

Between History and Power. The Historiography of Romanian National-Communism (1964-1989)

Francesco Zavatti¹

Recibido: 29 de junio de 2020 / Aceptado: 15 de julio 2020

Abstract. This article aims to analyse the relationship between history and political power in communist Romania during the rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu. The article's opening section explains how Romanian historiography was substituted by a pro-Soviet and pro-Stalinist version which proclaimed the superiority of the Soviet Union and of communism; secondly, the section illustrates the delicate passage between Stalinism and national communism. As the section shows, Party Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej understood that autonomy from Moscow was essential in order to guarantee the internal stability of the Romanian communist élite. For this reason, genuine legitimacy had to be created by reissuing the national ideology dismissed since 1948. National history was given back its primary importance within Romanian culture, this time in service of the Stalinist élite, sided with more traditional Marxist-Leninist tenets, symbols and narratives. The second section illustrates the development of the new national-communist canon after 1965, once Nicolae Ceaușescu took power. The section presents the main trends developed by Romanian historiography in order to inspire loyalty to the Romanian Communist Party. As the article shows, by the early eighties, nationalism and the cult of the leader had become the main trends of this metanarrative. The epilogue briefly points out the continuities and changes produced by the regime change in 1989 for Romanian historiography.

Keywords: Historiography; Stalinism; Romania; national communism; politics and history.

[es] Entre historia y poder. La historiografía del nacional-comunismo rumano (1964-1989)

Resumen. Este artículo tiene como objetivo el análisis de la relación entre la historia y el poder político en la Rumania comunista durante el gobierno de Nicolae Ceaușescu. La sección de apertura del artículo tiene como objetivo explicar cómo la historiografía rumana fue sustituida por una versión pro-soviética y pro-estalinista, con el objetivo de proclamar la superioridad de la Unión Soviética y del comunismo. En segundo lugar, la primera sección muestra el delicado paso entre el estalinismo y el comunismo nacional. Como explica la primera sección, el liderazgo rumano entendió que eliminar la dependencia de Moscú era esencial para garantizar la estabilidad interna. Por esta razón, tuvo que crearse una legitimidad genuina al reeditar la ideología nacional rechazada en 1948. La historia nacional recuperó su importancia primordial dentro de la cultura rumana, esta vez al servicio de la élite estalinista y al lado de los símbolos marxista-leninistas. La segunda sección tiene como objetivo mostrar el desarrollo del nuevo canon comunista nacional después de 1965, una vez que Nicolae Ceaușescu asumió el poder. La segunda sección presenta las principales tendencias desarrolladas por la historiografía rumana para inspirar lealtad al Partido Comunista Rumano. Como muestra el artículo, a principios de los años ochenta, el nacionalismo y el culto del líder se convirtieron en las principales tendencias de esta metanarrativa histórica. El epílogo señala brevemente las continuidades y los cambios producidos para la historiografía rumana por el cambio de régimen de 1989.

Palabras clave: historiografía; Estalinismo; Rumania; comunismo nacional; política y historia.

¹ Södertörn University, School of Historical and Contemporary Studies
E-mail: francesco.zavatti@sh.se

Sumario. Introduction. 1. Prequel: the making and breaking of Stalinist historiography 2. Romanian national-communist historiography. 3. Sequel 4. Bibliography.

Cómo citar: Zavatti, F. (2020). Between History and Power. The Historiography of Romanian National-Communism (1964-1989). *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, Vol. 42: 39-58.

Introduction

This article analyses some of the main historiographical trends developed during the second half of the communist dictatorship in Romania, “Ceaușescu’s era”. The analysis is focused on monographs and journals published in Romania between the sixties and the eighties by the Institute for Historical and Socio-Political Studies (*Institutul de Studii Istorice și Social-Politice de pe lângă C.C. al P.C.R.* – from here on “ISISP”), which was the Romanian Communist Party’s official history institute. ISISP’s historiography has contributed to the development in a “scholarly way” of the political theses of the Romanian Communist Party. In order to contextualise this historiographical corpus, the article will start with the analysis of the relationship between politics and historiography after 1948, once Romania became a communist dictatorship. As will be shown, the study of historiography cannot be exempted from the study of the state politics that set the rules of what is permissible, and which have the power to silence competing discourses with a range of instruments from repression to the expropriation of resources from the institutions for historical research. The state, with its repressive and economic power, may choose to monopolise culture by promoting exclusively discourses that are in line with its politics. The first section will show how the logics of Stalinisation in Romania worked and their impact on historiography. Historiography was, until then, a capital component of the national discourse. Until the end of the Second World War, Romanian historiography had contributed to the definition of the positive connotations of national ideology and the negative characteristics of its enemies. Communism had, until then, been framed as the most dangerous menace to national independence and sovereignty. For this reason, the Stalinisers of Romanian culture substituted the traditional historiography and its national content with a brand new Stalinist historiography drafted with the aim of demonstrating that the Soviet Union had been and still was the champion of social rights for the world proletariat.

As this metanarrative had political origin, so did its shift after the death of Stalin. The first section of the article provides an account of the “reaction to the de-Stalinisation” performed by the Romanian regime after 1956. The political strategy shifted from total acceptance of the Soviet Union’s line to the development of a double political line: a political one, still loyal to the Soviets, and a “scholarly” one, in which the national ideology was re-issued in order to build domestic consensus for the Romanian communist élites. Because of this strategy, the formerly repressed historians could retake their positions side by side with younger propagandists and old communist veterans, in the attempt to draft an official history of the party and of the Romanian nation.

The second section of the article shows the role of Nicolae Ceaușescu in potentiating the national-communist strategy and the historiographical canon with it. The thesis here advanced is that the strategy inherited from Gheorghiu-Dej on the reis-

suings of national ideology had been exploited in all its possibilities, up to the point of forcing the empirical materials of Romanian history into a narrative that, mixing tenets from the national discourse and from the Marxist-Leninist one, aimed to justify the twists and turns of the Romanian regimes' desiderata. The section analyses the main historiographical trends endorsed by the Romanian regime since 1965. As shown, the metanarrative canon pointed out that the Romanian nation and its leaders across time had always struggled to achieve social and national rights; the most recent of this uninterrupted dynasty of glorious leaders became Nicolae Ceușescu, followed loyally by the Party and "the entire people". The section shows how the regime performed the implementation of the strategy in the historical sciences and how these became the main narrative standpoints of the regime's legitimation, also in regimented forms of popular culture. The section also shows the development of the regime's politics in the eighties, once the general aim of the strategy had been taken for granted, without considering the changes in international politics or the endemic poverty that the economic policies had reduced Romania to.

The last section of the article shows the continuities and the changes of Romanian historiography after the fall of the communist regime. After an initial de-ideologising phase, a de-mythologising turn gave consent to the younger generations of historians to analytically confront the nationalist historiography still endorsed by the established academics who had been in powerful positions since the days of the communist regime. The nationalism developed in the eighties would continue to remain mainstream within Romanian historiography and, generally, within the public discourse, even if it was more and more challenged by the import and autochthonous development of new theories and methods in historical studies.

