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The Evolution of Gender Relations in Romania after the Great War

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Abstract: The Evolution of Gender Relations in Romania after the Great War.

The Romanian national state was constituted shortly after the end of the Great War, in December 1918, when provinces that had previously been under foreign rule – Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania – joined the Old Kingdom of Romania. The paper focuses on the changes that occurred in the role of Transylvanian women within the new national state after 1918. I analyse their political grievances and how they acted to obtain rights by starting from the questions: Were women considered second-class citizens? How were they perceived and how did they perceive themselves? My analysis focuses on aspects such as their level of education, given that many of them had only primary school education, their career outside home, most often as domestic servants, their political rights, especially the right to vote given that the 1918 Union Declaration of Alba Iulia proclaimed universal suffrage which was later conspicuously absent from the 1923 Constitution. The article also discusses to what degree we can speak of the existence of women leaders in this period, marriage age, and the changing vision on motherhood previously seen as an obstacle to professional success. A significant part will be devoted to the arguments that women used to obtain the rights they demanded. As for sources, I mainly use newspapers in my analysis, but also legislation and political literature from the period. The article concludes that despite significant steps forward, the striking and persisting differences between women from the rural and urban areas prevented the attainment of West-European emancipation levels. The paper reveals many common features with the newly-formed nation states that took a similar path. Therefore, the paper is a historical and a comparative analysis of feminism as an important factor for gender relation changes after the Great War.

Keywords: women, war, gender, Transylvania, Romania, rights

Rezumat: Evoluția relațiilor de gen în România după primul război mondial.

Statul român s-a constituit la sfârșitul primului război mondial, în decembrie 1918, când provinciile aflate anterior sub dominație străină - Basarabia, Bucovina și Transilvania - s-au alăturat Vechiului Regat al României. Articolul de față se focalizează pe schimbările care au loc în ceea ce privește rolul femeii în cadrul noului stat, după 1918. Voi analiza nemulțumirile lor politice și modul în care au

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acționat pentru a obține drepturi pornind de la întrebările: au fost considerate femeile cetățeni de rang doi? Cum au fost percepute și cum s-au autoperceput? Analiza se concentrează pe aspecte ca: nivelul de educație, dat fiind faptul că multe dintre ele aveau doar școala primară, cariera lor, cel mai adesea ca servitoare, drepturile lor politice în special dreptul de vot, având în vedere faptul că *Declarația de la Alba Iulia* proclama sufragiul universal care a fost apoi cu desăvârșire absent din *Constituția* adoptată la 1923. Articolul discută, de asemenea, în ce măsură putem vorbi despre existența unor femei-lider în această perioadă, vârsta la căsătorie și schimbarea viziunii asupra maternității, văzută anterior ca o piedică în calea succesului profesional. O parte semnificativă va fi dedicată argumentelor utilizate de femei pentru a obține drepturile solicitate. În ceea ce privește sursele, voi utiliza presa și, de asemenea, legislația și literatura politică a perioadei. Articolul concluzionează că, în pofida unor progrese semnificative, diferențele izbitoare și persistente dintre femeile din zonele rurale și cele urbane au împiedicat atingerea nivelurilor de emancipare vest-europene. Lucrarea relevă trăsături comune cu statele națiunilor nou formate, care au avut un parcurs similar. Prin urmare, lucrarea este o analiză istorică și comparativă a feminismului ca un factor important pentru schimbarea relațiilor de gen după primul război.

Cuvinte-cheie: femei, război, Transilvania, România, drepturi

The Great War and the premises of change in gender roles

The Great War reshaped the international political order, one of its main consequences being the disappearance of multinational empires and the establishment of national states. As a result, Romania, a case as many other, became a national state in accordance with the peoples' right to self-determination. The establishment of Greater Romania through the addition of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Old Romanian Kingdom occurred in 1918 in the favourable context of the end of the Great War. This context witnessed the emergence of a new concept of democratic state, which also opened the path for a reshaping of gender roles by placing women on a more equal footing with men from a legal, economic, social and cultural standpoint.¹

The impact of the Great War was also visible at the level of mentalities, since it prompted changes in the traditional way of thinking. Especially the issue of women's status had faced much resistance before de war, but one could finally sense some optimism: *"This issue, which faced much resistance in the past, (...) still makes headway because of the Great War that revolutionized many*

¹ Calypso Corneliu Botez, "Problema feminismului. O sistematizare a elementelor ei" in *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială*, year II, no. 1-3, 1920, pp. 27-28.

people's way of thinking",² even if the road ahead was still long in the case of Romania.

The Great War provided women with the opportunity to demonstrate skills and abilities previously denied to them. They fully demonstrated their ability to successfully fulfil the tasks and responsibilities of men fighting on the front lines: "During the First World War women had fulfilled with success, tenacity and sacrifice the economic functions abandoned by the husbands serving at the front".³ Apart from supporting the war effort, they also took over household chores normally reserved for men. Furthermore, the war also offered women the opportunity to volunteer their services as nurses, doctors, ambulance drivers or cooks on the front line. In Romania, the case of Ecaterina Teodoroiu, who volunteered as a nurse, was promoted to Second Lieutenant and died in combat in August 1917, is well-known.⁴ Over the decades, she has slowly become a revered historical character with a special place in the pantheon of national heroes.⁵

Thus, in many cases the war led to a multiplication of women's tasks and presented them with numerous challenges that they had to face. By multiplying women's tasks and responsibilities, the war created an unprecedented situation: it increased their level of self-confidence, which in turn would have a great impact on the evolution of gender roles in society. Therefore, the war was an exceptional situation that created the premises for women to become more visible in the public sphere.

Apart from fulfilling various important roles in the war effort, many women – regardless of social class – shared the distress of watching their brothers, husbands, lovers or friends leave for the front and of knowing that they might never come back alive.⁶ Furthermore, they were a source of constant moral support to the men fighting at the front. One should also emphasize here the significant role that Transylvanian Romanian women played in the difficult context in which Romanians living in the province were conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian Army and thus forced to fight against Romanians from the Old Kingdom, which caused further psychological distress among them. A remarkable example in this respect is Liviu Rebreanu's novel, *Pădurea spânzuraților* (*Forest of the Hanged*), which is inspired from actual

²Hilda Beșa, "Despre drepturile femeii" in *Patria*, year II, no. 6, 1929, p. 1.

³Ioan Clopoțel, "Un început bun: dreptul de vot al femeilor" in *Patria*, year XI, no. 32, 1929, p. 1.

⁴Arina Avram, *Femei celebre din România. Mica enciclopedie*, vol. II (București: Allfa, 2005), pp. 110-111.

⁵See Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, ediția a II-a (București: Editura Humanitas, 2000), p. 310.

⁶Susan Grayzel, *Women at Home in a World at War*, <http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/women-at-home>, (last accessed 07.05. 2016).

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events. Undoubtedly, the vital role that Romanian women played on the home front, being aware of the psychological traumas their loved ones were experiencing on the front line, was impressive. Therefore, this role demanded recognition and reward.

The Great War was a catalyst for change and for the elimination of many stereotypes regarding women's participation in public life, but it had a different impact in various countries around the world.⁷ Even though in many European countries and in the United States women's suffrage was granted during or shortly after the war, in many others their full participation in the political life remained limited or only a distant goal.⁸ Romanian women's struggle for these rights was barely starting after the Great War. In general, we can identify two models of civic and political emancipation: the Anglo-Saxon / Nordic model and the Latin model, together with its derivatives. The first model is that of the woman who became emancipated from a civic and political standpoint during or shortly after the war. Conversely, the second model includes the states where the emancipation of women was late. This is also Romania's case.⁹ If we assess this process in the Central-East European context, we note that it occurred later in Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes compared to other states in the region, even some of those recently-established, where the emancipation of women was almost complete.¹⁰ Clearly, the Great War opened the path for a new stage in gender relations and accelerated the rhythm of changes¹¹, even though in certain states, including Romania, expectations proved too high.

As a result, in Romania the struggle of women for rights that we consider normal today was long and difficult due to the duplicity of politicians, who were willing to admit the need for equality only verbally, as well as to the extreme conservatism of Romanian society. It is noteworthy that, until the end of the nineteenth century, women did not have access to higher education in the Romanian-inhabited provinces. Thus, until 1920, women in Wallachia and Moldova did not have the right to become lawyers. Until 1932, married women in Romania did not enjoy property rights, could not enter into

⁷Birgitta Bader-Zaar, "Controversy: War-related Changes in Gender Relations: The Issue of Women's Citizenship" in *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, available online at: http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/controversy_war-related_changes_in_gender_relations_the_issue_of_womens_citizenship, (last accessed 2.11.2016).

⁸*Ibidem*.

⁹Ghizela Cosma, *Femeile și politica în România. Evoluția dreptului de vot în perioada interbelică* (Cluj Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2002), pp. 8-9.

¹⁰*Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹¹Veturia Manuilă, "Feminismul și familia" in *Buletin eugenic și biopolitic*, vol. II, January-February 1928, no. 1-2, p. 93.

a contract, could not turn to courts, nor could they act as tutors to their own children. Until 1946, Romanian women did not have citizenship, which meant that they did not have the right to vote in general elections without limitations, could not be elected to Parliament or take up any government position.

This article focuses on the movement of Transylvanian women in two different contexts, as part of Austria-Hungary and as part of the Romanian national state beginning from 1918, and discusses the changes that it went through especially after the Great War.

The case of Transylvania

In the case of Transylvania, a province that before the war was part of Austria-Hungary and after the war became part of the Romanian national state, we can talk of two different stages of the feminist movement and must stress a great paradox, namely that after the war, there was a noticeable regress regarding women's rights in spite of the above-mentioned overall progress made in this respect during the war. Having national education on their agenda and devoting much energy to the national cause, women in the province were the first to organize themselves, thus serving as a model for the entire Romanian area from this point of view.

In the first stage, namely before the Great War, especially throughout the Dualist era (1867-1918), Romanians living in the province, who represented the majority, were extremely displeased with their inferior political and social status, and steadily intensified their struggle for rights.¹² As for the Transylvanian Romanian feminist movement, it had its own distinct agenda during this period; therefore, only after 1918, namely after the establishment of the Romanian national state, can we speak of a relatively unified movement.

The prevailing unfavourable political circumstances conferred specific features to the Transylvanian Romanian feminist movement. Thus, its agenda was limited to demands regarding access to education. However, this issue was even more complex as it was also on the agenda of the Romanian national movement given that mother-tongue education was limited by the Hungarian legislation. Moreover, the predominant and traditional role reserved for Romanian women was that of raising and educating their children. At the time, this role appeared more important due to its national dimension as well. In this capacity as “mother of the nation”, the Romanian woman contributed to the consolidation of national consciousness and its cultural endurance in the

¹² See Luminița Ignat-Coman, *Imagine de sine la românii ardeleni în perioada dualistă* (Cluj Napoca: Editura Argonaut, 2009).

context of foreign rule. Women as mothers guaranteed the preservation of the mother tongue and of family traditions.

Thus, national education, whose goal was to shape and preserve Romanian identity, but which also contributed to the social advancement of women, was the main demand on the agenda of the Romanian feminist movement in Transylvania until the outbreak of the Great War.¹³ Demands for civic and political emancipation were marginal, almost non-existent, Romanian feminists being more focused on national issues. The national dimension of the feminist movement largely coincided with that of the national movement of Transylvanian Romanians in general.

A perfect illustration of Transylvanian Romanian women's devotion to the national cause are the statements they issued in support of the *Memorandum* – an important petition in which Romanians outlined their national demands, – and of the Romanian national leaders who were convicted as a result of this action.¹⁴ In addition, they created a “Political committee” in Braşov, whose main purpose was to inform western governments on the lack of rights of Transylvanian Romanians and on the intense Hungarization process initiated and conducted by the Hungarian authorities.¹⁵ Through their actions, Romanian women brought significant support to the national movement. It is paradoxical, however, that the demand for full participation in the political life was missing from their agenda, given that their political activity was so remarkable. Only after the Great War did it become evident that, although a number of Transylvanian women had supported women's suffrage privately, they nonetheless considered that it was inopportune to campaign for it publicly in the prevailing political circumstances.¹⁶

Transylvania was the first Romanian-inhabited province where women solidarity became publicly visible, where women organized themselves by founding the so-called Women's Societies (*Reuniuni de femei*). In this respect, the province served as model for the organization of feminists first in the other Romanian principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia) and later in the Romanian Kingdom. Their first public endeavours were philanthropic and charitable, and aimed poor children, especially girls who they wanted to help with their education in order to preserve their national and religious identity. The first known women's organization is *The Society of Romanian Women in*

¹³Simona Stiger, *Asociaționism și emancipare în Transilvania până la Primul Război Mondial* (Arad: Editura Fundația “Moise Nicoară”, 2001), p. 20.

¹⁴*Ibidem*, p. 176.

¹⁵Paraschiva Căncea, *Mișcarea pentru emanciparea femeii în România: 1848-1948*, (București: Editura Politică, 1976), p. 59.

¹⁶*Ibidem*, pp. 89-90.

Buda (*Societatea Femeilor Române din Buda*), established in 1815 with the aim of 'providing support for Orthodox schools in the capital of Hungary.'¹⁷ Better known was, however, *the Society of Romanian Women in Braşov* (*Reuniunea Femeilor Române din Braşov*) established in 1850, whose aim was initially philanthropic, namely to help the orphans of the 1848 Revolution. Later, the society also acquired an educational role, more exactly that of educating Transylvanian Romanian women: "We want to establish a ladies' association or society by following the example of other European ladies and with the aim of protecting orphan and poor girls, but our intention is to establish a school to provide better education of our girls, establishments to raise our girls in several Romanian-inhabited areas, regardless of religion".¹⁸ Due to the efforts of the president of this Society, Maria Secăreanu, between 1878 and 1886, the first boarding school for girls was established in Transylvania at a time when there was an urgent need for a school devoted to educating Romanian girls.¹⁹

After these initial successes, other women's societies were established in several important towns, such as Sibiu, Blaj, Deva, etc. According to the findings of a research on the organization of Romanian women in Transylvania, there were around 103 such organizations established between 1850 and 1914.²⁰ The analysis of their geographic distribution reveals that first they were established in urban areas and only much later, after 1900, in rural areas as well.²¹ The protagonists, namely those brave women who created these societies and demanded rights, were the wives and daughters of the leaders of the Romanian national movement. This attests to the movement's political finality and to the close connection between the feminist movement and the national one.²²

A crucial element that foreshadowed the movement's future evolution in Transylvania was the idea of unifying all women's societies operating in the Romanian-inhabited provinces that were part of Austria-Hungary. It was proposed by Maria Baiulescu, leader of feminists and president of the Society in Braşov, in 1911. The aim was that Romanian women should be able to challenge and deal with the Hungarian authorities as a unified force. Therefore, at the congress that took place in Braşov on 3-4 June 1913, they founded the *Union of Romanian Women in Hungary* (*Uniunea Femeilor Române*

¹⁷Aurel A. Mureşianu, "Cea dintîi însoţire femeiască a neamului nostru: «Societatea femeilor române din Buda» din anul 1815" in *Carpaţi*, year VI, no. 339, 1926.

¹⁸Stiger, *op. cit.*, p.39

¹⁹Căncea, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²⁰Stiger, *op. cit.*, p.84.

²¹*Ibidem*, p. 87.

²²*Ibidem*, p. 88.

din Ungaria)²³ which included 37 women's organizations²⁴ and marked the beginning of a new stage. The Union's programme focused on women's access to education and training. The second congress was held in 1914. It included more participants and reiterated their support for the initial programme.²⁵

During the Great War, the activities of Transylvanian women's societies were put on hold, but when the province united with the Old Kingdom of Romania in 1918, their pre-war efforts did not go unnoticed. Thus, Article III of the Declaration of Alba-Iulia stipulated: "*The complete implementation of a fair and democratic regime in every sphere of public life. Popular, direct, equal, secret, proportional ballot for both sexes aged 21 or over for representation in municipalities, counties and Parliament*".²⁶ This highly advanced legal provision virtually proclaimed women's full participation in public life. Unfortunately, despite considering it indispensable to a democratic state, Transylvanian Romanian leaders failed to impose it in post-war Romania.

In analysing this period, we can note that the feminist movement in Transylvania was still in the early stages. Although they were better organized than women in other provinces, they were much more involved in the national movement or various other charitable activities than in public campaigns to obtain political rights, such as the right to vote.

In the second stage, after the Great War, although things looked very promising for Romanian women, especially given the principles included in the *Declaration of Alba-Iulia* and that several successor states of Austria-Hungary, such as Czechoslovakia, granted women's suffrage, resistance to change proved too powerful due to the persistent social conservatism. Therefore, the initial unexpected promise to grant women's suffrage was broken.

While women in other states were granted the right to vote, in the period shortly after the war, the agenda of Romanian feminists was extended to include the idea of full political participation and equality with men. These completely reasonable demands only attested to and emphasized the prevailing social backwardness. Therefore, the establishment of the Romanian national state did not change women's status as second-rate citizens. The

²³Maria Baiulescu, *Corespondența* (ediție, note și index de Ruxandra Moașa Nazare) (București: Editura Ars Docendi, 2001), p. 8.

²⁴Stefania Mihăilescu, *Din istoria feminismului românesc: antologie de texte: (1838-1929)* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2002), p. 166.

²⁵Câncea, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁶Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Z. Ionescu, Eufrosina Popescu and Doina Smârcea, *Istoria României între anii 1918-1944. Culegere de documente* (București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1982), p. 26. *The Resolution* is also available online at: <http://www.cimec.ro/istorie/unire/alba.htm> (last accessed: 24. 10.2016).

realities of the new state, the insincerity of politicians (in public they were all for women's full participation in public life, while in practice they did nothing), the prevailing conservatism and prejudices towards women, to which one should also add the indecisiveness of feminists whose programme had not included this demand until after the war, were all contributing factors to the exclusion of women's suffrage from the legislation of the new Romanian state despite the solemn promise made in the *Declaration of Alba Iulia*.

However, a few aspects give scope and force to the post-war feminist movement in Romania (and Transylvania from now on): firstly, the establishment of suffragette societies and the publication of women's magazines that intensified their struggle for political rights due to their propaganda. One such example is the magazine *Acțiunea Feministă* (*The Feminist Action*) that was exclusively devoted to women and outlined a general programme for the Romanian feminist movement in this new stage: "Convinced of the righteousness of the feminist cause whose triumph was sealed into *The Act of the Perpetual Union of Transylvania with the Motherland*, our magazine aims to fight for the awakening of women's human and civic consciousness, for winning the right to vote and for equality in all administrative and legislative bodies, for equal legal rights with men so that they can work together intensely and fruitfully to forge the new Romania".²⁷

After the war, Romania witnessed the emergence of two types of discourse on the emancipation of women. The first was *moderate* and was promoted by the *Union of Romanian Women* (*Uniunea Femeilor Române*) which continued to represent the nucleus of the feminist movement in Transylvania and became an important voice at national level. The second was *radical* and was promoted by the *Association for the Civic and Political Emancipation of Romanian Women* (*Asociația pentru Emanciparea Civilă și Politică a Femeii Române*) founded in Iași in 1918, whose programme was constructed around the objective of complete and equal rights to women.²⁸ The numerous conferences organized by this association in various cities and its propaganda conducted through magazines, such as *Buletinul Asociației pentru emanciparea civilă și politică a femeii*, *Acțiunea Feministă* or the *Foaia Gospodinelor*, as well as its connections with similar movements from abroad contributed significantly to the intense promotion of the feminist cause²⁹ and made the association become the most radical in Romania.³⁰

²⁷*Acțiunea feministă*, year 1, no. 1, 1919, p. 1.

²⁸Căncea, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

²⁹Cosma, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21.

³⁰*Ibidem*, pp. 27-28.

The Union of Romanian Women quickly expanded after 1918 and, similarly to the Transylvanian Association, opened new branches in the big cities. In parallel, other very ambitious associations and societies were established across the country, such as the *National Council of Romanian Women* (*Consiliul Național al Femeilor Române*) which was notable due to its intention to become associated to the *International Council of Women* in London. However, the Council's attempt to become an umbrella organisation for all women's associations and societies in Romania was ultimately unsuccessful.³¹ Another important association within the Romanian feminist movement was the *League of Women's Rights and Duties* (*Liga Drepturilor și Datoriilor Femeii*) which was founded before the Great War in Bucharest and which actively campaigned for women's suffrage and for their participation in the political life of the country.³² Another major association, founded in the 1930s, was the *The National Association of Romanian Women* (*Gruparea națională a femeilor Române*) which recruited members from other associations and became very influential within the emancipation movement.³³ All these associations as well as other smaller ones spent much energy in the struggle for political rights and the elimination of gender discrimination in Romania.

Second-rate citizens: women as legally incompetent subjects and children

The situation of women in the newly-created national state appeared complicated due to the various traditions that the newly-joined provinces brought and the diversity of codes in force which to a greater or lesser degree emancipated women prior to the war, such as the 1811 Austrian Civil Code that remained in force in Transylvania and Bukovina until 1918 and Andronache Donici's Code (*Codul lui Andronache Donici*) and Justinian's Novels in Bessarabia. In these provinces the woman had more autonomy even if the concept of family was based around male authority.³⁴ In comparison, in the Old Kingdom, where prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza's Civil Code of 1865 was in force, things were not so advanced.³⁵ The difficulty arose from the fact that the adoption of a united legislation required referral to the most advanced legal provisions because, otherwise, a natural question arose, namely: "*Will women from the recently-joined provinces be declared incapable in order to have the same status as those in the Old Kingdom, thus maintaining a much too old*

³¹*Ibidem*, pp. 36-37.

³²*Ibidem*, p. 39.

³³Mihăilescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

³⁴Botez, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³⁵Ion Palade, *Codul Caragea reproduc după manuscrisul original românesc* (București: Editura Librăriei Ion Alcalay, 1907), p. 5.

tradition?"³⁶. Legal harmonization occurred precisely in that sense. As a result, after the Great War women in Romania came to be treated as second-class citizens, being put on the same level as the legally incapable subjects and the children.

Romanian women's struggle for participation in the country's political life started decades before the Great War. The issue was included in the agenda of Parliament in the Old Kingdom by Eliade Rădulescu during the debates on the 1866 Constitution, but remained unsettled. On 6 May 1917, the Chamber of Deputies debated a proposal for electoral reform and women's suffrage in local elections. The arguments in favour of the proposal focused around women's predilection for domestic activities, social assistance and childcare.³⁷ During the debate there were even more radical voices that demanded women's suffrage for the general elections as well. These opinions were voiced by prominent political figures, such as N. Lupu, Gr. Trancu-Iași, I. Th. Florescu, G. Diamandi and N. Iorga. Their appeal was accompanied by a petition signed by 200 women. A similar petition signed by prominent feminists was presented in the Senate. The pro-suffrage arguments voiced here were partly economic, such as women's contribution to the war effort, and social, such as their ability to assert themselves in the public sphere, in education, medicine, the administration, etc.³⁸ Ultimately, however, the issue remained unsettled this time as well. The new state's legislation discriminated against women, excluding them from the political life. A decree issued in 1918 increased the electorate, but with the notable exclusion of women.³⁹ Furthermore, the electoral legislation passed in 1918-1921 did not bring any change in this respect.⁴⁰

The debates on the draft of the *1923 Constitution* included the issue of women's suffrage against the backdrop of high expectations in this regard. However, the draft limited women's rights only to civil ones. In this context, three separate opinions voiced by as many groups emerged. The first supported the draft in its actual form which limited women's rights to civil ones exclusively, the second argued for political rights at least at local level, while the third argued against suffrage at any level.⁴¹ Anti-suffrage arguments consisted of claims that women's suffrage could jeopardize the family, that women were biologically and physically inferior to men (for instance, women

³⁶Botez, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

³⁷Câncea, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

³⁸*Ibidem*, p. 97.

³⁹Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁴⁰*Ibidem*, p. 44.

⁴¹Eufrosina Popescu, *Din istoria politică a României. Constituția din 1923* (București: Editura Politică, 1983), pp. 130-131.

could not be soldiers), that this demand was missing from the agenda of feminists, and that such a reform would generate massive political instability.

The failure of those who argued for women's suffrage is clearly reflected in *Article 6* of the 1923 Constitution: "*The present Constitution and the other laws pertaining to political rights are, apart from the status as Romanian citizen, the necessary conditions for exercising these rights. Special laws passed with a two-third majority will determine the conditions under which women can exercise political rights. Women's civil rights will be established based on the full equality between men and women.*"⁴² Despite the wave of protest from feminist organizations, Romanian women remained second-rate citizens following the adoption of the new Constitution, being placed at the same level with the incompetent and the children.

Two additional laws were passed against this backdrop of great expectation, namely *The Administrative Unification Act of 1925* and *The Electoral Act of 1926*. The first act contained provisions that enabled women's inclusion in county and communal councils, while the other did not bring any changes regarding women's suffrage.⁴³ Following these failures, the feminist movement further radicalised and vehemently demanded women's suffrage. In 1929 this was considered one of the "*most burning issues of the time*".⁴⁴ The main argument in favour of voting rights, even for few categories of women, if not for all, was that women successfully performed various jobs during the war, when men were fighting at the front. Other arguments referred to equal opportunities, equal education for women and men, but also to the situation abroad, where many gave voting rights to women.⁴⁵

Women's suffrage: an illusion in Romania?

The analysis of the Romanian legislation in the period that followed the Great War reveals numerous attempts to limit their political rights. However, beginning with 1929 certain steps were made in the right direction. Thus, *The Administrative Organisation Act (Legea pentru organizarea administrativă)* passed the same year stipulated for the first time women's right

⁴² "Constituțiune" in *Constituția din 1923 în dezbaterile contemporanilor* (București: Editura Humanitas, 1990), pp. 611-612. The 1923 Constitution is also available online at: http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?id=1517 (last accessed 2.11.2016).

⁴³ Cosma, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-51.

⁴⁴ "Dreptul de vot al femeilor" in *Patria*, year XI, no. 161, 1929, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 1-2.

to vote and to be elected in local elections.⁴⁶ Maria Baiulescu, one of the feminist movement leader wrote in this occasion: '*The Government's new Administrative Organisation Act achieves one of the aspirations for which Romanian women have fought as a united front, contributing to the elevation of their dignity by giving them voting rights and eligibility in townships and counties.*'⁴⁷ Nonetheless, due to the limitations imposed by the law, the impact of this piece of legislation was minimal. Thus, in order to be able to exercise this right, women had to fulfil certain criteria, namely to have secondary education, teacher or vocational training, to be a state, county or municipal civil servant, to be a war widow, to be decorated for wartime activities, to have been a member of entities with legal personality in the field of social demands, social security at the time of the law's enactment.⁴⁸ One should also note that, according to the law, voting was compulsory.⁴⁹

Even though in this context many women had open access to positions such as local councillor or mayor, discrimination regarding universal suffrage was maintained. Therefore, the demand for full political emancipation remained on the agenda of Romanian feminists who continued their campaign for it throughout the 1930s. In these years we can note the emergence of two emancipation strategies: one postulating that women should remain excluded from the political life until its radical reform, and another arguing for women's involvement in the activity of political parties as an exercise and as a possibility for them to become influential in decision-making. A side-effect of the aforementioned Act was precisely the creation of women's sections within the main political parties, thus settling the long debate on whether or not women should create their own party or join the existing ones.⁵⁰

Although the activity of feminists was intense throughout the 1930s and minor successes were obtained, only at the end of the decade were women granted much wider voting and political rights, but on certain conditions. Paradoxically, the introduction of this measure coincided with the establishment of an authoritarian regime and not with the consolidation of a democratic one. As a result, it was nothing more than an illusion as the direct

⁴⁶ See *The Administrative Organisation Act (Legea pentru organizarea administrativă)* accessible online <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/lege-nr-95-din-13-iunie-1925-pentru-unificarea-administrativ-emitent-parlamentul-publicat-n-monitorul-107203.html> (last accessed 19.05.2017).

⁴⁷ Maria Baiulescu "*Româncele în viața politică*" in *Patria*, year XI, no. 217, 1929, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ C. Hamangiu, *Codul general al României*, vol. XVII, 1929, p. 986. See also article 17 from *The Administrative Organisation Act (Legea pentru organizarea administrativă)* accessible online <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/lege-nr-95-din-13-iunie-1925-pentru-unificarea-administrativ-emitent-parlamentul-publicat-n-monitorul-107203.html> (last accessed 19.05.2017).

⁵⁰ Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

influence of women's vote was very marginal. Articles 61 and 63 of the 1938 Constitution granted women the right to participate in the elections for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, but this right was restricted by age limitations (they had to be at least 30 years old) and by the practice of a profession.⁵¹ The 1939 Electoral Act would further increase these limitations by granting suffrage only to literate women.⁵² Consequently, the inter-war years, women's suffrage was almost an illusion. Despite all the efforts for emancipation, and even in the context of certain successes, Romanian women remained excluded from full political participation.

Conclusions

I have examined the gender-specific impact of the Great War on women in Transylvania and in Romania. The war represented the premise for the disappearance of imaginary barriers between men and women, between the private and public spheres, and an opportunity for women to show the inherent unreality of these dichotomies. It had different impact in the numerous countries around the world.

