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EDITORIAL

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Abstract: *“Gorbymania”: between the Illusion of “Socialism with a Human Face” and the Reality of Great Power competition*

This study examines the phenomenon of “Gorbymania” as a psycho-political mechanism with systemic effects on the end of the Cold War and the dynamics of the Soviet Union’s disintegration. Building on the classical debate concerning the role of personality in history, the article integrates concepts from complexity theory—most notably the notion of a “bifurcation point”—and tools of counterfactual history to assess the weight of individual decision-making in situations of structural crisis. The case of Mikhail Gorbachev is approached as a paradigmatic example of the interaction between charisma, international legitimacy, and internal institutional constraints. The analysis demonstrates that Gorbachev’s popularity in the West functioned as a symbolic feedback loop that reinforced his commitment to non-violence in 1989, thereby accelerating major geopolitical transformations, while simultaneously contributing to strategic indecision and the erosion of domestic authority. By exploring the contrast between external perceptions and internal receptions of reform policies (*glasnost* and *perestroika*), the article argues that “Gorbymania” was not merely a media-driven epiphenomenon, but a catalytic factor that reshaped the relationship between power, political image, and decision-making. The conclusion emphasizes the contingent nature of the Soviet collapse and the decisive role of leadership choice at a moment of maximum systemic instability.

Keywords: Gorbymania; Mikhail Gorbachev; personality and history; Cold War; glasnost; perestroika; international legitimacy; collapse of the USSR.

STUDIES

CONSTANTIN HLIHOR, *The "Gorbachev factor" and the "Sinatra" doctrine. Between the illusion of the Soviet Union's salvation and the collapse of an imperial project*.....17

The “Sinatra” Doctrine’s geopolitical influence on the fall of Eastern European socialism is still regarded as one of the most important developments of the 20th century. This paper revisits some of the

questions regarding Gorbachev's misperceptions of international issues, his vision of how an empire can survive a deep crisis, the relationship between the Soviet Union and eastern socialist countries, etc., even though the topic has already been the subject of many studies and books. Some of the most widespread misunderstandings about this subject are cleared up in this article.

Keywords: Sinatra Doctrine, perestroika, glasnost, fall of communist regimes, eastern countries, Gorbachev vision on the international world.

ANEMARI MONICA NEGRU, *Helping the Wounded. Testimonies from WWI*.....33

The women who volunteered and wrote about their initiatives during the first world war were mostly members of Romania's social and intellectual elite, such as Regina Maria, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Neli Cornea, Alexandrina Fălcoianu, Alexandrina Gr. Cantacuzino, Zoe Râmniceanu, Letiția Ghidionescu. Through work and dedication, they managed to transform schools into hospitals, to run them, to attract volunteers, doctors, and nurses, to collect money for the functioning of these medical institutions. The National Orthodox Society of Romanian Women was a feminist association that managed to open hospitals for wounded soldiers throughout the country – for example, Hospital 113 in Bucharest –, to provide daily meals for orphaned children, as well as aid to war prisoners.

Numerous female volunteers managed to collaborate, work, and help the wounded in hospitals, to feed and educate the orphaned children or the children of soldiers mobilized, both in Bucharest and in many other localities in the country. One should mention the contribution of nuns (including Swiss nuns), priests, and scouts in Hospital 113.

Godefroy Simionescu's scout notebook can be considered a relevant archival document, because it offers a history of Bucharest in September-October 1916 and an image of the activities of the scouts, especially the volunteer ones to the hospitals. Therefore, it is a historical source about the daily life of the inhabitants of Bucharest while Romania was entering the World War I, the health service, various political figures, doctors, scouts, and active women.

Keywords: female volunteers, feminist association, hospital, soldiers, scouts.

ALEXANDRU-CRISTIAN VOICU, *War, Peace, and Propaganda in Romanian Philately, 1930-1960. An Analysis of Postage Stamps as Historical Sources, I*.....50

Visual history remained neglected by scholars until the late 20th century. As technological developments enabled a much faster circulation of visual sources, specialists began to abandon the primacy of written sources. Philatelic sources are still, even today, a largely unexplored field, with postage stamps viewed primarily through their functional role: the payment of postal fees. The postage stamp was, by definition, a symbol and product of the state, alongside currency, the flag, and the national anthem, so political interference in their iconography was bound to manifest itself fully. Romanian postage stamps offer a distinctive lens through which to examine the concepts of war, peace, and propaganda, particularly in light of the country's turbulent historical trajectory between 1930 and 1960, the period selected for this study. The choice of this three-decade interval is deliberate. The year 1930 marks the accession of King Carol II, a moment when Romanian philately began to foreground visual motifs intended to legitimize the Carlist regime that consolidated toward the end of the 1930s. The 1940s constituted a phase of profound political and social upheaval in Romania, encompassing both the Antonescu dictatorship and, after 1945, the establishment and consolidation of communist totalitarianism. The terminal point of the analysis, 1960, was selected because it encompasses the first twelve years of the communist regime, during which the themes central to this study gradually diminish in philatelic representation.