1. Prequel: the making and breaking of Stalinist historiography

Since the establishment of the communist dictatorship in 1948, Romanian historiography had become an instrument of the propaganda exigencies of the regime. The change was epochal, in terms of content. Since the nineteenth century, national ideology had been the glue with which the Romanian state had built its discourse. The historians used to attach positive values to the Romanian nation and its sovereign state, assigning instead negative connotations to Russia and its imperialist politics. Since the times of the First World War, the Romanian state propaganda had pointed out that communism was the new form by which the old Russian imperialism was trying to attack and destroy the newly achieved union of all the Romanians. Communism and the Soviet Union were the main "other" in the narrative of inter-war Romania. Once the communists could, with the use of violence, neutralise their political adversaries and overthrow the monarchy, they set up a totalitarian regime. Since the new rule had a clear ideological programme, aimed at implanting a new civilisation on the lines traced in the Soviet Union by the Stalinist regime, the traditional Romanian culture was eradicated with violence and abuse. Since the early Stalinist period, the communist regime brutalised the historians and their profession, endorsing a politics based on control and repression.² With the precise goal of eradi-

² Deletant, Dennis: *Ceaușescu and the Securitate: coercion and dissent in Romania, 1965-1989*, London-New York, C. Hurst & Co., 1995. Deletant, Dennis: *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the State*

cating the Romanian culture and substituting it with a pro-Soviet version, the regime ostracised the interwar-time historians, jailing them or removing them from their teaching positions, which was particularly sensitive since the Romanian youth was the most important target of the new cultural politics.³ In order to support the making of a Stalinist civilisation in the cultural way, the regime reformed the school and university system in 1948. The reform drastically cut the budget to the state institutions⁴ and favoured the newly established Party institutions, like the Party Schools Ștefan Gheorghiu and Zhdanov, the History Museum of the Romanian Workers' Party, and the Party History Institute.⁵ These institutions were mainly responsible for the adaptation and development of the Stalinist canon within Romanian culture. They created the historiographical myth of the pivotal role of the Romanian Communist Party in fighting against the state repression in Romania during the interwar and war eras.

Up until the early sixties, these institutions and their employees, historians trained in the "Stalinised" faculties of history and propagandists trained at the Party Schools, developed a general metanarrative inspired by the main text of reference of Romanian Stalinism: Mihail Roller's *Manual for the Eight Class* (1947).⁶ The manual was issued in 1947 and continued to be used until 1962. Roller was the main Staliniser of Romanian historiography; he and the *Manual's* co-editors Victor Cherestesiu, Barbu Cămpina, Gheorghe Georgescu, Vasile Maciu, Aurel Roman, Dumitru Tudor, Solomon Știrbu and Gheorghe Ștefan were all members of the communist party and faithful Stalinist believers. They worked on the *Manual* in a record time, using the sources of the interwar-era's Romanian Communist Party. Those sources, together with hundreds of archives improperly confiscated by the communist authorities, and with a rich collection of interwar-era history monographs and journals, were conserved at the Party History Institute and could be consulted only for special purposes. The ideological standpoints of the *Manual* vilified the Romanian national symbols, which constituted the base of the interwar historiography: the union of the Romanian principalities was criticised; the union of 1918 was presented as an imperialist creation of the Western powers aimed at oppressing its nationalities; the parliamentary system was presented as a system of legalised exploitation of the working class; the monarchy and the leaders of the historical parties were presented as defenders of the constituted interests of various kinds of exploiters; and the interwar politics were presented as consequences of all the above. Evidently, the use of interwar-era sources that mixed Soviet-informed Stalinist ideology and the political exigencies of a small sect were perfect for changing Romania's past. Conceptually, Roller's manual was based on Marxist-Leninist assumptions applied to the geo-political settings of Romania. The history of Romania became a glorious history of resistance to oppression and capitalist exploitation that the communist faith in progress and equality wished to build from its power position: class struggle had to be seen as the motor

Police, 1948-1965, London, Hurst & Co., 1999.

³ Pleșa, Liviu: *Istoriografia clujeana sub supravegherea Securității (1945-1965)*. Bucharest, Cetatea de Scaun, 2018.

⁴ Sadlak, Jan: *Higher Education in Romania, 1860-1990. Between Academic Mission, Economic Demands and Political Control*, New York, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1990.

⁵ Bădică, Simina: "The Revolutionary Museum: Curating the Museum of Communist Party History in Romania (1948-1958)", *Historical Yearbook*, 10 (2013), pp. 95-109.

⁶ Roller, Mihail; Cherestesiu, Victor; Cămpina, Barbu; Georgescu, Gheorghe; Maciu, Vasile; Roman, Aurel; Tudor, Dumitru; Știrbu, Solomon; Ștefan, Gheorghe (eds.): *Istoria R.P.R.*, Bucharest, Editură PMR, 1947.

of change; the social conflicts became the *right* paradigm with which to read history; resistance to Western oppression became a constant of Romanian history; the difficult relationships between Romania and Tsarist Russia were reshaped so that the Russian foreign politics were, in a way or another, always justified. These features were fully endorsed by the regime. Roller's chief at the Propaganda Department, Leonte Răutu, was the main inspirer of these violent attacks against the freedom of research.⁷

Romanian historiography was following the Stalinisation diktat and its violent means all the way. This trend continued until the mid-sixties. However, since the new propaganda was ancillary to political power, once the political exigencies required a sudden turn, its main features and agents could be sacrificed in favour of more functional ones. These exigencies came already with the death of Stalin and with the consequent denouncement of Stalin's crimes by Nikita Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Union's Communist Party in February 1956. The Romanian Workers' Party Secretary, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, held a secret meeting with the Party's higher hierarchs already in March 1956 and asserted that no de-Stalinisation was necessary in Romania, since Stalinism was already a thing of the past. He had understood that, soon, his Soviet supporters could have lost their positions in the fight for the succession that opened in Moscow after Stalin's death. He could not know what would happen, but he chose the safe side and manoeuvred in order to be prepared for the worst with good timing.

This "reaction to de-Stalinisation", conceived secretly in the halls of the Romanian Workers' Party, was aimed at saving the Romanian communist élite, who at that point were reduced to Gheorghiu-Dej and his loyal court, since his most powerful enemies had already been eliminated or neutralised in the latter years.⁸ The main tactic of this "reaction" was the de-Russification of Romanian Stalinism, within a strategy aimed at cultivating popular consent; the greater aim was to establish the legitimacy of the Romanian communist élite and regime.⁹ This difficult aim was constructed by showing continuous loyalty towards the Soviet Union, as the Romanian regime did during the Hungarian crisis in 1956 and, later on, when the Romanian communists argued against the polycentric tendencies of world communism and sided with the Soviet Union in the most difficult confrontations, with Mao's China and with Hoxha's Albania.

De-Russifying Romania was achieved by inverting the road began with so many efforts in 1948. In order to reissue the national discourse, the previously ostracised

⁷ Tismăneanu, Vladimir; Vasile, Cristian: *Perfectul acrobat. Leonte Răutu, măștile răului*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008, pp. 26-30, pp. 216-257. Pleșa, Liviu: "Mihail Roller și "stalinizarea" istoriografiei românești", *Annales universitatis apulensis – Series Historica*, Universitate din Alba Iulia, 10 (1/2006), pp. 165-177; p. 165-166. Zub, Alexander: *Orizont Închis. Istoriografia română sub dictatură*, Iași, Institutul European, 2000, p. 41.

⁸ Levy, Robert: *Ana Pauker: the Rise and fall of a jewish communist*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001.

⁹ Haupt, George: "La genèse du conflit soviéto-roumain", *Revue française de science politique*, XVIII (4/1968), pp. 669-684. See also Tănase, Stelian: *Elite și societate. Governarea Gheorghiu-Dej, 1948-1965*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006; Tismăneanu, Vladimir: *Stalinism for all seasons: a political history of Romanian Communism*, London, Berkley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003; Tismăneanu, Vladimir (ed.). *Comisia Prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România – Raport Final*, Bucharest, 2006; Tismăneanu, Vladimir; Vasile, Cristian: *Perfectul acrobat. Leonte Răutu, măștile răului*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008; King, Robert: *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, Hoover University, 1980. Jowitt, Kenneth: *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1944-1965*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971.

historians were called back to their profession, while the propagandists had to relearn their work. Year after year, the Stalinist narrative endorsed with great energy was left behind and substituted with the gradual return of the wide repertoires of national symbols, anniversaries, slogans and key events. One of the first signs of the deviation from the Stalinist canon was the celebrations for the hundredth anniversary of the Union between Moldova and Walachia of 1859. Although Roller's *Manual* considered the Union as an important historical achievement for working-class progress, the regime dedicated several ceremonies and publications to the anniversary, underlining its *national* importance. Some Stalinist propagandists, who had not understood that the party politics were more important than the political discourse's coherence, publicly contradicted the positive significance of the event and were consequently removed from their positions. One of the most evident signs that the "Soviet-Romanian Friendship" was at a low ebb was the closing of the institutions that had been established in 1948 with the specific aim of strengthening the cultural ties with the Soviet Union. Among these, the most important were the Institute for Russian Studies and the Russian Books Publishing House (both closed in 1959), the Romanian-Soviet Institute, The Romanian-Soviet Annals, and the Russian-Romanian Museum (closed in 1963).¹⁰

