreme, type, of political regime. For instance, the author points out the importance what we understand through *totalitarianism*, when pinning it as a

common definition to all extreme type of political regimes or ideologies, but we are limited to what we can define a *totalitarian* political system. When it comes to having in mind the limits of the time span, the authors had in mind the necessity to limit themselves to the '30s and '40s, when both leaders were alive and the both political systems were still at work.

The first chapter of the book, *Governance*, starts with Yoram Gorlizki and Hans Mommsen essay, "The Political (Dis)Orders of Stalinism and National Socialism", in which the two historians point out the two political regimes, by having a parallel on the administrative, the party structure and importance, as the role of the leader. In their essay the readers can find the importance of the party as a mean of justification and the importance of the role of leadership that meant, how powerful it grew by taking the control of the entire state, becoming a party-state once with the takeover of the Bolsheviks. How this power of the party made possible for Stalin to take the full control of the state, of the importance of his understanding of the bureaucracy - a bureaucrat, himself - and his understanding of the communist ideology which he used to impose his will. When it comes to the National-Socialist Party, the authors point out the disorder, implied by the essays title, to its lack of a coherent structure, how it never took the administrative power of the state, just lingered as a second organ in the state. When it comes to the leaders and their relationship with the administration of the state and their leadership duties, the authors show a hardworking, paying attention to documents, no free time spending Stalin, as to the somewhat lazy, not interested in state affairs and as just a propaganda portrait Hitler. Having this characteristics in mind, the authors point out how the regimes made possible their stability and resistance of time. For instance, the disorder of Nazism was amplified by the guiding line of the *Führerprinzip* which made Hitler the all responsible of the continuing competition between his subordinates, which in a confusing pyramid of power that all derive from the Führer, managed to accelerate its downfall. The dependency over the last word kept by Hitler, made the administration impossible and all the structure under his command weak. As in contrast to the importance of the power of the Communist party, which it had been taken over by those that respected all Stalin's directives, when it came to times of crisis, the bureaucratic structure of the state had the possibility to manage resources and mobilize in a very short time. One other perspective of the strength of the Party-state was its capacity to withstand the death of Stalin, for its administrative structure did not become dependent on Stalin.

The second article of the first chapter, *Governance*, David L. Hoffman and Annette F. Tinn offer us the meanings of "Utopian Biopolitics: Reproductive Policies, Gender Roles, and Sexuality in Nazi Germany and Soviet Union". The premises that stand as basis for this article derive from the role of the *woman* in both regimes. For instance both ideocracies have seen the necessity of a larger population, the need of demographic growth, but they never fully reached their

goals. This idea of demographic growth was not a particularly German or Russian. It has manifested in all European countries. But, when it comes to comparing the two regimes, the authors start with the importance of eugenics, how they had an influence in the USSR, but was left aside after the Nazis took the power. The communist ideology could not withstand such a fascist compromise. It played an important role in the Nazis ideology of the *pure race*, the need for a dominant *Aryan*. This ideals did not come as very important when it came to the Soviet Union. By contrast, Germany did not have a cultural diversity in what was the Soviet Union. In this particular instance we should take a reference to how the importance of demographic policies, were carried out. In Nazi Germany only those how fitted the Aryan profile were to breed, the Germanic population, while the other groups were to be put to a series of measures for the insurance of their impossibility to pollute the purity of the Aryan race. When it came to the Soviet Union, they did not have a racial program, so the propaganda went for the need of all peoples of the Union to breed as much as possible.

One major difference between Nazism and Stalinism was the role of women in society. For the Nazi regime women had a pure breeding role, they were to be the mothers of the new pure race. Nazism was a patriarchic regime, women were didn't have the obligations to work, just to maintain their role as households. Take a difference to the Soviet Union, women were granted equal rights, so they were part of the working force, which was another attribute to their hard lives, after the role of breeding and householders.

When we come to the second chapter of the book *Violence* there are two articles that make the point of the role of coercion in the two compared political regimes. In "State Violence - Violent State", Christian Gerlach and Nicolas Werth take a look of how violence is used for the means of reaching the ideological goals of the two regimes. As an observation, the two totalitarian regimes have a similar approach to the same social groups: rubbers, petty thieves, alcoholics, homeless people, by what they mean, in ideological terms, for the regimes: "socially harmful elements" in the Soviet Union and "asocials" in Nazi Germany. Social groups have been taken off the streets and put in two camps, kept away from the other people. The regimes had the need to start, fresh, the social order they preached and were willing to develop.