In the newly-established Romanian national state many barriers persisted and women remained largely discriminated politically until the end of the Second World War. The change of gender roles remained an illusion given that each success obtained by women was restricted by limitations and that the concrete effect of these successes was marginal. There are several factors that contributed to the inefficiency of the Romanian feminist movement, such as the huge discrepancy between women living in urban and rural areas, respectively, low literacy, and differences in the perception of emancipation. Transylvania was almost a paradox: although women in this province organized themselves and were very active politically before the Great War, and although their role was recognized in the *Declaration of Alba-Iulia* which promised them full participation in the political life, they nonetheless proved more conservative regarding political participation after the war, and included this issue on their agenda only in the 1930s. Social conservatism was perhaps the main factor that made things move much

⁵¹*Monitorul Oficial al României*, partea I, no. 048/27 February 1938, pp. 1119-1120, available online at: <http://www.digibuc.ro/proxy/?px=aHR0cDovL2RpZ210b29sLmRjLmJtbXMucm86ODg4MS9SL0UyS1QzT1BmMUpsSQ0lEQ0JlU0FRN0JlU0JmF0cDtiYXNlPUdFTjAx> (last accessed 2.11.2016).

⁵²*The Electoral Act of 1939*, available online at http://fp.kross.ro/pdf/le_1939.pdf (last accessed 18.10.2016).

slower in the right direction than in other countries. Despite the establishment of a democratic state and the radical activity of feminists in the Old Kingdom, the analysis of Romanian legislation reveals persistent discrimination against women throughout the entire inter-war period, even if, some progresses was obvious. The biggest problem remains that despite all the efforts for emancipation, and even in the context of certain successes, Romanian women continued to be excluded from full political participation, particularly owing to the nature of the subsequent regimes from Romania, this dream of complete participation being accomplished only after the instauration of a real democratic rule.

The Legionary Movement and the Challenges of Modernity

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Abstract: The Legionary Movement and the Challenges of Modernity. Drawing upon valuable recent contributions brought about by an expanding new historiographical consensus in fascist studies, this article will briefly explore the manner in which the Legion of the Archangel Michael, regarded as the Romanian version of fascism, assigned significance to the evolution of historical and suprahistorical time, mainly but not exclusively focusing on modernity as a central component of the temporal pattern put forth by the movement. A careful selection of Legionary assessments of the modern era will be integrated into a wider temporal projection, assembled from various primary sources of notable ideological relevance. The resulting theoretical instrument which the article proposes is a sequential model consisting of five distinct, yet profoundly related chronological phases identifiable in Legionary thought, which will be successively analyzed in the course of the paper.

Keywords: fascism; the Legionary Movement; modernity; modernization; temporality.

Rezumat: Mişcarea legionară şi provocarea modernităţii. Inspirat de valoroasele contribuţii recente ale dinamicului câmp al studiilor fascismului, în contextul consolidării şi extinderii perpetue a unui nou consens istoriografic, prezentul demers constituie o explorare succintă a manierei în care Legiunea „Arhanghelului Mihail”, înţeleasă ca variantă autohtonă a fascismului continental, s-a raportat, în formulările sale ideologice, asupra temporalităţii istorice şi supraistorice, centrul de greutate al analizei fiind dat de reprezentările modernităţii, una dintre componentele diacronice fundamentale în interpretarea legionară a timpului. În acest scop, o suită de consideraţii teoretice privitoare la complexa problematică a modernităţii, formulate în interiorul mişcării legionare de către doctrinarii reprezentativi ai acesteia, vor fi integrate unei proiecţii temporale mai ample, asamblată prin selectarea atentă a unor surse primare de notabilă relevanţă ideologică. Instrumentul teoretic astfel alcătuit, pe care articolul de faţă îl propune în ideea mai bune înţelegeri a subiectului avut în vedere, se constituie ca un model secvenţial alcătuit din cinci faze cronologice distincte, dar profund interconectate, pe care analiza de mai jos le va explora succesiv.

Cuvinte-cheie: fascism; mişcarea legionară; modernitate; modernizare; temporalitate.

Introduction

From the beginning of the post-war era, the convoluted ties between fascism and modernity have been approached along numerous lines of inquiry by several generations of scholars. For decades on end, the strikingly complex, albeit deeply idiosyncratic fascist interpretations of modernity have been distorted by a consistent margin of the historiographical field, with some of the dominating views either labeling it as an outright rejection of the modern world, or inserting it into obsolete teleological narratives, as an inherently retrograde phenomenon irreconcilable with modernity¹.

Fortunately, intellectual transformations such as the gradual fading away of the Cold War rhetoric and its underlying implications², the conceptual revisions of modernity in social sciences, no longer regarded as linear, unique or clearly compartmentalized³, as well as the paradigmatic shifts allowing fascist studies to thrive in the past few decades have all determined substantial reevaluations of the intricate relationship between fascism and modernity. With the focus of Western academia turning towards the ideology of fascism and its cultural underpinnings, an expanding historiographical consensus has been increasingly preoccupied with the “[fascist] bid to establish an alternative, rooted modern culture”⁴, as Roger Griffin has eloquently described it. In linking this “rooted modernity” to the “palingenetic myth”⁵ affirmed to lie at its core, newer studies have identified a distinctive temporality embedded in the worldview of fascism, a revolutionary perception of time, determining a specific understanding of modernity⁶. Authors such as Sven Reichardt and Fernando Esposito have convincingly argued that fascism elaborated its own temporal design, morphing multiple interconnected components into a “nexus between future-oriented dynamics and an eternity which obviously encompassed the

¹ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, Routledge, New York, 1996, pp. 455-459.

² Valentin Săndulescu, „Modernism și fascism: repere ale unei evoluții istoriografice”, in Sorin Antohi (coord.), *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*, Editura Cuvântul, Bucharest, 2008, pp. 207-208.

³ Arnd Bauerkämper, „A New Consensus? Recent Research on Fascism in Europe, 1918-1945”, in *History Compass*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2006, p. 538.

⁴ Roger Griffin, „Fascism’s Modernist Revolution: A New Paradigm for the Study of Right-wing Dictatorships”, in *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2016, p. 105.

⁵ For the inaugural stance on palingenesis as the core of fascist ideology, an idea considerably broadened and refined in later works, see Idem, *The Nature of Fascism*, Routledge, London, 1993.

⁶ Idem, „Fixing Solutions: Fascist Temporalities as Remedies for Liquid Modernities”, in *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2015, pp. 16-17.

past”⁷. For its part, Romanian fascism, epitomized by the Legion of the Archangel Michael, was certainly no stranger to the ideological reworking of conventional chronology, hence the conflation of traditional temporal sequences and their radical reinterpretation within an all-encompassing utopian project, revolving around what Raul Cârstocea has adequately termed the “mythical idea of the atemporal nation spanning past, present and future”⁸.

Drawing upon such innovative research, this article will attempt to briefly outline the manner in which some of the most influential ideologues of the Legionary movement understood both the general evolution of time and the particular significance of modernity. For this purpose, a selection of Legionary assessments of the modern era will be integrated into a wider temporal projection, assembled from various primary sources of notable ideological relevance. The resulting theoretical instrument will be a sequential model consisting of five distinct, yet profoundly related chronological phases identifiable in Legionary thought, successively analyzed in the course of the argument: I) the mythical past, ambivalently depicted as both an idyllic primordial state of the national community and an age of continuous struggle, with the two conflicting representations being conceived as mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory; II) the disruptive modernity, envisioned as a period of great continental turmoil as well as national decay, a massive rupture of the natural historical continuum with far-reaching consequences; III) the anomic present, a time of lacking order and reigning chaos, of perpetual crisis and continuous transition, confined between a long forsaken past and a yet unreachable future; IV) the utopian future established through revolutionary means, bringing about the materialization of the palingenetic myth and the radical transformation of man and society, nation and state; V) the redemptive transcendence of the nation, a definitive break with history and immanence, indicating the fulfillment of a sacred, God-given mandate, followed by the continuation of collective national life in the spiritual realm.

I. The Mythical Past

The starting sequence of the Legionary temporal pattern concerns the distant mythical past, set between an indefinite time immemorial and a historically anchored period which preceded the dawn of the modern era. While the frequent references to this unclearly defined past do not equate, as it

⁷Fernando Esposito, Sven Reichardt, „Revolution and Eternity. Introductory Remarks on Fascist Temporalities”, in *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2015, p. 43.

⁸Raul Cârstocea, „Breaking the Teeth of Time: Mythical Time and the «Terror of History» in the Rhetoric of the Legionary Movement in Interwar Romania”, in *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2015, p. 80.

has been claimed, with the movement simply assuming a “regressive”, backward-looking vision⁹, there is nonetheless great ideological significance attributed to this time span.

As hinted above, the mythical past was simultaneously invested with two conflicting, yet ultimately compatible meanings in Legionary thought. The first one was indebted to the “organicist” philosophy of Oswald Spengler, whose representation of history as a cycle of “eternal formation and transformation”, in which cultures and civilizations are governed by the same natural laws applied to living beings¹⁰, profoundly influenced the views of several leading intellectuals of the Legion, keen on interpreting the evolution of the Romanian nation in spenglerian terms and prone to emphasize the importance of social organisms, while at the same time downplaying the significance of their comprising units. Following these lines of thought, major ideologues of the movement, such as Vasile Marin, uncompromisingly affirmed the original primacy of the nation at the expense of the individual, with the latter being inherently reduced to a mere “tool” subordinated to the unitary national community¹¹. The mythical past was an integral component of this collectivist outlook since, as Ion Victor Vojen, another important Legionary theorist, vividly explained, it was the foundational era inaugurating the particular historical course of the nation, a pathway both dictated by the laws of organicism and consecrated by divine will¹². Aside from this prevalent communitarian ethos, the idealized Legionary projection of the mythical past was connected to another essential component, compatible with the larger narrative – the cult of the ancestral land. As recent contributions by Constantin Iordachi have demonstrated, the movement devised a double ideological axis which firmly situated its defining guidelines on two levels: a vertical one, epitomized by the cult of the Archangel Michael, the eponymous patron saint of the Legion, aligned towards transcendence, and a horizontal one, earthly oriented, illustrated by the cult of the “land of the forefathers”¹³. The latter was extensively developed in the writings of the charismatic founding leader of the movement, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, for whom the nation was “a tree with its

⁹Radu Ioanid, „The Sacralised Politics of the Romanian Iron Guard”, in *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions*, vol. 5, no. 3, winter 2004.

¹⁰Oswald Spengler, *Declinul Occidentului. Schiță de morfologie a istorie*, Editura Beladi, Craiova, vol. 1, 1996, p. 38.

¹¹Vasile Marin, *Fascismul: organizarea constituțională a statului corporativ*, Serviciul și editura Colportajului Legionar, Bucharest, pp. 21-22.

¹²Ioan Victor Vojen, „Între Națiune și partid politic”, in *Revista Mea*, no. 5, July-August 1936.

¹³Constantin Iordachi, „De la credința naționalistă la credința legionară. Palingenezie romantică, militarism și fascism în România modernă”, in Constantin Iordachi (ed.), *Fascismul european 1918-1945. Ideologie, experimente totalitare și religii politice*, Editura Institutului pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, pp. 368-370.

roots grounded in the soil of the country"¹⁴. This metaphoric illustration of the binding tie between mythical past and ancestral land was further consolidated by Codreanu's conviction that the Romanian nation was unique insofar as it did not arrive on its destined land from any other place, instead having been "born on it from the haze of the past" and having become bound to it through the "bones of the ancestors who rest in its soil"¹⁵, particularly the heroic figures of the martyrs who had sacrificed themselves for the sake of the national community.

Herein lies the second meaning of this ambivalent representation: the mythical past deemed as a time of major turmoil, of persistent external threats and devastating foreign invasions, only held back through the glorious sacrifice of those relentless leaders and warriors of the national pantheon. Dark accounts of this time of great unrest, such as those of Alexandru Cantacuzino, a notable representative of the Legion, reveal the image of a "barren desert", throughout which a nation "thirsty" for freedom, justice and dignity resiliently made its way, eventually quenching its thirst from a few "violent springs [of water]"¹⁶, an allegorical reference to its battle-hardened heroes. Besides the essential contribution of its martyrs, the primordial nation was said to have survived the profound commotions of this era by properly channeling its spiritual resources, an argument put forth by the Legionary ideologue Ion Banea, who emphasized the fundamental importance of the religious ideal throughout the nation's early historical course, stating that one of the main explanations for its resilience was an unwavering faith, an enduring "attachment to the Holy Church and its teachings" which only confirmed the sacred destiny of a people "born in the shadow of the cross"¹⁷.

While this paradoxical reconstruction of the mythical past uncovered two apparently contradictory representations, they became mutually reinforcing given the fact that they both projected the image of a national community able to transcend the traditional constraints of history¹⁸, a vision which did not imply, however, that its pressures would prove less challenging.

¹⁴ Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, second edition, Editura „Totul pentru țară”, Sibiu, 1936.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁶ Alexandru Cantacuzino, „Cum suntem”, Editura Curierul, Sibiu, 1937, p. 6.

¹⁷ Ion Banea, *Ce este și ce vrea mișcarea legionară. Cărțică pentru săteni*, third edition, Tipografia Veștemean, Sibiu, 1941, pp. 8-10.

¹⁸ Raul Cârstocea, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

II. The Disruptive Modernity

The second phase of the Legionary chronological blueprint incorporated another stage of the past, covering the developments of modernity from its early onset until the inter-war era. Like other permutations of fascism, the Legionary movement was certainly not hostile to modernity as a matter of principle, nor did it inherently reject the multifaceted and thoroughly transformative “nexus of forces” that was the process of modernization¹⁹. However, its main ideologues unleashed a continuous wave of violent criticism aimed at the mutations modernity brought about, regarding it as a concatenation of disruptive forces culminating in nothing short of a derailment of history, an interpretation by no means particular to fascist ideology.

As several authors who have extensively studied modernity have emphasized in their works, this was an age of temporal recalibrations felt by contemporaries and later observers alike, hence its characterization by Reinhart Koselleck as a time of “temporalization” containing within itself a pervasive “alteration of rhythm”²⁰, its description by Zygmunt Bauman as a “liquid” and “flexible” state in profound contrast with the static “pre-modern solids”²¹, or its depiction by Peter Osborne as a readjustment of temporal sequences through the “openness towards an indeterminate future characterized only by its prospective transcendence of the historical present and its relegation of this present to a future past”²². As far as fascism is concerned, numerous contributions of the past couple of decades have argued that the phenomenon can hardly be comprehended without first acknowledging that, as Michael Mann put it, “fascists have been at the heart of modernity”²³ and that fascism itself, in the words of Emilio Gentile, attempted to “master the processes of modernization” and to “conquer” modernity itself²⁴. Significantly, in his most recent monograph, Roger Griffin proposed a novel definition of fascism as a “species of political modernism” whose intention to regenerate the nation involved the structuring of an alternative

¹⁹Roger Griffin, „Modernity Under the New Order. The Fascist Project for Managing the Future”, in Matthew Feldman (ed.), *A Fascist Century. Essays by Roger Griffin*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, pp. 27-28.

²⁰Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004, p. 11.

²¹Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 3-9.

²²Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time. Modernity and the Avant-Garde*, Verso, London, 1995, p. 14.

²³Michael Mann, *Fascists*, Cambridge University Press, p. 1.

²⁴Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism, and Fascism*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003, p. 44.

model of modernity²⁵. Such an aspiration was strongly influenced by the fact that, as many other radical critics before them, fascists assessed the project of modernity as an ultimately incomplete endeavor²⁶, therefore seeking to appropriate it, to purify it and to carry it out on their own terms.

To these extents, the ideology of the Legionary movement was once again illustrative for the worldview of generic fascism, with its evaluation of the modern era as a span of all-encompassing decadence, a time of individual and collective, physical and spiritual degeneration²⁷. From the Legionary perspective, the origins of this deplorable state were twofold. Firstly, there was the excessively abstract philosophy of the Enlightenment, whose major thinkers were harshly criticized for having developed idealistic theories which never seemed to concern “the living, moving matter” – man himself²⁸, a long standing denunciation of modern thought in conservative and radical circles both throughout the continent and within the autochthonous intellectual environment. Given the particular nature of the fascist mindset, it is unsurprising that the firm rejection of Enlightenment’s established order of reason in favor of fascism’s own mythical order²⁹ was clearly one of the main tenets of Legionary ideology. Secondly, there was the major decay following the French Revolution, which had allegedly brought forth a set of utopian aspirations promptly confiscated by malicious elites and insidiously utilized as instruments for the exploitation of defenseless national communities. Yet again, the Legionary projection came in line with the generic fascist perspective, which depicted the French Revolution as a tyrannical experiment inaugurating a deceitful discourse of freedom and equality, the antithesis of what the fascist revolutionary project purported itself to be³⁰. On top of this double edged criticism, the Legion added one of the defining elements of the imaginary of the far right – the fictitious universal Jewish plot, a central component of the broader narrative it proposed. As the theories of Ion I. Moța, arguably the second most important figure of the movement, prove at great length, the deviations of modernity were understood to have a deeper, conspiratorial explanation beyond the visible ones, which could be

²⁵Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism. The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007, pp. 181-182.

²⁶Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 230-231.

²⁷Roger Griffin, „Modernity, Modernism, and Fascism. A «Mazeway Resynthesis»”, in *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 15, no. 1, January 2008, p. 11.

²⁸Victor Vojen, „Evoluția doctinelor politice. Geneza utopiei democratice”, in *Calendarul*, 21 September 1932.

²⁹Fernando Esposito, *Fascism, Aviation and Mythical Modernity*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015, pp. 77-78.

³⁰George L. Mosse, „Fascism and the French Revolution”, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 24, no. 1, January 1989, pp. 5-6.

summarized as follows: while the dawn of the modern era, under the immediate impact of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, did bring notable benefits, such as technical progress and an increase in wealth, the mechanisms generating them were quickly taken over by a cabal reuniting the most influential political and financial circles of the world, invariably Jewish or dependent upon Jewish interests, as well as of the highest ranks of the freemasonry, serving as a designated rallying point for the occult forces around the globe³¹.

With these convictions guiding their worldview, Legionary ideologues were concerned about the dysfunctional model of modernity and the strenuous path to modernization they thought had been imposed upon the Romanian nation by pervasive external interests. Certainly, Romania had to confront the relentless issue of backwardness throughout the entirety of its modern existence and, given its specific set of circumstances, it could hardly emulate or even closely resemble some aspects of Western modernity, as shown by the poor functioning of its institutions, by its limited degree of social mobilization, by its archaic economic structures, by its narrow technological penetration and so on³². At the same time, it has been argued that between the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the country did manage to evolve from a “vertical” model of national construction, in which modern visions were only shared by a small margin of intellectuals and political leaders, to a “lateral” model, more dependent on extended political participation and genuine structural reform, which brought it closer to the advances of modernity³³.

However, the Legionary temporal pattern did not register any progress, instead underlining a constant direction of decadence, as shown by a wide range of processes and events described as flawed, either by way of faulty implementation or by their very nature. One of the most harmful such events was considered to be the Revolution of 1848, depicted as the fateful historical turn which first brought the nation under the influence of a destructive project of external fabrication, completely removed from local realities and promoted by an unpatriotic elite – a stern condemnation which implicitly placed the Legion’s original revolutionary project in perfect contrast

³¹Ion I. Moța, *Cranii de lemn: Articole 1922 – 1936*, Editura „Totul pentru Țară”, Bucharest, 1937, pp. 245-249.

³²Andrew C. Janos, „Modernization and Decay in Historical Perspective. The Case of Romania”, in Kenneth Jowitt, (ed.), *Social Change in Romania, 1860 – 1940. A Debate in a European Nation*, Berkeley, California, 1978, p. 100.

³³Sorin Alexandrescu, „Modernism și anti-modernism: Din nou cazul românesc”, in Sorin Antohi (coord.), *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*, Editura Cuvântul, Bucharest, 2008, p. 134.

with the one under scrutiny³⁴. Later on, as Marin claimed, the national community found itself confined within the constraining boundaries of an artificial state – by no means a national one – created and governed by a ruling class obedient to foreign interests, thus perpetuating a predicament in which the nation was no longer the “master of its own destiny”³⁵. The anti-national developments of the recent past were perceived as all the more damaging on account of democracy, seen as the most powerful catalyst of degeneration among the numerous vicissitudes of modernity. For Marin, democracy was not only the epitome of modern decadence, but also the main existential threat posed to the survival of national communities, given its numerous malignant implications, among which the most frequently counted were the disregard shown towards the legitimate interests of the nation in favor of the trivial benefits of the state, the rule of individualism at the expense of the people as a social unity, the “mechanical” representation of reality which completely overlooked the natural laws of history, the sole focus on form and the lack of an authentic substance, the cynical manipulation of amorphous masses, the chronic inability to breed capable elites³⁶ etc.

Ultimately, from a spiritual standpoint, the modern world with its democratic ethos was thought to have “turned man into the God of man”³⁷, as Vojen put it, abandoning the axiological foundations of the previous age and recklessly engaging in what Cantacuzino described as the “extinguishing of religious passions”, since the modern man had started to worship the “idols of progress and wealth” instead³⁸. With Legionary intellectuals announcing an imminent and definitive transformation of the nation and the world alike, the change of course they envisioned was expected to begin with a process defined by Moța as the reinstatement of the “primacy of the spiritual”³⁹, requiring a radical rechanneling of modernity itself.

³⁴Valentin Săndulescu, „Generation, Regeneration, and Discourses of Identity in the Intellectual Foundations of Romanian Fascism: The Case of the Axa Group”, in Diana Mishkova, BalázsTrencsényi, Marja Jalava (eds.), *‘Regimes of Historicity’ in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890–1945: Discourses of Identity and Temporality*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014, p. 217.

³⁵Vasile Marin, *Crez de generație*, the fourth edition, Colecția Europa München, Karlsfeld, 1977, pp. 68-70.

³⁶Vasile Marin, „De la formalismul democratic la naționalismul constructiv”, in *Axa*, no. 19, 1 October 1933.

³⁷Ioan Victor Vojen, „Drumul credinței”, in *Axa*, 5 March 1933.

³⁸Alexandru, Cantacuzino, „Între lumea legionară și lumea comunistă”, 1935, in *Opere complete*, Editura Antet XX Press, Filipeștii de Târg, no year, pp. 7-8.

³⁹Ion I. Moța, „Acesta nu e sufletul nostru!”, in *Pământul Strămoșesc*, no. 24, 25 December 1928.

III. The Anomic Present

The third stage of the Legionary timeline was contemporary to the movement itself, being set in the anomic inter-war years, a present of lacking order seen by a substantial margin of the ones living through it as a time of great uncertainty. After a traumatic world war, looked back upon as the climax of a prolonged moral malady⁴⁰, the intellectual climate of the continent was particularly suitable to the resurfacing of archetypal myths, such as the “eternal transition” or the “perpetual crisis”⁴¹, promptly identified in the developments of the period by some of those who felt most uprooted by its shifts. Among the latter, fascists perceived with remarkable intensity the effects of the so-called “order-dissolving spirit of modernity”⁴², a state they tried to break through by way of what Roger Griffin has suggestively called “mazeway resynthesis”⁴³, a complex endeavor aiming at the reinstatement of order and structure. Furthermore, this stance involved the adoption of what the same author characterized as a mindset of “Aufbruch”⁴⁴, an awareness of transition deriving from the firsthand witnessing of the succession of historical phases, coupled with the impulse to directly intervene and influence the process.

Certainly, the manner in which the Legionary movement sought to handle this protean phase of history was greatly dependent on the particular Romanian context. Following the war, the triumphant, unified and enlarged nation was confronted with the daunting task of redefining itself⁴⁵. An intense political and cultural confrontation rapidly ensued, one whose main lines of argument concerned Romania’s national identity, as well as the proper historical course the country was supposed to follow. These crucial matters were heatedly debated by representatives of modern and anti-modern positions, democratic and anti-democratic orientations, Western and Eastern allegiances, simultaneously competing for a monopoly on the core values and principles of the anticipated new order⁴⁶. In the midst of this highly disputed

⁴⁰Roger Griffin, „Tunnel Visions and Mysterious Trees: Modernist Projects of National and Racial Regeneration, 1880–1939”, in Marius Turda, Paul J. Weindling (eds.), *Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940*, Central European University Press, Budapest, 2007, p. 443.

⁴¹Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending. Studies in the Theory of Fiction with a New Epilogue*, third edition, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 28.

⁴² Fernando Esposito, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁴³Roger Griffin, „Modernity, Modernism, and Fascism”, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Idem, *Modernism and Fascism*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură și naționalism în România Mare. 1918–1930*, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1998, p. 16.

⁴⁶Sorin Alexandrescu, *Privind înapoi, modernitatea*, Editura Univers, Bucharest, 1999, p. 135.

intellectual battle, many conceptions rooted in the pre-war era were recovered and found a thriving environment under the new circumstances, among them the argument that national specificity is to be preserved at all costs, the tendency to reject foreign models and influences, a wide array of ethnic stereotypes, especially anti-Semitic ones, as well as negative evaluations of a supposedly corrupted modernity⁴⁷.

On this background, the Legionary movement came with a vision of its own, one drawing upon various preexistent intellectual strands and seeking to seize and subdue a present regarded as a pivotal point between an immediate past to be broken with and an imminent future to be prepared⁴⁸. Among the various national projects emerging in inter-war Romania, the one advanced by Legionary theorists was easily discernable as the most radical, advocating a sweepingly “totalizing”⁴⁹ revolutionary transformation of politics and society, culture and morality, the only cure for anomic dissolution. Relentlessly confronting a tormenting sense of alienation, which Moța vividly described as a “lingering connection with another world” and as “wandering through a life that does not belong to us”, the Legionaries saw themselves as the carriers of a sacred mission, as chosen men whose earthly goal was to “build up again what has been desecrated, squandered and cursed by others”⁵⁰, by salvaging the remnants of the mythical past and ingraining them into the utopian future.

Furthermore, in typical fascist manner, the movement configured its revitalizing quest at the scale of generations, with one of its ideological cornerstones being the idea of the self-sacrificing nationalist youth acting as an authentic *deus ex machina* for the national community. While generational consciousness, as well as a variety of themes pertaining to the notion of generational conflict, have been shown to predate the First World War by a couple of centuries, it was only after the greatest conflict mankind had ever experienced that, as Robert Wohl affirmed, “youth had become a state of mind, a style of life” and an uncompromising force willing to “rescue Europe” from itself⁵¹, a conviction which fascism, for its part, tirelessly affirmed. As far as the Legionary worldview was concerned, since history itself was supposed to be governed by inexorable laws of succession and rejuvenation, the coming

⁴⁷Răzvan Pârâianu, „Culturalist Nationalism and Anti-Semitism in Fin-de-Siècle Romania”, in Marius Turda, Paul J. Weindling (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 354-359.

⁴⁸Raul Cârstocea, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

⁴⁹Constantin Iordachi, „A Continuum of Dictatorships: Hybrid Totalitarian Experiments in Romania, 1937 - 1944”, in António Costa Pinto, Aristotle Kallis (eds.), *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorships in Europe*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2014, p. 237.

⁵⁰Ion I. Moța, *Cranii de lemn*, pp. 8-12.

⁵¹Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, pp. 204-229.

to the forefront of the radical youth was only, as Marin proclaimed, a natural phenomenon⁵², a view shared, with slight variations, by all the main representatives of the movement. For Cantacuzino, the “higher pursuit” of Romania’s new generation was nothing short of an “apostolate”, the holy responsibility to “recreate [...] the social and physical structure of the nation” on spiritual grounds⁵³. Similarly, Banea, who understood the notion of generation to designate “the totality of individuals belonging to a nation, fighting for the same ideal, carrying in their souls the same fate, experiencing the same holy aspirations and being shaken by the same longings”, described the “great ruptures, which mark the endings and beginnings of eras in the existence of nations” in generational terms, with the moment of highest transformative magnitude being identified in the present⁵⁴. Perhaps the most relevant perspective on the matter belonged to Codreanu himself, whose outlook, moving past the polarizing tensions between the traditional idyll and the dynamic novelty of contemporaneity⁵⁵, unveiled a larger, metaphorically defined temporal frame. Along the historical path of the nation, Codreanu claimed, there was a “bright line” indicating the right course which the nation was supposed to follow as it advanced through various stages of history⁵⁶. It was on this luminous line of righteousness that glorious figures of prior ages had situated themselves, thus rising above their times, and it was on the same axis of virtuousness that the Legion needed to locate itself⁵⁷ in order to guarantee the continuity between the ancestral past of heroes and martyrs, the present of a revitalizing generation and the future in which national destiny was meant to find fulfillment.

IV. The Utopian Future

The fourth phase of the Legionary temporal progression consisted of an indefinite yet imminent future, an eagerly anticipated golden age which was supposed to bring about the materialization of all previously conceived utopian aspirations of the movement. Illustrating what Roger Eatwell has suggestively described as “the fascist matrix”, the idealized representations of the future in generic fascist thought followed several intertwined directions,

⁵²Vasile Marin, „O singură ideologie: fapta”, in *Axa*, no. 5, 22 January 1933.