Since the early sixties, the Soviets had started to suspect that the interest of the Romanian Communist Party in its history was hiding an unknown political reason. Otherwise, they could not explain why the Romanians took so much interest in insisting that during the wartime, the Party and its organisations (a total of less than 4,000 persons) had been pivotal in crushing Antonescu's regime in 1944. It was simply not true and the Romanian comrades could prove it only by overvaluing the propaganda left from their wartime comrades – and hiding the ridiculously low membership of the wartime "mass organisations". The Soviets were right in being suspicious.¹¹ This first frontal confrontation between Romanian and Soviet historians on the role of Romanian communism in the Second World War, in 1961, led the Romanian communists to potentiate the main institution for "research" in Party history: the Party History Institute was transformed into the Institute for Historical and Socio-Political Studies (ISISP). Granted with many more new financial resources and with an unprecedented autonomy in human resources' management, the Institute enrolled new historians, created new research sections and put much effort into demonstrating that communism was a mass phenomenon in Romania, and that the Party had played a pivotal role in crushing the fascist dictatorship of Antonescu – much more so than the Red Army.¹²

Once the Soviets had left Romania (the Red Army left in 1958, the political counsellors in 1963), the Romanian regime's strategy could be fully displayed in all its political and cultural aspects. This was done by unprecedented moves. First, Roma-

¹⁰ Georgescu, Vlad: *Istorie și politică. Cazul comuniștilor români, 1944-1977*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006, pp. 47. See also Zub, Alexandru: *Orizont Închis...*, pp. 1-30. Boia, Lucian: *History and myth in Romanian consciousness*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2001.

¹¹ Romanian National Archives, CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, 9/1961, *Nota din 3 mai 1961, a directorului Institutului de Istorie a Partidului, I. Popescu-Puțuri, cu privire la redactarea volumului Istoria Marelui Război al Uniunii Sovietice pentru Apărarea Patriei, editat de Institutul de Marxism-Leninism din URSS*, ff. 1-6; see also Iacob, Cristian: *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation*, Budapest, Central European University, 2012 (dissertation), pp. 229-230 and Stoica, Stan: *Istoriografia românească între imperativele ideologice și rigorile profesionale, 1953-1965*, Bucharest, Meronia, 2012, pp. 143-144.

¹² ISISP, A-2/1, Vol. X, *Propuneri cu privire la îmbunătățirea schemei Institutului de istorie a partidului*, f. 37.

nia explicitly refused the Comecon plans for the de-industrialisation of the country; with so many investments in enormous and unprofitable kombinat in the Stalinist period, making a U-turn was declared to be disrespectful of the autonomous development of Romania and its economy. In April, Gheorghiu-Dej declared that each communist party should have followed its own path of development and that no foreign interference in internal politics was acceptable. After the issuing of this declaration of autonomy in the political and economic spheres, the capital importance of autonomy was stressed also in a “cultural way”, by recently discovered writings of Karl Marx. Some unedited notes on Romanian history, found in the Archive of the Institute for Social Sciences in Amsterdam in 1957, contained specific references to Russian imperialism and to the Hungarian nobles as exploiters of the Romanian people. Although Marx drafted these notes for personal use from nineteenth-century volumes, the regime enrolled several historians to work on them throughout the years, in full secrecy. After intense editing, the *Notes on the Romanians* were printed in 20,500 copies which were distributed and massively promoted. The long and well-crafted strategy had put the Romanian communist élite in a condition where they could challenge the Soviet Union both in the political and cultural spheres.¹³

2. Romanian national-communist historiography

The creator of the national-communist strategy, Gheorghiu-Dej, died in March 1965. Nicolae Ceaușescu, army general and political commissar of the Romanian army, emerged from the struggle for the succession as party secretary. Relatively young in comparison with the other members of the communist élite, he had been trained since the interwar times in party politics, and had consequently learnt how to position and align himself in order to succeed in the intra-party struggles. By conceding resources to his subordinates in the peripheries, he built his own consensus within the party in less than three years and he was soon able to shadow (and, later on, to exploit) the memory of his predecessor and patron Gheorghiu-Dej. The domestic audience thus had the impression that something was changing, that a guided liberalisation was leading the once brutal politics of the party towards relaxation.¹⁴ With the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Red Army in 1968, Ceaușescu took the opportunity to oppose the Soviets publicly, stressing that each state could choose its own way towards communism and that any foreign interference in national sovereignty was inadmissible.¹⁵ Noteworthy is that he did so in public, in a square full of organised party supporters and cameras, not inside the closed halls of a party meeting. At

¹³ Niculescu-Mizil, Paul: *O istoria trăită*, Bucharest, Editură Enciclopedică, 1997, pp. 263–266; Iacob, Cristian: *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation...*, pp. 246–255; Guida, Francesco: *Romania*, Milan, Unicopli, 2005, pp. 246–247.

¹⁴ Shafir, Michael: “Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania”, *Orbis. A Journal of World Affairs*, 27 (2/1983), p. 412. Vasile, Cristian: *Viața intelectuală și artistică în primul deceniu al regimului Ceaușescu 1965–1974*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2015, p. 22; Pavelescu, Alina; Dumitru, Laura (eds.): *P.C.R. și intelectualii în primii ani ai regimului Ceaușescu (1965–1972)*, Bucharest, Arhivele Naționale ale României, 2007, p. V.

¹⁵ Linz, Juan; Stepan, Alfred: *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore-London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 206; Deletant, Dennis: *Ceausescu and the Securitate: coercion and dissent in Romania, 1965–1989*, Londra-New York, C. Hurst & Co., 1995, pp. 156–157.

the domestic level, Ceaușescu's speech generated enthusiastic support by many who had until then passively submitted to communism but never embraced it fully. Those images would also make Ceaușescu an appreciated leader at the international level: the frankness with which a state leader was remarking on the right to national sovereignty, stressing that no foreign state had the right to interfere with sovereign internal politics, convinced the Western audience, especially the anti-communist Western leaders. While the form was original, the content was not: it was a continuation of the strategy that had been developed by Gheorghiu-Dej since 1956. That was a turning point also for the metanarrative construction of the Romanian nation. As pointed out by Dragoș Petrescu, the defiant gesture marked the transition from a 'process of "selective community-building" to a comprehensive nation-building project aimed at constructing an ethnically homogeneous Romanian "socialist" nation [...] [with] enormous consequences for the further development of Ceaușescu's chauvinistic nationalism'.¹⁶ In the previous months, Ceaușescu had referred often to the Stalinist methods of mass mobilisation and to the return to truly Romanian, autochthonous values in the sphere of culture. With his speech of 21 August 1968, it was clear that he understood that nationalism was the most powerful political principle that could confer legitimacy on the Romanian communist leadership. Since that moment, according to Petrescu, the regime started to give emphasis to the ancestors' struggle for independence, unity and so forth.¹⁷

The new socialist nation was built first and foremost by the means of historical legitimisation. The popular history journal *Magazin Istoric* (*Historical Magazine*), established by ISISP in 1967, was among the most representative historiographical products of this period of transient liberalisation. Directed by historian and epic-fantasy writer Dumitru Almaș, it presented to the readers a wide range of topics and themes developed though a simple, accessible language accompanied with a wide repertoire of colourful images. Consistently promoted by the regime and supervised by the Section for Propaganda, the first issue sold over 50,000 copies, the second one 100,000. Its aim was to "develop the patriotism that animates the present generations in the great work of building socialism".¹⁸

This socialist patriotism was developed in historiography by narrating anew the national history. At the end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies, the revolutions of the nineteenth century were presented by stressing that the Romanian revolutionaries were fighting for social rights and the creation of a Romanian bourgeoisie¹⁹, together with the minorities, which saw in the Romanian national struggle

¹⁶ Petrescu, Dragoș: *Legitimacy, Nation-Building and Closure: Meanings and Consequences of the Romanian August of 1968*, in Mark Stolarik (ed.): *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968. Forty Years Later*, Mundelein, Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2010, pp. 237–260.