Other means of violence was used on ethnical basis. In this perspective the authors of the article have had as a premise not only the ethnical cleansing of the Jewish populations in Germany, but also those minorities that were a problem within the Soviet Union: Chechens, Crimean Tartars, Ingush populations. Deportation was the main tool with which the regimes have operated. Another type of violence used by the regimes was their treatment of Prisoners of War. Giving in to the similarities in disorder, lack of supplies, corruption, somehow the two regimes were equal in their attitude over the treatment of the prisoners.

The means of violence came to be part of a planned and unplanned, ideological and personal gains to justify the needs of the regimes on their way to eliminate possible or imaginary adversaries.

In "The Quest for Order and the Pursuit of Terror", Jörg Baberowski and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel takes a basis of analysis the *multiethnic* empires of the two compared political regimes. When it comes to defining the aspects of the multiethnic society of two regimes, the authors start with the premise, in Nazi Germany case, from their ideological necessities of a vital space *Lebensraum*, which in their dare need of expansion over to recover the German habited regions of the neighboring countries, Germany was transformed into a multiethnic empire. The methods of dealing with the problems the occurred from the populations that came under their administrative power and the process of *Germanizing* the new lands conquered. When we take a reference to the case of the Soviet Union, in the article we can find an existing multiethnic empire. As we mention in the article above, there were no ideological means of a problems that had ethnical references. The only problems that occurred were with the identified populations that were profiled as enemies, which led to a series of deportations from the borders in the Caucasus or Baltic regions.

This second article of the second chapter comes as an extent to the "State Violence – Violent State" on the deportations and the consequences, which led to the justifications of the regimes way of operation, after the First World War. This article helps in understanding the magnitude of the deportation phenomenon and what means of coercion have been used against large numbers of populations.

In the third chapter, *Socialization*, we have three articles on how the two totalitarian regimes applied the ideological factor on shaping the social identity and the identity of every individual, the limits and rules they had to respect and the qualities they had to gain or lose.

In the article "Frameworks for Social Engineering, Stalinist Schema of Identification and the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft", Christopher R. Browning and Lewis H. Siegelbaum offer us the a construct of how the rules of ideology shaped the societies under Nazi and Soviet rule. For a better understanding and find a better correlation to the article already discussed on the reference that "Germany was not a "quicksand" society ruled by a one-party revolutionary regime as in the Soviet Union. Rather it was a modern society governed by a "quicksand" political system" as the authors of the article describe the contrast of the two societies. When it come to the Russian framework for social engineering, the importance of the class origin played an important role of how society should be structured. In the first years of its power takeover, the process of "cleaning" out the kulaks was an essential role for taking the right steps on achieving communism. the process of creating the soviet society had made possible the appearance of labor camps, reeducation camps for those whom need it to "correct" themselves to become a member of the socialist effort. When

it comes to *Volksgemeinschaft* race and Aryanism played in important role. The need of all the German people to be pure, to be German, was essential for a pure race. Eugenics was the main science which made this possible. For a better society the asocials had to be eliminated or stopped from breathing. If in the Soviet Union the "enemies of the people" were taken in to labor camps or physically eliminated, the Nazi regime had took great steps in defining racial purity. Jews were considered a national threat, so they were easy to identify with what *un-pure* meant. But, regime took steps in cleansing the race of all asocials: mentally desisted and the paraplegics were a liability which was to be taken care of by physical elimination and castration programs, so they will not multiply. Another factor was the mixed breed of Germans with Jews or the case of the Afro-Germans - they were born after French troops from the colonies have had German women as lovers during the First World War - were sterilized due to ideological means.

Sheila Fitzpatrick and Alf Lüdtké in their article "Energizing the Everyday. On Breaking and Making of Social Bonds in Nazism and Stalinism" they come to refer to the relationships that evolved between people in the two political religions, how they were managed politically or not.

Inclusion is one of the main themes of the article. Inclusion as a rules to be respected by individuals to become part of the political defined society. The authors of the article have in mind the importance of the youth organizations in the two regimes, as what it meant to be part of the futures society, insisting on the importance of how not cooperating and not letting once children to take part of one of the youth organizations, parents were to take a burden of stigmatization, though the organizations were not open to everyone, racial and class profiles were still a *must* in a child's families original background. This process of selection stands for the *exclusion* part of the article, emphasizing the role of the barriers of acceptance in the new social orders, to be.