⁵³Alex. Cantacuzino, „Studentimea română în fața streinătății”, in *Cuvântul Argeșului*, no. 10, 8 November 1935.

⁵⁴Ion Banea, „Generația tânără și credința ei”, in *Cuvântul Nou*, 25 March 1936.

⁵⁵Roland Clark, *Sfântă tinerețe legionară. Activismul fascist în România interbelică*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2015, p. 149.

⁵⁶Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

⁵⁷*Ibidem*.

concerning the radical transformation of man, the metamorphosis of the nation and the reconfiguration of society⁵⁸. Moreover, fascism sought to extract the utopian blueprint from the realm of “extra-temporality” and integrate it in the immanent course of historical evolution⁵⁹, with the path towards the chimerical future necessarily involving an acceleration of revolutionary action, the fundamental means towards the reinstatement of mythical time⁶⁰. In the case of the Legion, as Constantin Iordachi has shown, the concept of revolution was granted a double meaning which significantly determined the temporal perception of the movement: on the one hand, there was a negative connotation, relating to the dissolution of order and the prevalence of chaos; on the other hand, there was a more etymologically accurate meaning, referring to the return to an original state – the mythical past, hence the “concomitantly regressive and futurist” nature of the Legionary utopia⁶¹.

Since the future needed to definitively address the short comings of the present⁶², Legionary theorists tried to design all-encompassing revolutionary programs whose potential implementation was meant to correct the deviations of modernity and to overcome the bleak prospects of the anomic present. One of the most elaborate takes on revolutionary transformation, belonging to Mihail Polihroniade, an influential ideologue of the movement, had a strikingly eclectic content, incorporating, among others, a “revolution of ethics”, major institutional reforms, a significant demographic readjustment on ethnic grounds, an autarkic reorientation of economy, a wide range of radical social policies and a plan for cultural renewal⁶³.

However, while the direct political and social ramifications of the projected metamorphoses were clearly not ignored, it was the anthropological drive of the revolutionary endeavor which held ideological prevalence in Legionary thought. The image of the new man, of the “Romanian of tomorrow”, a gradually emerging ideal evolving at the pace of the movement itself throughout the inter-war years⁶⁴, consistently remained the epitome of the utopian future in the discourse of the Legion. Codreanu’s catchphrase, paradoxically turned into an electoral slogan, which famously stated that “the

⁵⁸Roger Eatwell, „Introduction: New Styles of Dictatorship and Leadership in Interwar Europe”, in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, vol. 7, no. 2, June 2006, pp. 132-133.

⁵⁹Roger Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁶⁰Fernando Esposito, Sven Reichardt, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁶¹Constantin Iordachi, „De la credința naționalistă la credința legionară”, pp. 370-372.

⁶²Raul Cârstocea, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁶³Mihail Polihroniade, „Sensul revoluției naționale”, in *Axa*, no. 14, 15 June 1933.

⁶⁴Valentin Săndulescu, „Fascism and its Quest for the «New Man»: The Case of the Romanian Legionary Movement”, in *Studia Hebraica*, no. 4, 2004, p. 354.

country is dying for lack of men, not for lack of [political] programs”⁶⁵ summarized the stance of his movement on the matter. His pledge to inaugurate a glorious new era for the Romanian people, the demand addressed to his followers, “the Carriers of the new Spirit of the Age”, to join the reconstruction of the country so that “its children will blossom, the foreigner will respect it and the enemy will fear it”⁶⁶, implied doing away with an irreparably corrupt human type, most clearly identified among the politicians of the time, portrayed as physical embodiments of national decay, as well as the creation of a novel model a man, “a giant amidst our history, to fight and triumph over the enemies of the Fatherland”, a heroic figure who could only originate in the infallible pedagogical model of “the school of the Legion”⁶⁷.

In its attempt to lay the foundations of the future from the early present in order to hasten its materialization, the Legionary movement advanced a twofold project of anthropological revolution. Firstly, it aimed at the “the taming of the body”, through an extensive range of social initiatives involving the affirmation of a cult of strength, the introduction of a new work ethic and the consistent following of a permanent quest for physical regeneration⁶⁸. Secondly, and more importantly, it strived towards “the taming of the spirit”, through various mobilization methods, integrated into a grandiose revitalization program expected to reinstate “the primacy of the spiritual”⁶⁹. The network of work camps founded by the Legion across the country in the second half of the inter-war period best demonstrated the eagerness of the movement to construct a functional and visible “parallel society”⁷⁰, inhabited by physically and spiritually rejuvenated men. This exemplary societal model, meant to be later extrapolated to the scale of the entire national community, as well as a number of additional initiatives, were conceived as the initial stage of the greater process of “building a new soul” for the “Romania of tomorrow”⁷¹, thus bridging the gap with the utopian future and bringing the nation closer to its ultimate redemption.

⁶⁵Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

⁶⁶ Idem, *Circulări și manifeste. 1927 – 1938*, Colecția „Europa” München, 1981, pp. 2-6.

⁶⁷ Idem, *Pentru legionari*, p. 286.

⁶⁸ Valentin Săndulescu, „«Taming the Body»: Preliminary Considerations Regarding the Legionary Work Camps System (1933-1937)”, in *Historical Yearbook*, vol. 5, 2008, pp. 85-86.

⁶⁹ Valentin Săndulescu, „«Taming the Spirit»: Notes on the Shaping of the Legionary «New Man»”, in Traian Sandu (ed.), *Vers un profil convergent des fascismes? “Nouveau consensus” et religion politique en Europe centrale*, L'Harmattan, Cahiers de la Nouvelle Europe, Paris, 2010, pp. 207-208.

⁷⁰ Rebecca Haynes, „Work Camps, Commerce and the Education of the ‘New Man’ in the Romanian Legionary Movement”, in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 51, nr. 4, decembrie 2008, p. 944.

⁷¹ Mihail Polihroniade, *Tabăra de muncă*, Tipografia Ziarului „Universul”, Bucharest, 1936, p. 1.

V. The Redemptive Transcendence

The fifth and final sequence of the diachronic course envisioned by the Legionary movement consisted of a temporal stage set beyond history itself, a moment of redemptive transcendence with profound eschatological implications, when the Romanian nation was expected to decisively break off from the worldly, profane historical timeline and permanently enter the suprahistorical, sacred realm of eternity, thus fulfilling its divine mandate. While the prospect of temporal regeneration up to the point of “annulling history” was an underlying characteristic of the generic fascist myth⁷², the Legion promoted a particular version of this conception, one that incorporated distinctive national idiosyncrasies, such as what Valentin Săndulescu has accurately described as the impulse “to bypass the Romanian inferiority complex about the historical past, and to actually become a maker of history”⁷³, while at the same time including numerous themes deeply rooted in the spirituality of Orthodox Christianity, as illustrated by the conviction that the national community consisted of the living as well as the dead, striving together for collective rather than individual salvation⁷⁴.

Therefore, Legionary ideologues were keen to integrate the preexisting religious sources they drew upon into a larger fascist blueprint, recalibrating them in accordance with the guidelines of the movement. To that extent, one of the most relevant examples was the cult of martyrdom, elevated, as it has been affirmed, to the status of an “eighth sacrament”⁷⁵, fundamentally connected to transcendence and immortality, but also holding significant worldly value, as an essential tool for the violent carrying out of revolutionary transformation, as suggestively summarized by Moța: “We all have at our disposal the most formidable dynamite, the most irresistible fighting tool, stronger than tanks and machine guns: our own ashes”⁷⁶. A fundamental trait of the spiritually infused

⁷²Fernando Esposito, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

⁷³Valentin Săndulescu, „Sacralised Politics in Action: the February 1937 Burial of the Romanian Legionary Leaders Ion Moța and Vasile Marin”, in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, vol. 8, no. 2, June 2007, p. 265.

⁷⁴Rebecca Ann Haynes, „The Romanian Legionary Movement. Popular Orthodoxy and the Cult of Death”, în Mioara Anton, Florin Anghel, Cosmin Popa (coord.), „Hegemoniile trecutului. Evoluții românești și europene”, Editura Curtea Veche, Bucharest, 2006, p. 117.

⁷⁵Ionuț Florin Biliuță, *The Archangel's Consecrated Servants. An Inquiry in the Relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Iron Guard (1930 - 1941)*, Ph.D thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 2013, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁶Ion I. Moța, „Esențialul”, in *Cuvântul Studențesc*, 17 April 1935.

metaphysical outlook of political radicalism⁷⁷, this fervently expressed willingness to engage in martyrdom, along with other defining ideological features, resulted, in the case of the Legion, in the structuring of what Iordachi has termed “a charismatic scenario of divine salvation”, a religiously inspired narrative internalized by the leaders and the rank-and-file of the movement alike, for whom the Romanian nation was favored by God himself, Codreanu was its chosen providential leader on its holy path to collective salvation⁷⁸, and the self-sacrificing ethos of the movement mediated the transition between the material world and the beyond. Codreanu himself frequently brought up biblical allegories and borrowed dogmatic statements from the discourse of the Church while arguing for the righteous creed of his movement, claiming that the absolute goal of humanity was not “life, but resurrection”, more specifically the “resurrection of nations in the name of Jesus Christ”, with all other aspects of existence being reduced to mere instruments serving this higher purpose⁷⁹. Paramount to his view was the notion that “each nation has its place before the throne of God” and that “the most sublime purpose” to be sought by every national community was reaching the “final moment, resurrecting from the dead”, a temporal break with specific implications in the case of the Romanian nation, since it had been given a particular “mission”, a distinguishing “historical destiny”⁸⁰.

As previously suggested, the Legionary palingenetic project also recovered and adapted to the realities of the inter-war era a prior linear representation of time, which antagonistically situated two mutually exclusive directions: a path of degeneration and decay, and another one of regeneration and progress, the latter brought about by revolutionary transformation⁸¹. This binary evaluation of historical evolution implicitly determined the nature of redemptive transcendence, in so far as it consciously down played the individual aspect and reiterated the spiritual primacy of the collective, a line of argument categorically expressed by Cantacuzino, whose option is uncompromisingly clear: “I, a Romanian soul, will find redemption along with the souls of Romanians, with the soul of the Romanian nation”⁸². Conclusively,

⁷⁷ For the “cosmic” nature of such radical outlooks throughout the past century, see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God. The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000, pp. 145-163.

⁷⁸ Constantin Iordachi, „Fascism in Southeastern Europe. A Comparison between Romania’s Legion of the Archangel Michael and the Croatian Ustaša”, in Roumen Daskalov, Diana Mishkova (eds.), *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, Brill, Leiden, 2014, pp. 419-421.

⁷⁹ Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-398.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 398.

⁸¹ Constantin Iordachi, „De la credința naționalistă la credința legionară”, p. 370.

⁸² Alexandru Cantacuzino, „Cum suntem”, Editura Curierul, Sibiu, 1937, pp. 11-14.

the perspective thus assembled, recently described as a variety of “redemption theology”, reinterpreted the interrelation between temporal dimensions and overstated the higher purpose of directing the national community towards atonement, which in turn resulted in the structuring of a specific chronological perception, a particular lens through which the Legionary movement observed the course of time itself⁸³.

Conclusions

In various shapes and forms, modernity – a protean era of major transformation, modernization – a nexus of intricate processes, and modernism – a set of innovative intellectual orientations, have all had a fundamental impact on generic fascism, most pervasively at its cultural and ideological level, a fact now widely acknowledged in the field of fascist studies. Drawing upon recent contributions brought about by a productive and ever-expanding new historiographical consensus, this article attempts to briefly explore, in terms of chronological dynamics, the manner in which the Legion of the Archangel Michael, the Romanian version of fascism, assigned significance to the evolution of historical and suprahistorical time, mainly but not exclusively focusing on modernity as a central component of the temporal pattern put forth by the movement. For this purpose, the analysis followed a diachronic model made up of five sequences, constructed through the critical interpretation of a variety of primary sources, each of the discussed phases revealing worth while interpretative suggestions concerning the Legionary worldview. The final, but by no means fully comprehensive image, one of convoluted progression from the original point of a mythical time, advancing through a disruptive modernity, reaching an anomic present, pushing forward towards a utopian future and ending with redemptive transcendence, might have the potential, if further explored, to provide valuable insights into the inner ideological workings of Romanian fascism.

⁸³Mihai Stelian Rusu, „The Sacralization of Martyric Death in Romanian Legionary Movement: Self-sacrificial Patriotism, Vicarious Atonement, and Thanatic Nationalism”, in *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, vol. 17, no. 2-3, 2016, p. 263.

La Santa Sede e l'Europa centro-orientale dopo la Grande Guerra. Il Concordato con la Romania*

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Riassunto: La Santa Sede e l'Europa centro-orientale dopo la Grande Guerra. Il Concordato con la Romania. I rapporti diplomatici tra la Romania e la Santa Sede e, in particolar modo, la questione relativa al Concordato sono stati a lungo indagati dalla storiografia romena, soprattutto negli ultimi decenni. Partendo da alcuni contributi storiografici recenti, ci proponiamo di inserire l'evoluzione dei rapporti diplomatici romeno-vaticani e specialmente la questione del Concordato nella dinamica dell'evoluzione internazionale del periodo interbellico, soprattutto dello spazio central-sud-est europeo, da un lato, e di evidenziare la connessione tra il livello politico-istituzionale e quello ecclesiastico nel consolidare il processo di costruzione nazionale (*national building*) della Romania, dall'altro.

Parole chiave: Santa Sede, Romania, concordato, Chiesa Cattolica

Rezumat: Sfântul Scaun și Europa Central-Răsăriteană după „Marele Război”. Concordatul cu România. Tema relațiilor diplomatice româno-vaticane și, în subsidiar, chestiunea Concordatului, a suscitat un interes crescând din partea istoricilor români în deceniile din urmă. Pornind de la unele din contribuțiile istoriografice recente, ne propunem să inserăm evoluția relațiilor diplomatice româno-vaticane și în particular chestiunea Concordatului în dinamica evoluției internaționale din anii interbelici, cu precădere din spațiul central-est european, pe de o parte, și să reliefăm legătura dintre aspectul politico-instituțional și cel ecleziastic în consolidarea procesului de edificare națională (*national building*) în cazul României interbelice, pe de altă parte.

Cuvinte cheie: Sfântul Scaun, România, concordat, Biserica Catolică

I rapporti diplomatici tra la Romania e la Santa Sede e, in particolar modo, la questione relativa al Concordato sono stati a lungo indagati dalla storiografia romena, soprattutto negli ultimi decenni. Sia gli studi, le edizioni

di documenti e i volumi dedicati esclusivamente all'argomento¹, sia le ricerche soffermatesi sull'andamento delle due Chiese, greco-cattolica e cattolica di rito latino durante il periodo interbellico, che hanno toccato il tema², nonché alcune eccellenti analisi sulla crisi e ulteriormente l'interruzione dei rapporti con il Vaticano sullo sfondo dell'emergenza della Guerra fredda e di seguito sui limiti del dialogo tra la Romania e la Santa Sede negli anni '60 e '70, hanno utilizzato la stampa del periodo e i documenti d'archivio innanzitutto romene e dall'estero³.

Partendo da alcuni contributi storiografici recenti, ci proponiamo di inserire l'evoluzione dei rapporti diplomatici romeno-vaticani e specialmente la questione del Concordato nella dinamica dell'evoluzione internazionale del periodo interbellico, soprattutto dello spazio central-sud-est europeo, da un lato, e di evidenziare la connessione tra il livello politico-istituzionale e quello ecclesiastico nel consolidare il processo di costruzione nazionale (*national building*) della Romania, dall'altro.

Nel tardo autunno del 1918, l'Europa presentava un quadro piuttosto desolante. Dopo più di quattro anni, "la guerra civile europea" ovvero "la Grande guerra" come è stata nominata, aveva lasciato cicatrici e ferite profonde, difficili da guarire. Quattro anni prima, invece, la gran parte dell'opinione pubblica di molti Stati europei aveva salutato lo scoppio della guerra con entusiasmo e atteggiamento patriottico, con la speranza che si

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¹ Ioan Dumitriu-Snagov, *România și Vaticanul. Relații diplomatice*, București, s.n., Idem, *România în diplomația Vaticanului 1939-1994*, București, 1991; Adela Herban, *România-Vatican 1920-1940. Relații diplomatice*, Deva, Editrice Călăuza, 2002; *România-Vatican. Relații diplomatice*, volumul I, 1920-1950, București, Editrice Enciclopedică, 2003. Si veda anche la versione più breve di questo volume, pubblicata in italiano: *La Romania e la Santa Sede. Documenti diplomatici*, Roma, Librerie Editrice Vaticane, 2000.

² Teodor, V. Damsă, *Biserica greco-catolică din România în perspectivă istorică*, Timișoara, Ed. de Vest, 1994; Nóda Mózes, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania în perioada interbelică*, Cluj-Napoca, Editrice Stúdiu, 2008; Lucian Turcu, *Între idealuri și realitate. Arhidiocesa greco-catolică de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi mitropolitului Vasile Suci (1920-1935)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editrice Mega, 2017.

³ Ioan-Marius Bucur, „Le relazioni della Romania con la Santa Sede all'inizio della guerra fredda”, in *Etnia e confessione in Transilvania (secoli XVI-XX)*, (a cura di) Francesco Guida, Roma, Ed. Lithos, 2000, pp. 97-107; Ovidiu Bozgan, „Nunțiatura Apostolică din România în anii 1948-1950”, in *Biserica, putere societate. Studii și documente*, a cura di Ovidiu Bozgan, Editrice dell'Università di Bucarest, 2001, pp. 130-154; Idem, *Cronica unui eșec previzibil. România și Sfântul Scaun în epoca pontificatului lui Paul al VI-lea (1963-1978)*, București, Editrice Curtea Veche, 2004; George Cipăianu, *Catolicism și comunism în România, 1946-1955. O perspectivă diplomatică franceză*, traduzione in lingua francese da Liana Lăpădatu, Cluj-Napoca, Editrice Argonaut, 2015. L'edizione in lingua francese di questo volume è uscita nel 2014.

sarebbe trattato di un conflitto di breve durata. Le voci che allora avevano esortato all'adozione di un atteggiamento riservato e prudente, tra cui anche quella di Pio X, furono coperte dal rumore delle marce militari e dei canti patriottici, mentre, invece, le ulteriori iniziative di pace come quella proposta da Benedetto XV furono ignorate dai *leaders* degli Stati entrati in guerra⁴. Ma ciò che viene definito dallo storico Niall Ferguson "il più grande errore del mondo moderno", il primo conflitto mondiale, portò al crollo dei due imperi multinazionali, l'autocrazia zarista e la Monarchia austro-ungarica. Se nel primo caso la speranza di costruire un regime democratico svanì sotto i colpi dei bolscevichi, la scomparsa della Duplice monarchia divise e aumentò gli scontri tra le nazioni che ne facevano parte, di talché le tendenze centrifughe stimulate dal principio dell'autodeterminazione dei popoli portarono, quindi, alla separazione delle province. I contrasti tra i progetti e le aspirazioni dei vari movimenti nazionali diventarono evidenti. Trovandosi in un posto di avanguardia della diplomazia vaticana nell'Europa orientale, a Varsavia, all'inizio in veste di visitatore apostolico e di seguito nunzio, il mons. Achille Ratti, più tardi papa Pio XI, ebbe a far fronte non solo alla minaccia bolscevica ma anche alle tensioni tra polacchi e ucraini sulla delimitazione dei nuovi confini, che si rifletterono anche nei rapporti tra la Chiesa cattolica polacca e la Chiesa greco-cattolica ucraina, sostenendo quest'ultima l'ingresso della Galizia orientale nello stato ucraino⁵.

Le tensioni scoppiate dopo il novembre 1918 dimostrano l'importanza delle istituzioni religiose nel movimento di emancipazione nazionale degli ucraini e, allo stesso tempo, il carattere molto sensibile del problema religioso e nazionale nell'area centro-orientale del continente⁶. Altre divergenze portate avanti dai contrasti nazionali si riscontrarono tra i cattolici polacchi e quelli lituani. Mentre il clero lituano difendeva le aspirazioni nazionali del proprio popolo sperando che Vilnius sarebbe stata la futura capitale del paese, il clero polacco si schierò da parte dell'idea di includere la città dentro i confini della Polonia ridelineata⁷.

Il secondo polo di potere dell'impero dualista, l'Ungheria, doveva affrontare il problema del distacco delle province che aveva voluto integrare in

⁴ Konrad Reppen, „La politica estera dei papi nel periodo delle guerre mondiali”, in *Storia della chiesa*, a cura di Hubert Jedin, vol. X, Milano, Jaca Book, 1995, pp. 45-52.

⁵ Yves Chiron, *Pio XI. Il papa dei Patti Lateranensi e dell' opposizione ai totalitarismi*, per l'edizione italiana, San Paolo, 2006, pp. 101-102.

⁶ Konrad Sadowski, „Religious Exclusion and State Building: The Roman-Catholic Church and the Attempted Revival of Greek Catholicism in the Chelm Region, 1918-1924,” in Zvi Gitelman et al. *Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Essays in Honour of Roman Szporluk*, Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 509-520.

⁷ Yves Chiron, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

uno stato forte⁸. La separazione dei croati fu seguita dalla partenza dei romeni, che lasciarono anch'essi la Doppia monarchia. A seguito del fallimento dei negoziati tra romeni ed ungheresi ad Arad, l'assemblea di Alba Iulia validò le azioni politiche avviate dall'élite del movimento nazionale⁹.

Le élite ecclesiastiche cattoliche aderirono ai progetti nazionali dei rispettivi popoli. Volendo mantenere l'integrità territoriale dell'Ungheria, sin dall'autunno del 1918 i *leaders* politici di Budapest cercarono di ottenere l'appoggio del Vaticano tramite l'episcopato cattolico ungherese. Inviarono, quindi, a Roma brochures, giornali storici, religiosi e culturali per dimostrare il carattere magiaro dei territori richiesti da slovacchi, serbi e romeni¹⁰. In una memoria indirizzata al pontefice Benedetto XV il 20 novembre 1918, il cardinale János Csernoch, primate della Chiesa cattolica ungherese, diceva che le minoranze nazionali non volevano separarsi perché godevano di libertà religiosa e diritti civili. Nel caso in cui alla fine fossero state soddisfatte queste rivendicazioni territoriali, ribadiva Csernoch, la sopravvivenza economica dell'Ungheria sarebbe stata impossibile per mancanza di materie prime. Oltre all'argomento economico, quest'ultimo sorprendente per un alto prelato, il cardinale Csernoch aveva citato un altro motivo ancora per sensibilizzare i circoli romani, il rischio di spartire le diocesi cattoliche, dunque la diminuzione del numero dei fedeli cattolici dell'Ungheria e di conseguenza l'indebolimento della forza del cattolicesimo. Nella chiusura del documento, il primate esigeva dal pontefice di intervenire presso le potenze dell'Intesa per rendere sicuri i vecchi confini dell'Ungheria¹¹.

Dall'altra parte, il Consiglio Nazionale per l'Unità dei Romeni, un'organizzazione creata nelle file dell'emigrazione romana nell'agosto del 1918 a Parigi, decise nell'autunno dello stesso anno di inviare in Vaticano mons. Vladimir Ghika il quale, avvalendosi degli eccellenti rapporti che aveva presso la Curia romana, difese gli interessi della Romania e dell'unione di tutti i romeni.¹² Attraverso ripetuti interventi, argomentò l'unione della Transilvania con la Romania in base al diritto di autodeterminazione dei popoli. Si era impegnato nel contempo a contrastare le istanze e le petizioni indirizzate al Vaticano dall'episcopato cattolico dell'Ungheria. Accanto a mons. Ghika, fu anche il sacerdote Alexandru Nicolescu, canonico a Blaj e più tardi metropolita della Chiesa Romana Unita, a difendere gli interessi dei romeni, a nome del Consiglio Dirigente, struttura di guida creata dai *leaders* del movimento

⁸ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰ Rita Tolomeo, *La Santa Sede e il mondo danubiano-pontico. Problemi nazionali e religioni, 1875-1921*, Roma, Ed. La Fenice, 1996, p. 97.

¹¹ *Eadem*.

¹² Adela Herban, *op. cit.*, p. 44-45.

nazionale romeno dopo l'assemblea di Alba Iulia. Il padre Nicolescu inviò delle memorie alla Santa Sede informando le autorità vaticane sull'andamento degli eventi in Transilvania alla fine della guerra. Quest'ultimo tenne, nel contempo, talune conferenze pubbliche a favore degli interessi nazionali dei romeni¹³.

Sulle conseguenze dell'unione della Transilvania con la Romania sul piano religioso si soffermò il nunzio di Vienna nel rapporto inviato al Vaticano all'inizio del mese di gennaio 1919. Il nunzio Theodore Valfrè di Bonzo descriveva gli eventi avvenuti in Transilvania - l'Assemblea di Alba Iulia e la partecipazione dei vescovi uniti a fianco degli ortodossi - e analizzava la Proclamazione dell'unione con il vecchio regno della Romania segnalando al cardinale Pietro Gasparri i provvedimenti riguardanti i culti religiosi. Nel rapporto non mancano, peraltro, considerazioni sulla posizione minoritaria del culto cattolico del nuovo Stato romeno e il nunzio espresse la speranza che la libertà religiosa sarebbe stata rispettata e che, una volta scomparso il regime zarista nella Russia, l'unione con Roma "avrà un terreno più fertile per poter allargarsi". Non per l'ultimo, il nunzio non escludeva la possibilità per la Romania di concludere, dopo il trattato di pace, un concordato con la Santa Sede. La speranza del nunzio in merito si basava su ciò che gli era stato riferito dal vescovo greco-cattolico di Gherla, Iuliu Hossu che fu rassicurato dal re Ferdinando in tal senso, e su un rapporto del vescovo greco-cattolico di Oradea, Demetriu Radu in cui venivano approfondite le conseguenze dell'unione della Transilvania con la Romania dalla prospettiva degli interessi della Chiesa cattolica¹⁴.

La propaganda condotta dalle autorità insieme alle organizzazioni politiche e confessionali ungheresi prima e dopo l'apertura dei lavori della Conferenza di pace di Parigi presso gli ambienti politici, economici e confessionali occidentali spinsero i *leaders* politici che avevano guidato le delegazioni della Romania alla Conferenza di pace di includere tra i rispettivi membri anche sacerdoti cattolici romeni, tra cui Ioan Coltor, prete greco-cattolico che aveva molteplici contatti presso i circoli cattolici francesi. Sin dal febbraio 1919, Coltor aveva avviato rapporti con varie personalità cattoliche francesi, tra cui il cardinale Ametté, l'arcivescovo di Parigi. Questo successo fu alleggerito dall' "influsso di alcuni progetti missionari e neocoloniali degli ambienti cattolici e militari francesi"¹⁵, giacché l'artefice dell'azione missionaria francese

¹³ Una din conferințe a fost susținută la Academia Pontificală, cf. I. Georgescu, *Momente din viața Bisericii Unite în ultimii zece ani (1918-1928)*, București, Atelierele Grafice „Cultura Națională”, 1929, p. 13.

¹⁴ Adela Herban, *op. cit.*, p. 47-48.

¹⁵ Catherine Durandin, *Discurs politic și modernizare în România*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2001, p. 172.

che si rivolgeva ai Balcani e al Medio Oriente era il Comitato cattolico degli amici francesi all'estero. Alla fine del 1919 e all'inizio dell'anno successivo, un numero considerevole di prelati francesi avevano visitato Costantinopoli e i Balcani. Arrivati a Bucarest, questi notarono la presenza piuttosto scarsa del clero francese sul posto nonostante le condizioni favorevoli al lavoro missionario, ma anche il fatto che c'era una Chiesa greco-cattolica in Transilvania che alimentava *“la speranza di penetrazione della Chiesa di Roma verso questo spazio di confine”*¹⁶.

A Parigi, sia il premier Ion I.C. Brătianu sia il suo successore Alexandru Vaida-Voevod ebbero degli incontri con mons. Bonaventura Cerretti, allora segretario della Congregazione per gli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, e le discussioni furono incentrate sul tema della libertà confessionale con la speranza che la Romania avrebbe potuto intrattenere dei rapporti diplomatici con la Santa Sede¹⁷. Allo stesso tempo, gli incontri diedero alla parte romena la possibilità di togliere alcuni sospetti sul futuro delle comunità cattoliche nella Romania, diffusi attraverso le memorie inviate alla Santa Sede dai vescovi cattolici ungheresi della Transilvania in cui questi avvertivano in ordine alle imminenti persecuzioni *“che i romeni vorranno fare alle minorità confessionali”*¹⁸.