¹⁷ Petrescu, Dragoș: "Continuity, Legitimacy, and Identity: Understanding the Romanian August of 1968", *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 31, (2009), pp. 69–88.

¹⁸ *Magazin Istoric*, "Catre cititori", *Magazin Istoric*, 1 (1967), p. 1. For an account of the journal's history, see Ștefan, Marian: *Trăite, văzute, auzite. 1967–1989*, Bucharest, Editură Oscar Print, 2004, p. 11; Georgescu, Titu: *Tot un Fel de Istorie Râmnicu Vâlcea*: Editură Conphys, vol. I, 2001, pp. 472–484.

¹⁹ Căzănișteanu, Constantin; Berindei, Dan; Florescu, Marin; Niculae, Vasile. *Revoluția română din 1848*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1969. Moisuc, Viorica; Calafateanu, Ion (eds.): *Afirmarea Statelor naționale independente unitare din centrul și Sud-Estul Europei (1821-1923)*, Bucharest, Editură Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1979. Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Copoiu, Nicolae (eds.): *Rolul maselor populare în fărâșirea unirii principatelor române (1859)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1979. Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin: *Unirea Transilvaniei cu România. 1918*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1978.

their possibility for improving their status and the values of social justice. According to these narratives, the relationship between the Romanians and the “coexisting nationalities” had always been ambivalent: cooperation and frontal struggles went hand in hand. The minorities were presented as hostile entities but at the same time they were recognised as a fundamental source of help in the fight for the national and social conquests. The main narrative technique was to separate the national minorities’ political and economic élites from their intellectuals and the “peoples”, and to present all the points of conflict with the Romanian national cause as a trickery of the minorities’ elites in the service of some foreign power. The narrative on the Hungarian minority incarnated this ambivalence. On the one hand, the Hungarians were considered as invaders of the lands in which the Romanians had been present since immemorial times, so the “guilt” was made archetypical. However, it was stressed that the Hungarian nobility had enslaved both the Hungarians and the Romanians. In order to “re-construct” the Hungarian minorities as historical allies, it was emphasised that the Hungarian peasants had since the sixteenth century supported the Romanian cause for national unity, recognising in it the only viable way to achieve social justice against the Ottoman empire, the Russian empire and the Austrian empire. The same metanarrative was applied also to more recent epochs: the Hungarians, it was stressed, sided with the Romanians in the revolutions of 1848, recognising in them the cause for the Romanian national unity and the only viable way to achieve freedom from the chains of feudal power; the same went also for the Great Union of 1918. The most recent “historical guilt” of the Hungarian minority laid in the interwar period, once Budapest’s propaganda had convinced the Hungarian minority in Romania to support revisionist theses. Also in this case, “good” Hungarians were found, this time among the ranks of the Romanian Communist Party. This metanarrative kept silent on the deprivation of rights suffered by the Hungarian minority during the time of the Hungarian Autonomous Region (1952-1968); the same silence was kept for the conditions of the Jewish and German minorities.²⁰

Primary importance was given to mystifying the history of Romanian communism, to show that Romania had its own historical tradition of socialist and communist thinkers²¹ and organisations²², but also to present the Romanian socialists of the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century as Romanian patriots.²³ As it was under Gheorghiu-Dej, the role of the Party in the interwar period and the communist resistance in the subsequent war continued to be heavily

²⁰ Bányai, Ladislau: *Pe făgașul tradițiilor frățești*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Göllner, Carol: *Muncă și năzuințe comune din trecutul populației germane din România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1972. Partidul Comunist Român: *Hungarians and Germans in România today. Plenums of the Concils of Working People of Magyar and German nationality in the Socialist Republic of Romania*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1978.

²¹ Iacos, Ion (ed.): *Christian Racovski – Scrieri social-politice (1900-1916)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1977. Ornea, Zigu; Cojocaru, Ion: *Falansterul de la Scăieni*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1966; Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin (eds.): *Documente privind începuturile mișcării muncitorești și socialiste din România. 1821-1878*, Bucharest, Editura Politică, 1971, p. 14.

²² Georgescu, Titu: *Traditions progressistes, révolutionnaires du peuple roumain (1848-1971)*, Bucharest, Editions Meridiane, 1971. Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin (eds.): *Friedrich Engels în publicistica română. Culegere de studii, articole, corespondență precum și o bibliografie a scrierilor lui Fr. Engels apărute în limba română*, Bucharest, ISISP, 1970. ISISP: *Engels și contemporaneitatea. Culegere de studii*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Deac, Augustin; Ilincioiu, Ion: *Lenin și România*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1970.

²³ Iacoș, Ion: *Partidul muncitorilor din România în viața social-politică a țării, 1893-1910*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1973. Copoiu, Nicolae: *Socialismul european și mișcarea muncitorească și socialistă din România*,

aggrandised. For example, the Party was presented as an umbrella of “mass” organisations that actually counted a few hundred members with multiple affiliations; the role of the monarchy and of the other parties in the coup d’état of 1944 was instead minimised. At the same time, the role of the Romanian communists in the struggles against fascism and Nazism in the European countries, from the Spanish Civil War to the Second World War, was recounted in multiple monographs – the Romanian communists could redeploy this sub-genre at the international level, thanks to the European network for the study of the history of the European Resistance.²⁴ The metanarrative of the common struggle of the Romanians for national independence side by side with the national minorities was fostered also in the narratives on WWII – this time showing the coexisting nationalities as anti-fascists.²⁵

The negative aspects of Romanian Stalinism were instead rejected and condemned, yet in a minor tone. The fault that led to the violence of the Stalinist times was found in the dependency on the Soviet Union by some Romanian communists, who were portrayed as national betrayers. Gheorghiu-Dej’s memory was demonised, making him and his early allies the scapegoats of a political regime whose essence was still continuing to exist. In order to show that Romania had its fair share of truly Romanian communists who had suffered Soviet intermissions in Romanian politics, the works of Corneliu Pătrășcanu, hierarch of the communist party who had been eliminated by Gheorghiu-Dej with the co-participation of his former adversaries, were re-edited and published, stressing that he was truly communist and, at the same time, truly Romanian.²⁶

Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Niculae, Vasile; Toacă, Ion; Tudoran, Georgeta (eds.). *Deputații socialiști în Parlamentul român. Discursuri. (1888-1899; 1919-1921)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1983.

