

**STUDIES AND MATERIALS
OF
CONTEMPORARY HISTORY**

**NEW SERIES
VOLUME 7/2008**

ABSTRACTS

Florin ANGHEL, *Projects for a New Europe: the establishing of Romanian-Polish diplomatic relations and the issue of mutual border (1918-1919)*

After November 11, 1918 (Proclamation of the Republic of Poland) France had decided that new Poland had the means to endorse at least three major factors, which were able to increase French influence in Central and Eastern Europe: 1) the setting up of a political, military and economic outlet to the Baltic Sea; 2) to provide a good neighbourhood to Romania, taking into consideration, for the future, the idea to forge a group of states between Baltic and Black Sea (the so called *cordon sanitaire*); 3) mediation, by the French authorities only, of any kind of border issues regarding Poland. French objectives, and in particular the one regarding the Romanian-Polish border, were issued in order to follow and back the military objectives of France, while the entire regional policy was in strong connection to the competition for influence between France and Great Britain.

Cristian SANDACHE, *Nicolae Titulescu's Foreign Policy: a critical approach*

The external policy of Romania was influenced before the war by the desire to realize national unity, the dream of union with all the Rumanians outside of Roumania's frontiers. In this policy Roumanians was always supported more especially by France, with whom a very close cultural bond also existed, relations which are still maintained. The external policy of Roumania has not changed after the 1918, and all the efforts made on different parts to alter this policy completed failed. If of late, voices have been heard endeavouring to force Roumania into another direction, their effect has been destroyed by the repeated declarations of Nicolae Titulescu, Minister for Foreign Affairs. After 1934, the anti-Semitic Romanian fascists, who received encouragement for German Nazis, were especially angered by the Titulescu's friendship with France, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet union. They denounced a plan of the Tatarescu Government to build a railroad connecting the Soviet Union with Czechoslovakia via Romania, and in 1936 brought about the resignation of Nicolae Titulescu.

Marcel VARGA, *The representatives of Ethnic Minority Parties in the Romanian Parliament (1934-1937)*

After the elections of December 1933, the Magyar Party had 3 senators and 8 deputies in the Romanian Parliament. The same results had the German Party, allied with the government. The Jews Party did not exceed the electoral threshold (2%).

Frequently, the members of Parliament raised various questions and initiated speeches concerning the Romanian economy, administration, education and culture. Their interventions were dictated by party interests or by their affiliation to various groups.

Bogdan Alexandru SCHIPOR, *British policy toward Finland during the Winter War*

The soviet attack over Finland, on the 30th of November 1939 without any preliminary war declaration, somehow surprised the British government and caused vehement reactions in the press and in the Parliament, but did not represent, though, a completely unexpected event for the diplomacy from London. The British political leaders found themselves in a delicate situation, because, on one side, the pressure of the public opinion obliged the government to express a favorable attitude to the Finnish cause, but giving an official answer about the soviet attack had to allow for the fact that Great Britain was not able to act directly for the government from Helsinki.

Or, this kind of actions could bring Great Britain in the situation of declaring war to the Soviet Union, what for the moment was not to be discussed. The relation with Moscow had to be kept the more that the attack of the Red Army did not represent a threat towards the direct British interests. These could have been affected only if the Russians had committed acts of aggression especially in the South-Eastern Europe. Only then London could take into consideration the adoption of a more firmly attitude, such as declaring war to Moscow.

But, for the moment, the British government based on two possibilities. The first was that the attacks confine themselves to Finland, and in this case the soviet expansion would have not affected at all the interests of the Western powers. On the other hand, if the attack of the Red Army over Finland took part of a much developed plan, which would have implied the expansion of the Russian influence on the South-Eastern Europe also, it was obvious that the Western interests would have been affected. An eventual soviet aggression in the area of the Balkans or of the Straits would have forced thus Great Britain to think about the possibility of declaring war to the Soviet Union, eventually altogether with Italy. Until then, London had to avoid an open conflict with Moscow.

For the British, Finland has become a second-place issue, their interest being the possibility that under the false intervention for this country, they would obtain altogether with the French the control over the iron mines from the Northern Sweden and of the Norwegian harbor Narvik, from which all these took the road to Germany. In these circumstances it was somehow preferably that Finland resist the more it could, because it would have kept away the Russian troops, as the German ones, from the interests followed by the Great Britain and France in the Northern Scandinavia.