A sua volta, il governo magiaro, con a capo Károly Mihály, avviò alcune iniziative allo scopo di concludere rapporti diplomatici con la Santa Sede, poichè in alcuni ambienti politici ed ecclesiastici ungheresi si riscontrava l'idea che il riconoscimento da parte del Vaticano avrebbe potuto fungere da migliore garanzia per la conservazione dell'integrità dell'Ungheria. Il primo a fare esplorazioni in merito fu Oszkar Charmant, nel febbraio 1919 a Roma, in veste di incaricato straordinario e di ministro plenipotenziario. Dopo le discussioni preliminari, la Santa Sede accettò di intrattenere rapporti diplomatici e quindi di aprire una Nunziatura Apostolica a Budapest, il premier Károly nella lettera inviata il 19 marzo 1919 ringraziò papa Benedetto XV per la disponibilità¹⁹. Dopo le dimissioni del governo Károly e l'arrivo dei bolscevichi al potere in Ungheria, la Santa Sede non abbandonò l'idea di aprire una Nunziatura a Budapest e, quindi, le trattative furono svolte nell'estate del 1919 tra il nunzio Valfrè di Bonzo e il conte Bethlen István in quanto rappresentante del governo di Szeged. Durante le discussioni, il conte Bethlen su suggerimento del cardinale Csernoch, chiese per il primato della Chiesa cattolica dell'Ungheria di avere la giurisdizione spirituale sui cattolici che si trovavano fuori dall'Ungheria, ma la finalità politica di questa domanda fu

¹⁶ *Eadem*, p. 171, 192.

¹⁷ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁹ Rita Tolomeo, *op. cit.*, p. 102-105.

percepita dalla Curia romana²⁰. Comunque, i progetti e le proposte inviate da ambienti cattolici ungheresi sopravvalutavano il ruolo del Vaticano negli affari internazionali di allora²¹.

Dall'altro canto, era normale l'interesse del Vaticano nel regolare la situazione della Chiesa cattolica negli stati formati dopo la "Grande guerra" oppure che avevano aumentato il territorio nazionale, residuando la diversità religiosa dello spazio centro-orientale del continente, l'intreccio tra religione e nazionalismo e la necessità di sistemare le giurisdizioni ecclesiastiche in conformità con le nuove frontiere politiche²². Questo obiettivo era complementare ad un'altra dimensione della politica internazionale promossa dalla Santa Sede nel primo dopoguerra, oltre all'aumento del numero delle rappresentanze diplomatiche. La gran parte dei paesi dell'Europa fu interessata ad avere rapporti diplomatici con la Santa Sede. Se all'inizio del conflitto quest'ultima intratteneva relazioni diplomatiche con 17 Stati, il numero delle rappresentanze pontificie di vari livelli arrivò a 27 nel 1922²³.

Infatti Benedetto XV e il suo segretario di stato Pietro Gasparri avevano capito quanto fosse importante adattare la Chiesa cattolica alla nuova architettura politico-territoriale che sarebbe stata presto sancita dai trattati di pace di Parigi e quindi erano riusciti a stabilire in breve tempo rapporti diplomatici con tutti gli Stati successori dell'Impero austro-ungarico²⁴. *È molto rilevante in merito la lettera indirizzata da papa Benedetto XV al cardinale Gasparri in occasione della conclusione dell'armistizio con l'Austria: „Egli è che la Chiesa, società perfetta, che ha per unico fine la santificazione degli uomini di ogni tempo e di ogni paese, come si adatta alle diverse forme di Governo, così accetta senza veruna difficoltà le legittime variazioni territoriali e politiche dei popoli”,* scriveva il papa. Nel suo riscontro, Gasparri non nascondeva le sue paure sul futuro dell'Europa ed era poco fiducioso negli Stati nuovamente creati, che avrebbero dovuto resistere alla minaccia bolscevica oppure stavano per scontrarsi a causa delle insoddisfazioni sulle nuove frontiere con i Paesi vicini²⁵. Preoccupato dall'avvenire della Chiesa cattolica e dei suoi fedeli, nell'allocuzione fatta il 21 novembre 1921, il papa Benedetto XV attirò l'attenzione sul fatto che i nuovi Stati oppure quelli

²⁰ *Eadem*, p. 109.

²¹ Eördögh István, *Erdély Román Megszállása*, Szeged: Laczi, 2000, p. 86. Colgo l'occasione per ringraziare il collega Lónhárt Tamás per avermi segnalato il volume e per la traduzione delle pagine utili alla stesura del presente articolo.

²² Ioan-Marius Bucur, *Din istoria Bisericii greco-catolice române (1918-1953)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editrice Accent, 2003, p. 49.

²³ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 153.

radicalmente modificati dopo la guerra non avrebbero potuto richiedere privilegi concessi nel passato per Concordati o convenzioni speciali. La Santa Sede manifestava invece la disponibilità a trattare con le autorità politiche di ogni singolo Stato, dichiarando al contempo che sarebbe stata inaccettabile qualsiasi violazione dei diritti e delle libertà della Chiesa²⁶.

Come già detto, fin dal periodo che precede la conclusione della guerra, i dirigenti politici romeni erano consapevoli di quanto fosse importante avere dei rapporti formali e siglare un accordo con la Santa Sede e le discussioni fatte durante la conferenza di pace di Parigi avevano aperto la strada per sistemare i rapporti bilaterali. L'esistenza tra i confini della Grande Romania di una considerevole comunità cattolica che contava quasi tre milioni di fedeli (la più importante minoranza religiosa nello Stato romeno del dopoguerra), l'aumento del numero delle diocesi da due a dieci, tra cui sei di rito latino e quattro di rito orientale e la necessità di regolamentare lo statuto giuridico del culto cattolico con i suoi diversi riti, costituirono la base per organizzare i rapporti diplomatici tra la Romania e la Santa Sede e pervenire alla conclusione di un accordo²⁷. *Tuttavia, la necessità di avere un'architettura istituzionale coerente per la Chiesa cattolica della Romania, era soltanto uno dei motivi che esigevano la conclusione di un Concordato tra la Romania e la Santa Sede. Tra gli obiettivi da raggiungere c'erano ancora la base dei rapporti tra le istituzioni ecclesiastiche e l'autorità dello Stato, il quadro legale per il funzionamento della Chiesa, i problemi del patrimonio ecclesiastico, le scuole confessionali, i limiti del controllo civile sull'attività della Chiesa (jus supremæ inspectionis) e via dicendo. Entrambe le parti erano dunque profondamente interessate ad arrivare ad un accordo sui diritti e obblighi reciproci*²⁸.

*Dopo la conclusione del trattato di pace di Trianon fu possibile l'avvio di relazioni diplomatiche tra lo Stato romeno e la Santa Sede, e, quindi, si aprirono le negoziazioni per stabilire il quadro legale dunque i diritti e i doveri della Chiesa cattolica in Romania. In base al rapporto fatto da Duiliu Zamfirescu, ministro degli affari esteri, Dimitrie C. Penescu fu nominato per decreto reale inviato straordinario e ministro plenipotenziario della Romania presso la Santa Sede*²⁹. Nel telegramma inviato il 28 luglio 1920 al ministro degli affari esteri Duiliu Zamfirescu, il cardinale segretario di Stato Pietro Gasparri esprimeva la soddisfazione per la nomina di un diplomatico romeno presso la Santa Sede e dichiarava l'intento del Vaticano di aprire una Nunziatura a Bucarest. In occasione dell'udienza

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ Ioan-Marius Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.

²⁸ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

²⁹ *La Romania e la Santa Sede*, p. 23. L'alto decreto no. 2543 bis del 12 giugno 1920 per la nomina di Dimitrie C. Pennescu quale inviato straordinario e ministro plenipotenziario del Regno della Romania presso la Santa Sede.

con papa Benedetto XV, il 29 luglio 1920, il ministro Penescu sottolineò il significato della sua nomina per lo sviluppo dei rapporti diplomatici bilaterali e al contempo esprese la speranza che “un accordo sincero e duraturo” tra le due parti sarebbe stato possibile. Dopo la cerimonia che ebbe luogo alla presenza del Sovrano Pontefice, il ministro Penescu fu ricevuto in udienza dal cardinale Gasparri. Le discussioni si soffermarono anche sul tema del concordato, proponendo il cardinale Gasparri di avviare le trattative in merito alla fine di settembre oppure all’inizio del mese successivo³⁰. Nominato l’1 settembre 1920, il primo nunzio apostolico della Santa Sede a Bucarest, l’arcivescovo Francesco Marmaggi arrivò in Romania il 17 ottobre 1920³¹.

Le iniziative che miravano la realizzazione di un accordo con la Santa Sede si concretizzarono verso la fine della guerra e subito dopo, senza tener conto delle iniziative piuttosto timide e senza finalità che si riscontrarono nella seconda metà del XIX secolo. Nell’autunno del 1918, dietro richiesta de I. G. Duca, uno dei capi del Partito Liberale, il sacerdote greco-cattolico e futuro vescovo Ioan Bălan concepì un progetto di concordato, ma il coinvolgimento della Romania in guerra e gli eventi dell’ultima parte dello stesso anno 1918 rimandarono le discussioni intorno al progetto³². Dopo la fine del conflitto, il prete greco-cattolico Vasile Lucaciu fu incaricato di avviare il dialogo con i rappresentanti del Vaticano con la prospettiva di arrivare ad un concordato. Siccome all’inizio del 1920 non c’erano rapporti diplomatici tra Romania e la Santa Sede, fu necessario avere l’accordo della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali perchè il padre Lucaciu potesse fungere da rappresentante plenipotenziario del governo romeno³³. Invece, la caduta del governo guidato da Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, a metà marzo del 1920, pose fine alla missione del suo emissario a Roma. Tuttavia, il clero greco-cattolico non rinunciò all’idea di inviare a Roma un progetto proprio di concordato e, quindi, venne incaricato a stilare il documento il canonico Alexandru Nicolescu, il procuratore della Chiesa Romana Unita presso la Santa Sede³⁴. Il progetto aveva 30 articoli e fu presentato a mons. B. Ceretti, il quale dichiarò che il progetto del concordato da trattare tra la Romania e la Santa Sede si sarebbe dovuto redigere con l’accordo delle due parti³⁵. Su richiesta del metropolita Vasile Suci, il testo scritto dal canonico Nicolescu fu discusso dai vescovi greco-cattolici e, quindi, l’eparca di Oradea Demetriu Radu predispose un proprio progetto, auspicando di essere incaricato dal nuovo governo guidato

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 25-26.

³¹ Ion Dumitru-Snagov, *România în diplomația Vaticanului*, p. 45.

³² Ioan-Marius Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³³ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 155-156.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 157.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

da Alexandru Averescu a portare avanti le discussioni con la Santa Sede³⁶. Elaborato in conformità con i principi del codice di diritto canonico, questo progetto non teneva conto “*dei nostri pregiudizi*”, secondo quanto detto da M. Theodorian-Carada al vescovo Radu³⁷.

L'interesse delle autorità romene per concludere il concordato spinse la Santa Sede a proporre, a breve termine dopo l'arrivo a Bucarest del primo nunzio apostolico, un proprio progetto di concordato. Formato da 34 articoli, il documento definiva la Chiesa cattolica della Romania quale “*Religione Cattolica Apostolica Romana*”, composta da tre riti: latino, greco-romeno e greco-ruteno. Il progetto aveva ovviamente l'impronta della visione della Santa Sede sul luogo, ruolo e l'organizzazione ideale della Chiesa cattolica della Romania³⁸. Il governo guidato da Alexandru Averescu non fu, però, del tutto soddisfatto del progetto inoltrato dalla Santa Sede e, dunque, la parte romena scrisse un nuovo progetto in cui venivano tutelati gli interessi dello stato romeno. Le modifiche apportate avevano quale obiettivo, tra l'altro, l'organizzazione amministrativa e istituzionale dei riti greco-cattolico romeno e latino, le procedure da seguire nella nomina degli arcivescovi e vescovi, il riconoscimento del diritto del padrone per il re della Romania, l'organizzazione dell'insegnamento confessionale, l'attività degli ordini religiosi ecc³⁹. L'insistenza delle autorità di Bucarest per l'inserimento dell'articolo che prevedeva il diritto di suprema ispezione dello Stato sulle attività della Chiesa cattolica della Romania era giustificato da ragioni politiche, secondo quanto comunicato dal ministro dei Culti e delle Arti Octavian Ogoga all' inviato della Romania presso la Santa Sede, D. Penescu: “*nelle circostanze speciali del nostro paese, il problema religioso si confonde spesso con il problema di nazionalità e ogni tanto la Chiesa viene presentata come una facciata per promuovere degli interessi che non hanno niente a che fare con la religione. Lo stato penserà a sorvegliare che tendenze di questo tipo non avvengano mai sul territorio della Romania*”⁴⁰.

Rispetto al progetto proposto da Bucarest nella primavera del 1921, i vertici del Vaticano inviarono una nuova versione del progetto di concordato con alcuni provvedimenti più rigorosi e con un contenuto meno ampio nei diritti che concedeva allo stato romeno⁴¹. Neanche questo progetto fu, peraltro, gradito dalle autorità romene. Informati discretamente dal ministro dei Culti

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

³⁷ M. Theodorian-Carada, *Acțiunea Sfântului Scaun în România*, București, l'Editrice dell'autore, 1936, p. 8.

³⁸ Per un'analisi dettagliata del progetto si veda L. Turcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-173.

³⁹ Ioan-Marius Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁴⁰ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁴¹ Il testo è stato pubblicato da Adela Herban in *op. cit.*, pp. 287-293; l'analisi del progetto si veda a Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.

Octavian Goga, i vescovi ortodossi del paese protestarono energicamente per la prima volta dopo l'inizio delle trattative contro ciò che definivano le esagerate richieste fatte dalla Santa Sede nell'ultimo progetto di concordato⁴². Inoltre, la pubblicazione nella stampa di alcune informazioni sulle trattative con il Vaticano fece scoppiare una campagna intensa, portata avanti da alcuni settori del clero e del laicato ortodosso, contro i negoziati in corso. Alcune associazioni e organizzazioni dei laici inviarono delle memorie al governo e al Parlamento, chiedendo appunto la sospensione delle trattative che ledevano gli interessi dello Stato e della Chiesa Ortodossa Romana⁴³. Questi accesi dibattiti ebbero risonanza anche nel Parlamento. Rispondendo alle critiche, il ministro dei Culti Octavian Goga dichiarò che l'iniziativa della Romania di concludere un concordato con la Santa Sede non era singolare, perché molti Stati che avevano al loro interno comunità di fedeli cattolici, si erano già spinti in questa direzione. Secondo il ministro, il concordato era *"una necessità di stato che nessuno può contrastare in modo legittimo"*⁴⁴.

Tornati al potere nel gennaio 1922 i liberali non negarono la necessità di arrivare ad un accordo con la Santa Sede, tuttavia, rinviarono le discussioni sostenendo che fosse prioritario adottare la nuova Costituzione. In un tal contesto, i vescovi di rito latino e di rito orientale scrissero due progetti sperando che dopo l'uscita della nuova Costituzione, i *leaders* di Bucarest avrebbero avuto la volontà politica di riprendere le trattative sul tema del concordato con la Santa Sede⁴⁵. Un anno dopo la promulgazione della legge fondamentale, il governo decise di riprendere i negoziati, rivolgendosi come primo passo alla Nunziatura Apostolica di Bucarest⁴⁶. Dopo più turni di discussioni con i delegati del governo, mons. Dolci, il nunzio, mise a punto un proprio progetto⁴⁷. Durante le trattative condotte a Roma da Constantin Banu e Zenovie Pâclișanu da parte romena, si ottenne la modifica di alcuni articoli. Le discussioni interrotte nell'agosto 1924 furono riprese soltanto nel marzo 1925, la parte romena ottenne la revisione di alcuni articoli. I negoziati si conclusero nel gennaio 1926 quando si pervenne ad una versione gradita ad entrambe le parti, però siccome erano al termine del loro mandato ed essendo interessati piuttosto alla vita politica interna, i liberali rinviarono la firma dell'accordo⁴⁸.

Le trattative furono riprese, durante il governo Averescu, dal ministro

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 180.

⁴³ Ioan-Marius Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁴⁴ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

⁴⁵ L'analisi dei due progetti si veda a Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-191.

⁴⁶ Ioan-Marius Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 52; Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁴⁷ Lucian Turcu, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁴⁸ Ioan-Marius Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

dei Culti Vasile Goldiș, il quale, partendo dal progetto dei liberali, chiese alla Santa Sede di accettare alcuni cambiamenti di modo che il testo del concordato fosse in accordo con i provvedimenti del progetto della legge dei culti⁴⁹. Gli ultimi dettagli furono messi a punto di comune accordo, a Roma, a partire dal 27 aprile, da Vasile Goldiș accompagnato dal ministro della Romania presso la Santa Sede, Demetriu C. Pennescu e Barbu Constantinescu, consigliere di legazione⁵⁰. Durante le trattative, Vasile Goldiș lesse una dichiarazione in cui il governo romeno teneva per sé il diritto di rendere pubblico il concordato e la sua ratifica nel Parlamento, dopo la promulgazione della legge dei culti, procedura gradita alla Santa Sede. Il testo del concordato fu firmato finalmente il 10 maggio 1927 da Vasile Goldiș e dal cardinale segretario di Stato Pietro Gasparri⁵¹.

Nonostante il provvedimento del Concordato, tramite l'articolo XXIV, che *"lo scambio delle ratifiche avrà luogo a Roma al più presto possibile"*, la procedura non fu messa in pratica. Anche se le trattative finali e la firma del Concordato non furono portate alla conoscenza dell'opinione pubblica, alla vigilia e dopo la firma del Concordato, alcune persone, organizzazioni e associazioni ortodosse del clero e del laicato riattivarono la campagna contro il Concordato. I critici dell'accordo ribadirono tra l'altro che per i provvedimenti dell'articolo 2 che stabiliva il modo di organizzazione della gerarchia cattolica della Romania con i suoi tre riti, s'ignorò l'articolo 22 della Costituzione perché la Chiesa greco-cattolica diventò da una "Chiesa romena", un semplice rito della Chiesa cattolica. Si è detto in seguito che attraverso il concordato la Chiesa Unita è stata limitata al territorio della Transilvania, e *"i cattolici del resto della Romania entreranno sotto la giurisdizione della metropoli di Bucarest che era di rito latino"*⁵². Dopo le dimissioni del governo Averescu, il 5 giugno 1927, il nuovo governo di coalizione presieduto da Barbu Știrbei riportò a capo del ministero dei culti Alexandru Lapedatu, già ministro nello stesso campo durante i governi di Ion I. C. Brătianu e Vintilă Brătianu. Alexandru Lapedatu fu messo al corrente con la firma del Concordato ma preferì, come, del resto, il suo predecessore Vasile Goldiș, ottenere, prima della ratifica del Concordato, il voto del Parlamento sulla legge dei Culti. Se questo obiettivo fu compiuto nell'aprile 1928, la validazione del Concordato fu nuovamente rinviata da parte romena. Il motivo venne presentato il 30 gennaio 1920 al Sovrano Pontefice durante l'udienza accordata al ministro degli Affari Esteri Nicolae Titulescu, il quale rassicurò che il governo romeno voleva ratificare il concordato ma

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁵⁰ Adela Herban, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁵¹ *România-Vatican. Relații diplomatice*, vol. I, 1920-1950, Doc. Nr. 15, pp. 32-44.

⁵² I.-M. Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

desiderava avere la certezza che ci fossero tutte le garanzie sull'effettiva assenza di svantaggi per lo stato romeno. Dunque, il 20 luglio Titulescu inviò per via ufficiale una nota al mons. Angelo Dolci, il nunzio apostolico a Bucarest, in cui sosteneva che onde evitare "una seria opposizione" che sarebbe potuta accadere durante i dibattiti, si sarebbero dovuti chiarire alcuni provvedimenti nel testo del concordato⁵³. Nell'autunno dello stesso anno, il nunzio Dolci fu in grado di rispondere tramite una nota alle precisazioni e chiarimenti richiesti da Bucarest⁵⁴.

Il progetto di legge per la ratifica del concordato fu inizialmente affidato al Senato della Romania. I dibattiti nella camera superiore del Parlamento furono estremamente accesi e gli avversari del trattato si raggrupparono intorno a Nicolae Bălan, il metropolita ortodosso della Transilvania⁵⁵. Nel proprio discorso il metropolita Nicolae contestò la legalità dell'accordo, dichiarando che secondo la Costituzione del paese (articolo 22) i rapporti tra Stato e culti dovevano essere regolamentati per legge, invece, nel caso della Chiesa cattolica questi rapporti erano stabiliti attraverso un accordo internazionale ciò che era contrario al principio dell'uguaglianza delle religioni e al contempo il concordato conferiva alla Chiesa cattolica uno statuto privilegiato a dispetto della Chiesa ortodossa dominante e, quindi, danneggiava gravemente la sovranità dello Stato romeno. Il ministro del Culti, Aurel Vlad, rifiutò invece l'accusa di mancanza di costituzionalità affermando che si trattava di una legge basata su una convenzione internazionale, posto che il capo spirituale della Chiesa cattolica si trova fuori dai confini della Romania⁵⁶. Tramite il concordato, ribadiva il metropolita Nicolae, lo Stato romeno ha confermato "l'abuso compiuto da Roma pontificia con il concorso della monarchia austro-ungarica nel 1700". Allora, nell'opinione dell'alto prelado ortodosso, invece di contribuire alla cancellazione di un'ingiustizia fatta dagli stranieri contro la Chiesa ortodossa e contro la nazione romena, appoggiandola nel rifacimento dell'unità di fede del popolo romeno, metteva la Chiesa greco-cattolica - "strumento del proselitismo cattolico" - sotto la protezione del concordato. Il ministro Aurel Vlad gli replicò che, invece, la Costituzione garantiva la libertà di coscienza e l'episcopato ortodosso "non deve esigere che lo Stato oppure il Ministero dei Culti anche se molto attaccati alla Chiesa Ortodossa, mettono a disposizione la loro forza per far scoppiare in mezzo a noi una guerra di religione"⁵⁷.

Il concordato fu criticato, per altre ragioni, anche dagli ungheresi

⁵³ *România-Vatican ...*, Doc. nr. 17, pp. 46-48.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, Doc. nr. 18, pp. 48-49.

⁵⁵ Nicolae Bălan, mitropolit, *Biserica împotriva Concordatului*, Sibiu, Tipografia dell'Arcidiocesi, 1929.

⁵⁶ Valentin Orga, Aurel Vlad. *Istorie și destin*, Cluj-Napoca, Editrice Argonaut, 2001, p. 405.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 407.

cattolici di rito latino e dai ruteni greco-cattolici. Uno dei rappresentanti della comunità cattolica ungherese, dr. Elémer Gyárfas, il promotore di un raduno di protesta a Cluj, dichiarò che con la conclusione del concordato, *“la Santa Sede romana ha voluto sacrificare gli interessi nazionali degli ungheresi della Romania”*⁵⁸. Negli ambienti cattolici ungheresi di Transilvania si sviluppò l’idea di inviare a Roma una delegazione *“per chiedere al papa di rinunciare alla ratifica del concordato nella sua forma di oggi”*, oppure *“di fare il possibile per convincere la Santa Sede a cambiare questo atto diplomatico”*. A propria volta, i greco-cattolici ruteni erano malcontenti perché non erano stati organizzati in una propria diocesi, bensì inseriti in un vicariato che sarebbe dovuto appartenere ad una nuova diocesi greco-cattolica da erigere nel nord della Transilvania⁵⁹.

Interventi ben più equilibrati e favorevoli alla ratifica del concordato ebbero luogo nel Senato dei *leaders* politici, sia dal potere sia dall’opposizione. Nel suo discorso, l’ex-ministro liberale dei Culti, Alexandru Lapedatu, ricordò le iniziative dei governi del dopoguerra di concludere un concordato con la Santa Sede, citando in merito le trattative condotte da Alexandru Averescu tra 1920-1921 e 1926-1927 e dal governo liberale di Ion I. C. Brătianu tra 1922-1926. Nella chiusura, Lapedatu affermò che per siffatto accordo non furono trascurati gli interessi dello Stato e dell’ortodossia romena⁶⁰. L’ultimo discorso nel Senato fu fatto da Aurel Vlad, il ministro dei Culti. Questi apportò alle critiche fatte in precedenza, argomenti storici e di diritto interno ed internazionale e alla fine raccomandò ai senatori di votare favorevolmente per la ratifica del Concordato⁶¹.

Nella Camera dei Deputati del Parlamento romeno, i dibattiti non ebbero l’ampiezza delle discussioni svolte nel Senato. Le osservazioni fatte dal metropolita Nicolae Bălan furono reiterate dal deputato Coriolan Buracu, il quale dichiarò di appoggiare le opinioni del metropolita Bălan⁶². Punti di vista diversi espressero invece I. G. Duca e Nicolae Iorga. Duca dichiarò, quindi, che i deputati liberali avrebbero votato il progetto di legge sul concordato giacché l’esistenza di un numero significativo di cittadini di religione cattolica esigeva un *“modus vivendi per rassicurare i rapporti tra lo stato e questa confessione”*. In più, diceva I. G. Duca, tutti i Paesi *“che hanno cittadini di religione cattolica e che osservano la collaborazione tra Chiesa e Stato e non la separazione tra Chiesa e Stato si*

⁵⁸ Elemér Illyés, *National Minorities in Romania. Change in Transylvania*, East European Monographs, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 218.

⁵⁹ Adela Herban, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁶⁰ *Monitorul Oficial*, Partea a III-a, Dezbaterile parlamentare. Senatul, nr. 54, 1929, p. 1844.

⁶¹ *Monitorul Oficial*, Partea a III-a, Dezbaterile parlamentare. Senatul, nr. 55, 9 iulie 1929, p. 1857.

⁶² *Monitorul Oficial*, Partea a III-a Dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților, nr. 73, 26 iunie 1929, p. 2700-2701.

sono impegnati a concludere questo tipo di concordati”⁶³. Nel suo discorso, Nicolae Iorga insistette sul significato del concordato dalla prospettiva delle relazioni internazionali sottolineando quanto fosse importante avere buoni rapporti con “una Chiesa che ha un’influenza mondiale così grande”. Iorga si dichiarò al contempo favorevole al riconoscimento dei meriti della Chiesa greco-cattolica, asserendo, sul punto, che “sarebbe ingiusto se in questa Camera verranno negati anche dagli ortodossi più entusiasti i meriti di questa seconda Chiesa del popolo romeno”⁶⁴.

La legge per la ratifica del concordato fu adottata finalmente il 27 maggio 1929 nel Senato e due giorni più tardi nella Camera dei Deputati, e di seguito lo scambio degli strumenti di ratificazione ebbe luogo a Roma il 7 luglio 1929⁶⁵. La ratifica del concordato fu accolta con soddisfazione anche dal pontefice Pio XI, il quale sottolineava che tutti i partiti parlamentari romeni si pronunciarono favorevolmente alla ratifica e constatava “con gioia” l’unità di vedute dei partiti sui problemi importanti per il Paese. Il papa aggiunse che un concordato costituisce “un punto di partenza nella politica di uno stato” e rivelò la sua fiducia che nel caso della Romania “questo punto di partenza sarà un bell’inizio verso un futuro di grandi e nobili realizzazioni”⁶⁶.

Una volta siglato il concordato, la Romania diventò il secondo Stato dell’Europa centro-orientale con maggioranza di popolazione non cattolica e il singolo Stato a maggioranza ortodossa ad avere firmato, ratificato ed applicato un accordo di questo genere. Nonostante “il percorso tumultuoso” che precedette, accompagnò e seguì la firma e la ratifica del concordato, questo contribuì all’organizzazione della Chiesa cattolica nella Romania e al consolidamento della posizione dello Stato romeno sul piano internazionale. Fino al suo annullamento per la decisione del regime comunista nel luglio 1948, il concordato con la Santa Sede rappresentò la base di discussione e di interpretazione di tutti i problemi religiosi che riguardavano i tre riti della Chiesa cattolica in Romania.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 2705.

⁶⁵ Adela Herban, *op. cit.*, p. 108 e *Documenti diplomatici...*, p. 71.

⁶⁶ *România-Vatican...*, Doc. nr. 20, pp. 52-53.

David Mitrany during the First World War. Some Ambiguities in His Biography

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Abstract: David Mitrany during the First World War. Some Ambiguities in his Biography. In this paper, I will attempt to provide another overview of the David Mitrany activity in his first years in England (1908-1918), to emphasise the important role played by his Romanian origin on his work during the First World War, but also to fill in some gaps remained in his *official* biography for that period. In this respect, I opposed some information collected from David Mitrany personal collection to several details from the literature presenting him with a 'diplomatic and intelligence work' in the wartime. These new data provide us another meaning for many of his works in the interwar period.

Keywords: David Mitrany, intelligence, diplomacy, Romanian Legation to London, Foreign Office

Rezumat: David Mitrany în timpul Primului Război Mondial. Unele ambiguități din biografia sa. În acest articol, voi încerca să prezint o altă perspectivă asupra activității lui David Mitrany în primii săi ani din Anglia (1908-1918), să subliniez rolul important pe care l-a jucat originea sa românească asupra activității sale din Primul Război Mondial, dar și să completez unele omisiuni rămase în biografia sa *oficială* pentru acea perioadă. În acest sens, am opus unei informații provenite din arhiva personală a lui David Mitrany unor detalii din literatura care îl prezintă cu „activitate diplomatică și de intelligence” în anii războiului. Aceste noi date ne oferă un alt sens pentru multe dintre lucrările sale din perioada interbelică.