²⁴ Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin; Dragne, Florea; Matichescu, Olimpiu (eds.): *Organizații de masă legale și ilegale create, conduse sau influențate de P.C.R. 1921-1944*, Vol. 1, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970. Matichescu, Olimpiu: *Apărarea Patriotică*, Bucharest, Editură Științifică, 1971. Ceașescu, Ilie: *P.C.R. – Stegarul luptelor revoluționare din anii 1929-1933*, Bucharest, Editură Științifică, 1971. Deac, Augustin. 1933. *Les luttes révolutionnaires des cheminots et des pétroliers de Roumanie*, Bucharest, Ed. Meridiane, 1971. Voicu, Ștefan: *Pagini de istorie socială*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Goldberg, Nicolae; Dragne, Florea; Matichescu, Olimpiu; Mocanu, Constantin; Munteanu, Nicolae G.; Surpat, Gheorghe; Unc, Gheorghe (eds.): *Greva generală din 1920*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970. Matichescu, Olimpiu; Georgescu, Elena: *1 Mai în România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970. Zaharia, Gheorghe; Ilie, Petre; Tălăngescu, Maria; David, Gheorghe; Mîndru, Costachi: *În numele libertății și prieteniei. Documente, extrase din presă și amintiri despre participarea României la eliberarea Ungarici de sub jugul fascist (octombrie 1944-ianuarie 1945)*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1970. Matichescu, Olimpiu: *Doflana. Simbol al eroismului revoluționar*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1979. Matichescu, Olimpiu: *Apărarea Patriotică*, Bucharest, Editură Științifică, 1971. Copoiu, Nicolae; Zaharia, Gheorghe; Unc, Gheorghe (eds.): *Rezistența europeană în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial, 1938-1945*, Vol. 1, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1973; Vol. 2, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1976. Adorian, Gheorghe; Burcă, Mihai; Câmpeanu, Constantin; Florescu, Magda; Minea, Stan; Nedelcu, Iosif; Roman, Valter (eds.): *Voluntari români în Spania, 1936-1939. Amintiri și documente*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Zaharescu, Vladimir (eds.), *August '44*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Simion, Aurică; Covaci, Maria. *Însurecția națională antifascistă armată din August 1944*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1973. Roman, Valter; Zaharia, Gheorghe (eds.): *Marea Conflagrație a secolului XX al doilea război mondial*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. Bantea, Eugen; Nicolae, Constantin; Zaharia, Gheorghe. *La Roumanie dans la guerre antihitlérienne, août 1944-mai 1945*, Bucharest, Éditions Meridiane, 1970. Academia de științe sociale și politice a Republicii Socialiste România, ISISP: *Împotriva fascismului. Sesiunea științifică privind analiza critică și demascarea fascismului în România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.

²⁵ Micu, Iosif: *Am supraviețuit lagărului hitlerist, Memorii despre Buchenwald*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970. Academia de științe sociale și politice a Republicii Socialiste România, ISISP: *Împotriva fascismului. Sesiunea științifică privind analiza critică și demascarea fascismului în România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.

²⁶ Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Un leac de frământări sociale (1821-1907)*, Editură Politică, Bucharest, 1969; Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Sub Trei Dictaturi*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, Bucharest, 1970; Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Curenți și*

In a linear and steadily implemented process, the regime was favouring the centralisation of politics within the hands of Ceaușescu who, in his turn, favoured the propaganda echelons as mainly responsible for the regimentation of culture. By the mid-seventies, the Party had expanded notably its own history (both thematically and chronologically) and re-written the national history in accordance with the metanarrative of a non-Soviet form of Marxism-Leninism. The propaganda apparatus decided to move one step forward. In 1974, the programme for the Eleventh Congress of the Party included a 38-pages introduction on the “history of Romania” from ancient Dacia to the present. One of its passages set the new canon as a party truth: “The entire history of the Romanian people depicts the history of unceasing class struggles, of battles fought by the popular masses for freedom and social rights, for the defence of national essence and independence, for progress and civilization.”²⁷ This metanarrative had been drafted collectively by the historians who had previously worked on specific aspects of Romanian and communism history. It comprised four components: the ancient origins of the Romanian people; the continuity of the Romanians in the present territory of Romania from ancient times to the present; the unity of the Romanian people throughout their history; and the constant fight of the Romanian people for their independence.²⁸ In the 1974 manual for Party history, the history of the workers’ movement, of the Romanian socialists and of the Romanian Communist Party was presented as a constant struggle for social and national conquests, against foreign enemies. The manual stressed that the Comintern and the Soviet Union had been responsible for heavy intermissions in Romanian internal politics and that the Romanian communists who served the Soviet Union had put at risk the fulfilment of the millenary struggle of the Romanian people for freedom and independence.²⁹ A few years later, the tendency of national self-glorification meant that more and more heroic gestures of the Romanian people and their leaders were searched for in a remote past. In the history textbook for university courses *Fundamental problems of the homeland’s history and of the communist party*, edited in 1977, the works of Ceaușescu are the only references. The personification of the nation in the figure of the leader was deployed in past epochs, so that the leader of communist Romania could be put into the same narrative as Burebista, Michael the Brave, Tudor Vladimirescu, etc.³⁰

This canon was applied explicitly within works specialised in Romanian history and the history of communism, and it found its application also in literary products like romances, films and the fine arts, making epic-fantasy a constant trait in the Romanian popular culture. Moving away from libraries and bookshops and looking at the Romanian state television, it is possible to see the canon applied to TV broadcasts. The TV was one of the most powerful instruments for spreading the historical propaganda wished for by the regime at the popular level. Historian

tendințe în filosofia românească, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971; Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Texte social-politice (1921-1938)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1975.

²⁷ Partidul Comunist Roman, *Programul Partidul Comunist Roman de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre comunism*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1975, pp. 27-28.

²⁸ Petrescu, Dragos: “Historical Myths, Legitimizing discourses, and Identity politics in Ceaușescu’s Romania”, *East European Perspectives*, 6/7 (2004), available here: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1342455.html>

²⁹ ISISP, *Întrebări și răspunduri pe teme din istoria P.C.R. și a mișcării muncitorești din România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1974.

³⁰ Mușat, Mircea; Petreanu, Nicolae; Sârzea, Ion; Smârcea, Vasile; Zaharia, Gheorghe (eds.): *Probleme fundamentale ale istoriei patriei și partidului comunist român*, Bucharest, Editură Didactică și Pedagogică, 1977.

Vlad Georgescu has reported the titles of some of the TV programmes for children and young adults inspired by Romanian history; they are revelatory of the tone adopted and the style forced upon the audience: *Path of Glory* (*Drum de glorie*), *My Homeland, My People, My Party* (*Patria mea, poporul meu, partidul meu*), *Flowers for Romania* (*Florii pentru România*), *Blossom, oh land of joy* (*Înflorești, pământ al bucuriei*), *Ode to the Romanian language* (*Odă limbii române*), *They were heroes, they are still heroes* (*Eroi au fost, eroi sunt încă*), *Time of glory* (*Timp de glorie*).³¹ Perhaps even more than the television, the creation of permanent cultural-educational institutions in the territories, at capillary level, had been of main importance in spreading the canon. With one decree (703/1974), each city quarter and village was provided with resources for establishing cultural centres (*cămine culturale*) and culture houses (*case de cultură*).³² The aim was to co-opt the entire population into constructing the canon, turning a passive audience into an active choreography in the spectacle of the self-glorification of the communist power. This was done also through the popular song festival *Cântare României*, where excessive praises to Ceaușescu were sung by amateurs and unprofessional artists, and by the poetry cenacle *Flacăra*.³³

These forms of mass propaganda were able to compensate for two major failures of the party cultural politics: the party could not produce its own history, nor was it able to publish a reference volume of Romanian contemporary history in which the Party could be presented as the defender of the Romanian nation. Since the history of the party lived by its protagonists was a continuous series of intestine struggles for power among competing networks, which hid their greediness for power behind ideological proclamations in a shifting horizon of international politics, no party history could be written in a consistent narrative. In the seventies, it became possible to abandon the projects for a party history, as the Romanian Academy's series on Romanian national history was going to publish its fifth volume, on contemporary history. However, the volume did not appear because of the conflict between the old Stalinist canon (contained in works which were still pivotal references for the recent historiography) and the new national-communist one. Also, the latest and widest project launched by the Romanian Academy failed: the "Treatise of Romanian History" had been planned by the Romanian regime since the mid-seventies and its publication should have coincided with the 1980's global Congress of the Historical Studies, to be held in Bucharest. The regime had put all its efforts into presenting Romania at its best to such a wide and important audience of foreign intellectuals. However, the "Treatise" could not be published. In this case, the failure was provoked by the rabid competition among higher ranks of the propaganda establishment.³⁴ One major exception to this long series of failures was the success of military history, the development of which was granted by Ceaușescu to his brother, General

³¹ Georgescu, Vlad: *Istorie și politică. Cazul comunistilor români, 1944-1977*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006, pp. 107-108.

³² Oancea, Constantin Claudiu: *Mass culture forged on the party's assembly line: Political festivals in socialist Romania, 1948-1989*, Florence, European University Institute, 2015 (dissertation).