Keywords: Philately, Postage Stamps, Postal History of Romania, Communism, King Carol II, Propaganda, War, Peace.

ROBERT PĂIUȘAN, *How to punish a criminal war: Gheorghe Leon case*.....67

Gheorghe Leon (1888-1959) belonged to the generation of important interwar Romanian economists, both as a university professor and as a publicist promoting economic nationalism. In his political life, after two short terms as undersecretary of state, Leon served as a minister during July-November 1940 in the Gigurtu and Antonescu governments a position in which he promoted laws and

measures of an anti-democratic nature, including racist provisions. For his political activity, he was tried three times: in 1946, when he was acquitted; in 1951, when he was sentenced in absentia (as he was already administratively imprisoned) to 12 years of hard labor; and in 1956, when the previous criminal ruling was annulled and he was sentenced for the same acts to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment. He was incarcerated between 1950 and 1959 in the prisons of Sighet, Făgăraș, and Râmnicu Sărat, where he died.

Keywords: Gheorghe Leon, minister, economic nationalism, Ion Antonescu, war criminal, political prisoner.

FLORIN-RĂZVAN MIHAI, *Hydrometeorology and Water Management during the Communist Regime: The State Committee and the National Council of Waters (1956–1989)*.....85

This article examines the evolution of hydrometeorology and water management in communist Romania through an analysis of the State Committee of Waters and its successor, the National Council of Waters, between 1956 and 1989. Drawing on archival documents, memoir literature, and the legislative framework, the study reconstructs the institutional stages, areas of competence, organizational structures, and leadership dynamics of these bodies. It highlights the growing centralization of water governance and the expansion of technocratic responsibilities in the fields of infrastructure development, environmental protection, and flood defense. The article also addresses the gap between ambitious planning objectives and the practical constraints imposed by resource shortages and political decision-making. By situating water management within the broader context of socialist governance, the study contributes to the historiography of environmental administration under state socialism.

Keywords: Hydrometeorology; Water Management; Romania; communist regime; National Council of Waters.

MIHAELA MUSTĂŢEA, *Neorealist Cinema and the Memory of WWII*.....102

Italian neorealism, a cinematic movement that emerged in the late 1940s, is heavily influenced by anti-fascism and the spirit of the Resistance. It is often associated with leftist culture and has its roots in the fascist period. Aesthetically, neorealism is marked by innovations such as on-location filming, the use of non-professional actors, documentary-style editing, and the rejection of Hollywood conventions. Authentic language, the use of regional dialects, and faithful representation of social reality became defining features of this new postwar cinematic movement. Ideologically, neorealism reflected the political tensions of the era, serving both as a form of social critique and as a tool for reconstructing collective identity. Films such as *Roma città aperta* turn cinema into a valuable primary source for historians, allowing the analysis of the interaction between individual experience, collective memory, and the political context of the postwar period. Beyond film studies, the neorealist movement has interdisciplinary relevance in social, cultural, and political history, serving as a lens through which to understand the postwar period.

Keywords: WWII, Italian Neorealism, Cinema, Fascism, War Crimes.

DAN CĂTĂNUŞ, *The cadre policy of Nicolae Ceaușescu in his first year at the head of the Romanian Communist Party, 1965*.....118

Nicolae Ceaușescu made full use of the grace period of 1965, his first year at the head of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP). He redefined both the party and the state, reorganized them at the level of leadership bodies, and set in motion the vast mechanism of cadre policy, which had become rigid during Gheorghiu-Dej's rule. Although he had been installed in power in order to ensure continuity, he soon proved that he eagerly sought change: in terms of personnel, institutions, and approaches to both domestic and foreign policy.

