

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After a period of dramatic narrowing of history studies in a sense provided by national landmarks, in the early 1960s, historians are allowed gradual freedom to return to Western models. As Bogdan Cristian Iacob argues, the possibility of recognition and reward in the historiographical "front" was a relevant factor of mobilization in historiographical production. Another element was the training internships both in the USSR and especially in the West¹.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bogdan Iacob identifies several levels that describe the publication of the manuscript in a Romanian edition. First of all, he mentions the so-called public dimension updating the Russophobia of the Romanians, then a form of political leadership expression that used sources with ideological “weight” to justify their orientation of national origin. From a historiographical standpoint, the action must have been understood as the official end of the Soviet influence on historical writing³.

Why Andrei Oțetea?

This approach is based mainly on the involvement of the historian Andrei Oțetea in the project of editing the manuscripts. The analysis is relevant because it reveals the “backstage” of the plan and changes the viewpoint to an episode that fuelled the dissensions against the Soviets. We also try to focus on the evolution of the relations between Oțetea and the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, which managed the “Marx-Engels” Archives, where the manuscripts had been discovered. More precisely, we set out to follow the pace of the negotiations between the Romanian and the Dutch side, the emerging humps on the way, and the forms of reaction to the interest produced by the publication of the book⁴.

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

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

The reasons provided by Pavel Țugui – the head of the Science and Culture Section of the RWP, at the request of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej – referred to the fact that Andrei Oțetea was the director of the History Institute of the RPR Academy in Bucharest, that he was one of the main specialists involved in the elaboration of *Tratatul de Istoria României*. He was mainly interested in the Modern History of Romanians and in Universal History, synchronized with the contents of the document signed by Karl Marx⁵.

In December 1959, the issue was presented to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej by Miron Constantinescu, Paul Niculescu-Mizil, and Pavel Țugui. As such, it was decided that Andrei Oțetea would be sent to Amsterdam to start the negotiations on exploiting the sources referring to Romanians' past⁶. The notification made to Gheorghiu-Dej regarding the existence of valuable documents in the Netherlands made him take a special interest in them for a possible publication, but he asked for caution at the same time. One of the essential conditions was the involvement of professional specialists without important political functions, but with scientific prestige⁷. Moreover, the manuscript editing project would be carried out with caution, because no Romanian political leader would participate directly⁸.

Pavel Țugui's notes suggest that – following his discussions with Andrei Oțetea, after his return from Amsterdam – he found out about a previous attempt by Polish historian Stanislaw Schwann, who had discovered the documents in 1957, to inform the Romanian historians about their existence. Probably, Oțetea had obtained such information only following the negotiations with the Institute of Amsterdam. According to him, there was no reaction from the RPR Academy, where Mihail Roller was still very influential⁹. The Romanian-Polish historiographical relations had begun to develop only in the late 1950s, based on the cultural agreement similar to the one established with other popular democracies. Plans were made for a joint project titled *Lucrări comune privind editarea tratatelor polono-române din Evul Mediu până azi*¹⁰.

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

⁶ Bogdan Cristian Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, p. 248.

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

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

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

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

In consequence, the first reaction after Schwann's notification came from the management of the Party's History Institute in the spring of 1958. Director Ion Popescu-Puțuri decided to ask the Dutch to provide the microfilmed manuscripts, but he received a clear refusal from the director of the Institute in Amsterdam, A.J. C. Rüter. The pretext of the Dutch intellectual was justified by the existence of another project where the documents were to be published under the aegis of the institution. It seems that – following Schwann's findings regarding the origins of Marx's writings, as mere reading notes from the work of French historian Élias Regnault¹¹ – Rüter lost interest in revealing them to the public. The efforts of the Polish historian to exploit the sources about the Romanians shifted toward the political leadership in Bucharest, to obtain the necessary funds for potential researches in the Netherlands. In Rüter's correspondence with Schwann, the Dutch intellectual was assured that Romanian communists were totally open to a future publication of the manuscripts by the institute. The content was considered of the highest interest in Romania. On the other hand, the Dutch's reply was poignant. Schwann was advised to abandon any thoughts of exploiting the manuscripts about Romanians and to use only those with strict reference to Poland¹².