Paris and London hoped that finally Sweden and Norway allow the passage of a French-British expeditionary troop on their territory, towards Finland, as a result of a call that the Finnish government should do for assistance against the Soviet Union. This time, the Western powers were wrong. Finland did not opt for an official call to help, neither from France or Great Britain, nor from the two Scandinavian states, Norway and Sweden. The Finnish government chose in exchange the way of negotiations with the Soviet Union, through complicated ways, which passed over Stockholm. At last, under the pressure of the more complicated situation from the

front and of the lack of adequate resources to continue to fight, the Finnish signed the peace with Moscow on the 12th of March 1940.

Simion GHEORGHIU, *Policy and History in dealing with Romanian-Russian/Soviet relations. 1947-1989. Case-study: Romanian Historiography*

Between 1947 and 1989 the history of Romanian-Russian and Romanian-Soviet relations have been reflected in the Romanian historiography under a strong political influence. Their presentation and interpretation have been dependent on the evolution of the political relations between Bucharest and Moscow.

Sensitive episodes such as: annexation of Bessarabia by the Tsarist Russia in 1812; request of Romanian military support sent by the Great Duke Nicholas in 1877; the Union between Romania and Bessarabia in 1918; the breaking of the diplomatic relations between Soviet Russia and Romania and the confiscation of the Romanian Treasure sent in Moscow in 1917-1918; the annexation of Bessarabia and North Bucovina, by the Soviet Union, in 1940, have been presented during '40s-'50s in a way which favored Moscow, using texts from Soviet handbooks historiography.

The change that occurred in the Romanian-Soviet relations in early '60s has significantly influenced the Romanian historiography. Romania has been the only member of the Warsaw Pact which acknowledged, in a 1981 University Manual of Romanian History, the existence of the Additional Secret Protocol of MolotovRibbentrop Pact (The above mentioned document was published -the 3rd paragraph concerning Bessarabia). Therefore Romania pronounced itself against Moscow, in a fundamental issue of Soviet's foreign policy.

Radu TUDORANCEA, *The „imperialist camp“ in the Korean War. From Diplomatic Reports of the Romanian Legation in Washington to international events hosted by Bucharest (1950-1953)*

The purpose of this paper was to assess the way in which Romania, one of the People's Democracies countries, (fully engaged in offering „brotherly support“ to Pyongyang), monitored and evaluated the „home reality“ of the main opponent from the *other side*(USA) in the Korean War. Thus, the reports elaborated by the Romanian diplomats, members of the Romanian Legation in Washington, are at least interesting, despite their obvious subjectiveness.

The „enemy“ is even more criticized, when it comes to „international events“ hosted by Romania, such as the *World Youth Congress in Bucharest* (25-30 July 1953), or the *World Festival of Youth and Students in Bucharest* (2-16 August 1953).

Emanuel PLOPEANU, *Beyond the Iron Curtain: the Romanian Governmental Propaganda in the North-American Romanian Exile (1950-1952)*

The object of this paper is to bring into light some aspects regarding the way in which the Communist establishment, from Bucharest, try to spread, in the middle of Romanian emigration, from United States, a very improved image of itself and of the „achievements“ who are taking place in new Romania. Following this goal, the Romanian authorities try to use every possibility; for example, they responded very promptly to some demands regarding school textbooks, as for *Romanian language, History* and many others; in the same time, the delivery of above mentioned material was accompanied by new and old literary; first was, of course, on the ideological

course, underlined the new better world which take shape; from the second one, only the pieces which stressed upon the deficiencies of the old society was, of course, selected. Documentary movies, on special occasions (as August 23th) were also delivered.

In the very intense correspondence, regarding the problem of broadcasting information about Romania, more restricted positions were adopted. This produced in the case of some requests, forwarded by originated Romanians scholars, now Americans, interested in knowing the latest scientific achievements. In every case the response was absolutely „no”. A similar position was adopted in the case of diffusing Romanian press to the United States journals or agencies. The reluctant attitude was motivated by the fear of using this sources of information against Romanian interests, few readers, of course, being tempted to actually believe what was written in the page of Romanian journals. This continued to come into Washington, but only for serving Romanian Legation needs, and, occasionally, for delivering to the Romanian – American or American „friends”.

What was surprisingly was the relative open attitude of some Romanian – Americans toward Communist rule from Romania, position motivated either by a real sympathy with transformation which were take place or by an understandable need to know what was going on in the originated home. Anyhow, beyond ideological consideration, the Communist authorities has speculate very intensely the free climate from the United States, in order to spread what they believe to be great achievements, for themselves and for the people, and, also, for finding the ideological support, in various left orientated American writings.

Cristian VASILE, *The Literature of Socialist Realism. The Romanian Writers and the Ideological Burden (1948-1953)*

Using preeminently newly declassified documents from the National Archives' funds (especially Propaganda and Agitation Section/Direction of the Romanian Communist Party's Central Committee), one tried to draw up an extensive inventory of the RCP/RWP's strategy to manipulate and enroll the Romanian Writers during the first years of Stalinism.