Workplace bonds have had an important role of difference of the trajectory in the capacity of the workforce. In the Nazi regime the competition attribute that dominated the ideology and the state structure went all the way to the worker. A good performance was acknowledged and the workers got a better pay. By contrast in the Soviet Union were work was scares at the beginning of the regime instauration, only took a bust after the first five-year plan was put in action. The propaganda was pointing out for a Stakhanovite workers that can become heroes of the workers.

Main context of the article - it begins to the reference of Hannah Arendt presumption of *atomization* of totalitarian societies - shows us that beyond the political necessities and interferences, the societies still go on creating new type of bonds and maintain those whom have been of the social structure before the takeover of power by the totalitarian regimes.

"The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany" is the essay in which Peter Fritzche and Jochen Hellbeck point out the necessities of ideology

to transform the individual in the ideal, perfectly resonating human being that is flawless and uncorrupted by the "old ways". Again we come to the reference of the important role played by class and race. When it comes to the class factor of importance of the "New Man" was a machine-alike type of a human being, one that acts with an iron force, a proletarian that will reach the height of industrialization. Ordered, knowledgeable of his role in socialism, the boundaries he has to respect of his role, part of the struggle for reaching the utopian goals. The essay gives us an inside of the structure of importance of male attribution and physical condition, when referring to the Nazi propaganda, of a man. Some elite soldiers have come to be the pure form of the racial standard for what it meant the future worker-soldier. The SS troops, Hitler's personal elite, had such criteria of selection, for example.

In the last chapter of the book *Entanglements*, we have the last comparison of the two political regimes in their direct encounter via the Second World War and the perception of their image in their own country. This last chapter takes us to the limits of direct contact and the view of their ideological enemies within their own borders.

In the first essay of the last fourth chapter, Mark Edele and Michael Geyer: "State of Exception: The Nazi-Soviet War as a System of Violence, 1939-1945" take on the grounds of the Eastern Front, on the barriers of inhumanity, the place where soldiers of both armies have taken violence to an extreme level, so it will diminish and demoralize its opponent. What has been observed by the two historians are the common characteristics of "barbarization" of the enemy. But also we have a glimpse on what happened behind the lines, on the occupied grounds where military brutality was manifested against the civilian population. Though not always the main actor, The Wehrmacht had went over the lines of ideological means. In retaliation to their lack of judgment and practices of overkill, the Red Army responded with the same hate and with an equal sense of justice in their vendetta toward the German army and later in the war, the population.

In this essay the authors have tried to take a different path when referring to violence. They have set themselves on pointing out the importance of the circumstances, of the lack of control of ideological, though some atrocities fall on the responsibility of the ideas of the totalitarian regimes, extreme violence it's not a main characteristic, but a particularity of war, not a rule.

Last essay of *Beyond Totalitarianism* offers us a vista on the perception of each other of the two political systems. In "Mutual Perceptions and Projections. Stalin's Russia in Nazi Germany - Nazi Germany in the Soviet Union" Katerina Clark and Karl Schögel open up the discussion of the image of the "other". In an effort to understand the existence of a mutual image of each other, it came to be that both totalitarian systems have been working with clichés that were part of the German culture and Russian culture on how they saw each other, both regimes sharing the patterns of the pre First World War regimes and their

cultural basis. Coming to the sense of the cultural urban German and the pure soul-centered rural Russian have been taken as a point of understanding the *other*. Difference of definitions have been changed once with the beginning of the war between the two sides, on which grounds the ideological factors have, in a some ways, altered the image of each other. Mainly how the clichés have been proven right or wrong, or how their images were taken as tools of propaganda for ideological means.

In their collective book *Beyond Totalitarianism*, the authors and editors have given another perspective in comparing Nazism with Stalinism, going beyond the limits of ideological theories have offered us the possibility to understand some general characteristics of the two regimes, which have had different roots of manifestation, always tracking back to the preexisting ideas, clichés or relations between the two political systems.