From Schwann's correspondence with Rüter, Wim P. van Meurs outlines in his researches several premises that were the basis for a direct dialogue between the Romanian political leadership and that of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Although he failed to obtain Marx's text, Schwann came to a consensus with the political leaders of the Romanian Propaganda Directorate, whereby Oțetea was to assume the role of a specialist interested in researching the manuscripts under the management of the Dutch institute. The new strategy thus proved the decisive role of the Polish historian in informing the Romanian leaders¹³.

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

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

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

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 240-241.

with the Party History Institute¹⁴. However, the prudence of the Romanian communists persisted, as long as the Polish historian received the main mission of improving the relations with the Dutch institution. He was charged with sending a letter to the Institute asking for the consent to publish the discovered texts. Oțetea would only have a secondary role. The Romanian historian would deal with the exchange of photocopies: "should the Institute in Amsterdam request a collaboration with Prof. Schwann to get the material ready for editing, Comrade Acad. Oțetea would accept and would grant at the same time Prof. Schwann the copyrights"¹⁵.

A syncopated Romanian-Dutch collaboration

In the context of the volume's publication, Andrei Oțetea prepared an informative note, titled *The History of "Notes about Romanians"*, describing the whole project carried out for four years, between 1960 and 1964, including its regression phases. The documents were discovered by Schwann while studying the "Marx-Engels" Archives at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Initially, his plans were to track down sources regarding Marx's relations with Poland, but upon finding the manuscripts about the Romanian Principalities, he began the process of decryption. Between February and March 1960, Oțetea received approval from the Propaganda Department of RWP to travel to Amsterdam and to meet Schwann. However, the main purpose was to conclude an agreement with the director of the Institute, Professor A.J.C. Rüter. The first impression after meeting the Institute's head was not among the most promising, with Oțetea stating that Rüter's attitude was full of suspicion concerning the possibility of exploiting the documents. An authorization to view the manuscripts was obtained, but the Romanians did not benefit from copies thereof. Finally, the Romanian historian mentioned a "tacit assent of the staff" suggesting the possibility of revising the text transcribed by Schwann¹⁶.

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

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

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

¹⁶ BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Informative note.

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

Shortly after, Rüter totally changed his attitude towards the Romanian historian. At the last meeting following his return to Romania, on March 14, 1960, he launched a personal proposal – not on behalf of the institution – that implied the possibility of providing photocopies of Marx’s texts. Nonetheless, an exchange of documents was necessary. The Romanian side had to provide photocopies of letters belonging to well-known personalities who were part of the international communist movement, maybe even the correspondence between the Romanian and foreign socialists. The publication of the manuscripts or their conveyance to other socialist states was forbidden; the interdiction referred mainly to the USSR given that in that period, the Institute was in negotiations with other institutions in Moscow for an exchange of photocopies¹⁸.

Should the discussions evolve in a convenient direction, a critical edition of the manuscript was planned, to which would be added the articles published in *New York Daily Tribune* about the Romanians, as well as letters from Marx and Engels on the same issue. Oțetea claimed that Rüter was the first person who insisted that the Romanian historian publish the volume as the main person in charge to the detriment of the Polish historian. The main justification was that the members of the Institute could not have finalised such a volume, since their Romanian language skills were not sufficient to write the introduction and critical notes. The leaders of the Institute in Amsterdam proposed for the volume to be published in the collections coordinated by the specialists of the institution, the collation of the original manuscripts to be carried out by members of the Amsterdam establishment; the editor Andrei Oțetea would benefit from all possible support during the research. However, the main condition was for the edition to be “strictly scientific”. It was not desirable for the project to dive into in the sphere of polemics and “political arguments”. The decision-making committee comprised only of specialists and members with no “scientific socialism” training, but “sensitive to the general atmosphere”. And any attempt to use the introduction and notes as a vehicle for transmitting messages “incompatible with their beliefs” entailed an immediate cease of the collaboration¹⁹.

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

¹⁸ BJ Astra, “Andrei Oțetea” Collection. Informative note.

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

transmitted to other countries, too. Following these conditions imposed by the Dutch, the problem was presented to the Propaganda Department of the RWP, which expressed its full consent, especially concerning the "exclusive rights of the Amsterdam Institute" on the text²⁰.