The measures adopted showed that he was prepared to take power. He had a project, even if it was not yet clearly defined. In order to implement it, throughout 1965 he acted gradually and decisively, though not brutally. In most cases, he carried out changes carefully, offered alternatives, and preserved old privileges or granted new ones. At the same time, Ceaușescu gave many members of the second echelon hope that they would be given the chance to rise higher, and he began the still hesitant rehabilitation of former activists who had been repressed or sanctioned under the Gheorghiu-Dej regime.

Keywords: Nicolae Ceaușescu, cadre policy, 1965, Gheorghiu-Dej.

MIOARA ANTON, *When East (re)meets West. The stakes of Romanian-British economic interests in the 1960s and 1970s*139

In the context of liberalization of the 1960s and 1970s, the United Kingdom followed a policy of openness toward the communist bloc countries by fostering political, economic, and cultural relations. For its part, the government in Bucharest was interested in developing economic relations and acquiring technology. The majority of official delegations that visited Western countries in the second half of the 1960s had mainly economic missions: contracts for the acquisition of advanced technology, obtaining loans at favorable interest rates, and testing markets to boost foreign trade. As a result of the official visits and economic agreements concluded during the 1960s with the United Kingdom, Romania managed to acquire technology for important industrial projects such as the Danubiana tire factory and the Galați steelworks.

Keywords: communist economy, technological exchanges, Romanian-British exchanges, Ion Gheorghe Maurer.

OVIDIU MARIAN DRĂGOI, *Romania, Greece and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1965-1975*.....156

Based largely on documents from the diplomatic archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the press of the time, the article traces how two states that were in antagonistic political-military alliances after World War II, namely the Warsaw Pact and NATO, related to the emerging bipolarity after World War II. Member of the CMEA in the case of Romania, and an associated state of the Common Market since 1961 in the case of Greece, the two states generally positioned themselves differently towards the Soviet-American international *détente* that reached a peak in the early 1970s and subsequently towards the holding of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1972-1975), ultimately pursuing their own national interests

Keywords: CSCE, Cold War, *détente*, anti-hegemonic policy, Balkan cooperation.

ARTYOM A. ULUNYAN, *The Soviet stance on Ceaușescu's developing countries policy: the turning point of 1975*.....178

The article is based on earlier unknown archival sources and the writer sought to define most important Soviet assessments of the turning point of N. Ceaușescu's Third World policy in 1975. The author provides the reader with particular data of the Soviet diplomats' attitude towards Romania's special course aimed at getting support among developing countries and conclusions on the Soviet part on combination of political, ideological and economical aspects of that policy. As follows from these documents, the Soviets were extremely suspicious of strengthening Romanian positions among the Third World nations since it could build obstacles to the Soviet plans there. The Soviet diplomats' assessments which they shared with the Foreign Ministry gave wide range of concern to Moscow on this issue.

Keywords: Africa, Asia, Ceaușescu, developing nations, DPRK, Latin America, Romania, Third World, USSR.

ALEXANDRU-MURAD MIRONOV, *An Ever-Present Past. Controversies in Teaching Recent History in French Schools in the Beginning of 21st Century*.....195

In this study we outline the main topics of teaching post-WWII history mostly in France, but also in UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. All school curricula mention issues as: foreign occupation during the Second World War, the Holocaust, decolonization, immigration, etc. Political interventions in the composition of these curricula are obvious and reach a peak in the French case, where all heads of state in the last four decades have made it their duty to influence the teaching of history. This also happens as a result of the pressure of public opinion in relation to controversial subjects. A close look at the evolution of public debates regarding the Vichy regime could provide a very good basis for a methodological approach to studying controversies in dealing with various topics of recent history in any European country.

Keywords: Holocaust, Vichy France, Textbooks, French Resistance.

DOCUMENTS

ALEKSANDR STYKALIN, NIKITA BONDAREV, *The beginning of the Soviet–Yugoslav split as seen by the Romanian ambassador in Belgrade, Teodor Rudenko, 1948*.....211

The contradictions between the Soviet and Yugoslav leadership, which first emerged during the Trieste crisis (May-June 1945), reached a critical point in the spring of 1948. Although Yugoslavia, after the end of the World War II, resolutely turned to implementation of deep economic and political reforms in accordance with Communist doctrine, the overly independent and ambitious Josip Broz Tito did not let Moscow control properly over the situation in his country. And in this sense he did not correspond himself very much to I.V. Stalin's ideas about the leader of a country which was building socialism in accordance with the general principles of the World Communist movement. In May, Tito rejected the demand of the Soviet leadership to attend a new meeting of the Cominform bureau, and the meeting held at the end of June in Bucharest without the participation of the Yugoslav delegation adopted a resolution containing sharp accusations of nationalism against the leaders of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. An anti-Yugoslav campaign was launched within the framework of the World Communist Movement. It involved all the Communist parties of the Soviet sphere of influence, by this time already possessing full power in their states. As concerns Yugoslavia, the consolidation of Tito regime was accompanied by harsh measures against those communists who called on their leadership to submit themselves to the dictate of Moscow.