Cuvinte-cheie: David Mitrany, intelligence, diplomație, Legația României la Londra, Foreign Office

David Mitrany remains famous through his functionalist approach to international affairs influencing the theoretical debate for several decades.

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Dorothy Anderson presented some data about his Romanian origins rewriting some details from his *Memoirs*² and adding even less information. In fact, his biography is very lacunar and, I would say, even ambiguous in some respects. These gaps in Mitrany's biography could be filled by studying also his personal collection from Library of London School of Economics and Political Science. This collection includes more proves about his life that help us give a proper meaning to many of his works.

There is little reference in literature about David Mitrany's life. The autobiographical chapter from his last book and the famous article written by Anderson in 1998 became the most quoted sources describing his life. A closer analysis of the two sources, corroborated with that provided by James T. Shotwell, in 1924, and confronted with David Mitrany's personal collection from LSE's Library, paves the way for new interpretations. In this article, I chose to pursue David Mitrany until 1918 insisting on his origins in Romania and his presumed intelligence activity during the First World War. I started, in my analysis, from an undemonstrated statement made by Dorothy Anderson in 1998 and in 2004 that between 1914 and 1918 David Mitrany had a 'diplomatic and intelligence work'.³ Without any bibliographical reference, she slipped such an important detail of Mitrany's life. Just this ambiguity determined me to seek for more evidences on this detail. I think that clarifying this part of his first years in England helps us to define properly his intellectual and professional path during the interwar period.

In this paper, starting from the above-mentioned sources, I present my considerations about his early life and the important role played by his Romanian origin during the First World War.

The method of analysis in this paper is that of deductive reasoning, benefiting from the chance to read Mitrany's personal collection at LSE's Library. Even though the analysis period is 1908-1918, my target is presumed 'intelligence and diplomatic work' relating to Romania, leaving aside a deeper analysis of his papers or of his debut in journalism in the same period.

Coming into contact with the United Kingdom

David Mitrany was born on 1st of January 1888 in Bucharest in a Jewish family. His surname is known as a Sephardic Jewish name frequently found in this country. M. A. Halevy noted that they were traders settled in Walachia

² David Mitrany, "The Making of the Functional Theory. Memoirs", In David Mitrany, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, London School of Economics & Political Science: Martin Robertson, 1975, pp. 3-82.

³ Dorothy Anderson, "David Mitrany (1888-1975): An Appreciation of His Life and Work." *Review of International Studies*. 24.4, 1998, p. 577.

starting from 1496 after they had fled from Spain due to anti-Semitic persecution. These Sephardic Jews seem to arrive in Walachia via Vienna, but also from different Italian cities. One of these cities was Trani, hence the name Mitrani. Just since 1730, during the ruling of Nicholas Mavrocordatos in Walachia, the Sephardic Jews from Bucharest were acknowledged.⁴

Particularly about David Mitrany's family we know that his parents, Moscu and Jeannette, lived in Romania even after the First World War and his brother, whom name we do not know, moved to Paris, acting as a doctor.⁵

After the accomplishment of his military service in Romania, David Mitrany moved to Hamburg. There are very little data about the three years spent in this German city and they are pretty unclear. Mitrany wrote, in 1969, that he attended 'evening classes at the Kolonial Institut, the precursor of the University of Hamburg'.⁶ It is not clear the status that Mitrany had in those classes. He insisted just on the impact on his intellectual preoccupations to work 'in a business office' and to 'come across the new ways dealing with the social problem, beyond mere charity'.⁷

A very interesting *Sunday* is mentioned in his Hamburgean life when 'an older acquaintance - later to become one of the city's leading lawyers and a judge' facilitated the entrance of young Mitrany to 'a group of factory apprentices at a social settlement'.⁸ We would have a hard mission if we propose to learn more about his benefactor or even about the place of this revelation because no any other data about his life earlier than 1916 we could learn from his personal collection at LSE's Library.

In any case, in autumn of 1912 he enrolled at the LSE. Among his professors Mitrany preferred to mention only L. T. Hobhouse and Graham Wallas. In that period G. Lowes Dickinson and Clement Attlee had been teaching also at LSE.

I suppose that David Mitrany lived, at least before the outbreak of the Great War, in Tooting, a southern suburb of London. During his LSE studentship he worked in Tooting both as a social worker in a settlement of the Shaftesbury Society of Fairlight Hall and as an advisor for teenagers seeking jobs being a member of the Juvenile Advisory Committee of the Tooting Labour Exchange. 'Labour exchanges' were a 1909 creation of the Liberal Government of H. H. Asquith government, namely of David Lloyd George as Chancellor of Exchequer (1908-1915).

⁴ Cernovodeanu, Paul. *The History of the Jews in Romania 1 1*. Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 2005.

⁵ David Mitrany, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

In wartime, Mitrany was involved 'into intelligence work relating to South-Eastern Europe for both the Foreign Office and the War Office'.⁹ However, Dorothy Anderson noted that he was 'for a while attached to the Romanian Legation in London'.¹⁰ This fact appears only in her article, without any biographical reference. Just indirectly we could suppose that Mitrany would have collaborated, in 1914, with the named Legation when he translated into Romanian the British White Paper, but no prove is clear.

In 1916, he became a member of League of Nations Society, an association created to promote the idea of changing the post-war world order from the traditional balance of power towards an 'international system of peace and security'.¹¹ Of course, the meaning of his adherence to this group promoting the original idea of Bryce's group is deeper and I think that we find in it the beginning of Mitrany's collaboration with other groups in the following years developing cordial relationships with few influential persons.

For the same year, Mitrany added a little detail mentioning his participation in a 'group of foreign editors' who were 'guests ... through battered Albert on fields of Somme'.¹² It seems it was a real adventure.

In 1917, David Mitrany was designed to participate in a campaign in different cities of England alongside other four lecturers (G. Lowes Dickinson, L. Woolf, H. N. Brailsford and A. J. Grant). His correspondence with the staff of League of Nations Society reveals that he enjoyed a good appreciation and trust among his superiors.¹³ In his opinion, he was selected to take part of that team of lecturers due to his origin but also to his foreign intonation.¹⁴ In the same time his Romanian background was a key motivation of his adherence to an idea which was coming to change the old tradition in the European diplomacy:

*"My subject was 'Small States and a League of Nations', for which I seemed well suited by my origin as by my foreign intonation. Coming as I did from a small country, where resentment at the bossiness of the Great Powers was endemic, my theme might well have been a plea for straight sovereign equality among state."*¹⁵

Undoubtedly, the first three years of war gave him the opportunity to show his ability to make relevant analyses on the war evolution but also to prove his loyalty to the host country. In 1918 he became a member of the

⁹ *Ibidem.* p. 6.

¹⁰ Dorothy Anderson, *op.cit.*, p. 577.

¹¹ David Mitrany, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibidem.*, p. 48-49.

¹³ *David Mitrany Papers*, box 66, at LSE's Library.

¹⁴ David Mitrany, 1975, p. 6

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*

Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Affairs and he gave up on his membership in 1931 when the Party's leadership conditioned it with the Party's membership.

It seems that just in April 1919 he finished his 'war work' once again Mitrany keeping a dark shadow on his wartime activities.

A presumed relationship with British intelligence

One of the most interesting details about David Mitrany's work during the First World War is the 'intelligence work'. This hypothesis is encouraged in the literature just by what he noted in his *Memoirs*:

*"I was drawn into intelligence work relating to South-Eastern Europe for both the Foreign Office and the War Office."*¹⁶

David Mitrany wrote that he was 'drawn into' the intelligence work rather than he would have been 'invited' or 'desired' to be part of it. This semantic is quite present in his *Memoirs* giving the reader a wide spectrum of interpretations. If his commitment in the intelligence work in the Second World War is proved, his activity during the First World War seems to be kept intentionally in a blurred image.

The character who would have opened or drawn him on the path to this kind of activity was Sir George Prothero, famous for coordinating *Peace Handbooks*. These volumes contain documents prepared by the Historical Section of the Foreign Office to support British delegates at a peace conference. David Mitrany was involved in the document concerning Romania. However, apart from this moment, Mitrany's ties with the British intelligence are still to be sought out and explained.

So far, my considerations have been based on five sources: (1) David Mitrany, *The Making of the Functional Theory. Memoirs*, 1975; (2) Dorothy Anderson, *David Mitrany*, 1998 and 2004; (3) James T. Shotwell, *Introduction*, 1924; (4) James T. Shotwell, *Autobiography*, 1961; (5) *David Mitrany Papers* at LSE's Library, 1917, box 29.

Besides the ambiguous statement of Mitrany, in literature there are other ones slipped by James T. Shotwell¹⁷ and Dorothy Anderson¹⁸. In the first case, I consider a short presentation made by Shotwell to Mitrany in his 1924

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ James T. Shotwell, *Economic and Social History of the World War*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for Internat. Peace, 1924, pp. 33-34; James T. Shotwell, *The Autobiography of James T. Shotwell*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961, pp. 143-144.

¹⁸ Dorothy Anderson, "David Mitrany (1888-1975): An Appreciation of His Life and Work." *Review of International Studies*. 24.4, 1998, pp. 577-592; Dorothy Anderson, "Mitrany, David", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

volume, in the list of contributors. The American professor brought the following details:

*“David Mitrany – Graduate of the High School of Commerce, Bucharest, B. Sc. in Economics (London); with Rumanian Army in the Second Balkan War 1913; during the War attached to Rumanian Legation at London, at the request and at the disposal of the British authorities; worked for Foreign Office, Intelligence Development of War Office and the Ministry of Information; from July 1919, for three years on the editorial staff (foreign affairs) of Manchester Guardian; since January 1921, Foreign Editor of Manchester Guardian Commercial.”*¹⁹

Later, in his *Autobiography*, Shotwell came back with a brief mention of Mitrany, which the latter takes over in one of his self-flattering passages with which he has used the reader in his *Memoirs*:

*“My Austrian colleagues understood the situation perfectly and co-operated with good will. But I could not have carried out so great a responsibility if I had not been able to share it with David Mitrany, who not only aided in the editing the volumes on all the countries of southeastern Europe but wrote the final volume summing up, in a masterly survey, the effects of the war in the Danubian countries. Mitrany was Romanian-born but had been correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in Germany and then served in the British Foreign Office during the war. His intimate knowledge of men and events never influenced his critical objectivity, for his advice, like his writings, was in the best traditions of English Liberalism. He also worked with me on some of my adventures in peace-making during the years that followed. Finally his contributions to political thought won him the honour of a professorship in the Institute for Advances Studies in Princeton – Einstein’s colleague.”*²⁰

In both cases, Shotwell inserted some confusing data which were in contradiction even with Mitrany's chronology. Firstly, when the American Professor placed Mitrany in the Balkan War of 1913, being known that he left Romania no later than 1909, and in the fall of 1912 he became a student at the London School of Economics. Secondly, his mentioning of being ‘attached to the Romanian Legation at London, at the request and at the disposal of the British authorities’ in a time when Romania was still keeping its neutrality, seems to be a non-sense. This appears as if Mitrany was as a double agent.

¹⁹ Shotwell 1924, pp. 33-34.

²⁰ James T. Shotwell, *The Autobiography*, Bobbs-Merril, 1961, pp. 143-144.

This confusion was amplified still more since Dorothy Anderson²¹ introduced two articles that were taken in the literature on Mitrany's life. The information that David Mitrany was 'attached to the Romanian Legation in London' was squeezed by Anderson in her 1998 article. However, this detail is not found in Mitrany's *Memoirs*. In her Oxford Dictionary article, Anderson based this fact on her 'personal knowledge'²², which remains quite difficult to consider in the absence of any other evidence.

A real question mark remains on the so-called 'diplomatic work' because I have had no indication of any real involvement of Mitrany in this field at that time. Indeed, we can notice that he mentioned in his *Memoirs* that he made a translation into Romanian of the British White Paper, which was sent to Bucharest with a 'diplomatic bag', but he did not note whether it meant a British courier or a Romanian one. On the other hand, Mitrany himself described this as work done 'at speed and on my own initiative'²³, not as a diplomatic activity.

If the Mitrany's ties with the Romanian Legation in London during the First World War are not yet clear, his involvement in intelligence work seems to be marginal rather than decisive. If his intelligence activities during the Second World War were engaged and institutional, those during World War may be harder enclosed in what is called *intelligence* properly. I still keep doubts that Mitrany has already received the trust to be involved in the English intelligence operations. In this regard, two aspects are taken into account. The first one is the short duration passed since he entered the United Kingdom (1911), being naturalized only in 1924. The second one, much more concrete, relates to an exchange of letters between the War Ministry officials, that I found in the personal collection of David Mitrany.²⁴

On October 18, 1917, Sir Edward Carson sent the British Government a memorandum entitled 'Proposal mission to Romania'. The author deplored the situation in Romania as an outcome of the 'Russian collapse'. Romania's material needs were 'most urgent' but 'Roumania's geographical position' made difficult any British support. In terms of Carson 'it is also important to give any possible encouragement to the Roumanian people to continue their resistance to the enemy and to show them that their efforts to preserve a remnant of their country from the invader have won the admiration and

²¹ Dorothy Pauline Anderson (born in 1924) was the secretary of David Mitrany since May 13, 1958, and previously (1948-1957) she had been a Librarian at Hendon Technical College (see *David Mitrany Papers*, box 63).

²² Dorothy Anderson, "Mitrany, David", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

²³ David Mitrany, 1975, p. 5.

²⁴ *David Mitrany Papers*, box 29, London School of Economics Archives.

appreciation of the British Government and Nation.'²⁵

A slight jealousy can be noticed in Carson's writing when he states that the French mission of General Henri Berthelot 'has placed France in a more favourable light than ourselves in Roumanian eyes.' Edward Carson, who had been Minister without portfolio and member of the War Cabinet of David Lloyd George since July 1917 until January 1918, put forward to the Government the following five objectives that a British Mission to Roumania would have had to follow:

"To give proof of British sympathy with Roumania in the trials she is undergoing, and to encourage her to continue resistance to the enemy.

To protect British interests.

To organise British Propaganda in Roumania so far as practicable in the present military situation.

To establish in Roumania an organisation corresponding to the Anglo-Roumanian Society, to co-operate with the latter in fostering mutual good relations.

*To collect information for the British Government as to the best lines on which commercial assistance may be rendered to Roumania, and commercial relations between the two Countries encouraged for the future."*²⁶

Considering the general diplomatic context that joined the Entente's Powers in the First World War the proposed objectives for a British mission in Romania should not have disregarded the state interests of the Kingdom of Romania. It is precisely in this logic that the British official's explanation should be read in his memorandum:

"The last-mentioned of these objectives is of less urgency under existing conditions than the others, and may be regarded as only incidental to the more pressing work of the Mission. But the importance of giving Roumanians ocular demonstration of our solicitude for their safety and of our determination that their integrity and independence shall be restored, with full reparation for the wrongs they have suffered, cannot be questioned, especially in view of the fate that has hitherto befallen the small nations who have joined the Allies, and of our repeated declarations that the protection of these small nations is one of our essential war aims."

Here there is a detail that sparked my interest in finding footpaths that brought David Mitrany closer to the world of British intelligence. Edward Carson took into consideration the proposals made by Robert Donald for the staff of the projected British Mission. Donald had been, since 1904, the editor of

²⁵ Edward Carson to British War Government, 18th of October, 1918, in *David Mitrany Papers*, box 29, London School of Economics Archives.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

the *Daily Chronicle*, which in 1914 became the most read newspaper in the UK, outperforming *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, *Evening Standards* and *Daily Graphic*. Robert Donald's newspaper advocated the Liberal Party politics, including Prime Minister Lloyd George, and offered the government all the support in its war effort. From the Carson Memorandum we find out that:

"As to the personnel of the proposed Mission, it is submitted that it need not be numerous. Mr. Donald's suggestion that either Lord Hugh Cecil, president of the Anglo-Roumanian Society, or Mr. Mackinder, MP, would be a suitable head of the Mission, is endorsed by Lord Milner and Colonel Buchan, and the names of Mr. Leeper²⁷ of the Department of Information, Mr E. D. Madge and Mr. Mitrany, a Roumanian journalist, are mentioned as possessing qualifications for the work."

On the same day, a memorandum of Lord Alfred Milner was registered. He was referred to by Carson as if he were in agreement with the staff proposed for the British mission. Member of Lloyd George's five-member War Cabinet and influential member of the British intellectual and political elite, Lord Milner presented a nuance of the goals the British mission would have had to pursue:

"But there are other arguments for the Mission if we can send a sufficiently strong one. The Roumanins are much discouraged just now. One of their causes of discouragement is that they think they are being forgotten by their Western Allies, or at any rate by England. As a matter of fact we are doing a great deal more for Roumania than is commonly supposed [...] It is not, therefore, as if our Mission represented a purely platonic sympathy. We are doing – under very great difficulties and at the most enormous disadvantage, owing to distance and for the miserable communications – what we can."

"If it was only to help the Roumanians to realize this and our disposition, and also to find out, as perhaps it might, that there are other ways of helping them which do not occur to us, I think the Mission would do good."²⁸

Regarding the staff of the British Mission in Romania, Lord Milner considered particularly important the value of the people who were about to compose it, as 'it would be much better not to send a Mission at all than to send an inadequate' people. As for Lord Cecil and Professor Mackinder, he agreed, but he said that 'I know nothing of Mr. Mitrani, but if he really is a 'capable Roumanian journalist', I think he might be a valuable addition. I

²⁷ Later, Allan W. A. Leeper was an expert of the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.

²⁸ Lord Alfred Milner to British War Government, 18th of October, 1918, in *David Mitrany Papers*, box 29, London School of Economics Library.

am told he is a very clever man.'²⁹

For two reasons, I find interesting that Lord Milner said he did not know anything about Mitrany, just that he was a 'very clever man'. First of all, this can be considered as an element supporting that the David Mitrany's involvement in British intelligence activity took place earlier than 1918. Secondly, Milner was a friend of the Hobhouses, but his name was also linked to the environment in which the League of Nations Society activated during the war. From those I can assume that David Mitrany had not yet enjoyed a lobby strong enough to get into this sphere of activity.

This episode important begins to clarify partially the confusion that remains in the literature about the early years of David Mitrany's work.

I do not have any information to witness the presence of David Mitrany in the last team of the British mission. It is worth mentioning here that, in 1918, he continued to be active in London in the League of Nations Society and later in Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Affairs. None of these comes to confirm a real commitment of Mitrany in a British intelligence service or in a diplomatic one.

From my point of view, the involvement of David Mitrany in the British *intelligence* environment during the First World War was a marginal episode, but later he tried in some moments to place it in a stronger light depending on certain contexts that might have given him the chance to enhance his biography with his connection to some circles of expertise. What motivated his *contribution* to British intelligence was his desire to show his loyalty to Britain, and his work was, in many cases, voluntary and on his own initiative.

This does not diminish the importance of his writings from the perspective of the study of international affairs, in many cases he managed to demonstrate even a well-structured and well-grounded writing.

At the same time, I do not deny his participation in the promotion of a League of Nations project, but it was not coordinated directly by any government department, but by the League of Nations Society, regardless of some human resources that could have been shared with other bodies.

As such, I consider that Mitrany's participation in a series of public conferences to present the advantages of a League of Nations is not likely to support the hypothesis of intelligence activities. So I appreciate fair enough his expression 'drawn into' to describe his initial relationship with the British Intelligence Service.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

Writing about Romania during the First World War

Beyond his work on the Functionalist Approach and Marxism and peasants, the Mitrany's list of publications includes some works about Romania, most of which being published during the First World War and the others in the interwar period. For the war period, we retain the following titles:

- (1) *O cauză dreaptă* [A Right Cause] (1915)
- (2) *Rumania: Her History and Politics* (1915)
- (3) *German Penetration in Rumania* (1916)
- (4) *Greater Rumania. A Study in National Ideals* (1917).

In the aftermath of the war, he published three exclusive works about Romania, not taking into consideration those referring to the wider area of South-Eastern Europe:

- (1) *The New Rumanian Constitution* (1924)
- (2) *The Transylvanian Land Dispute* (1928)
- (3) *The Land and the Peasant in Rumania* (1930).

I would not fit these works into intelligence activity for either the Foreign Office or the Romanian Legation in London. Rather, it is about works for which he found, in the UK, an intellectual and political environment interested in the topics covered. I believe that these well-documented works and his activism within the League of Nations Society propelled him to the point he came to be proposed to the British mission team in Romania.

David Mitrany's presence in the environment that provided some reports needed for a coming peace conference can be seen by following the characters he came in contact with: Lucien Wolf and Sir George Prothero, whose common denominator was William Tyrell, the head of the Political Information Department of Foreign Office. The last coordinated the Prothero's group of historians who wrote *Peace Handbooks*.³⁰

In the first stage, these experts supported the integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the idea of a Balkan federation. Even David Mitrany published, in 1914, in the *New Romanian Journal*, led by Constantin Rădulescu Motru, an article titled "Towards the European Federation".³¹ Subsequently, on the proposal of David Mitrany, Harold W. Temperley, Arnold J. Toynbee and Allen Leeper, the Foreign Office agreed in the summer of 1918 to dismantle the Habsburg Empire. At the end of the same year, the Foreign Office recommended that Transylvania be fully relayed to Romania,

³⁰ Carol Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection; 1878-1938*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 150-151.

³¹ Mihai Alexandrescu, "David Mitrany: From Federalism to Functionalism", *Transylvanian Review* XVI (1), 2007, pp. 20-33.

that the Banat be shared between Serbia and Romania, that Bukovina be divided between Romania and a Ruthenian State, and an international control commission to be set up to oversee Danubian traffic.³²

In this logic, we can also fit the 1917 paper published by Mitrany with the title *Greater Romania. A Study in National Ideals*. The chapters of this paper gave a clear red thread of the pro-Romanian argument that Mitrany built in his document:

- *The Seed of Rumanian nationality*
- *Hungarian Tyranny*
- *Lese-magyarisme.*

At the end of the work he also provided an ethnic map of Greater Romania. The paper does not contain bibliographic references, thus revealing its informative character, being published in Great Britain by Hodder and Stoughton.

As a result, it can be concluded that during the First World War, David Mitrany was not part of any of the British intelligence services, but he only participated in a campaign to promote Romania's national ideals. It is exaggerated to interpret it as an involvement in the activity of the Romanian Legation in London, regardless of its purpose. Concerning the proximity to the British intelligence environment, it is rather involuntary, unbounded and even accidental. In this case, Mitrany's wording chosen in his memoirs is correct, as he was 'drawn into intelligence work', but not 'employed' or 'activated in'.

Final Remarks

Literature has maintained some ambiguities in the biography of David Mitrany. Once the fog will dissipate, his life and work will receive a stronger light and will help us to understand better his actual message. I think that Mitrany himself encouraged this confusion of his biography by mixing his role as a journalist with that of a presumed intelligence worker, and sometimes he hinted that he had even a diplomatic activity. The superficial interpretation of James T. Shotwell and Dorothy Anderson has prompted the perpetuation in the literature of a cliché: 'diplomatic and intelligence work' during the First World War.

Finally, I think that two reasons for his actions during the First World War can be identified. Firstly it is the manifestation of loyalty to the host country and then his attachment to the interests of Romania, which he has often presented in an integrating language, so as to increase its potential.

³² Mihai Alexandrescu, *Funcționalismul și Sistemul Internațional: (David Mitrany)*, Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2010, p. 62, ff 81.

The beginning of the Sino-Soviet Split: two different approaches

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Abstract: The emergence of the Sino-Soviet split and implicitly the contestation of the ideological primacy of the Kremlin would have a negative impact on the unity of the Communist monolith. Both sides will relate differently to the events that had contributed to the tensioning of the Sino-Soviet relations, trying to underline the legitimacy of their own interpretation. Based on unpublished documents from the Romanian archives, this article aims to analyze the main views promoted by the USSR and China towards the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split, while trying at the same time to capture, on the basis of declassified documents, the elements omitted by both sides in explaining their own position.

Keywords: Marxism-Leninism, Nikita S. Khrushchev, Mao Zedong, Stalin, Sino-Soviet split, communism

Rezumat: Emergența rupturii sino-sovietice și, implicit, contestarea primatului ideologic al Kremlinului aveau să se repercuteze negativ asupra unității monolitului comunist. Ambele părți se vor raporta în mod diferit la evenimentele care au contribuit la tensionarea relațiilor sino-sovietice, încercând să sublinieze legitimitatea propriei interpretări. Bazat pe documente inedite din arhivele românești, prezentul articol își propune o analiză a principalelor poziții promovate de către URSS și China față de emergența rupturii sino-sovietice, încercând în același timp să surprindă, pe baza documentelor declassificate, care au fost elementele omise de către ambele părți în explicarea propriei poziții.

Cuvinte-cheie: marxism-leninism, Nikita S. Hrușciiov, Mao Zedong, Stalin, ruptura sino-sovietică, comunism

The beginning of the Sino-Soviet split had definitively shatter the illusion of the unity of the Communist monolith, an illusion which was attentively created and developed by the Kremlin decision makers. Besides, the direct and open action of disapproval from the Beijing authorities of the ideological primacy of the Kremlin was not left unanswered because in a short time Albania got engaged into an action which was similar with the one initiated by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Moreover, between 1963-1964, Romania will commence a policy of detachment from the Kremlin by

taking advantage of the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split. Therefore, the consequences of the Sino-Soviet split were major for the unity of the Communist camp. In the following, starting from these ascertainments, we intend to resort to a comparative analysis of the causes of the emergence of the Sino-Soviet disputes, by illustrating the way in which both, the Kremlin and the Zhongnanhai, reported to, at the beginning of the '60s.

The Chinese view

According to the version accredited by the Beijing decision makers, the Sino-Soviet disagreements had started in February 1956, with the convening of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).¹ As a consequence, the Chinese Communist leaders rejected the version sustained by the Soviets, according to whom the Sino-Soviet disputes had started in April 1960, with the publishing by the Chinese side of the brochure entitled "Long Live Leninism".² Referring to the ideological positions promoted by the Soviets, the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were talking about a dual nature of 20th Congress of the CPSU, underlying the fact that even if some of the adopted decisions had indubitably a positive aspect, others had a strongly negative aspect.³ The archive documents prove that two main aspects of the Congress in question seem to have disturbed the Chinese Communist leaders: the denunciation of Stalin's cult of personality⁴ (and, implicitly, the launching of the de-Stalinization process), and the enunciation of the "parliamentary path" (of the peaceful revolution), related to the question of transition from capitalism to socialism.⁵

Admitting the fact that during the years when Stalin was in power he committed errors, Beijing still considered that there were some mistakes that he had not committed, "wrongly attributed" to him.⁶ As a consequence, by completely denying the role played by Stalin within the International Communist Movement, the Soviet leaders engaged on the path of revisionism, once with the convening of the 20th Congress of the CPSU.⁷ According to the Chinese side, "criticizing Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU was wrong, both as principle and as method. The life of Stalin was the life of a great

¹ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (National Central Historical Archives - hereafter, ANIC), CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 4.

² ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, f. 10.

³ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 38/1963, f. 6.

⁴ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 5.

⁵ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 65/1964, f. 12.

⁶ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1963, ff. 4-5.

⁷ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 5.

Marxist-Leninist, a great proletarian revolutionary. For thirty years after the Lenin's death, Stalin was the main leader of CPSU and of the Soviet government, was also recognized as the leader of the International Communist Movement, and considered the guide of the worldwide revolution. During his life, Stalin committed some serious mistakes, but in comparison with his great and meritorious facts, the mistakes he had done are only secondary."⁸ Obviously, the critics formulated by the Chinese authorities couldn't avoid Nikita S. Khrushchev, these being especially concentrated on the discourse delivered by him at the closed session on February 25, 1956.⁹ Therefore, referring to the attitude adopted by Nikita S. Khrushchev as well as by other members of the Soviet leadership towards the previous leader from Kremlin, the Chinese side underlined the followings: "They did not treat Stalin as a comrade, but as an enemy."¹⁰ Equally, the Beijing decision makers reproached the Kremlin the fact that they did not resort (before the convening of the 20th Congress of the CPSU) to a prior consultation with the other communist and workers' parties regarding the decisions that were about to be adopted, trying to impose a *fait accompli* on them.¹¹

Concerning the question of "transition from capitalism to socialism", the position assumed by the CCP leaders to the "parliamentary path" (the peaceful transition), promoted by Khrushchev, was an explicit one, underlying the fact that "the violent revolution is a universal law of the proletarian revolution."¹² Thus, in Beijing's view, the formulation by Nikita S. Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the CPSU of the thesis on the transition from capitalism to socialism through the "parliamentary path" actually meant a revision of Marxism-Leninism, as well as a clear denying of the universal significance of the October Revolution¹³. Moreover, the Chinese Communist leaders sustained the fact that the thesis of the "peaceful transition" could not have been put into practice, arguing their position in the following manner: "It is absolutely impossible to make such a fundamental social change relying on parliaments or bourgeois governments. Because the state apparatus is under their control, the reactionary bourgeois can cancel the elections, dissolve the Parliament, exclude the communists from the government, outlaw the Communist Party and resort to barbaric means of violence for the repression of the masses and

⁸ *Ibidem*

⁹ For a broader perspective on the secret speech delivered by Nikita S. Khrushchev, see: ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 23/1956, ff. 1-61.