The three weeks spent by Oțetea in Amsterdam were dedicated to the collation of the three texts discovered by Schwann, which he had transcribed incompletely and with numerous errors. The manuscripts contained texts that were difficult to decipher, not only because of the "very small and clumped" writing. The notes written by Marx were a mixture of words from different languages such as German, English, and French. For these reasons, Oțetea argued that "a good editor of Marx must master the three languages". The group of Romanian historians did not meet these conditions, so dictionaries were used to understand the meaning of certain words and the connotation of certain sentences²¹. In addition, Schwann had identified other texts, too. One was titled *Russia, Moldavia and Wallachia*. Another one was an analysis of the *Organic Regulation* and the draft of a letter from Friedrich Engels to Ion Nădejde²².

One month after the negotiations between the Institute of History in Bucharest and the Presidium of the RPR Academy were completed, Oțetea sent 10 photocopies of letters written by Engels Lenin and Kautsky²³. In exchange, Rüter was supposed to send full-sized photocopies of Marx's texts. At that time, the Dutch director argued that the management of his institution had nothing with Schwann's name being featured alongside Oțetea's. The next step consisted in the collation of the texts. The activity was carried out within the Institute by Cornelia Bodea and Gheorghe Zane. Throughout the publication process, Andrei Oțetea and A.J.C. Rüter maintained the correspondence, the Romanian historian were even invited in December 1960 to the 25th anniversary of the Amsterdam Institute²⁴. The visit to the Netherlands would no longer occur. Gradually, the Dutch's insistence on researching the documents became intense again. Oțetea claimed that "overnight" his Western collaborators acquired a great deal of knowledge in deciphering Marx's writings²⁵.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*.

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

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

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

About the research stage, Keith Hitchins recalls an episode from 1962, when Oțetea showed him the typed pages of manuscripts. For the English pages, the American historian offered him – at that time – a series of suggestions necessary to transliterate and interpret certain passages²⁶. The first public presentation of some sections of the manuscript was made by Oțetea, on June 8, 1961, at the Romanian History Museum, during a session of the Society of Historical and Philological Sciences²⁷. The edition containing the manuscript was prepared only for the internal circuit of RWP, because the relevance of the information did not benefit from a favourable political situation, too. At that point, the Romanian political leadership was still on a pro-Soviet line, and potential disputes focusing on historical territorial disputes could have destabilized the country's foreign position²⁸. However, Oțetea had had previous presentations at the Institute of History in Bucharest. An example is the paper presented in the context of the centenary marking the establishment of the first diplomatic representation of the United Principalities. The topic drew attention, discretely, to issues related to the support of the Romanian national cause by foreign intellectuals. Oțetea invoked both Regnault and Marx through his texts within the *New York Daily Tribune*, throughout the years preceding the Union of the Principalities²⁹.

Oțetea referred expressly to Marx's interest in Regnault's book on the Romanian Principalities. It was necessary to explain clearly the reasons leading the French historian to write a book about the contemporary events. The available sources were also relevant, especially those from Romanian intellectuals and politicians such as Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Nicolae Bălcescu, and Ion Ghica, the political essence of the manuscript was the vision proposed by Regnault, who encouraged the principle of nationality in the area of south-eastern Europe, to refrain the Tsarist imperialism. Another stake was the delimitation of Marx's interest, which required a clarification of the interpretation from the angle of historical materialism. The conclusions drawn by Marx after reading from Regnault were relevant for the Romanian historian. One of the examples was the characterisation of the Organic Regulation, seen as a "clique code". Although Kisseleff has promulgated it, it represented the expression of a diktat of the Romanian boyars³⁰.

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

²⁷ Bogdan Cristian Iacob, *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, p. 255.

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

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

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

Regarding the "Marx-Engels" Archive of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, we have identified in Andrei Oțetea's archives some notes related to the past of the institution. To prevent confiscation by the new national socialist leadership, in 1934, the archive was evacuated from Germany to Copenhagen, where it remained until 1937, when it was relocated to Amsterdam, immediately after the establishment of the International Institute of Social History, specially created, it seems, for organising this archive. The main scientific concerns included the publication of this archive. In the 1960s, only 30% of the documents remained unpublished, including the manuscripts on Romanians³¹.