³³ Petrescu, Dragos: *Historical Myths, Legitimizing discourses...*; Oancea, Constantin Claudiu: *Mass culture...*

³⁴ See, for example Constantiniu, Florin: *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu*, Bucharest, Editură Enciclopedică, 2007, p. 380; Papacostea, Șerban: "Captive Clio: Romanian Historiography under Communist Rule", *European History Quarterly*, 26, (1996), pp. 181-208, p. 196; Stan, Apostol: *Istorie și politică în România Comunistă*, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 2010, pp. 286-287.

Ilie Ceaușescu. Since the sixties, the leader had been fascinated by the Yugoslavian “theory of the defence by the entire people”, which united the army, the people and the party under the guidance of the leader. It was pure theory, but it still had a narrative strength that exalted the leadership and large strata of the higher echelons of the Party, especially the Securitate generals. The theory was turned by Ilie Ceaușescu in a narrative expedient for redrafting the entire history of the Romanian civilisation as a military history. In order to achieve this aim, the regime granted copious resources to the creation of the Centre for Military Theory and History, which could count on the work of several powerful propagandists and historians from the other institutions which had their own prolific ghost-writers.³⁵

Major focus was given to the role of the leader as the saviour of the homeland and even as the “author” of the official metanarrative canon. Already in 1977, the compulsory history textbook for all university courses was edited by making reference almost exclusively to speeches of Ceaușescu.³⁶ Personifying communism within the role of the leader served to insert the successes of the socialist nation within the discourse on the successes of the Romanian nation, led by the great leaders of the national past. One of the consequences was the flattening of history in an eternal present, with no real distinction among the centuries and the specificity of the historical processes involved.

National communism’s use of history aimed to produce concepts that were functional for the creation of popular consensus and legitimacy for the regime. In the eighties, the regime lost sight of the main goal of the strategy and started to replicate the praises of the leader and his wife Elena. The leader became the undisputable central element of the historiographical narrative and at the same time the development of the canon was aimed at defending the political choices of the leadership. Apparently, Ceaușescu had followed the teaching of Gheorghiu-Dej since the beginning of his mandate as party secretary and then as president of Romania (since 1974). However, Gheorghiu-Dej had supported the intellectuals in the semi-autonomous development of the national-communist canon, by allowing them to develop the national discourse under the aegis of the Party. The aim of his strategy was the conservation of power by the development of legitimacy. Ceaușescu, as shown, was successful in developing this strategy at home and at the international level in the sixties and early seventies, being labelled as “liberal”. However, Gheorghiu-Dej’s strategy took origin from the specific need to react to the incipient Soviet de-Stalinisation. Three decades later, international relationships had changed drastically, while the Romanian regime continued to perform variations on the same old tune, insisting on the more nationalist characters and favouring the leader’s idolatry, since it was simply not able to construct legitimacy by other means. This sultanistic degeneration made so that even the aim of the old strategy, the creation of a genuine popular consensus,

³⁵ The main series of volumes produced by the Centre were Căzănisteanu, Constantin (ed.): *Documente privind istoria militară a poporului român*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1974-1986, 7 voll.; Ceaușescu, Ilie (ed.): *File din istoria militară a poporului român*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1973-1988, 19 voll.; Ceaușescu, Ilie (ed.): *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1984-1988, 5 voll. For the phenomenon of “ghost-writing” requested by the propaganda patrons to younger historians, see Papacostea, Șerban: ‘Captive Clio’ ... p. 198; Georgescu, Titu: *Tot un fel de istorie*, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Conphys, 2001-2004, 3 voll., I, pp. 264; Stan, Apostol: *Istorie și politică...*, pp. 295-296; Constantiniu, Florin: *De la Răutu și Roller...*, pp. 293-295.

³⁶ Mușat, Mircea; Petreanu, Nicolae; Sârzea, Ion; Smârcea, Vasile; Zaharia, Gheorghe (eds.): *Probleme fundamentale ale istoriei patriei și partidului comunist român*, Bucharest, Editură Didactică și Pedagogică, 1977.

became secondary. The historical narratives of the eighties created no epic of the Romanian nation – but an exalted and repetitive narrative aimed at glorifying the leader, the party and the nation.

By the beginning of the eighties, the praise of the leader and his coronation as a main point of reference for the Romanian historians was expressed in the historical journals, which dedicated monographic issues to the biography, “teachings” and successes of Ceaușescu.³⁷ These journals portrayed well the propaganda function of Romanian historiography and, on closer inspection, show also that the higher ranks of the propaganda institutions were competing through adulation for the favours of the leader. The effect wished for was to put the leader (and only him) at the centre of the stage and in line with the great leaders of the Romanian past, even by the means of incredible exaggerations. At the end of the decade, in *The History of the Romanian People in the concept of president Nicolae Ceaușescu*, the director of ISISP, Ion Popescu-Puțuri, reminded the reader that “evoking the antiquity of the Romanian people, its continuity with the ancestral cradle of Dacia, has created a strong consciousness, in the conscience of the Romanian people, on its ancient state traditions, its unity and continuity, and on the fight for the defence of its autochthonous essence”.³⁸ Fostering a tradition that had begun in the early eighties, this volume brought the cult of the leader to its extreme consequences, praising Ceaușescu as the maximum expert of Romanian history.

Another main trend of this decade was protocronism, the idea that every progress in human history had been achieved first in Romania or by Romanians.³⁹ Another one was the exculpation of Romania from the collaboration with Nazism and the Holocaust, which had been developed since the previous decades.⁴⁰ Since Stalinist times, the admission that interwar fascism had attracted mass consensus could not be made. According to the official narrative, fascism in Romania had not existed: fascism and Nazism had simply been an imported product; mass consensus towards rabid antisemites like A. C. Cuza and C. Z. Codreanu, and Nazi-collaborator and mass murderer Ion Antonescu, did not exist. Romania had no responsibility for the Holocaust.⁴¹ The leadership of ISISP withdrew from commerce the 1983 monograph

³⁷ Magazin Istoric, 1, (1983), p. 1; Anale de Istorie, 2, (1983); Roumanie: Pages d'Histoire, 1, (1983).

³⁸ Popescu-Puțuri, Ion: *Istoria Poporului Român în concepția președintelui Nicolae Ceaușescu*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1988, pp. 12-13.

³⁹ For a good treatise of this topic, see Roiban, Cristian: *Ideologie și istoriografie: Protocronismul*, Timișoara, Editură Universității de Vest, 2014.

⁴⁰ See, i.e., Simion, Aurică: *Regimul politic din România în perioada septembrie 1940 – ianuarie 1941*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1976; Simion, Aurică: *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice ale insurecției române din august 1944*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1979. A fundamental witness for the Holocaust in Romania had been the book of Carp, Matatias: *Cartea Neagra. Suferințele evreilor din România (1940-1944)*, Bucharest, 1946, not reprinted until the French edition in 2009. For a critique of communist historiography over the Holocaust in Romania, see Cioflâncă, Adrian: “A grammar of exculpation in communist historiography: distortion of the history of the Holocaust under Ceaușescu”, *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, 4, (2/2004), pp. 29-46.