¹⁰ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1963, f. 10.

¹¹ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 9.

¹² ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 65/1964, f. 8.

¹³ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 7.

the progressive forces.”¹⁴ Equally, the doctrine of the peaceful coexistence, formulated by Nikita S. Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, would form the nucleus of the Sino-Soviet differences. According to the Chinese side, Khrushchev had distorted the Leninist principle of the peaceful coexistence among different states, proclaiming the doctrine of peaceful coexistence as “USSR’s general line of foreign policy.”¹⁵ Thus, according to Beijing, the Kremlin had adopted a revisionist political line through the doctrine of the peaceful coexistence, Khrushchev joining the American imperialism.¹⁶ Therefore, placing the peaceful coexistence as the foundation of Soviet foreign policy was perceived by the Chinese policy makers as impairment of the unity of the communist camp and of the International Communist Movement.¹⁷

The question of the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism will become the object of the Sino-Soviet differences during the Meeting of the Communist and Workers’ parties held in Moscow, in November 1957. Thus, the CCP delegation, headed by Mao Zedong, would reject the draft declaration elaborated by the Central Committee (CC) of the CPSU, motivating the fact that in this declaration was mentioned only the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism.¹⁸ Moreover, the CCP representatives will write their own views on question of the “transition from capitalism to socialism” in a document addressed to the CC of the CPSU.¹⁹ As a result of the opposition manifested by the Chinese Communist leaders, the CC of the CPSU would propose a second draft declaration in which, besides the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, was also mentioned the non-peaceful transition.²⁰ In essence, the CCP delegation will succeed to add to the 1957 Moscow Declaration the following statement: “Leninism teaches, and experience confirms, that the ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily.”²¹

According to Beijing, between the 20th and the 22nd Congresses (February, 1956 and October, 1961), the leadership of the CPSU, using the great power chauvinism, laid the foundation for a “complete system of revisionism.”²² Sustaining this idea, the CCP leaders reminded the requests formulated by the Kremlin in 1958 (referring to the construction of a radio

¹⁴ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 65/1964, f. 34.

¹⁵ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 8.

¹⁶ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 102/1964, f. 27.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 65/1964, ff. 13-14.

¹⁹ For a broader perspective on this document see: ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 8C/1960, f. 93-96.

²⁰ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 65/1964, f. 14.

²¹ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 19.

²² ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1964, ff. 17-18.

station on the territory of the Chinese state and the establishment of a Soviet-Chinese common fleet), these requests having the sole purpose “to put China under the military control of the Soviets.”²³ Also, the Chinese decision makers brought to discussion the Soviet unilateral decision of cancelling the provisions from the agreement on new technology for national defense, (signed by the two parties in October 1957), refusing to provide the Beijing authorities the needed documentation for the manufacturing of the atomic bomb.²⁴ Nor the Soviet declaration from September 9, 1959, related to Sino-Indian border incidents, would not fall out of the Chinese severe indictment. Thus, according to Beijing, expressing their regret for the incidents that took place at the Sino-Indian border, the Soviets publicly convicted, for the first time, a “brotherly” socialist country, confronted at the time with an “armed provocation”.²⁵ Under these conditions, the CCP leaders published in April 1960 the brochure entitled “Long Live Leninism”, the declared purpose of it being “the defense of Marxism-Leninism” and the elucidation of “the ideological confusion” within the International Communist Movement.²⁶ Equally, the accusations formulated by the Chinese Communist leaders also referred to the Bucharest Meeting of the Communist and Workers’ Parties (June 24-26, 1960). Thus, according to the Chinese side, the purpose of convening the meeting in question by the Soviets was to discuss the tense international situation following the failure of the Paris Summit. To Beijing’s surprise, the delegations of communist and workers’ parties that had been present at Bucharest (except for the Albanian) would resort to extensive criticism of the Chinese ideological “heresies”.²⁷ Consequently, the Kremlin’s decision of withdrawing the Soviet experts from China, in July 1960, was perceived by the Chinese communists leaders as an explicit wish of the CPSU to enhance the Sino-Soviet differences.²⁸ Moreover, according to Chinese decision-makers, the withdrawal of 1390 Soviet experts from China was a violation of the provisions of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance (signed in February 1950), resulting in the termination of 343 contracts and the cancellation of 257 projects of scientific and technical collaboration.²⁹

²³ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 19.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 38/1963, ff. 11-12.

²⁶ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 26.

²⁷ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 38/1963, ff. 13-14; ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1964, f. 37.

²⁸ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 30.

²⁹ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1964, f. 18.

The Soviet view

Referring to the Sino-Soviet split, the CPSU leaders expressed their surprise about the emergence of disagreements between the two states, given that in the period prior to the outbreak of tensions, the USSR had given a consistent economic support to the People's Republic of China. In order to sustain their position, the Kremlin made use of some statistical data: USSR had helped China to build more than 200 large enterprises; between 1950 and 1960 more than 10 000 soviet specialists had been sent to China; between 1951 and 1960, more than 10 000 Chinese engineers, technicians and workers were trained in the USSR, as well as about 1000 scientists; also, in this period, more than 11 000 Chinese students had already graduated from soviet higher education institutions; USSR had granted China, under very favorable conditions, long term loans worth 1 816 000 000 rubles.³⁰

Unlike the Chinese political leaders, who considered that the Sino-Soviet split had started with the 20th Congress of the CPSU in February 1956,³¹ the Kremlin decision makers considered that the "deviation" of Beijing from "the common line of the Communist movement" had started in April, 1960, with the publication of the brochure entitled "Long Live Leninism".³² Occasioned by the 90th anniversary of Lenin's birth, the brochure consisted of three distinct editorials: "Long Live Leninism", "Forward Along the Path of the Great Lenin" and "Unite Under Lenin's Revolutionary Banner".³³ According to the Kremlin, the three articles included numerous misinterpretations of the Leninist ideological percepts, being basically against the provisions of the Moscow Declaration of November 1957.³⁴ Moreover, according to the Soviet side, the Chinese communist leaders will again publicly manifest their own ideological views during the 11th session of the General Council of the World Trade Union Federation,³⁵ which had taken place in Beijing, on June 1960.³⁶ As a result, during the Bucharest Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties (June 24-26, 1960), "the representatives of fifty Communist and Workers' Parties had brotherly criticized" the ideological views promoted by CCP.³⁷

³⁰ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 123/1964, ff. 64-66.

³¹ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 4.

³² ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, f. 10.

³³ See: *Long Live Leninism*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1960, passim.

³⁴ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, f. 10.

³⁵ For a broader perspective on this meeting see: ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 34/1960, ff. 1-13.

³⁶ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, f. 10.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 11.

Regarding the withdrawal of Soviet experts from China in July 1960, the Kremlin decision-makers promoted a different view from that of the CCP. Thus, according to the Soviet side, CCP attempted to accredit the idea that the Chinese economy faced visible hardships precisely because of the withdrawal of those experts and not because of the failure of the economic policies implemented during the Great Leap Forward.³⁸ The reason of the withdrawal of these Soviet experts from China lied, from Kremlin's point of view, precisely on the Chinese authorities' behavior, who adopted an "unfriendly and offensive" attitude towards them.³⁹ As a result, the Soviet authorities declined the Chinese allegations that, by withdrawing the experts from China, the USSR would have violated the provisions of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance.⁴⁰ On the contrary, the Kremlin underlined, "the Soviet Union respected scrupulously all the obligations deriving from this treaty".⁴¹

With the beginning of the Sino-Soviet open polemic, a controversial topic during the debates between the two sides was represented by the 20th Congress of the CPUS. On this matter, the Kremlin reclaimed that in 1956 the Chinese side had agreed to the decisions taken at 20th Congress of the CPSU, in this regard citing fragments from the speeches delivered by Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping during the 8th Congress of the CCP (September 1956).⁴² Also, the Soviet leaders brought in discussion the article "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (published on December 29, 1956 in "Renmin Ribao") in which the Chinese decision makers praised the condemnation of Stalin's personality cult at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.⁴³ Or, starting with the beginning of Sino-Soviet open polemic, the CPSU leaders accused the Chinese side of "having assumed the role of

³⁸ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 123/1964, f. 71.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 73.

⁴⁰ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1964, f. 18.

⁴¹ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 123/1964, f. 66.

⁴² ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, ff. 36-37.

⁴³ According to the article in question: "The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union showed great determination and courage in doing away with blind faith in Stalin, in exposing the gravity of Stalin's mistakes and in eliminating their effects. Marxist-Leninists throughout the world, and all those who sympathize with the communist cause, support the efforts of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to correct mistakes, and hope that the efforts of the Soviet comrades will meet with complete success. It is obvious that since Stalin's mistakes were not of short duration, their thorough correction cannot be achieved overnight, but demands fairly protracted efforts and thoroughgoing ideological education." See: "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, December 29, 1956", in *The Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1959, p. 38.

defenders of the personality cult, as propagators of Stalin's misconceptions."⁴⁴ In fact, according to the Soviets, the Sino-Albanian alliance was precisely the result of the common views promoted by the two sides regarding the 20th Congress of the CPUS. Thus, according to the Kremlin, "the Sino-Albanian Alliance is not an accidental fact. It appeared on the basis of opposition to the Leninist line of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, based on the hostile attitude towards the liquidation of Stalin's cult of personality."⁴⁵

Regarding the issue of the transition from capitalism to socialism, the leaders of CPSU will reject the allegations submitted by the CCP, according to which the Soviet side would have only recognized the peaceful transition. Thus, according to the Kremlin, the CPSU recognized both peaceful and non-peaceful (violent) transition, imputing to the Chinese authorities that they had only accepted the latter.⁴⁶ Equally, the Soviets accused the Chinese side of underestimating the threat of a thermonuclear war, reproaching Beijing authorities that they considered the atomic bomb as "a paper tiger".⁴⁷

Final remarks

Although the 20th Congress of the CPSU had contributed, on a long term, to the deterioration of the relations between China and the USSR, in 1956 the tensions between the two sides were not noticeable. Moreover, in an editorial entitled "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (published in "Renmin Ribao" on April 5, 1956), the Beijing decision makers emphasized the following: "The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union summed up the fresh experience gained both in international relations and domestic construction. It took a series of momentous decisions on the steadfast implementation of Lenin's policy in regard to the possibility of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems, on the development of Soviet democracy, on the thorough observance of the Party's principle of collective leadership, on the criticism of shortcomings within the Party, and on the sixth Five-Year Plan for development of the national economy."⁴⁸ However, within the same editorial, a careful observer would have noticed that with regard to the the condemnation of Stalinist abuses, Beijing was promoting a slightly different view from that of the Kremlin, stressing the following: "Some people consider

⁴⁴ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, f. 35.

⁴⁵ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 123/1964, f. 23.

⁴⁶ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 61/1963, ff. 50-51.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 20.

⁴⁸ "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, April 5, 1956", in *The Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, p. 1.

that Stalin was wrong in everything; this is a grave misconception. Stalin was a great Marxist-Leninist, yet at the same time a Marxist-Leninist who committed several errors without realizing that they were errors.”⁴⁹ It is equally true that after the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the Chinese Communist leaders continued to show Stalin’s portrait together with the ones of Marx, Engels and Lenin in various public manifestations.⁵⁰ The interesting fact is that in 1956 these issues did not cause tensions in Sino-Soviet relations. Moreover, in the Moscow Declaration of 1957,⁵¹ the 20th Congress of the CPSU is illustrated in a positive light, a fact that was highlighted by CPSU at the beginning of the Sino-Soviet open polemic.⁵² However, Beijing would justify its position adopted at Moscow in 1957 by invoking the compromise. Thus, according to the CCP leaders, although they did not agree with the inclusion in the Declaration of the issue of the significance of the 20th Congress of the CPSU for the International Communist Movement, however, taking into consideration “the difficult position at which the CPSU was at that time”, they resorted to a compromise, accepting its mention within the document.⁵³ And yet, in 1956-1957 the disagreements between the CPSU and the CCP did not degenerate into an open polemic between the two parties. A possible explanation may be represented by the consistent Soviet economic aid received by China during that period.

The first significant tension between the two sides will occur in 1958 with the Soviet proposal for the construction of a long range radio station on China’s territory. The Soviet demand (doubled by a proposal regarding the establishment of a Sino-Soviet common fleet)⁵⁴ will, however, result in a definite refusal from the Chinese Communist leaders.⁵⁵ But this time, also, due to the secret visit of Nikita S. Khrushchev in China, between July 31 – August 3, 1958, the Sino-Soviet tensions seem to have been dissipated.⁵⁶ The year 1959,

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

⁵⁰ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 12.

⁵¹ For a broader perspective on this Declaration see: “Declarația de la Moscova (noiembrie 1957)”, in Mihai Croitor (ed.), *În umbra Kremlinului: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej și geneza Declarației din Aprilie 1964*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, pp. 430-446.

⁵² ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 123/1964, f.122. See also: “Document 3. 10 iulie 1963, Moscova. Răspunsul lui Mihail A. Suslov la expunerea lui Deng Xiaoping din 8 iulie 1963”, in Mihai Croitor, Sanda Borșa (ed.), *Moscova 1963: eșecul negocierilor sovieto-chineze*, Editura Mega & Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p. 113.

⁵³ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 71/1963, f. 21.

⁵⁴ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 40/1964, f. 44.

⁵⁵ See: “6. Minutes, Conversation between Mao Zedong and Ambassador Iudin, 22 July 1958”, in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issues 6-7, 1995/1996, pp. 155-159.

⁵⁶ For a broader perspective on this visit see: “Document No.1 First Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, Hall of Huaizhentan [Beijing], 31 July 1958”, “Document No. 2

however, will witness the emergence of new tensions in the Sino-Soviet relations. The reasons for the worsening of the relations between the two sides lie in two separate events: the incidents at the Sino-Indian border (and the Soviet declaration on these incidents) and the “spirit of Camp David”, reluctantly viewed by the Chinese part.⁵⁷ In fact, the tensions between Mao Zedong and Nikita S. Khrushchev will be obvious during the meeting of October 2, 1959.⁵⁸

Or, in this tense context, the Chinese Communist leaders published the brochure “Long Live Leninism”, in which, as already shown, they promoted some ideological precepts in contradiction to those disseminated by the Kremlin. Under such conditions, the split between the two parties became imminent. As a result, on June 24-26, 1960, at the Bucharest Meeting of the Communist and Workers’ Parties, the Sino-Soviet divergences exceeded for the first time the strict framework of bilateral relations, becoming known to all communist and workers’ parties. At the urge of the Kremlin, all delegations present in Bucharest (except the Albanian one) will unanimously condemn the ideological views promoted by Beijing.⁵⁹ The Sino-Soviet split was now complete.

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⁵⁷ ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Foreign Relations Section, file 38/1963, f. 11-12.

⁵⁸ For a broader perspective on this meeting see: “Document No.3 Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, Beijing, 2 October 1959”, in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issues 12-13, 2001, pp. 262-270.

⁵⁹ For a broader perspective on the June 1960 Meeting of the Communist and Workers’ Parties see: Mihai Croitor (ed.), *La București s-a scris: „Sciziune!” Consfătuirea partidelor comuniste și muncitorești din iunie 1960*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, *passim*.

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Political-diplomatic relations between Romania and the Palestine Liberation Organization

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Abstract: Political-diplomatic relations between Romania and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Arab-Israeli conflicts during 1967-1989 brought international attention to an extremely sensitive issue for the Arab world, namely the Palestinian refugee population, which in a very short time turned into one of the most difficult problems of the 20th century. Although, it was highly involved in finding a solution for the peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli crisis, the Bucharest government initially hesitated to establish direct contacts with the organizations fighting to create an independent Palestinian state. Gradually, Nicolae Ceaușescu understood the importance of this problem for the Arab world and became more receptive in creating contacts with the new Palestinian leaders. From here to the friendship with the "brother" Yasser Arafat was no more than a step. By the late 1980s, Romania had become one of the most important partners and supporters of the Palestinian cause.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestinian population, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Yasser Arafat

Rezumat: Relațiile politico-diplomatice dintre România și Organizația pentru Eliberarea Palestinei. Conflictul arabo-israelian din perioada 1967-1989 a adus în atenția opiniei internaționale o problemă extrem de sensibilă pentru lumea arabă, și anume populația refugiată palestiniană, care într-un timp foarte scurt s-a transformat într-una dintre cele mai dificile probleme ale secolului XX. Deși a fost extrem de implicat în găsirea unei soluții pentru rezolvarea pașnică a crizei arabo-israeliene, guvernul de la București a ezitat inițial să stabilească contacte directe cu organizațiile care luptau pentru crearea unui stat palestinian independent. Treptat însă, Nicolae Ceaușescu a înțeles importanța acestei probleme pentru lumea arabă și a devenit mai receptiv față de crearea unor contacte cu noii lideri palestinieni. De aici și până la prietenia cu "fratele" Yasser Arafat nu a mai fost decât un pas. Spre finalul anilor '80 România se transformase într-unul dintre cei mai importanți parteneri și susținători ai cauzei palestiniene.

Cuvinte-cheie: conflictul arabo-israelian, populația palestiniană, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Yasser Arafat

Romania's official position on the Palestine Liberation Organization was initially a reticent one, Romanian authorities preferring to maintain some distance in relations with this entity. However, the Romanian diplomats from the Arab states were urged to hold unofficial relations with PLO representatives.¹ The reserve of Romanian diplomats to establish official contacts was determined by the contradiction between the objectives of the Palestinian movement, namely the formation of an independent state, and the attitude of the Arab states directly involved in this conflict.²

Until 1968, Romania pleaded for compliance of the UN Resolutions of 1948, 194 and 394 respectively, using in all statements from this period the phrase "*Palestinian Arab refugees*", but not recognizing any Palestinian organization or movement.³ Romania's position on the Palestinian issue was very clearly exposed at the Extraordinary Session of the UN General Assembly through the President of the Council of Ministers of the R.S.R in June 1967, as follows: "*We believe that on the basis of human rights and international norms, the issue of the Arab population displaced from Palestine, must be resolved in the light of the decisions of the General Assembly, such as Resolution 194 adopted at the third session, which provides that refugees will be allowed to return to their homes if they desire so or will be compensated by governments responsible for the loss of their property, and Resolution 394 adopted at the 5th Session, which emphasizes the need to protect the rights and property of Arab refugees in Palestine.*"⁴ Since the 1967 conflict, Romania has been actively involved in granting aid to the Arab states in order to support them, and not to help the Palestinian population. In fact, Romania refused to respond positively to UNRWA's call for assistance for Palestinian refugees.⁵

Since 1968, Romania has reconsidered its policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and has begun to take into account the recognition of the Palestinian issue. The first action that demonstrates the change in approach to the conflict in the Near East was to provide an aid to the Palestinian, not Arab, population of 100,000 lei in material goods through the General Union of Syndicates. Thus, for the first time, Romania recognized a Palestinian organization, namely the Federation of Syndicates of Palestine.⁶

The attitude of the Romanian state in relation to the problem of the

¹ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 210/1970, Palestina, Direcția a V-a Relații, Dosar 15, *Problema palestiniană și situația din Orientul Apropiat*, f. 18.

² *Ibid.* f. 19.

³ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 210/1970, Palestina, Direcția a V-a Relații, Dosar 16, *Situația mișcării palestinienilor*, f. 60.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ff.21-22

⁵ *Ibid.*, f.61

⁶ *Ibid.*, f.61

Palestinian population is not only a charity act but is based on a series of political and economic elements. The interest for the situation in the area has brought to the attention of the Romanian authorities the fact that this issue is extremely sensitive for the Arab states so, any state that wanted to establish relations of any kind, should consider also this delicate situation for the Arab world.⁷ At the same time, taking into account the fact that at the end of 1968 the trade relations between Romania and the Arab states turned around the amount of 901.730 million lei, of which 679.160 million lei were⁸ only exports, it is very clear that the marketplace of these states was a huge potential for Romania.⁹ Also, the economic exchanges between 1966 and 1969 between the Romania and the Arab states increased by about 40%.¹⁰ Beyond these issues, we must also take into consideration the support that the Arab states have given over time, to the various actions that Romania has initiated within the UN.¹¹ Thus, in the views expressed by the Romanian state, in state and party documents and in the speeches pronounced at the UN on the situation in the Near East, the Romanian officials often took into account the extremely sensitive subject of the Palestinian refugees, often highlighting the fact that urgent action must be taken to put to an end the plight of the Palestinian population.¹² Therefore, on December 10, 1969, Romania voted the UN Resolution 2535, which reaffirmed "*the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine*."¹³

As a result of the Romanian state's decision to establish relations with Israel on a different level by the mutual upgrading of diplomatic representation at the embassy level, on September 2-7, 1969, a meeting of the Palestinian National Council, the supreme forum of PLO, took place in Cairo, where Romania's initiative was debated. The news of the evolution of the Romanian-Israeli relations was not received with open arms by the Palestinians, although there were voices who thought that Romania was a sovereign state able to make decisions according to its own interests and that this should not stand in the way of developing closer Palestinian-Romanian relations.¹⁴ Therefore, the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Syndicates call on the General Union of Syndicates in Romania, an aid consisting of food,

⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 63.

⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 63.

⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 64.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, f. 64.

¹² Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 210/1970, Palestina, Direcția a V-a Relații , Dosar 15, *Problema palestiniană și situația din Orientul Apropiat*, f. 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, f. 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 18.

clothing, tents and medicines. Although the Romanian authorities' response was a positive one, the Palestinian authorities refused the aid sent, as a result of a subsequent decision by the Arab unions to break relations with Romanian unions. Despite these disagreements, two months later, the government in Bucharest decided to send assistance to the Palestinian population, this time through the Red Cross.¹⁵

Since the 1970s, representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization have begun to step up their diplomatic work and put pressure on several states, including Romania, by requesting the opening of PLO representations in their capitals.¹⁶ Thus, during February-April 1970, a delegation of the PLO, led by Yasser Arafat, undertook a series of visits to several socialist states like the USSR (the visit to Moscow was not an official one, despite the fact that Arafat had a series of talks with Soviet officials¹⁷), the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and also visits to other socialist states such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and the DRG. As a follow-up to these actions, Romanian officials were advised to accept the initiative of the PLO to make a visit to Romania, given the fact that at that time a refusal by the Romanian authorities could have had a negative impact on the relations with the Arab states.¹⁸ It was also envisaged that a possible visit by Palestinian officials to Romania could attract reproaches from the Western states, but especially from Israel and the United States of America.¹⁹ On the other hand, accepting such a visit would have generated a favorable echo in all Arab states, which could have intensified Romania's relations with them on all levels, without this visit implying an official recognition of the PLO or the Palestinian organizations program.²⁰

Starting from this moment, we are witnessing at a series of efforts made by the Government of Bucharest to maintain a close relationship with the PLO representatives. In February 1970, UN Secretary-General U.Thant launched a humanitarian appeal to highlight the tragic situation of Palestinian refugees in the Near East, and called on the Romanian authorities to provide a financial contribution equivalent to \$100,000 in products or in currency, hoping that with the contribution of all UN member states, the \$4.8 million deficit will be covered. U.Thant also mentioned that the situation in the Near East was so critical, and the discontinuation of UN assistance to Palestinian

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 15.

¹⁷ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 210/1970, Palestina, Direcția a V-a Relații, Dosar 16, *Situația mișcării palestiniene*, f. 119.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 95.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 96.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 96.

refugees could give rise to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.²¹ As a result of this request, the Government of Romania decided to grant, through the National Red Cross Council, aid to the Palestinian refugees amounting to 120,000 lei, consisting of medicines, clothing and food.²²

The preoccupation of the Romanian state for the situation of the Palestinian refugees in this period is very obvious. In an interview from May 12, 1970 given by Nicolae Ceaușescu to the magazine "Le Figaro", he stated that "*... it is necessary to take into account the existence of the Palestinian population that plays an important role in the Near East. The end of the conflict in this area calls for the satisfaction of the Palestinian national interests, including the possibility - if this population wishes - of forming their own independent state.*"²³

While it seems that at this time the Romanian government was trying to respond as soon as possible to many of the demands made in connection with the Palestinian population, Romanian diplomats were still advised to be very careful in their discussions with various members of the PLO. Relations with PLO representatives should have a personal character and in no case an official one. Also, the heads of diplomatic missions were advised to refrain from visiting the Palestinian office and promising aid for the Palestinian cause, if PLO had requested such aid.²⁴ On the other hand, the Palestinian leaders tried to convince the Romanian ambassadors accredited in different countries in the world to establish official contacts between PLO and Romania. They tried to point out that Romania's position on the conflict in the Near East was highly appreciated among the leaders of the PLO, and to prove this, any attack on Romania was strictly forbidden among the publications of the organization.²⁵

The desire expressed repeatedly by the PLO representatives regarding a possible meeting of Yasser Arafat with Nicolae Ceaușescu was long delayed by the Romanian officials. According to the MFA, Romanian diplomats were skeptical about the role and interests of Palestinian liberation organizations that "*they are not the most representative of the Palestinian population.*"²⁶ Therefore, the Bucharest authorities were advised not to follow up an initiative to invite Palestinian representatives to Romania unless such an initiative would come from the Palestinians. In this case a visit could be organized in Romania

²¹ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 216/1970, Palestina, Dosar 17, *Refugiați palestinieni*, f. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, f. 6.

²³ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 220/1970, Palestina, Dosar 19, *Politica externă OEP*, f. 97.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 120-121.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 135.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 139.

through the Romanian Friendship League with the African-Asian peoples or even through the Front of the Socialist Unity.²⁷

Gradually, the Romanian-Palestinian relations have entered an ascending trend. As a result, on February 14, 1974, Nicolae Ceaușescu met with Yasser Arafat in Beirut, where they had a discussion about the evolution of the conflict in the Near East and possible solutions that could help defuse this situation.²⁸ A month later, a permanent representative of the PLO was accredited in Bucharest. From this moment on, the political-diplomatic exchanges between the two entities have intensified considerably. On April 27th the same year, the Romanian president was the host of a delegation of the Federation of Palestinian Syndicates, who came in a experience exchange in our country. In May, a delegation from the Socialist Republic of Romania held an invitation to the Second Congress of the Palestinian Jurists. Between June 24 and July 1, 1974, a delegation of the PLO led by General Abdul Razak El Yahia had a series of meetings with President Nicolae Ceaușescu discussing the need for joint actions that would lead to the withdrawing of the Israeli troops from the territories occupied abusively²⁹, while stressing the need to create an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, as well as recognizing the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.³⁰

Gradually, during the visits of Nicolae Ceaușescu to the capitals of the Arab countries in the Near East, there were numerous meetings of the Romanian President with the Palestinian leader. Such a meeting took place on April 24, 1975, in Damascus, during which the two leaders discussed about the clashes between the Palestinian fighters and the Israeli forces on Lebanon's territory. Yasser Arafat briefed President Ceaușescu about the recent events, insisting that the situation in Lebanon could degenerate at any time giving rise to massacres similar to those of the Armenians and the Jews.³¹ Also, Arafat explained to the Romanian president the difficult situation of the members of the organization who were banished from Jordan and had to seek refuge in Lebanon. From here they were determined to fight with all forces to end the American-Zionist plot to eliminate the organization.³² Nicolae Ceaușescu analyzed this situation with a lot of calm and tact, trying to convince the PLO leader to understand that such a rigid position of the organization is primarily in the disadvantage of the Palestinian population. Asked by the Romanian President how he sees the resolution of the conflict, Yasser Arafat replied that

²⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 141.

²⁸ Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 217/1974, f. 113.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 113 verso.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 114.

³¹ Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 62/1975, f. 3.