The institute founded in 1935 contained many of the private archives of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as well as numerous documents relating to the activities of the Second Communist International. Between 1935 and 1940, the institution was interested in saving documents from all over Europe, especially due to the ascension of political dictatorships. The most important archive obtained was the one that included the manuscripts of Marx and Engels. The activity was discontinued by the Nazi occupation in the summer of 1940³², and most of the documents were sent to Germany. These were only recovered in 1944, with significant support from the Allied armies, but those remained in the Soviet sphere of influence were returned after much effort or only partially recovered³³.

The material existence of the Amsterdam Institute proved to be problematic in the first post-war decade, because the resources were usually internal (from the University of Amsterdam and local authorities). The involvement of the Ford Foundation represented an exception³⁴. The Romanian efforts to intensify the cultural exchanges with the Polish People's Republic also involved the interest in getting an insight into the relations of this socialist state with the Western countries.

³¹ BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection.

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

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

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

In 1958, about 3,000 Poles crossed the border, either for academic purposes or for exchange of experience. More than half opted for capitalist countries. For them, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundation Scholarships were the most advantageous way³⁵.

Regarding the articles published by Marx and Engels in *New York Daily Tribune*, between 1852-1862, director Rüter agreed that Oțetea should get them in microfilms. However, later, W. Blumenberg – custodian of the *Marx-Engels* Archive and the one who had brought the archive to Germany after Hitler came to power – claimed that the microfilms had been sent to the United States for another order, which made research impossible³⁶.

The first article published in *New York Daily Tribune* was dated in London (March 22, 1853) and it was published on April 7, 1853, titled *The Nationalities of Turkey*. Marx stopped in 1860 with texts referring to Romanians. Of the entire series of articles submitted, many were not published or were censored, especially given that Marx and Engels had launched a campaign against tsarist Pan-Slavism. The texts were apparently rejected due to the intervention of the imperial diplomatic envoys to the United States. However, the published articles have essentially contributed to the identification of unknown manuscripts that referred to the topic of Romanians mid-19th century³⁷.

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

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

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

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

manuscripts elements that described the Ottoman and Austrian interests in the Romanian Principalities. The French text has 19 pages and it is signed by Oțetea and Schwann³⁸.

Oțetea's presence at events with international historiographical importance in the first part of the 1960s in capitalist states confirmed his close relationship with the communist regime. The personal documents of the historian contain a file titled: *Marx et les Roumains*³⁹. He supported the special interest of the other socialist states, as well as well-known Western Marxists, precisely to propose in an initial phase an edition "of international circulation in French". The volume would include an "already verified" the preface and Marx's text, with all its notes and its inconsistencies. To reinforce his proposal in those "informative notes", the historian also invoked Alexandru Graur, a true philologist in close relation with the party structure, who had already agreed with his plan and who even encouraged "a mass edition". In exchange, the second phase was dedicated to the publication of a Romanian edition⁴⁰. The edited text was verified by Director Rüter, but at the insistence of the Dutch intellectual, Schwann's contribution was not highlighted. Instead, Oțetea admitted that this version of the text would be a disappointment for Schwann. However, observing the conditions imposed by Rüter was a priority⁴¹.

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

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

³⁹ BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection. Karl Marx et les Roumains.

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

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

existence of the documents. The merits of discovering the manuscripts could not belong to a historian from a communist state within the Soviet sphere of influence. It seems that the main pretext was related to the distrust of the Dutch Institute in the Marxist knowledge of the Polish historian, but also to his faulty transcription of the manuscripts. The Institute requested 40 volumes free of charge⁴². Regarding the answer from the Netherlands, Oțetea claimed that he was authorised to answer and that he accepted the conditions imposed by the former. Moreover, on the occasion of a January 1963 visit, the historian had already provided a text to Rüter to avoid any misunderstandings. At that time, the party leadership agreed to the version of an internal edition, but the request of 40 volumes would have cancelled this plan. Firstly, Oțetea's interest were to maintain good relations with the Dutch Institute and mostly to meet the conditions imposed by Rüter⁴³. The expenses required to produce the microfilms and photocopies were incurred by the Romanian authorities, upon a request made by the historian for 1,600 florins (470 US dollars)⁴⁴.