⁴¹ Cioflâncă, “Grammar of Exculpation...”; International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, *Raport final*, Iași, Editură Polirom, 2005; for Legionarism as an import product lead by a “mystical” bunch of antisemites, see Mihai Fatu and Ion Spălățelu, *Garda de Fier, organizație teroaristă de tip fascist*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971. On the negation that the Legion of the Archangel Michael was a fascist movement, see the letter signed by Radu Ciuceanu, president of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, unit of the Romanian Academy, on the eve of the issuing of Romanian Law 217/2015, which was aimed at inserting the Legionary movement among the fascist movements.

by Aurică Simion, which aimed to justify the exterminationist politics of Antonescu's regime.⁴²

3. Sequel

Voltaire once wrote that for writing history, freedom is a necessary condition. However, as pointed out by Irina Livezeanu, the state of negative freedom of post-communism could not turn the ruins of national-communist historiography into something new and fresh.⁴³ In the early 1990s, historiography continued to be infected by the old forms of cultural poverty. The historians' milieu could renovate only partially, with evident continuities with the historians' communities of the past regime. One of the first acts of the new president, Ion Iliescu, former higher member of the Propaganda and Agitation Section at the Central Committee of the Party, was to ask the state institutions to provide help to the intellectuals formerly employed at the party institutions for propaganda, since they had lost their jobs. In several cases, these former party servants were ostracised for some years from public life and they made their comeback to the cultural scene some years later. However, several were the historians who had supported the intellectual leaderships established during the former regime; they continued to count. For example, Șerban Papacostea was elected as director of the Nicolae Iorga Institute in 1990 by only a few votes, since many colleagues granted their support to the communist-times director Ștefan Ștefanescu.⁴⁴

Gradually but steadily, after the immediate de-ideologising turn which followed the 1989 revolution, a novel de-mythologising turn emerged from the works of innovative historians such as (among many others) Lucian Boia and Sorin Mitu. Moving against the myths developed for decades by the national-communist historiography provoked enormous debates between the nationalist (and well-positioned) historians and those who asked to bring deconstructionism and other such theoretical and methodological novelties within the range of usable methods in historical studies.⁴⁵

4. Bibliography

Academia de științe sociale și politice a Republicii Socialiste România, Institutul de Studii Istorice și Social-Politice: *Împotriva fascismului. Sesiunea științifică privind analiza critică și demascarea fascismului în România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.

⁴² Păvelescu, Alina: *Le Conducător, le Parti et le Peuple. Le discours nationaliste comme discours de légitimation dans la Roumanie de Ceaușescu (1965–1989)*, Paris: Institut d'Etudes Politiques, 2009 (dissertation), pp. 237-239 and notes.

⁴³ Livezeanu, Irina: *The Poverty of Post-Communist Contemporary History in Romania*, Title VIII Program – The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, Washington, 2006, available at <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/nceer/2003-816-08-2-Livezeanu.pdf>; retrieved on 21st February 2015, p. iii.

⁴⁴ Stan, Apostol: *Revoluția romană văzută din stradă*, Bucharest, Curta Veche, 2007, p. 186.

⁴⁵ Petrescu, Cristina; Petrescu, Dragos: *Mastering vs. Coming to Terms with the Past: A Critical Analysis of Post-Communist Romanian Historiography*, in Antohi, Sorin; Trencsényi, Balasz; Apor, Péter (eds.): *Narratives Unbound. Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2007, pp. 311-408. Basciani, Alberto: "La storiografia romena postcomunista e la storia della dittatura comunista in Romania", *Mondo Contemporaneo*, 1 (2015), pp. 173-196.

- Adorian, Gheorghe; Burcă, Mihai; Câmpeanu, Constantin; Florescu, Magda; Minea, Stan; Nedelcu, Iosif; Roman, Valter (eds.), *Voluntari români în Spania, 1936-1939. Amintiri și documente*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Bădică, Simina: "The Revolutionary Museum: Curating the Museum of Communist Party History in Romania (1948–1958)", *Historical Yearbook*, 10 (2013), pp. 95-109.
- Basciani, Alberto: "La storiografia romena postcomunista e la storia della dittatura comunista in Romania", *Mondo Contemporaneo*, 1 (2015), pp. 173-196.
- Bányai, Ladislau, *Pe făgașul tradițiilor frățești*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Bantea, Eugen; Nicolae, Constantin; Zaharia, Gheorghe. *La Roumanie dans la guerre antihitlérienne, août 1944-mai 1945*, Bucharest, Éditions Meridiane, 1970.
- Boia, Lucian: *History and myth in Romanian consciousness*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2001.
- Carp, Matatias: *Cartea Neagra. Suferințele evreilor din România (1940-1944)*, Bucharest, 1946.
- Căzănisteanu Constantin (ed.): *Documente privind istoria militară a poporului român*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1974-1986, 7 voll.
- Ceașescu Ilie (ed.): *File din istoria militară a poporului român*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1973-1988, 19 voll.;
- Căzănisteanu, Constantin; Berindei, Dan; Florescu, Marin; Niculae, Vasile. *Revoluția română din 1848*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1969.
- Ceașescu, Ilie (ed.): *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1984-1988, 5 voll.
- Ceașescu, Ilie: *P.C.R. – Stegarul luptelor revoluționare din anii 1929-1933*, Bucharest, Editură Științifică, 1971.
- Cioflancă, Adrian: "A grammar of exculpation in communist historiography: distortion of the history of the Holocaust under Ceausescu", *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, 4 (2/2004), pp. 29-46.
- Copoiu, Nicolae: *Socialismul european și mișcarea muncitorească și socialistă din România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Copoiu, Nicolae; Zaharia, Gheorghe; Unc, Gheorghe (eds.): *Rezistența europeană în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial, 1938-1945*, Vol. 1, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1973; Vol. 2, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1976.
- Constantiniu, Florin: *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu*, Bucharest, Editură Enciclopedică, 2007.
- Deac, Augustin: 1933. *Les luttes révolutionnaires des cheminots et des pétroliers de Roumanie*, Bucharest, Ed. Meridiane, 1971.
- Deac, Augustin; Ilincioiu, Ion: *Lenin și România*, Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1970.
- Deletant, Dennis: *Ceașescu and the Securitate: coercion and dissent in Romania, 1965-1989*, London, New York, C. Hurst & Co., 1995.
- Deletant, Dennis: *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the State Police, 1948-1965*, London, Hurst & Co., 1999.
- Fatu Mihai; Spălătelu, Ion: *Garda de Fier; organizație teroaristă de tip fascist*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Georgescu, Titu: *Traditions progressistes, révolutionnaires du peuple roumain (1848-1971)*, Bucharest, Editions Meridiane, 1971.
- Georgescu, Titu: *Tot un fel de istorie, Râmnicu-Vâlcea*, Conphys, 2001-2004, 3 voll.
- Georgescu, Vlad: *Istorie și politică. Cazul comuniștilor români, 1944-1977*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006.

- Goldberg, Nicolae; Dragne, Florea; Matichescu, Olimpiu; Mocanu, Constantin; Munteanu, Nicolae G.; Surpat, Gheorghe; Unc, Gheorghe (eds.). *Greva generală din 1920*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970.
- Göllner, Carol. *Muncă și năzuințe comune din trecutul populației germane din România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1972.
- Guida, Francesco: Romania, Milan, Unicopli, 2005.
- Haupt, George: "La genèse du conflit soviéto-roumain", *Revue française de science politique*, XVIII (4/1968), pp. 669-684.
- Iacob, Cristian: *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation*, Budapest, Central European University, 2012 (dissertation).
- Iacos, Ion (ed.): *Christian Racovski – Scrieri social-politice (1900-1916)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1977.
- Iacoș, Ion: *Partidul muncitorilor din Români în viața social-politică a țării, 1893-1910*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1973.
- Institutul de Studi Istoric și Social-Politice: *Engels și contemporaneitatea. Culegere de studii*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Institutul de Studi Istoric și Social-Politice: *Întrebări și răspunduri pe teme din istoria P.C.R. și a mișcării muncitorești din România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1974.
- International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, *Raport final*, Iași, Editură Polirom, 2005.
- Jowitt, Kennet. *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1944-1965*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971.
- King, Robert: *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, Hoover University, 1980.
- Levy, Robert: *Ana Pauker: the Rise and fall of a jewish communist*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001.
- Linz, Juan; Stepan, Albert: *L'Europa post-comunista*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000.
- Livezeanu, Irina: *The Poverty of Post-Communist Contemporary History in Romania*, Title VIII Program – The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, Washington, 2006, available at <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/nceer/2003-816-08-2-Livezeanu.pdf>.
- Magazin Istoric, "Catre cititori", *Magazin Istoric*, 1 (1967), 1.
- Matichescu, Olimpiu: *Apărarea Patriotică*, Bucharest, Editură Științifică, 1971.
- Matichescu, Olimpiu; Georgescu, Elena. *1 Mai in România*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970.
- Matichescu, Olimpiu. *Doftana. Simbol al eroismului revoluționar*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1979.
- Moisuc, Viorica; Calafateanu, Ion (eds.). *Afirmarea Statelor nazionale independente unitare din centrul și Sud-Estul Europei (1821-1923)*, Bucharest, Editură Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1979.
- Micu, Iosif. *Am supraviețuit lagărului hitlerist, Memorii despre Buchenwald*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970.
- Mușat, Mircea; Petreanu, Nicolae; Sârzea, Ion; Smârcea, Vasile; Zaharia Gheorghe (a cura di), *Probleme fundamentale ale istoriei patriei și partidului comunist român*, Bucharest, Editură Didactică și Pedagogică, 1977.
- Niculae, Vasile; Toacă, Ion; Tudoran, Georgeta (eds.). *Deputații socialiști în Parlamentul român. Discursuri. (1888-1899; 1919-1921)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1983.