³² *Ibid.*, f. 3.

he believes that as long as a disengagement has been made on the front of Sinai and the Golan Heights, this should be also possible in Gaza and the West Bank.³³ These territories should be in the PLO possession, possibly through the UN forces or a mixed Arab organization.³⁴

In the view of the Palestinian leader, the negotiations for this move should have been carried by Egypt and not by Jordan who had direct interests in the issue, but neither by the PLO that both Israel and the United States refused to recognize³⁵. At the same time, Arafat appealed to the goodwill and good relations of the Romanian state with the states of Western Europe and with the USA³⁶, for starting the procedures for disengagement in the two territories. Nicolae Ceaușescu avoided to give a concrete answer to this, suggesting that Arafat should have a discussion with King Hussein of Jordan, to find a solution together.³⁷ Arafat replied that Hussein "*speaks one and does another*", so any discussion with him would have been useless, especially since through the money he received from the Americans he tried to buy the peace and silence of the Palestinian people in the two territories.³⁸ Nicolae Ceaușescu insisted that the PLO had to intensify its political and diplomatic activity at international level, and this could also be achieved by convening a special session of the UN General Assembly. In this way the UN will get acquainted with the new realities of the situation in Near East and based on them will issue a new set of political measures to help resolve the conflict.³⁹ The new measures had to take into account the fact that Israel had the obligation to withdraw from the occupied territories in 1967, while acknowledging the rights of the Palestinian people and the need to establish a Palestinian state in the territories of Gaza and West Bank, as well as guaranteeing the right of all states in the area, including Israel.⁴⁰

The Romanian president was of the opinion that, by adopting such measures, Israel would had been subjected to international political pressure which eventually could have led it to give up the territories acquired illegally in 1967.⁴¹ In fact, the whole dialogue between the two leaders seems to have been more of an exploration of the interlocutor to discover the true positions of each other. On the other hand, the discussion of the two was much hampered

³³ *Ibid.*, f. 4 verso.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 8 verso.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 8 verso.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 8 verso.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 8 verso.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, f. 9.

by the PLO's position on Resolution no. 242, which they considered to be extremely unfair. Representatives of the organization have refused to accept the stipulations of this resolution by showing that they do not meet the most ordinary conditions of the Palestinians. First, the Resolution referred to the rights of the refugee population, without specifying the nationality of this population, and secondly, the rights of the Palestinian nation were ignored.⁴²

Nicolae Ceaușescu has repeatedly tried to point out that although this resolution is not perfect and, from some points of view, it is not correct to the Palestinian people, even so it has some very important and essential stipulations to restore peace in the region. First, Resolution no. 242 clearly stated that Israel must withdraw from the territories occupied by force in the wake of the 1967 war. This withdrawal involved the liberation of territories in the West Bank and Gaza that the Palestinian people claimed and which could be the first step towards the establishment of a Palestinian state.⁴³ Nicolae Ceaușescu therefore tried to explain to the Palestinians that it was better not to fight this resolution but rather to ask for its implementation as soon as possible, especially as this could be supported by almost the entire international community.⁴⁴ Moreover, the resolution pleaded for compliance for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states in the region, including Israel, an idea with which the Palestinians had to get used.⁴⁵

Beyond these misunderstandings, Romanian officials have supported the establishment of a Palestinian government, believing that such an action could bring a new perspective on the approach of the Palestinian issue in the Near East. The Romanian president also encouraged Yasser Arafat in his efforts to establish a Palestinian government, even though at that time the territories claimed by the PLO belonging to the Palestinian population were occupied by the Israelis.⁴⁶ Recognition of such a government has increased the prestige of the PLO among the international community and has given another meaning to the Palestinian issue.

On November 10, 1975, through UN Resolution 3376, the UN General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People⁴⁷, consisting of 23 member states including Romania, the Arab States and the PLO being observers.⁴⁸ The main objectives of the

⁴² Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 165/1974, f. 3.

⁴³ Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 118/1980, f. 13.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 13 verso.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 14.

⁴⁶ Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 220/1976, f. 18.

⁴⁷ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 224/1980, Orientul Mijlociu, Dosar 1930, *Problematika Orientului Mijlociu la Organizația Națiunilor Unite*, f. 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 7.

Committee were:

- implementing a program for the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian population,
- establishing contacts with all Member States, intergovernmental organizations as well as with the Palestine Liberation Organization
- to draw up a report on the recommendations of the members of the Committee and forward it to the Security Council.⁴⁹

During the sessions of this committee Romania supported the Palestinian cause, having very good relations with the members of the PLO at the UN.⁵⁰

In 1977, after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, the Bucharest government sent two delegations with messages from Nicolae Ceaușescu to confirm to the Palestinian authorities that Romania is doing all it can to resolve the conflict in the Near East.⁵¹ Signing the Camp David Agreements, deeply dissatisfied the Palestine Liberation Organization. Its leaders accused the signatories of the agreements of trying to diminish the Palestinian issue and the role of the organization in solving it.⁵² The Palestinians reproached the fact that with the aim of gaining advantages for Egypt and Israel, some of the Middle East issues were partially solved through these agreements, and the interests of the Palestinian cause were totally ignored. Indeed, the entire Arab community accused Egypt of collaborating with Israel.⁵³

In view of the growing recognition of the PLO on an international scale as legitimate representative of the Palestinian population interests, the organization has gained increasing influence among international organizations. As a result of the PLO leadership's approach, in 1980, the organization was invited to participate as an observer at a World Bank and International Monetary Fund session held in Washington in September. The US Delegation vehemently opposed this initiative and called on the World Bank and the IMF to use the vote by correspondence on the presence of the PLO in Washington. The PLO Executive Committee forwarded an address to the MFA officials requesting the Romanian side to refrain from sending its vote by correspondence even if it was one in favor of the PLO. Palestinian leaders thought that a small number of votes could call into question the credibility of such an approach by giving them a win-win situation. As a result

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 11.

⁵¹ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 220/1978, OEP-RSR, Dosar 2264, *Relațiile politico-diplomatice româno-palestiniene*, f. 13.

⁵² Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 2P/1974-1989, f. 15.

⁵³ Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 230/1979, f. 3 verso.

of this approach, the MFA proposed to pursue the Palestinian demand.⁵⁴

Following the conflict in Lebanon, the meetings and talks between Nicolae Ceaușescu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat intensified. The Palestinian leader has consistently sought to secure Romania's support for the cause of his people. Using the occasion of a visit by the Romanian President to Paris, the PLO leaders tried to get in touch with him to draw attention to the situation in Lebanon and especially to the problems faced by the PLO in this country. Khaled Al-Sheikh, the permanent PLO representative in our country, revealed to Nicolae Ceaușescu that the leaders of the organization have information showing that Lebanon was preparing actions aimed to liquidate the Palestinian population from several directions.⁵⁵ The PLO also held information that Israel had already begun implementing a Palestinian cleaning strategy in the areas they controlled. The establishment of new Israeli settlements in these territories automatically leads to the withdrawal of the native population. According to Palestinian information, 80 new establishments were registered in the West Bank. Although the number of Israelis in these areas was only 12,000, the territories they occupied were very large.⁵⁶ The position of France was generally quite elusive with regard to the existence of an independent Palestinian state.⁵⁷ Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit and his intervention with the French President in favor of the PLO could have been a step forward for the recognition of the full rights of the PLO to represent the cause of all Palestinians.⁵⁸

Throughout the 1980s, Romania continued to provide political and military support to the Palestine Liberation Organization, taking on its role as a mediator between the leaders of the PLO and Israel. In 1986, Yasser Arafat was invited by Nicolae Ceaușescu to celebrate August 23, Romania's national day. On the eve of this day, one of the most important PLO officials, Salah Khalah, known as one of the bombers at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, on the Israeli delegation, said in an interview from the Hungarian national television that *"unfortunately, Romanian comrades commit a serious mistake and a sin against my people (Palestinian) when they treat the Transylvanian Hungarians as equally ruthless as Israeli people treat us in the occupied territories."*⁵⁹ Khalaf continued his speech claiming that it is very difficult to understand *"how a socialist country can take such drastic measures as the demolition of some villages, which has nothing to do*

⁵⁴ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Problema 220/1980, OEP-RSR, Dosar 2087, *Relațiile politico-diplomatice româno-palestiniene*, f. 45.

⁵⁵ Arhivele Naționale, Fond C.C al P.C.R, Secția Relații Externe, Dosar 118/1980, f. 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 5 verso.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 7 verso.

⁵⁹ Michael Shafir, *PLO'S Second in Command Denounces Romania's Treatment of Hungarian Transylvanians*, Radio Free Europe, 25 august 1988, p. 1.

*with Marxism or socialism. I would like to tell you that I empathize with the Transylvanian Hungarians, who suffer exactly like the Palestinian people under military occupation. They are forced to flee from their native land that is expropriated, their villages are destroyed and they are deprived of their national culture and identity."*⁶⁰

This violent attack on Romania by a Palestinian leader can be explained through two aspects. First of all, it is very possible that Hungary had given Khalah some "special incentives" that led him to take such a position in a problem that had nothing to do with the situation of the Palestinian population. Another explanation could be the failure of Romania to receive from Israel an agreement on the participation of the PLO at an international peace conference on the situation in the Middle East. In fact, Romania's attempts to obtain Israel's agreement on this matter continued in the years to come. In 1988, Ceaușescu again appealed to Israel's favor by sending Constantin Mitea to Jerusalem, who had several meetings with Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to persuade them to start negotiations with the PLO representatives.⁶¹

Moreover, Khalah considers that a country that behaves with its citizens as Romania does in the case of Transylvanian Hungarians can not speak about peace, understanding and stopping the violence between Arabs and Israelis as long as they can not solve the problems in their own yard. Therefore, Romania was not the most suitable candidate for the role of mediator between Israel and the Palestinian people.⁶² Given the very good relations between Ceaușescu and Arafat, it is unlikely that the Palestinian leader would have been aware of his second statements. Khalaf's attitude most likely betrayed a series of tensions accumulated at the top of the PLO, and his statements were essentially just a message through which he transmitted that it is delimiting itself by the policy promoted by Yasser Arafat and of his vision of solving the Palestinian problem.

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⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.2

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The Anti-System Candidates at the 1996 Presidential Election in Romania

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Abstract. The 1996 Romanian presidential elections represented the end of the transition to democracy in post-revolutionary Romania, because for the first time, the elections were won by an opposition candidate. The 1996 elections were the third ones, after the Revolution of 1989. During the six years the parties perfected a range of communication techniques so that besides print, television began to play an increasingly role thanks to the appearance of private stations, voters could compare and an incipient form of political culture was materializing. Also, the political spectrum was much more diversified than 1990 or 1992. Therefore, in 1996 the attention is drawn by those candidates who stand out, like Adrian Păunescu, Gheorghe Funar and C.V. Tudor. The three are representing parties which supported the government formed in 1992, but later adopted a political platform which aimed to mobilize those dissatisfied with the living standards, ethnic issues and the lack of authority. Despite declaring their attachment for principles like democracy or the rule of law, a few program elements, speeches and public appearances reveals a different image regarding their political vision.

Keywords: Presidential election, anti-system, populism, nationalism, communism nostalgia

Rezumat. Candidații anti-sistem la alegerile prezidențiale din 1996. Alegerile din 1996 au marcat sfârșitul tranziției în România post-revoluționară, deoarece, pentru prima dată, alegerile au fost câștigate de un candidat al opoziției. Acestea au fost cea de-a treia rundă a alegerilor generale după Revoluția din 1989. De-a lungul celor șase ani, partidele au perfectat o gamă largă de mijloace de comunicare, astfel că pe lângă presa tipărită, televiziunile, în special cele private, au început să joace un rol important. Astfel, votanții puteau compara ofertele politice, iar o formă incipientă de cultură politică începea să se formeze. De asemenea, spectrul politic a fost mult mai diversificat decât în 1990 și 1992. De aceea, în 1996 atrag atenția acei candidați care se evidențiază în raport cu discursurile celorlalți, precum Adrian Păunescu, Gheorghe Funar și C.V. Tudor. Cei trei sunt reprezentanții unor partide care au susținut guvernul format în 1992, dar care au adoptat o platformă politică contestatară, menită să mobilizeze acele categorii ale populației nemulțumite de nivelul de trai, problemele etnice, vidul de autoritate. În ciuda declarării atașamentului pentru principiile democrației și ale statului de drept, elemente ale programului, discursuri și apariții în spațiul public relevă o imagine diferită referitoare la viziunea lor politică.

Cuvinte-cheie. Alegeri prezidențiale, anti-sistem, populism, naționalism, nostalgie pentru comunism

Introduction

The 1996 general election has been one of the most important political moments after the fall of Communism, because until then Romania has been ruled by the same political family, meaning Ion Iliescu and the Party of Social Democracy in Romania¹ (PDSR). The main novelty recorded on the Romanian political scene in the 1992-1996 electoral cycle was the constitution of party coalitions. Even though the struggle for power continued to take place between the Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR) and PDSR, political groups such as the Great Romania Party (PRM) or the Social Democratic Union (USD) started to show up in polls. Virgil Nemoianu notes that the Romanian political spectrum can be delimited in four orientations: a populist one - that is, parties promoting an authoritarian doctrine, whether it is the extreme right or left, and distrustful of change and the West: The Romanian National Unity Party (PUNR), The Socialist Labor Party (PSM) and PRM; a Christian Democrat one: represented almost exclusively by the Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNȚCD), but whose ideology was unclear, relying more on the ideas of political leaders who began their career in the interwar period; a liberal one - with the greatest tradition in the history of Romania but disputed by many parties, so unlike the PNȚCD, they lack institutional organization, while promoting clear programs; a social-democratic one: disputed since 1992 by two parties, and in 1996 by PDSR and USD².

Unlike the 1990 elections when only three presidential candidates competed and 1996 when six politicians registered their candidacy, in 1996 no less than 16 candidates joined the electoral race. They were Ion Iliescu from PDSR, Emil Constantinescu from CDR, Petre Roman from USD, C.V. Tudor from PRM, Gyorgy Frunda from the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, Tudor Mohora from the Socialist Party (PS), Gheorghe Funar from PUNR, Adrian Păunescu from PSM, Nicolae Manolescu from the National Liberal Alliance (ANL), Ioan Pop de Popa from the Center National Union, Radu Câmpeanu from the National Liberal Alliance, Constantin Niculescu

¹It appeared after a scission in the National Salvation Front which took place in 1992. The politicians loyal to Ion Iliescu created the Democratic National Salvation Front, which afterwards became the Party of Social Democracy in Romania.

² Virgil Nemoianu, „O narațiune explicativă” în *Sfera politicii*, Anul V, nr. 44/1996, p. 18.

from the Romania's Motorists Party, George Muntean from the Party of Pensioners in Roman, and also three independent candidates: Gheorghe Mudava, Nuțu Anghelina and Nicolae Militaru³.

The result confirmed the forecasts of the opinion polls, meaning the fight was mainly one between Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu, the latter winning it. This moment marked the first exchange between power and opposition after 1990 and, at the same time, the end of the political transition after the fall of Communism. Still, it also revealed that there is a public which is attracted by candidates with a different kind of speech than the Romanians were used to. Some candidates have been delineated according to the issues addressed in the electoral campaign, as well as by the doctrinal identity adopted by the political parties that supported them. Antoine Roger, referring to the parties that participated in the 1996 elections, has distinguished three political formations that adopted an anti-system platform: PSM, PUNR and PRM. Their candidates for the presidential elections, Adrian Păunescu, Gheorghe Funar and Corneliu Vadim Tudor, were characterized by populism, nationalism and nostalgia for the Communist regime.

In this paper we will look at how each of the three candidates presented themselves to people and to what extent the anti-system discourse was part of their strategy.

Adrian Păunescu

Adrian Păunescu was the PSM's candidate for the presidential election. This party was born after a merge between the Romanian Socialist Party – formed by former communists and the Democratic Party of Labor. After winning a few seats in the Romanian Parliament after the 1992 elections, IlieVerdeț – former prime-minister before 1989 – was reconfirmed as its president, while Adrian Păunescu was elected as first vicepresident. PSM's first scission happened when Tudor Mohora and Traian Dudaș created The Socialist Party. Public attention to PSM increased in intensity after the 1996 local elections, when it ranked forth⁴. From an identity point of view, the party identified itself with the Freiburg School, arguing that the Marxist model continues to provide pertinent answers to the problems of Romanians. The party's program criticizes international creditors, but also their supporters in Romania. The PSM advocated for the maintenance of collectivism among the

³ Marius Mureșan, „Politică și presă: reflectarea campaniei electorale din 1996 în ziarul «Evenimentul Zilei»” in *Revista PHILOHISTORISS*, An II, Nr. 4, decembrie 2016, p. 81.

⁴Bogdan Teodorescu, „Campaniile electorale din România. Prezentare cronologică” in Bogdan Teodorescu, Dorina Guțu, Radu Enache, *Cea mai bună dintre lumile posibile. Marketingul politic în România – 1990-2005*, Ed. Comunicare.ro, București, 2005, p. 224.

state structures and called for the necessity of a strengthened control over food production and distribution, seen as the only way to ensure the food security of the country⁵.

The candidate was born in 1943 in the present Moldavia and attended the courses of the Faculty of Philology at Bucharest University, after which he started a career in the written press. During the Communist period he held the post of Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the "România Literară" magazine and Editor-in-Chief of "Flacăra"⁶. He became popular between 1973 and 1985 when he coordinated the "Flacăra" Cenacle which organized thousands of performances all over the country. This movement revealed his appetite for the exaltation of nationalism through the intermingling of the patriotic texts with shows of lights and sounds. Moreover, in the spirit of this orientation, meetings took place near some historical places to amplify their effect⁷.

The post-communist political career began in 1992 when he was elected as senator in Dolj County⁸. Even though he officially launched its candidature on the 6th of September 1996, during his first public appearance Păunescu motivated that he is running because those who ruled Romania "have robbed the national wealth" and "they have demolished industry, culture places, prices, gratuities"⁹. Its program aims at implementing an economic socialism, thus presenting itself as the promoter of the third path, besides liberalism and social-democracy. This vision presupposes centralism and etatism regarding the state property, because it must be strengthened and defended by law if it has to coexist with the particular one. Adrian Păunescu tried to individualize himself from other candidates who claimed a left-wing economic policy by criticizing their actions so far: Petre Roman was presented as "the architect of the national disaster" due to his government, while Ion Iliescu was attacked for supporting the 1996 Romanian-Hungarian Treaty, accusing him of "selling the country"¹⁰. At the beginning, his foreign policy vision was a pro-Euro-Atlantic and pro-democracy one, but he also favored privileged relations with the "Great China"¹¹, an important economic partner of Romania before 1989. Still, a short time after being named as the party's candidate, Păunescu

⁵ Antoine Roger, „Les partis anti-système dans la Roumanie post-communiste” în *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, vol. 31, 2000, n°2, p. 110.

⁶ „3 în 1990 – 6 în 1992 – 16 în 1996” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr.1989, 4 octombrie 1996, p. 3.

⁷ Michael Shafir, „Antisemitic Candidates in Romania's 1996 Presidential Elections” in *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1996, p. 97.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Floriana Jucan, „Adrian Păunescu: Guvernările de după 1989 au întors România în Evul Mediu” in *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1275, 2 septembrie 1996, p. 3.

¹⁰ Rodica Ciobanu, „Adrian Păunescu și-a început campania atacându-l pe Ion Iliescu” in *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr. 1961, 2 septembrie 1996, p. 4.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

attacked Richard Holbrooke, the United States Undersecretary of State, accusing him of accepting the Hungarian revisionism, after the American official called for the ethnic tensions generated by the Treaty of Trianon to be forgotten. More so, the candidate accused the United States of wanting to take Transylvania from Romania, while Holbrook was named „an anti-Romanian extremist”¹². Some speeches like the one cited above reveal the main themes that were going to be addressed during the campaign and also an inconsistency of ideas: Păunescu used an anti-system discourse, criticizing those who were in power until 1996, even though PSM and PDSR – the ruling party – signed a protocol to support the Văcăroiu Government; the candidate also had an adversely attitude towards the Romanian-Hungarian relations, talking from the beginning about the danger of chauvinism and his intention to fight against it.

The candidate’s political program, which was presented during the Socialist Labor Party’s National Council Plenary on 31st of August 1996, started by criticizing those who had the power in Romania after 1989. Regarding their activity, Păunescu used verbs like “to spoil [the country]”, “to demolish”, “to lose”, by doing so trying to reveal the FSN-FDSN-PDSR Governments’ incapacity to deal with the country’s most important issues. The slogans that the PSM campaign had at their disposal were: “Sun for all”, “By ourselves, for ourselves, for the good of the world and of man”, “It’s up to us”, “Freedom, dignity and balance”, “Let’s do justice so it can depend on us”, “Equal rights, equal obligations”, “Live, live, live, Moldavia, Transylvania and the Romanian Country”. Păunescu set himself in a permanent antithesis with Ion Iliescu, whom he called “a Revamped Menshevik” and whose program was described as a “social-democratic-liberal bluff”. The PSM candidate speech was presented as an imaginary dialogue with the Romanian people, which he calls “Your Majesty” and in whose service he was put through the presidential candidacy. The program itself consisted of a series of proclamations, such as equal rights for all citizens, respect for democracy, republic and the constitution, the necessity of creating the basis of Great Romania. Păunescu assumed commitments like attachment to the Church, a strong army inside NATO and “banning poverty and misery”. Closing the speech, he critiqued the so called foreign interventions whose purpose is that Romania to be ruled by the right wing parties¹³.

During a meeting with his supporters, which took place at the Nottara Theatre in Bucharest while in Timișoara the Romanian-Hungarian Treaty was signed by president Iliescu, patriotic songs were played. In this context, Adrian

¹² Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

¹³ „Adrian Păunescu: Program pentru bătălia prezidențială prezentat la Plenara Consiliului Național al Partidului Socialist al Muncii din 31 august 1996” in *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1277, 4 septembrie 1996, p. 8.

Păunescu referred to the Nicolae Ceausescu regime and this became a leitmotif of the electoral campaign. While criticizing the mistakes made by the communist regime, without naming them, the PSM candidate evoked Ceausescu's struggle to defend Romania's national sovereignty¹⁴. Thus, the PCR leader was compared to Ion Iliescu, who became a target because, according to Păunescu, wasn't capable to continue what the Communist leader started¹⁵. Due to these remarks, Michael Shafir called Păunescu an artisan of attempting to empower "the national communism". The argument has a real basis, because, in an interview, Păunescu argued that the communist ideal is not a dead idea¹⁶. Moreover, during his political career, he was noted, through controversial actions, like the request for a presidential amnesty for former PCR members imprisoned after 1989 and the rehabilitation attempt of Marshal Ion Antonescu, accused, among other things, of the measures taken against the Jews, and the Roma population between 1940 and 1944¹⁷.

His electoral campaign also included visits through the country, which were not free of incidents. For example, after visiting the "Gerom" and "Laminorul" factories from Buzău, Adrian Păunescu was stopped by the PDSR supporters to visit the «Fermit» and «Elars» factories from Râmnicu-Sărat. Păunescu responded by refusing to meet Aurel Gubandru, the Prefect of Buzău County¹⁸. Another electoral action retained by the 1996 press was a rally held in Oradea, attended by approximately 15,000 people. The event followed the model of the "Flacăra" Cenacle from the communist period, being re-titled as "Numai iubirea" Cenacle. Among the people's chants were "Păunescu, Peace, without you what would we do?", "Păunescu we love you, as President we want you"¹⁹.

At the end of the campaign, Păunescu looked like a resigned candidate knowing that his chances of winning were very low. He identified those responsible for the probable failure: false opinion polls, which revealed that the skills are not important in the campaign, but "the assets, the showcases, and the ability of each candidate to be on the national post or on other television stations"²⁰.

¹⁴Floriana Jucan, „Adrian Păunescu a evocat lupta lui Nicolae Ceaușescu pentru suveranitatea României” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1288, 17 septembrie 1996, p. 5.

¹⁵„Adrian Păunescu apreciază că Ion Iliescu nu-l va ajunge nici în 200 de ani pe Ceaușescu” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1307, 9 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

¹⁶ Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁷*Ibidem*, p. 99.

¹⁸Floriana Jucan, „Adrian Păunescu a fost împiedicat să viziteze câteva fabrici din Râmnicu-Sărat” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1308, 10 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

¹⁹Eadem, „15.000 de oameni au strigăttimp de 30 de minute la Oradea <<Păunescu te iubim, Președinte te dorim!>>” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1314, 17 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

²⁰„Adrian Păunescu a declarat că jocurile pentru Cotroceni sunt făcute” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr.1319, 23 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

Gheorghe Funar

The PUNR mayor of Cluj-Napoca has participated for the second time in the presidential elections, after the 1992 experience. During 1992-1996, his party supported the PDSR Government, ruled by Nicolae Văcăroiu. During his mayoral mandate of the Transylvanian city he made controversial decisions like the prohibition of Hungarian inscriptions or the engraving of a quote belonging to the historian Nicolae Iorga on the statue of Matthew Corvinus, which spoke about the victory of Stephen the Great against the born in Cluj Hungarian king²¹. Gheorghe Funar compromised himself by supporting the Caritas Business²² which started in Cluj. The head of the program, Ion Stoica, offered money to the city hall for funding monuments dedicated to the national heroes. In this respect, Funar presented Caritas as a way “to help the Romanians in Transylvania becoming richer than the Hungarians”²³. The mayor even offered Stoica a place to work in the City Hall building, which helped to increase the credibility of this business²⁴. By a Government decision, Caritas was over, so Funar considered that PDSR should be held accountable for its failure and the bankruptcy of several thousand Romanians who invested their money. He further accused members of the party, some government officials or employees of the presidential cabinet for “having raised bags full of money from Stoica”²⁵.

The program presented to the voters can be summed up in a few main ideas: bringing the truth about December 1989 to the knowledge of the nation, the abolition of the illegally constituted Hungarian state structures, the abandonment of the wrong austerity budgets policy, the change of the customs system policy, increasing the salaries of the public employees, recovering the treasury deposited in Russia in 1917. By developing these ideas,

²¹ Antoine Roger, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

²² Caritas was a pyramidal game, started in Cluj-Napoca in 1992 and promoted intensively by the press. By 1993, by promising to multiply eight times the amount invested, about a million people were convinced to do so. Given that the limits of the business were observed until 1994, an amendment to the Penal Code was discussed in Parliament such games were prohibited. On May 19, 1994, the Caritas closure was announced publicly. Cristian Delcea, Mihai Voinea, „25 DE ANI DE CAPITALISM. Falimentul Caritas. Schema care a arătat gradul de prostie și de hoție al românilor” in *Adevărul*, 7 aprilie 2015. Available at adev.ro/nmg164, accessed on April 20, 2017.

²³*Ibidem*, p. 113.

²⁴ Katherine Verdery, „«Caritas»: And the Reconceptualization of Money in Romania” în *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Feb., 1995), p. 2.

²⁵ Victor Bratu, „Potrivit lui Gheorghe Funar, Ioan Stoica va face dezvăluiri despre «Mini-Caritas» circuit destinat doar privilegiaților” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1303, 4 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

the candidate's program reveals an authoritarian view of the presidential powers, because he intends to participate in all Government sessions where topics such as the economy, foreign policy, country defense, public order, etc. were to be discussed. Regarding the promotion of presidential officials and advisers, the selection criteria set out do not cover skills, but "perfect morality", "vision in cultivating the country's interests", "holy love for nation and country". An important part of the program was devoted to the dangers to national identity, which are due to the involvement of the Hungarian state in Romania's internal policy. In this respect, it mentions the punishment of those who were involved in actions directed against the united national state, as well as those who supported ideas such as autonomy and ethnic separatism. UDMR is directly named as being involved in these approaches. Gheorghe Funar's program, as in 1992, makes a distinction between Hungarian politicians and "Romanians of Hungarian ethnicity", so the second category is the subject of an attempt to identify solutions to the discontent over the rights granted by the Romanian state. UDMR is directly named as being involved in these approaches. Gheorghe Funar's program, as in 1992, makes a distinction between Hungarian politicians and "Romanians of Hungarian ethnicity", so the second category is the subject of an attempt to identify solutions to the discontent over the rights granted by the Romanian state. From an economic point of view, the PUNR candidate's vision is a state-centered one, which must be subjected to a process of "strengthening its role as a guardian and controller of the use of the country's wealth, national heritage, national currency and Romanian finances"²⁶.

Despite the fact that the start of the campaign was at the end of August, Gheorghe Funar launched its program 20 days later, thus close to the date of the elections. That is why it is important to follow what has characterized the promotion of the PUNR candidate up to that moment. The first example we want to present happened in early September when Funar outlined the main directions of his vision for the Presidency: he proposed to use the president's attributions, such as the initiation of a referendum whenever a decision needs to be made, talked about rebuilding the national economy by exploiting crude oil, natural gas and developing the mining industry²⁷. The referendum is one of the most important prerogatives of the head of state, but it is used usually in case on delicate problems. The fact that

²⁶ „Gheorghe Funar s-a angajat să oprească procesul început în decembrie 1989, pe care l-a denumit «Prăbușirea prin noi înșine»” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1293, 23 septembrie 1996, p. 2.

²⁷Silviu Achim, „Gheorghe Funar promite: 100 de idei pentru 4 ani de președinție” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr. 1961, 2 septembrie 1996, p. 4.

Funar plans to use this medium as a tool of propaganda reveals the weaknesses of his political platform, as well as a well to decline responsibility in certain cases and also populism. Beyond the anti-Hungarian messages he noted, in this speech Funar which form of nationalism is going to promote: supporting the "Vatra Românească" organization and others as such which are defending the national interests, building statues to embody personalities from Romanian history and culture such as Mihai Eminescu, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, Avram Iancu, Al. I. Cuza, Ion Antonescu²⁸. The PUNR candidate has made very few references to the economic decline Romania has experienced since 1989 and his program contains only a point about "stopping the process that has taken place since December 1989, which can be synthesized as follows: the collapse by ourselves, but legally" along with "giving up the wrong policy of austerity budgets"²⁹.