Being in the spotlight within artistic and cultural life, the writers were perceived preeminently as the *intellectuals*, and after 1945/1948 the Romanian Communists sought to bring them on RCP's side, despite the seeming unusable past. The Communist control over Literature was accomplished both through the agency of subtle plans of manipulation and instrumentalization and censorship (thousands of books were gathered in a sort of *Index librorum prohibitorum*). The forbidden literary works had to be replaced and the State Publishing Houses printed especially ideologically-oriented books. In such circumstances the writers had to choose between resistance, surrender, and ambiguity. The majority preferred the last two options and such choices were facilitated by the creation of the Soviet-type Writers' Union which replaced the old Society of the Romanian Writers and supervised the imposition of Socialist Realism.

Cezar STANCIU, *The Build up of Legitimacy of Gheorghiu-Dej's regime*

This article deals with the theoretical and empirical background of the legitimacy issue, during the early Communist regime in Romania. Exploring various definitions of political legitimacy, we can discard the popular concept according to which Communist regimes were illegitimate. Although the methods of power-seizure and also the nondemocratic instruments of control were indeed illegitimate, the regime in Romania, just like all East European regimes, managed to obtain a certain degree of support from society. This was done starting in the post-

Stalinist context, when the increased space of maneuver allowed by the Kremlin raised the question of the relations between the regime and society, in mostly all Communist countries. The recognition of social necessities as political issues and the attempt to identify solutions in the mid' 50s were the premises for the construction of political legitimacy.

Mioara ANTON, *The Road to Helsinki. Romania and CSCE. 1966-1975*

From the mid-sixties onwards, the project of a conference for security and cooperation in Europe became a priority of the foreign policy of the Communist regime in Romania. The publication in Bucharest, in July 1966, of the *Declaration on the reinforcement of peace and security in Europe* marked the beginning of this process. The leaders of the PCR understood that involving Romania in the organisation of the conference meant the development of an independent foreign policy and the accumulation of prestige in relations with western states. But the period of opening was very brief, the causes of which have their origins in the evolution of the leader of the PCR. The theses of July 1971 and the return to ideological dogmatism had particularly grave consequences for acts of foreign policy. The ideological freeze compromised the bases of the policy of independence, leading to the isolation of Romania and to an unprecedented opening to the countries of the Third World. If at the end of the sixties, Romania surprised by its individual position within the Warsaw Pact, after 1975 the leader in Bucharest lost much of his prestige, becoming the prisoner of a policy which no longer suited the realities of the seventies.

Cristina DIAC, *The Censorship in Theatre. Case-study. The „previews” at Cluj National Theatre*

After 1990, in order to prove the repressive dimension of Romanian communist regim, it were a large discussion about the last step „made” by a play before beeing seen by ordinary people. The term for this final step, used by officials but by artistic folklor also, was „previews”, but the correct sense was „ideological previews”. The main thesis said officials of Communist Party falls upon playhouses, determined to censure and defaime the plays, stage managers and actors. Documents from archives published recently prove a more complex reality. The main goal of censors was to save the play. Parts of text removed at explicit demand of political power were the price payd by stage managers and actors before their cultural product get to her final destination, the audience.

Luminița BANU, Florian BANU, *The History of the Securitate and its sources*

Given the huge interest regarding the various aspects of the *Securitate* history any presentation of the historiographic sources cannot be complete. In this case, our study must be connected to a much needed analysis of the stage reached by historical research on this topic, taking into consideration the existing premises which can extend and deepen any future research leading to a comprehensive history of the Romanian communism. We can only hope that the future research projects will allow the scholars to draw an accurate picture of the political mechanism, created by the communism regime in Romania.

Raluca URSACHI, *Romania's Recent Past and Its Political Uses. About two scholarly works recently published in France*

Romania's political development since the fall of Communism in 1989, comparatively little studied and understood in the Western academia, is explored by scholarly authors in recent publications in France. Both concentrate on the events that defined the fundamental divide of the Romanian political elite: the December Revolution and the mass meeting of the University Square followed by the violences of June 1990. While one of the authors, in virtue of her political career, offers a very biased analysis of the development of this divide once „the opposition“ finally won the elections in November 1996, the other work goes on to explain why the 1996 administration meant the end of anticommunism as a political discourse – though not of anticommunism as a civic attitude. The recent revival of the anticommunist discourse is not sufficiently dealt with by any of the two publications – it is up to the reader to see to what extent they offer useful tools of analysis for this unexpected development.