The extremely tense domestic political atmosphere in Belgrade at the end of the summer of 1948 is reflected in the description of the Romanian ambassador to Yugoslavia, Bessarabia-born Teodor Rudenko, who acted as an informant for the Soviet leadership.

Keywords: I.V. Stalin, Josip Broz Tito, Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict of 1948, Romania, Cominformbureau, Teodor Rudenko as a Romanian diplomat.

DORIN DEMOSTENE IANCU, OCTAVIANA JIANU, *The Romanian domestic and foreign policy in Italian diplomatic documents. The report of Italian Ambassador Niccolò Moscato dated August 31, 1972, I*.....227

This article contains the translation of a report written by Italian Ambassador Niccolò Moscato at the end of his mission in Romania (November 1964 – August 1972). Dated August 31, 1972, the document was addressed to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Giuseppe Medici, as required by procedure. It reflects important aspects of Romanian domestic and foreign policy during Moscato's time as ambassador in Bucharest. The Italian diplomat's reflections on Romania are grouped into general themes, such as: Romania in the context of the „Prague Spring” and the Warsaw Pact; Romanian diplomatic relations.

Keywords: Nicolae Ceaușescu, Niccolò Moscato, USSR, Italian-Romanian relations, socialist countries.

ANA-MARIA CĂTĂNUȘ, *An X-ray of Human Rights in Communist Romania. A Memoir Addressed to the U.S. Congress, March 1979*.....240

In Romania, the human rights movement initiated by Paul Goma in the spring of 1977 created the context for a new practice within Romanian society, rooted in necessity and opportunity. This involved the drafting of open letters or memoirs requesting the observance of fundamental rights and freedoms, whether regarding cases of discrimination, freedom of conscience, freedom of movement, or the right to emigrate.

The document we are publishing is a memoir addressed to the U.S. Congress on March 5, 1979, by six Romanian citizens who were denied the right to emigrate. The document, divided into two sections, refers to human rights violations and the repressive and intimidating methods used by the communist authorities against those "guilty" of thinking or acting in contradiction with the socialist way of life.

Keywords: Romania, communism, human rights, S.L.O.M.R.

BIOGRAPHIES

FLORI BĂLĂNESCU, *Radu Negrescu-Suțu (b. 1950)*.....250

Radu Negrescu-Suțu is the only surviving member of a group of young individuals from the 1970s who sought to flee communist Romania. The human rights movement initiated by writer Paul Goma in the winter of 1977 represented a pivotal opportunity for many Romanians to break their silence and confront their fear of the Securitate, the regime's secret police. Following Goma's arrest, Radu Negrescu-Suțu and his peers joined the broader dissident movement and established their own group, known as GRUP CANAL 77. They were all illegally sentenced to one year of forced labor, under the pretext of being „social parasites”. Despite the repression, they continued to assert their rights. Eventually, under internal and external pressure, the communist authorities granted them passports, allowing them to emigrate to the free world.

Keywords: forced labor, free world, human rights, human rights movement, repression, Securitate.

ANA-MARIA CĂTĂNUȘ, *Carmen Popescu (1943-2004)*.....258

Carmen Popescu was a dissident and a fighter for human rights and free trade unions in communist Romania. After several violations of her labor rights, Carmen Popescu joined in March 1979 the newly established Free Trade Union for Human Rights in Romania (S.L.O.M.R.). As a result of her activity, like other S.L.O.M.R. members, she was sentenced to four months in prison for “parasitism,” under Decree no. 153/1970. After her release in March 1980, she continued her oppositional activity, drafting and attempting to send abroad documents concerning human rights violations in Romania. She was arrested again on 15 May 1981 and sentenced to six years' imprisonment for the offense of attempted propaganda against the socialist order. She was released on 10 August 1983, following the presidential decree of pardon no. 211/9 August 1983. She left the country three years later, on 13 April 1986, together with her daughter.

Keywords: Romania, Carmen Popescu, S.L.O.M.R., free trade unions, repression.

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