The first part of the campaign was marked by the actions and positions taken by the PUNR candidate regarding the signing of the Romanian-Hungarian Treaty. By press releases he warned about the danger this treaty presents to the unitary national state, the sovereignty and territorial independence of Romania³⁰. Moreover Funar organized a funeral march in Cluj-Napoca³¹, which CDR compared with the Ku-Klux-Klan shares in the United States. The reason is the use of Christian symbols and the parody of the funeral ceremony, which is a sacrilege and an offense against the Church³², as they said. A similar reaction came from the Prefecture of Cluj and the Romanian Government, which took into consideration the possibility of the dismissal of Funar as mayor. The main reason was that the images of the symbolic burial were taken over by international media Euronews, who resumed every half an hour "the images of the coin and the coffin that crossed

²⁸*Ibidem*.

²⁹ Victor Bratu, „Gheorghe Funar: Prăbușire prin noi înșine, dar în mod legal” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1275, 2 septembrie 1996, p. 3.

³⁰Dumitru Tinu, „Ungharia - NATO, România - feliicitări” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr. 1973, 16 septembrie 1996, p. 1.

³¹ The rally began at 10.30 a.m. along the Statue of Memorandists - the Avram Iancu Square - Turzii Street - the Central Cemetery itinerary. In front of the funeral convoy against the signing of the Romanian-Hungarian Treaty, there was a mortuary car, accompanied by the city hall employees, who had on their back the names of Gyula Horn, Ion Iliescu, Nicolae Văcăroiu and Teodor Meleşcanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Funar said that this march represented the funeral of the Romanians' tranquility in Transylvania. In a statement made by the PUNR leader, he said the treaty "is nothing but the loss of Transylvania". „Gheorghe Funar a organizat un marș funebru în centrul Clujului” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr. 1974, 17 septembrie 1996, p. 2; Bogdan Eduard, Sandu Mureșan, „Gheorghe Funar a înmormântat, în cimitirul central din Cluj, Tratatul româno-maghiar” în *Evenimentul zilei*, Anul V, nr. 1287, 16 septembrie 1996, p. 3.

³²Cristian Mihai Chiș, „Gh. Funar - acuzat de practici tip KU KLUX KLAN” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr. 1975, 18 septembrie 1996, p. 2.

Cluj”³³. The Prosecutor’s Office attached to Cluj County Court opened an investigation about Funar’s participation in the events that happened on the day of signing the treaty with Hungary. The candidate attacked Ion Iliescu by saying that his regime „has come to investigate those who go to a funeral”, while the Prosecutor tries to eliminate him from the presidential race³⁴.

After launching the electoral program and the conclusion of the discussions on the Romanian-Hungarian Treaty, Funar focused on other ways of retaining public opinion. Starting from the ideas announced in the political platform regarding the involvement of UDMR in the process of Magyarization of the Romanian population in the counties of Transylvania, the candidate launched an appeal to the political parties for collaboration in order to appoint candidates in the Harghita and Covasna counties who can obtain seats in the Romanian Parliament. The message also addressed the Romanian population in these counties, who were asked to vote for the unique candidate that the “Romanian political forces”³⁵ would designate.

Another favorite subject of Funar was the threat of Iliescu's imprisonment if elected president. During the Moldovan electoral tour in early October, the candidate invoked a 55-day countdown, after which he promised Iliescu would get the “mandate he deserves - the arrest”³⁶. The theme was resumed in the last days of the campaign, when both Iliescu and Petre Roman were threatened to “finish their days in Cluj County, collecting potatoes” because they will be imprisoned at the Gherla Penitentiary³⁷. These kinds of statements reveal the lack of interest in the democratic principles of the separation of powers in the state. Also, it exposes an authoritarian vision in which the head of state has both executive and judicial powers, and he can decide, from the position he holds, who and why should be sent behind bars.

Corneliu Vadim Tudor

The third candidate we present is Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the president of PRM. The PRM was born on June 20, 1991, as a result of an initiative

³³Bogdan Eduard, Sandu Mureșan, „Juriștii Prefecturii Cluj și Guvernul României studiază posibilitatea demiterii din funcția de primar a lui Gheorghe Funar” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1289, 18 septembrie 1996, p. 4.

³⁴Victor Bratu, „Gheorghe Funar protestează: «A ajuns regimul Iliescu să-i cerceteze pe cei care merg la o înmormântare?»” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1299, 30 septembrie 1996, p. 4.

³⁵„Funar propune o coaliție antimaghiară în Harghita și Covasna” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr.1981, 25 septembrie 1996, p. 2.

³⁶Bogdan Eduard, Sandu Mureșan, „Funar a declarat că Ion Iliescu și Petre Roman sunt niște asasini care își vor petrece restul vieții la Gherla, în haine vărgate” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1326, 31 octombrie 1996, p. 5.

³⁷Antoine Roger, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

initiated by the editors of the "România Mare" magazine, which became the means for the dissemination of the platform. Initial management structures included Corneliu Vadim Tudor as president and Eugen Barbu as honorary president³⁸. In the first years of its activity, the PRM remarked through the harsh criticism of any foreign entity in the country: it described the reform attempts since 1989 as "criminals" ones that brought Romania under the control of foreign banks, while the economy was "colonized" by Western powers. According to the representatives of this party, the purpose of the "occult forces" supported and controlled from abroad was to dismantle the Romanian state. In the same vein, the IMF has been called a "mafia organization"³⁹. A characteristic of PRM was its attitude towards communism, because the party dissociated the ideology from the person of Nicolae Ceausescu, considering that the communism was brought to Romania by "Jews, Hungarians, Russians and Gypsies"⁴⁰. This nostalgia for the pre-1989 leader will also be found in the presidential candidate's campaign.

Corneliu Vadim Tudor was born in Bucharest in 1949 and he graduated in sociology from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Bucharest. In the Communist period he professed as a journalist, but he was especially noted through the poems dedicated to the leaders of the country, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu, being perceived as a "bureaucrat poet". After 1989 he held the trust that published the weekly "România Mare" and "Politica". He joined the political life by founding the PRM in 1991⁴¹. Following the 1992 elections, he was elected as a senator of Bucharest, and his party supported the Văcăroiu government.

Similar to Gheorghe Funar, Tudor launched its program two weeks after the start of the campaign, but unlike his opponent, he joined the electoral race only on September 16th, having the support of 130,000 people. The date and time were concise with the signing of the Romanian-Hungarian Treaty in Timisoara, but the PRM candidate claimed it was a coincidence⁴². On September 18th, Corneliu Vadim Tudor presented the electoral program for the presidential elections at the Romanian Opera House in Bucharest. The event was organized under the slogan "A Christian President for the 21st Century Romania". Among the speakers were Mitzura Arghezi - the head of the presidential campaign and the spokesperson for the candidate, Titus Raveica - a philosophy professor and senator on the FSN lists between 1990 and 1992,

³⁸Bogdan Teodorescu et.al., *op.cit.*, p. 222.

³⁹ Antoine Roger, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

⁴⁰*Ibidem*.

⁴¹ „3 în 1990...”, p. 3.

⁴²Corina Drăgotescu, „C. V. Tudor a venit la BEC pe jos și a plecat cu Mercedesul” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr. 1974, 17 septembrie 1996, p. 2.

Leonida Lari – a poet and militant for uniting Bessarabia and Romania, Martin Maled – an American preacher. The latter's speech sparked public applause, claiming that “the PRM Senator is not against Americans, Hungarians, Jews, but against the American, Hungarian or Jewish scams”. Tudor began his speech by highlighting the amount of factors that would influence the outcome of the election, comparing the situation with that of the Phanariot regime: “opinion polls, electoral agents, foreign multipliers who have certain tasks, some TV stations”⁴³. However, Tudor has evoked the intention to present a moderate speech, and he motivates the lack of an “electoral offer” by the fact that the tragedy of a country cannot be reduced to political-economic terms⁴⁴.

As for the program, it was presented as the 60-point "lightning strategy" of the PRM and the candidate C.V. Tudor. In summary, the platform declares the candidate's attachment to the rule of law, democracy, separation of powers. One of its goals was to make Romania a great power in areas such as economy, science, culture, tourism, sports, by appealing to the “unmistakable genius of the Romanian people”. Tudor has already committed himself to taking the necessary steps for the unification of Romania and Moldavia, while in the economic field he has proposed a revitalization of the industry, the abolition of the underground economy, investment, energy independence and monetary stability. On the list of the 60 necessary measures, was the establishment of the Propaganda Ministry, without giving further details. Also, among the ideas were the references to the tensions between the Romanians and the Hungarians. Thus, on the assumption that “tens of thousands of Romanians were expelled by the fanatical elements of the Hungarians”, it is hoped to restore the state authority in the counties of Harghita and Covasna. In addition to this measure, UDMR would be outlawed on the grounds that it is an “anti-Romanian organization”⁴⁵.

Despite the promises of a moderate campaign, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, following the editorial lines of the "Romania Mare" magazine, used public appearances to attack opponents, weather they were representatives of the political world or the press. The representatives of the "Adevărul" newspaper were the protagonists of such a moment, following an article that reported a PRM candidate's visit to Resita, during which he was booed. According to the article published by the daily Rompres news agency and quoted by “Adevărul”,

⁴³ Floriana Jucan, „C.V. Tudor a promis că va duce o campanie electorală civilizată” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1287, 19 septembrie 1996, p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ „Un președinte creștin pentru România secolului XXI. Senatorul Corneliu Vadim Tudor – singurul om capabil să facă ordine în țară!” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1303, 4 octombrie 1996, p. 11.

Tudor's visit was delayed due to the fact that Nicolae Drăgan, the president of the Caraș-Severin Branch of BNS and Bruno Szwatsynka, the vicelider of the Independent Free Trade Union at the Reșița Machine Works Plant SA, supported by Cornel Nițoiu, the president of the local branch of the CNSLR - Frăția, opposed the arrival of the PRM leader in the House of Culture building⁴⁶. The candidate reacted, accusing the newspaper of being illegally privatized and inheriting by fraud the patrimony of "Scânteia", the former official communist newspaper⁴⁷. An unnecessary attack on the PDSR candidate was made during a rally organized at the Union House of Culture in Cluj-Napoca where, besides claiming that Ion Iliescu "is not a Christian, he did not do military service, he participated in a coup d'etat, he made a colony of flats and took all the thieves in his arms". Tudor also made some remarks about his mother, whom he compassionates because he claims she regrets giving him life⁴⁸. This kind of speech attracted a series of defamation trials against him, but Tudor has portrayed them as revenge attempts for his fight against corruption. Thus, in the electoral campaign, Corneliu Vadim Tudor tried to assert himself as a rioter, revolted against those who were enriched in the first post-communist years "on the back of the people"⁴⁹.

The anti-system discourse, impregnated by the theme of the outside plot, as well as the nationalist one, determined the start of a collaboration with the French National Front. Tudor attended the Strasbourg National Front Congress in 1996, and Jean-Marie Le Pen was the guest of honor at the PRM Congress in the same year⁵⁰.

Conclusions

The three candidates that were the subject of this study have promoted a critical discourse on the PDSR government, although each represented parties that upheld the executive at one point. PRM, PUNR, PSM and PDSR were partners and this coalition was named the "red quadrilateral", because of their leaders' ties with the communist regime.

In the middle of the first post-communist decade, Romania was in the

⁴⁶ „C.V. Tudor – huiduit la Caraș-Severin” în *Adevărul*, seria a cincea, nr.1991, 7 octombrie 1996, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Remus Radu, „Corneliu Vadim Tudor a tunat și a fulgerat împotriva ziarului <<Adevărul>> mai tare ca împotriva ungarilor” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1307, 9 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Bogdan Eduard, Sandu Mureșan, „Corneliu Vadim Tudor a compătimit-o pe mama lui Ion Iliescu” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1314, 17 octombrie 1996, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Ion Cristoiu, „Parada TVR a candidaților la președinție. 4. Imaginea” în *Evenimentul zilei*, anul V, nr. 1321, 25 octombrie 1996, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Antoine Roger, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

situation of choosing a unique foreign policy direction. The closeness to the West, meaning the European Union integration and NATO membership, could only be achieved by providing clear evidence of the government's attachment to the principles of democracy and respect for human rights. Thus, the three parties, due to the controversial platform based on xenophobia, nationalism and nostalgia for the old regime, were gradually removed from power. This generated and amplified a conflict between the former allies, which led to a discourse against the PDSR and against the entire political system because this party was the only representative of the power, thanks to winning the general elections of 1990 and 1992.

An interesting aspect is related to the political evolution of the three candidates after 1996. Despite the similar discourse, only C.V. Tudor remained in public attention. Antoine Roger, referring to this path, found that the PRM laid the foundations for a "national doctrine" - characterized by xenophobia manifested and promoted in public discourse - continued by an economic project motivated by "regaining prosperity and dignity", with specific objectives and clear steps: macroeconomic planning, state control over prices, domestic capital development, consolidation of forms of co-operation in agriculture⁵¹. Therefore, using this kind of rhetoric and because of the country's economic problems, in 2000, the PRM candidate has won the second place in the presidential election.

⁵¹*Ibidem*, pp. 115-116.

Book Reviews

Rudolf Dinu, *L'avamposto sul Danubio della Triplice Alleanza. Diplomazia e politica di sicurezza nella Romania di re Carlo I (1878-1914)*, collection „Dialogoi Politiké”, Aracne Publishing House, Ariccia (Italia), 2015, 212 pages.

Rudolf Dinu is known as a historian both inside and outside Romania's borders particularly because of his contributions on topics touching on the history of international relations, diplomatic and political history and the history of Italian-Romanian relations from the second half of the 19th century – beginning of the 20th. He is a professor at the Faculty of History, Bucharest University, currently active in the field of cultural diplomacy: he was director of the Romanian Culture and Humanist Research from Venice and recently was appointed director at the Accademia di Romania in Roma. Among his most important scientific works we mention: *35 anni di relazioni italo-romene, 1879-1914. Documenti diplomatici italiani* (Univers Enciclopedic Printing House, Bucharest, 2001, with Ion Bulei); *Studi italo-romeni. Diplomazia e società, 1879-1914*, Editura Militară Printing House, Bucharest, 2009); *La Romania nella Grande Guerra. Documenti militari e diplomatici italiani 1914-1918* (Editura Militară Printing House, Bucharest, 2014).

The present book responds to a need of Romanian scientific research, research to which historians also contribute – externalisation, the real need to be better known outside the country and to publish in international languages. Rudolf Dinu has published in specialised magazines from Italy, respectively coordinated the publications of the Romanian Cultural Institute from Venice, *Annuario* and *Quaderni*, both serving the same goal which is to present to the Italian historiography topics of the Romanian history.

The foreword of this book is signed by professor Francesco Guida, one of the foremost Italian specialists in the history of Romania and Eastern Europe, dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences, Roma Tre University. The foreword is followed by an introduction signed by the author, a list of abbreviations and the main contents, structured in seven chapters. At the end there is a small appendix containing documents and a name index. The main idea of the book is to present the manner in which the young Romanian state built its defence strategy in a period that was crucial for its evolution: from obtaining its independence (1878) until the start of World War I. Thus, a first chapter presents the structures, the diplomatic elite and those in charge of

Romania's foreign policy during this period. This chapter brings information about, among others, the diplomatic offices Romania had between its independence and World War I. Chapter two focuses on a topic that weighed heavily in the way "small" Romania shaped its relations with the Central Empires with which it will become allied in 1883: the Danube. The third chapter focuses on a topic that is less debated in our specialised literature: the evolution of Romanian diplomacy during the end of the Bismarck era (1883-1888). The topics covered in this chapter are Romania's position concerning the Rumelia crisis (1885-1886) and Italy joining the Austrian-Romanian treaty in 1888: both topics are presented in a synthetic manner and the relevant details are pointed out.

The fourth chapter of the book is entitled *La diplomazia romana nell'età della Weltpolitik*, and focuses in the alliance crisis and the third treaty between Romania and the Triple Alliance (Dreibund), respectively the period 1889-1892, as well as the topic of Transylvania given Romania's relations with the Triple Alliance at the end of the 19th century. The complicated evolution of the relations between Romania and the Central-European political and military alliance is well created. Particularly the relations between Romania and Austria-Hungary are well illustrated: this is a period when the Romanian problem from Transylvania reached a crisis point without political precedent given the rejection of the Memorandum and the fact that the leaders of this movement were condemned in 1894. Chapter V deals with the Romanian external policy from the Balkan area at the end of the 19th century, an area where Bucharest's interests were no less greater than with regards to Transylvania. Among the less well-known details that we encounter in this chapter we mention Serbia's attempt from 1900 to create a form of regional partnership by means of an alliance with Romania and Romania's attempt from the following year, 1901 to reorganise the Triple Alliance. Chapter VI deals with the activity of Romania's diplomacy in the years before the war, 1908-1913, and focuses on two topics: the attitudes and fears of Romania's diplomacy with regards to the Bosnian crisis from 1909-1909, respectively the manner in which Romania positioned herself in the Balkan wars, 1912-1913. Finally, chapter VII focuses on what is entitled "the end of an era": the period 1913-1916. It is a decisive period and at its end, following hesitations, dilemmas and numerous probings in the political and diplomatic environments Bucharest decided to abandon its alliance with the Central Empires and join the war alongside the Triple Entente.

The book signed by Rudolf Dinu, that we have briefly presented above, represents first and foremost a documentary contribution to the study of Romania's involvement in international relations from the second half of the 19th century – beginning of the 20th. The bibliography of the book is relevant

as it contains archived from Romania's Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central National Historical Archives, Bucharest and the Romanian Academy Library, Bucharest. They are proof of the intensity of research conducted by the author, an effort he undertook with the conviction that the introduction in the scientific discourse of information from primary sources enriches historical knowledge. Secondly, the studies the volume offers excel through a spirit of synthesis, through thorough analysis and a great selection of Romanian and international bibliography. Last but not least we want to point out that the author has presented in Italian his results following the research done on the topic of Romania's relations with the political and military body represented by the Central Powers. Thus, the Italian historiography has at the ready a thorough book concerning Romania's approach towards the Central Powers of Central Europe in the period prior to World War I. Beside using information from primary sources and the Romanian bibliography covering this topic, a bibliography to which the Italian and international historiographies have difficult access, Rudolf Dinu's book offers to the same Italian historiography the needed material for a possible comparative approach between the situation of the two countries, Italy and Romania, as they both shared a similar path marked by them joining the Central Powers (1882, respectively 1883) and the decision to join the war alongside the Triple Entente in 1915, respectively 1916.

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Peasants and Politics in Interwar Romania. Perceptions, Mentalities, Propaganda, Edited by Sorin Radu and Oliver Schmitt, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017

The following volume focuses on the complexity of the interwar period of Greater Romania, a country suddenly born after the closure of the First World War. The volume and its vast selection of authors emphasize in decrypting a very sensitive yet crucial topic in order to understand the evolutionary process of the political life in the realm of peasants the vast majority of Romania's population obviously consisting of them. A significant proportion of the population in a country that has always and always will

have a significant amount of peasants and agricultural traditions. Therefore their political impact is unquestionable.

The volume *"Peasants and Politics in Interwar Romania"* challenges itself to present a much nuanced reality in the political life of an everyday peasant during the interwar period. It strives to achieve this feat in sixteen very eye opening chapters which all shed light to a different aspect of everyday political life from the viewpoint of an everyday peasant's life in interwar period Greater Romania, a period of great anomalies for almost all of the newly founded European States post the Versailles treaties.

The volume kicks off with a very strong introduction by the editors Sorin Radu and Oliver Jens Schmitt describing the general aspects and vague theme of the volume that will focus on the specifics of the peasants political life and the challenges they had to face with the old and newly formed political parties in Greater Romania. Then with a simplicity of a coin flip we will be able to see the other side, the political parties viewpoint on how challenging or easy was for certain parties to acquire the much needed votes by the Greater Romanian peasantry, because who controlled the peasant voters more than likely had won the elections in greater Romania in certain periods of time. This situation sheds light to a very gruesome reality of interwar period Romania, that of peasants being used as instruments in the process of making politics, they were subjects of the events and not participants or actors of the events by any means, only in very few instances. Another statement by the editors is the fact that the relevance and a new approach in this volume has been implemented with the attention to detail of various specific fields of the subject and that the volume contrary to previous research findings does not concentrate on agrarianism as a third way path to modernity, this is very important because it is one of the first studies to acknowledge this as a statement in the prologue of the volume. Instead the volume with the contribution of a vast selection of specialist authors have opted to emphasize on the social and political dimension of the peasants integration process and how effective this will be in the case of Greater Romania in its state-nation building endeavor. In many cases the volume also tried to examine a bottom-up viewpoint of the subject although this is many times a way more challenging aspect then the traditional top-down view.

Sorin Radu's article about "Peasant Democracy" or what it was like to Practice Politics in Countryside Romania between the Two World Wars is the first chapter of the volume and sets the tone for the rest of the following chapters with its detailed and much nuanced analyses of the peasantry situation and political integration from a social and political dimension. The author also is presenting the complexity of the situation of the process of political integration of peasants in the country's political life and culture, right

after the end of the Great War. The volume then follows with Șerban Stelu's article about communal political cultures in Interwar Romania examining the effects of Legionary and Cuzist extremism in rural Romania. But of course more studies like his will need to emerge in the future to evaluate this very uneasy subject.

The continuation of the volume stays true to its primary statement and to the prologue of presenting a very nuanced and detailed picture of the peasant situation in interwar Romania. From case studies like Micu Cornel's examination of the mayors and local elites in Bordei Verde, Brăila County, till the situation in Bessarabia and Transylvania all aspects and territories are covered by the authors and their researches focusing on different aspects and different approaches to the subject. We can see it throughout the articles that from an everyday peasant life and political integration process we arrive to the tricky parts of examining the elections, the results of these elections, the campaigns, the methods and so on, the volume gives us very valuable articles in these subjects as well.

From chapter twelve the volume sheds light on a new and very important part on the topic of the volume Politics and Peasants in interwar Romania. From here on it will heavily emphasize the minority aspect of this period focusing on the minority parties, party leaders and peasant integration into the political life of these minorities in Greater Romania.

Egry Gábor strives in His article to examine the constructs of ethnicity in Rural Transylvania and the suspicious nature of the interwar period between the majority and the minorities consisting of Hungarians and not only. While Vasile Ciobanu focuses on the peasantry and political life of the German minority in Transylvania.

Toth Szilárd continues this aspect of the volume with His article, examining the cooperation of the Hungarian Party and the Hungarian Peasantry in Romania. Shedding light on the practical approaches the Party leaders of the minorities took towards their vote casting citizens before and during the political campaigns, the propaganda aspect infused with the electoral methods and also examining their involvement and effects in interwar Romania clearly symbolizing the Hungarian minority political nature and pragmatic practices during this period.

The closure of the volume consists of two very distinct and interesting topics. After witnessing the political life and the integration of the Hungarian and German peasantry in interwar Romanian politics, we can clearly see how nuanced case studies can be born. Pintilescu Corneliu adds on top of this and lives up to our expectation with his article, where he examines the Saxon Press in Transylvania in the period of 1935-1941 and how the "Nazification process" of the local media has influenced the political life and integration of the Saxons

in Transylvania. Duminica Ivan contributes with the final chapter to the volume, where he examines the policy options of Bulgarians in Bessarabia during the period of 1919-1940 completing the circle of this very detailed and nuanced volume, covering all important aspects of this difficult period.

To conclude, the volume *Peasants and Politics in Interwar Romania* is a very complex and detailed academic achievement. The reader of this volume will have the delight to get a clear picture on just how politics and peasants mixed up during interwar Romania on all territories of the newly born country Greater Romania. From the party leaders to the ordinary everyday peasant, from a Hungarian to a German minority viewpoint, we get the chance to examine the period. The strong side of this article is that all of its articles offer something refreshingly new, therefore this volume does not disappoint, it clearly shows the complex nature of the volume. Revelations are needed are needed in future researches to go even deeper in certain topics, that has many times been regarded as a challenging period but existing to research the topics of politics and their impact on the population.

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Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin: Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941*, Penguin Books, London, 2017.

Stalin and Hitler have been by far the two most written about dictators of the 20th Century. While this means that there is a vast literature from which to choose, it also makes it more difficult to bring original contributions. In the case of Stalin, Stephen Kotkin has proven, with the first two parts of his biographical trilogy that we have yet to have seen the definitive book on the Red Tsar. The second volume, entitled *Stalin: Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941* presents the implementation and creation of the Stalinist system and how it came to mould the very essence of the Soviet Union and its inevitable clash with its historic opponent, Nazi Germany.

To historians of the contemporary period, Stephen Kotkin has become by now a household name. He came of fame with his ground-breaking book, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*¹, which is considered by some to

¹Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1995.

have ushered the first steps towards the post-revisionist paradigm. It was for the first time that a historian tried applying Michel Foucault's theory of the linguistic turn to an analysis of the transformations suffered by Soviet society under Stalin's leadership. Yet Kotkin's research has not been limited to this topic, as in *Armageddon Averted*² and *Uncivil Society*³ he moved towards elements of transitional studies combined with economic insight, as he looked at the decline and fall of European communist regimes and the establishment of democratic states. Currently, he is the John P. Birkelund '52 Professor at Princeton in History and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. He is also a Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. In the past few years Stephen Kotkin has focused much of his efforts in writing the most comprehensive biography of Stalin, a part of which is here under review.

The main difference between the first and second volumes is one of emphasis. While the former was more than biographical research, as it focused on explaining and illustrating the last decades of the Russian Empire, the latter brings Stalin at the forefront. This serves to prove how the dictator had in fact by 1929 become very much the centre of the Soviet world. While this might disappoint some readers, one can argue that it is a natural transition, given the transformations suffered by Soviet society and Stalin's role in this process. Kotkin works very hard to explain the dictator's ideological theories and interpretations and how these turned into policies with real-life consequences for the population (collectivization, heavy industrialization, etc.). In this respect it is not so much about what the author brings new to existing historiography, as it is a matter of how this information is interpreted and used in the illustration of Stalin. And in a sense it is here that Kotkin maintains his advantage over other contemporary authors, such as Oleg Khlevniuk, who was more focused on the demonization of the dictator than on historical interpretation⁴.

This volume is more oriented towards the political aspects than its predecessor as it presents what evolutions took place within the Party in the context of the Great Terror. Stephen Kotkin seemed very interested in presenting not only the interaction of leading figures with Stalin, but also among themselves and the world in which they resided. Yet it is here that he also manages to present the role played by Stalin in the demise of important

²Idem, *Armageddon Averted: the Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001.

³Idem, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of Communist Establishment*, Random House, 2009.

⁴Oleg Khlevniuk, *Stalin: A New Biography of a Dictator*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 2015.

figures (Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev were tried and executed, and the manner in which he pitted Yezhov against Yagoda, and the latter against Beria). Kotkin manages to do this without losing any of the zest of Simon Sebag Montefiore's biography of the Red Tsar, which focused more on personal elements and Stalin's relationships with party higher-ups⁵. Also, the author is doubtful that Stalin was involved in the death of his friend Serghey Kirov, rather he punished those found responsible quite harshly and in a diabolical fashion.

Lastly, but not least, the book emphasizes the USSR's actions in foreign affairs, in its struggles for international recognition, expansion of influence, and of course the spread of the Revolution. While a good portion of the book looks at efforts put in the support of communists in the Spanish Civil War, Kotkin is one of the few Stalin biographers to analyse his decisions in Asia. Much of the focus is put on Mongolia and China, with the latter explaining to a certain extent the future break-up between Mao and his so-called Soviet comrades. Of course, this marked the perfect opportunity, while looking at Europe, for Stephen Kotkin to introduce a comparative approach towards Nazi Germany. This idea seems to suggest an inevitable clash between two opposing systems. And in fact, the title of the volume itself, *Waiting for Hitler*, serves to implant the idea that the '30s were the period in which Stalin consolidated the Soviet Union for war, while his nemesis was building up his own regime. But this analysis often seems aimed at explaining some of the inner workings of the Nazi regime in a manner which both serves to illustrate ideological differences and mounting reasons and decisions leading up to a future conflict with the Soviet Union. Kotkin manages to underline this through a parallel, a technique which can often be elusive to other authors, while he himself is not an established academic authority when it comes to Nazism. He also emphasizes, in an elegant fashion, the perils of a highly-centralized system of decision-making, for as another biographer of Stalin⁶ put it, he was the primary intelligence analyst of the country, although not necessarily the best.

As we are approaching the conclusion we must establish where this book stands in regards to the existing historiography on Stalin's life and regime. Without a doubt it marks a progress in terms of information available to the writer in comparison to what Robert C. Tucker had at his disposal⁷. It

⁵Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, Vintage, 2003.

⁶Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary: 1879-1929*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1988; Idem, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1990.

⁷Ed. E.A. Rees, *The Nature of Stalin's Dictatorship: The Politburo, 1924-1953*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004.

also distinguishes itself from Simon Sebag Montefiore's amazing two-book effort on the life of the Red Tsar⁸, as a more academic approach with more attention to historical consequences. Beyond other authors, a comparison between this volume and the preceding, some readers might be left disappointed by the reduced interest shown in society, but this would have been very difficult given the scope of the book. Since this is aimed at being a comprehensive look at Stalin's life, Kotkin's decision to split the biography into a trilogy was a very wise one.

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⁸Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Young Stalin*, Vintage, 2008.