CRISTEA NICOLAE-MARCEL

Elena Shulman, *Stalinism on the Frontier of Empire: Women and State formation in the Soviet Far East*, 2008

Elena Shulman is an independent scholar and has taught at UC Berkeley and Texas Tech University after receiving her Ph.D. in History from UCLA in 2004. " *Stalinism on the Frontier of the Empire: Women and State Formation in the Soviet Far East* " which was published in 2008, is a fascinating account of frontier of the Stalinism, told through the previously unexplored history of a campaign to attract female settlers to the socialist borders of the Soviet Far East, in the late 1930s. Elena Shulman reveals the instrumental functions that these migrants played in the extension of Soviet state power and cultural domination in the periphery. Their remarkable stories, recovered from archival letters, party documents, memoirs, press coverage and films, shed new light on Soviet women's roles in state formation, the role of *frontier Stalinism* in structuring gender ideals and the nature of Soviet society and Stalinism in the 1930s. Through these stories Elena Shulman offers a picture of the world of the frontier as well as the complexities of women's lives in the USSR, under Stalin's rule.

The author applies the concept of frontier to the expansion of the Soviet Far East by examining the women and a few men who placed themselves at the forefront of efforts to settle and develop these borderlands as part of the Khetagurovite Campaign of 1937-1939.

The book is composed of six chapters. It begins with Valentina Khetagurova's letter, "Join us in the Far East", published in *Komsomol' skaia pravda*. The letter has addressed to the Young Woman of the Soviet Union. Approximately 250,000-300,000 individuals responded to the call, and 25,000 women and 5,000 men were ultimately selected and sent into the borderlands between 1937 and 1939.

The book is focalized on the story of three young women who wanted to join the Soviet border construction. The image created by these women on the Far East is very interesting. For them this land was "some distant planet", that can change their lives, while for the party, "Stalinism on the frontier" was an ideological development, cultural, political and economic. A number of the women also saw their participation in the Khetagurovite movement as emancipatory action, providing them with new opportunities and freedoms.

The first woman left without parent's permission to have an independent life and there she hoping to marry with a man to share her passion for work and sport. Second actor decided to go because she was a loving mountain and more attracted by the exploration than the life of mother. The last example is more interesting; the drama lived by this woman proved the power of the state to divide family, so she lifts to begin a new life there.

So, they volunteered to achieve their ideals, empowerment, new opportunities and freedom. Their voluntary work was due to the fact that these women were first generation educated under the Soviet.

The campaign lasted for three years, because it was declared a failure. It seems that the patriotic enthusiasm for transform the harsh landscape were not enough. While the migrants possessed great optimism and adventurous spirits, they faced extreme privation and hardship. The climate of the region was extreme. Nearly devoid of infrastructure, the territory experienced shortages of everything, from housing to basic necessities. The understaffed and undersupplied authorities were unable and, at times, unwilling to do much to improve the living conditions of this volunteers. Without pre-established social networks, the migrants often could not procure necessary resources unavailable through normal channels. Unfortunately, some ended up jobless and homeless. A number of the women become the victims to sexual predators in the local administration, who took advantage of the women's lack of protection and limited ability to secure jobs, living quarters, and sustenance. Khetagurovites, how they are named after the author of the letter, were also exposed to close attention from the state security services, leading some into the labour camps and others into complicity with Stalinist repression as agents of the NKVD. Considering the conditions, the settlers took two directions: some of the migrants did remain in the Far East and many others were unable to withstand the difficult conditions and returned to their previous homes. A few chose to end their own lives.

Khetagurovites did not have the desired "civilizing" effect on the Far East, as the Party wanted. The young women had great difficulty integrating with the local population, another obstacle in their mission. The Far East was populated with a large numbers of single male labourers, criminals, and victims of forced resettlement. Here the tensions between settlers and locals were high. Many locals believed they came because they were social outcasts from their own communities or, unable to secure suitable marriage partners back home, had come to the Far East to seek husbands among the predominately male population. For them this was a good reason not to accepted women into the workplace by locals. They were derided when they entered traditional male

fields, consistently underpaid, and continually viewed with suspicion. Men were especially resistant to Khetagurovite women placed in positions of authority.

Despite its lack of overall success, Elena Shulman maintains that the campaign demonstrates a number of important aspects of the development of the Soviet state and society and gender roles in this period, especially connected with the State's ability to create a new devoted and loyal generation, which responded promptly to his request. The failure of the campaign was caused by the deficiencies which appeared at the level of the region, not to the ideal of socialist construction.