A relevant aspect is worth mentioning throughout all these events. Romanian-Dutch relations were rather poor, which made the collaboration process more difficult⁴⁵. As such, the publication of Karl Marx's manuscripts on Romanians was not based on a Romanian-Dutch cultural agreement.

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

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

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

⁴³ BJ Astra, "Andrei Oțetea" Collection.

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

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

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

were addressed to the Dutch director to spend his holidays in Romania. However, the moment did not materialise⁴⁷. There were New Year wishes or repeated invitations for a possible return to Amsterdam, exchange of views on manuscripts, and other issues related to scientific interests⁴⁸.

After Rüter's conditions were accepted by the Romanian side, following discussions at the level of the RPR Academy management⁴⁹, Oțetea returned to Amsterdam in January 1963, to collate the original text. At the same time, he presented the revised preface to Rüter, and he gave his consent for the publication. He claimed that the French edition was ready for print, and that in a few days he would also present the Romanian one⁵⁰.

The contacts between the two states in the plans to facilitate access to foreign archives about Romanians have benefitted from constantly improving relations at the level of diplomatic representation. However, the political leadership carefully analysed the improvement of Soviet relations with Dutch officials⁵¹. For the year 1964, visits of Romanian specialists were planned to carry out scientific activities, along with cultural exchanges, seen as first steps in better political relations⁵². Within the period dedicated to the negotiations between the two parties, the involvement of the communist regime proved to be as obvious as possible, as highlighted by the correspondence between Rüter and Oțetea. The Romanian academician mentioned Aurel Gheorghe, the diplomatic envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In many cases, he was interested in finding out mainly the divergent aspects mentioned in the preface of the volume, suggesting the interest of the political leadership regarding the controversies generated by Marx's writings⁵³.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Western echoes

The Romanians’ the intention to become estranged from Moscow became a topic of interest for both the capitalist world and in the dissensions between the Soviets and the Chinese. Leaders such as Mao Zedong invoked the territorial disputes of the Romanian or Polish past to justify and fuel the complicated political relations of the present. Undoubtedly, the question of Bessarabia played a special role in articulating the intervention of the Romanian communists. Moreover, Karl Marx’s manuscript became a basic landmark, especially for interpretations that suggested that Andrei Oțetea had been sent with a precise purpose to the archives of Amsterdam, namely, to dig up old writings on the problem of Bessarabia and to talk about the abduction of 1812⁵⁴. The fact that the sources of 1915-1916 could be identified in the same archives, where the socialist Christian Racovski, one of the founders of the Communist Party in Romania, referred to the same accusations, could not benefit from a similar political importance. The publication of the manuscript did not outline a clear consequence in the relations with the Soviets, but what mattered was that a gesture with multiple political and historiographical valences was assumed⁵⁵.

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

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

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

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

During the editing of the manuscripts, Andrei Oțetea expressed the hope that the instrumentalization of Marx's thought – to issue autonomous claims in the Soviet sphere of influence – would improve the conditions for the activity of Romanian historians. This meant a greater freedom in the direction of access to sources and a relaxation of ideological intrusion. At the same time, Oțetea became the main voice of the Romanian historiography, which exploited the importance of analysing a problem such as Marx's interest, the political evolution of the Romanian Principalities. In April 1965, the historian arrived at the Dutch Institute to hand over to Rüter 40 volumes. The historian had requested since November 1964 to go directly to Amsterdam to deliver the volumes, according to the contract concluded with the International Institute of Social History, immediately after a visit to Paris⁵⁷. On this occasion, he explained the reasons for giving up on a French version, which had been in the initial plans. The historian argued that Marx's manuscripts were, first and foremost, important for the analysis of capital events from the Romanians' past. He insisted on the risk of receiving political implications: "that is why we preferred to publish an edition in the Romanian language, limited to a restricted circle of intellectuals". Rüter had told him about the immediate reactions of the Western press, who assaulted him on interviews regarding the collaboration with the Romanian historians. The relatively easy access of Oțetea to the documents within the institute had to be as well justified, because it was "natural" to transcribe Marx's texts. The Romanian historian stated about Rüter that "he agreed to continue our relations on the same basis of strict objectivity and, if he could not receive the invitation of the Romanian Academy to spend the holiday with us, it is precisely not to say that he had favoured us and that we had paid him with a trip to Romania"⁵⁸. The Dutch director died shortly after, in 1965, as shown by the Institute's response to the condolence message sent by Oțetea⁵⁹.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the flurry produced by the publication of the volume, the enthusiastic reactions were not delayed. On January 1965, Andrei Oțetea wrote to Vasile Dinu, the head of the Science and Art Section of the RWP, about the visit of Gherman Pîntea to the Institute of History. He was one of the Bessarabian leaders during the interwar period. The former mayor of Kishinev and Odessa intended to donate the original documents regarding the events in which he was involved, from February 1917 until the act of unification on March 27, 1918. As an example, he held the document of Revolutionary Committee foundation which provided for the proclamation of the Moldavian Republic and elections in the country's Council⁶¹.