- Niculescu-Mizil, Paul: *O istoria trăită*, Bucharest, Editură Enciclopedică, 1997.
- Oancea, Constantin Claudiu: *Mass culture forged on the party's assembly line: Political festivals in socialist Romania, 1948–1989*, Florence, European University Institute, 2015 (dissertation).
- Ornea, Zigu; Cojocaru, Ion: *Falansterul de la Scăieni*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1966.
- Papacostea, Șerban: "Captive Clio: Romanian Historiography under Communist Rule", *European History Quarterly*, 26 (1996), pp. 181–208.
- Partidul Comunist Român, *Hungarians and Germans in România today. Plenums of the Concils of Working People of Magyar and German nationality in the Socialist Republic of Romania*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1978.
- Partidul Comunist Român, *Programul Partidul Comunist Român de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre communism*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1975.
- Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Un veac de frământări sociale (1821-1907)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1969.
- Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Sub Trei Dictaturi*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970.
- Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Curente și tendințe în filosofia românească*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Pătrășcanu, Lucrețiu: *Texte social-politice (1921-1938)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1975.
- Pavelescu, Alina; Dumitru, Laura (eds.): *P.C.R. și intelectualii în primii ani ai regimului Ceaușescu (1965–1972)*, Bucharest, Arhivele Naționale ale României, 2007.
- Păvelescu, Alina: *Le Conducător, le Parti et le Peuple. Le discours nationaliste comme discours de légitimation dans la Roumanie de Ceaușescu (1965–1989)*, Paris, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, 2009 (dissertation).
- Pleșa, Liviu: Mihail Roller și "stalinizarea" istoriografiei românești, *Annales universitatis apulensis – Series Historica*, Universitate din Alba Iulia, 10 (1/2006), pp. 165-177.
- Pleșa, Liviu: *Istoriografia clujeana sub supravegherea Securității (1945-1965)*. Bucharest, Cetatea de Scaun, 2018.
- Petrescu, Cristina; Petrescu, Dragos: *Mastering vs. Coming to Terms with the Past: A Critical Analysis of Post-Communist Romanian Historiography*, in S. Antohi, B. Trencsényi, and Péter Apor (eds.): *Narratives Unbound. Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Budapest, CEU Press, 2007, pp. 311-408.
- Petrescu, Dragos: "Continuity, Legitimacy, and Identity: Understanding the Romanian August of 1968", *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporanea*, 31 (2009), pp. 69–88.
- Petrescu, Dragos: "Historical Myths, Legitimizing discourses, and Identity politics in Ceaușescu's Romania", *East European Perspectives*, 6/7 (2004), available here: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1342455.html>.
- Petrescu, Dragos: *Legitimacy, Nation-Building and Closure: Meanings and Consequences of the Romanian August of 1968*, in Mark Stolarik (ed.): *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968. Forty Years Later*, Mundelein, Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2010, pp. 237–260.
- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion: *Istoria Poporului Român în concepția președintelui Nicolae Ceaușescu*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1988.
- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Zaharescu, Vladimir (eds.), *August '44*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Copoiu, Nicolae (eds.). *Rolul maselor populare în făurirea unirii principatelor române (1859)*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1979.
- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin. *Unirea Transilvaniei cu România. 1918*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1978.

- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin (eds.), *Documente privind începuturile mișcării muncitorești și socialiste din România. 1821-1878*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin (eds.). *Friedrich Engels în publicistica română. Culegere de studii, articole, corespondență precum și o bibliografie a scrierilor lui Fr. Engels apărute în limba română*, Bucharest, ISISP, 1970.
- Popescu-Puțuri, Ion; Deac, Augustin; Dagne, Florea; Matichescu, Olimpiu (eds.). *Organizații de masă legale și ilegale create, conduse sau influențate de P.C.R. 1921-1944*, Vol. 1, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1970.
- Roiban, Cristian: *Ideologie și istoriografie: Protocronismul*, Timișoara, Editură Universității de Vest, 2014.
- Roller, Mihail; Cherestesiu, Victor; Câmpina, Barbu; Georgescu, Gheorghe; Maciu, Vasile; Roman, Aurel; Tudor, Dumitru; Știrbu, Solomon; Ștefan, Gheorghe (eds.): *Istoria R.P.R.*, Bucharest, Editură PMR, 1947.
- Roman, Valter; Zaharia, Gheorghe (eds.). *Marea Conflagrație a secolului XX al doilea război mondial*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Sadlak, Jan: *Higher Education in Romania, 1860-1990. Between Academic Mission, Economic Demands and Political Control*, New York, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1990.
- Shafir, Michael: "Political Culture, Intellectual Dissent, and Intellectual Consent: The Case of Romania", *Orbis. A Journal of World Affairs*, 27 (2/1983).
- Simion, Aurică: *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice ale insurectiei romane din august 1944*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1979.
- Simion, Aurică: *Regimul politic din România în perioada septembrie 1940 – ianuarie 1941*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1976.
- Simion, Aurică; Covaci, Maria. *Insurecția națională antifascistă armată din August 1944*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1973.
- Stan, Apostol: *Istorie și Politica in Romania Comunistă*, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 2010.
- Stan, Apostol: *Revoluția Romană văzută din stradă. Decembrie 1989 – Iunie 1990*, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 2007.
- Ștefan, Marian: *Trăite, Văzute, Auzite (1967-1989)*, Bucharest, Editură Oscar Print, 2004.
- Stoica, Stan: *Istoriografia românească între imperativele ideologice și rigorile profesionale, 1953-1965*, Bucharest, Meronia, 2012.
- Vasile, Cristian: *Viața intelectuală și artistică în primul deceniu al regimului Ceaușescu 1965–1974*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2015.
- Voicu, Ștefan. *Pagini de istorie socială*, Bucharest, Editură Politică, 1971.
- Tănase, Stelian: *Elite și societate. Governarea Gheorghiu-Dej, 1948-1965*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006.
- Tismăneanu, Vladimir; Vasile, Cristian: *Perfectul acrobat. Leonte Răutu, măștile răului*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008.
- Tismăneanu, Vladimir: *Stalinism for all seasons: a political history of Romanian Communism*, London-Berkley-Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003.
- Tismăneanu, Vladimir (ed.): *Comisia Prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România – Raport Final*, Bucharest, 2006.
- Tismăneanu, Vladimir; Vasile, Cristian: *Perfectul acrobat. Leonte Răutu, măștile răului*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008.
- Zaharia, Gheorghe; Ilie, Petre; Tălăngescu, Maria; David, Gheorghe; Mîndru, Costachi. *În numele libertății și prieteniei. Documente, extrase din presă și amintiri despre participarea*

României la eliberarea Ungarici de sub jugul fascist (octobrie 1944-ianuarie 1945),
Bucharest, Editură Militară, 1970.

Zub, Alexandru: *Orizont Închis. Istoriografia română sub dictatură*, Iași, Institutul European, 2000.