The most interesting part in this work is the demonstration of minimalist state role in launching this campaign. In fact, she attributes considerable agency to the leaders of the movement, especially Valentina Khetagurova, and asserts that they were able to capitalize on the situation to bring them into the limelight.

Firstly, "Stalinism on the frontier of Empire: Women and State formation in the Soviet Far East" is highly readable and provides a much-needed study of a unique facet of the Stalinist period, while raising interesting questions regarding the nature of Stalinism and the frontier experience. This work is interesting and provocative for the scholars of Soviet history, because they can find here the impact of the terror on Soviet development, the Stalinist bureaucracy, or frontier development.

Secondly, the book is based on extensive research in archival and published sources; the book is a fine addition to the history of the 1930s, particularly to the history of women's participation in the Stalinist projects of that decade. It is a remarkable story and Elena Shulman tells it well.

At last, we can mention that the book makes an important contribution to Soviet history, as well it demonstrates that woman's participation was beneficial to the enlargement of the peripheral status, even if their efforts could not overcome the specific obstacles Far East.

FLORINA BIANCA CHERECHES

Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism. New directions*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

The volume edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick is a sum-up work of both new wave historians (young historians writing in the 1990s), and consacrated historians of the revisionist wave (such as the editor) who propose new approaches in some variate aspects of the study of Stalinism.

The debate between revisionism and traditionalism in historical writing has had flourishing outcomes concerning the study of Stalinism: one of these achievements is the present volume. Its publication is tightly connected to the significant changes occured in this field of research, particularly between 1991-

2000. The collapse of the Soviet Union allowed, on one hand, the integration of Russian scholars into the international scholarly community, and on the other the opening of Soviet archives to historians. These two changes contributed significantly to elaborating new approaches in the study of Stalinism, within the major context of two other cultural processes.

Contextualization

First, historians in both United States and Europe (and, subsequently, after 1991, Russian historians as well) had been experiencing a shift from social history (dominant in the 1960s and 1970s) towards a new cultural history. Second, the growing interest in cultural and social theory pulled the historical profession, in the 1990s, away from the social sciences and towards the humanities. The impact of these two processes was felt on writing Soviet history as well, as Sheila Fitzpatrick emphasizes, and it is these two processes who the new directions presented in this volume are the result of.

Authors

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¹⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick attended the University of Melbourne (BA, 1961) and received her DPhil from St. Antony's College, Oxford (1969); she was a Research Fellow at the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1969–72. Fitzpatrick is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She is a past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

¹⁶ Sarah Davies specialises in the cultural, social and political history of the Soviet Union in the Stalin era (1920s–1953). Her first book, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia* (CUP, 1997) was awarded the Alec Nove prize. She received AHRC funding for a project on Stalin's personal archive, which has resulted in a forthcoming monograph, *Stalin on Stalinism*, jointly-authored with James Harris (Leeds). With Harris, she co-edited *Stalin: A New History* (CUP, 2003). She also has interests in Soviet cinema and the culture of the Cold War. Her profile on <http://www.dur.ac.uk/history/staff/profiles/?id=396>, accessed 10th April 2012.

¹⁷ Jochen Hellbeck is an associate professor at Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences (since 2003). Ph.D. (Columbia University). Among his publications: *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, May 2006) ; *Autobiographical Practices in Russia*, ed. with Klaus Heller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). His profile on:

http://history.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=161&Itemid=140, accessed 10th April 2012.

¹⁸ Alexei Kojevnikov teaches at University of British Columbia. More information about his work at his profile page: <http://www.history.ubc.ca/people/alexei-kojevnikov>, accessed 10th April 2012.

¹⁹ Julie Hessler teaches at the University of Oregon. More information about her work at <http://history.uoregon.edu/faculty/profiles/index.php?name=hessler>, accessed 10th April 2012.

Siegelbaum²⁰, James R. Harris²¹, Paul Hagenloh²², Yuri Slezkine²³ and Terry Martin²⁴ are the twelve authors who contribute innovatively to the study of Stalinism through their articles.

Since out the twelve authors represented in this book, eight belong to the post-1991 historians, while three learned their Soviet historian trade under the old dispensation (Fitzpatrick, Siegelbaum – in the West, Kozlov in the Soviet Union), and the last came onto the American historical scene as a Soviet emigré

²⁰ Lewis Siegelbaum teaches Russian and European History at Michigan State University. Co-author of the award-winning website Seventeen Moments in Soviet History (www.soviethistory.org) and my most recent book, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (2008), was awarded two prizes by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies at its convention in November 2009. <http://history.msu.edu/people/faculty/lewis-siegelbaum/>, accessed 10th April 2012.