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

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

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

volume would have run out "in one hour", as Huf claimed. In the entire picture, there was no intention to bring up the issue of Bessarabia⁶².

The Consequences of a Political Manifesto

The manner in which the Romanians chose to invoke the past Russian-Romanian relations provoked outrage from the new Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, who challenged the authenticity of the ideas exposed in the manuscript. Undoubtedly, the opening of the discussions between the two delegations suggested the attention that the specialists in Moscow paid to the volume published under the auspices of the Romanian Academy, as long as there was talk about "the true Marx" and "Marx resulting from the volume". The Soviet position came rather on the basis of the interest expressed by the Western press, and less on a potential instrumentalization of the past by the Romanians, to issue any territorial claims⁶³. Emil Bodnăraș, a Romanian communist leader close to the political circles in Moscow, confirmed the views circulating among Soviet teachers about a "nationalist current" among the political and intellectual elite in Bucharest, through territorial claims on Bessarabia⁶⁴.

The main political issue behind the volume was to exploit any Russophobe position of Marx in such a way that Élias Regnault's original vision would become secondary. The intentions can be noticed in the volume's preface, but the only form of intervention proved to be the analysis of the sources about Romanians from a Marxist-Leninist angle. In addition, the difficulty of determining whether Marx supported the Romanian national cause was an obvious one. The mere assertion that the author of the manuscript emphasized anti-Russian tendencies regarding imperialist policy in the first half of the 19th century could not indicate an approving position towards the formation of a Romanian national state⁶⁵.

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

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

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

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

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

of the Transylvanian issue, a fact also noticed by the delay in publishing the manuscripts. In early 1964, the volume was a form of immediate reaction to possible pressures coming from Budapest and encouraged by the Soviets. In contrast, Marx's notes outlined in November 1964 the offensive side, too, by which the rights of Romanians over Bessarabia were claimed. The use of sources discovered by the Polish historian Stanislaw Schwann as a political instrument proved to be dependent on the Soviet positions towards the dissident attitudes of the Romanian communists⁶⁶. From a relatively similar perspective, Dennis Deletant insists especially on the internal impact caused by the volume on extracts from Marx's manuscript. The existence of a "fertile ground of anti-Russian feelings" could only encourage the popularity of the regime led by Gheorghiu-Dej. The controversial position on the Bessarabian question after the moment of 1812 was the providential element to formulate a discourse with a deep political subtraction in the volume's introduction⁶⁷.

The long interval of about six-seven years, during which efforts were made to publish the documents discovered in Amsterdam, was explained by Andrei Oțetea through the involvement of some party members who prevented, apparently, the normal evolution of the editing project. Another explanation provided by Paul Niculescu-Mizil resided in the analysis of the foreign context of the first half of the 1960s, while internally the main factor that led to the increased interest in bringing to light the manuscript was the retreat of Soviet advisors and military troops from Romania⁶⁸. The moment became a favourable one, as the Romanian side was able to use the authority of the "fathers of socialism" to invoke the Russian occupation of the Romanian territories.

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

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

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

⁶⁸ Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită*, p. 268.

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

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