²¹ James Harris is Senior lecturer in Modern European History at University of Leeds. MA (University of Toronto, 1990), Ph.D (University of Chicago, 1996). His research interests include: The political, economic, social and cultural history of the Soviet Union especially under Stalin, Regionalism and regional history in the Soviet Union, The Stalinist political system, The political values of Joseph Stalin, Dictatorship and democracy in inter-war Europe, Stalin and the Soviet intelligence apparatus, Anti-liberal ideas and ideologies. http://www.leeds.ac.uk/site/custom_scripts/people_profile_details.php?profileID=717, accessed 10th April 2012.

²² Paul Hagenloh is an Associate Professor in History at Maxwell School of Syracuse University . Ph.D. (University of Texas, 1999). Among his most recent publications: *Stalin's Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926-1941* (Washington, D.C., Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press / The Johns Hopkins University Press, in press, 2009); Encyclopedia Entries: "Kirov, Sergei," and "Show Trials," for the Encyclopedia of Russian History, James Millar, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 2003). His profile at: <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/faculty.aspx?id=6442451529>, accessed 10th April 2012.

²³ Yuri Slezkine teaches at University of California Berkeley. Among his most recent publications: *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000). His profile at : <http://history.berkeley.edu/people/yuri-slezkine>, accessed 10th April 2012.

²⁴ Terry Martin is John L. Loeb Associate Professor of Social Sciences at Harvard. His area of study is Russia and eastern Europe, and his interests include the Soviet formation of national identity and government, and nationalities policy. His two most recent publications include: *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Cornell UP, 2001), and *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Building in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (with Ronald Grigor Suny, Oxford UP, 2001). <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~conih/bios/martin.htm>, accessed 10th April 2012.

in the 1980s (Yuri Slezkine), it is important to differentiate between the circumstances that have led to the formation and the writing of the authors.

For example, Slezkine's emigré status meant that when writing his dissertation he had no hope of Soviet archival access, since emigration was still regarded by the regime as an act of treachery. On the contrary, young historians of Soviet Russia have benefited from vast archive documentation: as Fitzpatrick describes it, "almost buried under the avalanche of bureaucratic paper ceaselessly generated by modern governments", a switch from "something like a seventeenth-century source base to a twentieth-century one, almost overnight".

Fitzpatrick emphasized other advantages which the wave of new historians benefit from, deriving from their arrival on scene after the end of the Cold War: having been lucky not to be marked by political circumstances – since they did not go behind "the Iron Curtain" to do their graduate work, to their great benefit, they did not have to acquire the traits of political caution and self-censorship once required to work in the Soviet Union (and sometimes also in the United States, reflexes which the editor considers "very bad for scholarship").

Regarding the cultural influences that have contributed to the authors' formation, they are highly diverse, as the scholars represented in the volume are not a unified group; therefore, among their sources of intellectual inspiration are Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Erving Goffman, Jürgen Habermas, Benedict Anderson, Edward Said, Mikhail Bakhtin, James C. Scott, Norbert Elias, Janos Kornai, Katherine Verdery, Vera Dunham, Katerina Clark, Boris Groys, Thomas Lahusen or Vladimir Paperny.

Revisionism and the new historians

One of the main ideas of the 1970s revisionism in the study of Stalinism was that Soviet society was something more than just a passive object of the regime's manipulation, as theories of totalitarianism were suggesting. This raised questions about the existence and the nature of popular support for the regime, as well as the so-called "initiative from below" that the society could have been able to generate. Other revisionist concerns pointed out to upward mobility from the working class as a means of elite formation and source of legitimacy. A generally revisionist-accepted idea was that Stalinism was a form of statism taken to extreme, in which the regime "acquired a social base it did not want and did not immediately recognize: the bureaucracy." Compared to this point of view, Stephen Kotkin proposed, in his 1995 *Magnetic Mountain*, the idea that, far from being a post-revolutionary phenomenon, Stalinism was the true revolution, as it had radically created new and durable political, economic, social, and cultural structures that were to last for half a century.

This is an idea generally accepted by all the scholars whose works are gathered in this volume. And, although it differs from the revisionists, the new generation of historians does have a lot in common with them, too.

Content and approaches

The twelve articles/chapters of the book are grouped thematically into five delimitary parts: *Social identities, Private and public practices, Consumption and*

civilization, Varieties of terror, Nationality as a status.

But which are the new approaches presented in this volume?

First, it is Sheila Fitzpatrick's deconstructionist approach to class, which shows that class identities are being seen as things chosen and manipulated by individuals rather than produced by socioeconomic circumstances.

Then, there is the approach to nationality and ethnicity. If the general public concluded that the events of 1991 demonstrated the unappeasable strength of nationalisms that the Soviet Union had been unable to crush, scholars like Yuri Slezkine and Terry Martin have been finding almost the opposite: namely, that the Soviet regime not only fostered national identities but in many cases actually created them.

Therefore, the work in this volume challenges many received truths and assumptions about Soviet history. "Class" - including the "dictator class" of the revolution, the proletariat - becomes a problematic rather than a transparent category (in Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Ascribing class: the construction of social identity in Soviet Russia*), though we see that Russians had their own spontaneous form of "class consciousness" in the us/them dichotomy (Sarah Davies's "*Us against them*": *social identity in Soviet Russia, 1934-41*).

Nationality assumes a new centrality in Soviet state-building and the myth of the Communist leaders as suppressors of ethnic/national particularism dissolves (Yuri Slezkine's *Soviet Union as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism*; Terry Martin's *Modernization or neo-traditionalism? Ascribed nationality and Soviet primordialism*). Consumer goods turn out to have been vitally important because of their scarcity, and a spirit of consumerism turns out to have been actually encouraged by the Stalinist regime (in Julie Hessler's *Cultured trade: the Stalinist turn towards consumerism*). The regime has marked paternalist features (Lewis Siegelbaum's "*Dear comrade, you ask what we need*": *socialist paternalism and Soviet rural "notables" in the mid-1930s*) and sees itself as engaged in a "civilizing mission" *vis-a-vis* "backward" ethnic groups, peasants and women, as well as a mission to instill "culturedness" in the whole population (Hessler, Slezkine, as well as Vadim Volkov, *The concept of "kul'turnost"*: *notes on the Stalinist civilizing process*). Soviet citizens are participants in, rather than victims of, Stalinism, devoting much energy to cultivating a Soviet mentalité and suppressing the non- or anti-Soviet elements in their souls (Jochen Hellbeck, *Fashioning the Stalinist soul: the diary of Stepan Podlubnyi, 1931-9*); but that participation is likely to be expressed in surprising forms, such as the "disinterested denunciation" discussed by Vladimir Kozlov (*Denunciation and its functions in Soviet governance: from the archive of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1944-53*). Citizens learn rituals and practices from the Communist Party but then use them for private ends (Alexei Kojevnikov, *Games of Stalinist democracy: ideological discussions in Soviet Sciences 1947-1952*).

Uncertainty about identity and fear of being unmasked as "socially alien" produce passionate commitment to the regime's values, as well as resentful alienation, on the part of "former" people (Hellbeck, Fitzpatrick) - and

the reality behind that fear is demonstrated by the fate of social marginals who fell into the related, though distinct, category of "socially harmful" (Hagenlof).

The most controversial of all topics in the history of the Stalin period, terror and the Great Purges, is illuminated by two innovative contributions included in this volume. James Harris shows how the imperatives of meeting production targets of the Five-Year Plans led regional party and economic leaders into self-protective practices that involved a systematic deception of the Center that was interpreted during the Great Purges as "conspiracy." (*The purging of local cliques in the Urals region, 1936-7*). Paul Hagenlof ("*Socially harmful elements*" and *the Great Terror*) distinguishes a strand in the process of terror in 1937 that was essentially unknown until publication in the early 1990s of secret Politburo directives, namely the mass arrests of marginals that constituted the climax of a decade-long effort to remove from the society lower-class misfits like beggars, itinerants, prostitutes, and expropriated peasants.

Conclusions

The new approaches in the study of Stalinism, as gathered in this volume, show us a different, more complex landscape of this period. Beyond the traditional-revisionist debates of the 1970s and 1980s, these new contributions, subscribing to new paradigms of interpretation, as well as being based on recently opened archives, are undoubtedly enriching the chapters of the history of the Soviet Union.

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