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Totalitarianism Archives

Review of the National Institute of the Study of Totalitarianism

Volume XXXII, Number 122-123, 1-2/2024

EDITORIAL

FLORIN ABRAHAM, *The challenges of the digital revolution for historical archives in Romania*
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In the editorial, the author analyses the issue of digitization of historical archives, starting from the experience gained in the USA, Germany, United Kingdom and France. The article investigates the causes of the poor digitization of historical archives in Romania: the lack of government interest, limited financial resources, a weak mobilization of researchers to request the acceleration of the integration of new information technologies. The author believes that important institutional changes are needed, and the National Archives of Romania must become a distinct institution, integrated into the Ministry of Culture, for example. The author argues the need for new legislation in the field of archives, which encourages both the digitization of classic archives and the preservation of documents created exclusively digitally, such as the content of social media (e.g., Facebook, Youtube).

Keywords: historiography, communism, fascism, archives, digital humanities, digital history, Romania, Europeana.

STUDIES

ILIE SCHIPOR, *Romanian Communists in the Comintern Archives. New information, II*
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The article brings to attention some of the results of the research carried out by the author in the former Comintern Archives (now the Russian State Archives of Social-Political History / RGASPI) in Moscow, which contain thousands of files with very important documents for the knowledge of the history of contemporary Romania.

Particularly interesting is the information that the author extracts from the archives of the Representation of the Romanian Communist Party to the Comintern and its correspondence with Romanian communists and political emigrants, from the fonds on the participation of Romanian

volunteers in the internationalist brigades in Spain (1936-1938) or the tragic fate of leading Romanian communists and political emigrants who were executed during the Great Stalinist Terror of 1936-1938. Last but not least, documents on anti-fascist propaganda and 're-education' work among Romanian prisoners held (in 1941-1956) in NKVD camps and for their recruitment into the USSR's post-war foreign agents are brought to light.

Keywords: Comintern, Archives, Soviet Union, Romanian Communist Party.

ALINA ILINCA, LIVIU MARIUS BEJENARU, *J.V. Stalin as a literary character*36

Stalin did not keep a diary, publish his memoirs, or take a keen interest in writing a history of himself, but throughout his life as leader of the Soviet Union he strove to shape both his biography and the archive of documents that would be studied by his biographers. Our aim in this study is to present the epic dimension of Stalin's personality, as he is portrayed in literary creations either personified or alongside other historical personalities, some only mentioned, others strongly individualized or the fruit of writers' imagination.

Keywords: Stalin, Stalinism, literary character, political repression.

IONUȚ IAMANDI, „Rumanian Booklet”. *Rumanian Booklet: How tried the BBC to toot his own horn in Romania at the end of the Second World War*69

This paper is structured in three parts. In the first one, the institutional route of a BBC editorial project for the Romanian audience is exposed. The project is a brochure from 1944-1945 presenting in Romanian the activity of the British corporation during the Second World War. In the next section, the paper attempts to describe the self-perception of the British radio establishment as it emerges from the draft brochure. The image that the BBC wanted to convey was that of a highly credible media institution that, even during wartime, observed very closely the journalistic principles. In the third part of the paper, the author tries to place the BBC's activity in the general context of British propaganda during the Second World War. The paper is based on documents held at the BBC Written Archives Centre in Caversham, Reading, UK.

Keywords: radio, broadcasting, booklet, Second World War, BBC, propaganda, media, journalism, Political Warfare Executive, Romania.

ALEXANDRU-MURAD MIRONOV, *The Last Light from the City of Lights. How the Romanians saw the Occupation and the Liberation of Paris during World War Two*89

The study focuses on a comparison of how the Occupation of Paris, in June 1940, and the Liberation of the same city, in August 1944, were seen by the Romanian society. However, one must take into account that these events, which were overshadowed by the domestic policy – the first one taking place only a week before the military occupation of Bessarabia by the Soviet Union, while the latter happening basically in the same time as the coup of 23 August, 1944, when the military dictatorship of Marshall Ion Antonescu fell from power and Romania changed sides from the Axis to the United Nations. However, it should be noted that the two events did not have nearly the same impact on Romanian public opinion. The Second World War, which was entering new phases in the early summer of 1940 and towards the end of 1944, respectively, acted as a screen on world news, sometimes inadvertently focusing attention on events local, not only because the circulation of information had become more difficult, but also because the catastrophes were multiplying, and the closer ones were more relevant than the ones in the distance.

Keywords: Paris during German Occupation, Liberation of Paris, mentalities, diaries, World War Two, Romania.

GEORGE DUMITRESCU, *The secret city of uranium, Băița-Ștei. „Sovromquarțit”, and the interference of the Securitate in the exploitation of the first uranium mine in Romania. 1952-1956*97

The article contains information about the first uranium mine in Romania, Băița-Ștei, 1952, which opened in the aftermath of the Soviet occupation after WWII. The article brings forward the measures applied by the Securitate to keep this activity secret, which also entailed violating some fundamental rights. The research analyses the strategic interest of the Soviet regime in taking over all the uranium for its industry. Furthermore, the study uncovers the exact quantities of uranium purchased by the USSR between 1952 and 1956.

Keywords: Romanian uranium, Romania, Soviet Union, Băița-Ștei, Securitate, state secret, human rights

VASILE BUGA, *Reforms and counter-reforms in USSR from 1960s to 1980s*.....131

Initiated with the best of intentions, the reforms promoted by the post-Stalinist leaderships of the Soviet State failed, among other reasons, due to a lack of coherence and realism. Last but not least, the mistakes made and the lack of capacity to highlight any priorities, the delay in taking urgent measures to solve the economic and ethnic problems, the exacerbation of the struggle for power, the improvisations led to the collapse of the system that seemed eternal and the dissolution in December 1991 of the U.S.S.R.

Keywords: USSR, economic reforms, Soviet economy, Khrushchev, Brezhnev.

ANDREI POPA, *The origins of propagandistic spectacles of socialist Romania*.....141

This paper aims to present the traits of Socialist Romania's propagandistic spectacles that took place on stadiums. The main focus will be on comparing them to the ones organized during the authoritarian regime established by King Carol II of Romania between 1938 and 1940, showing similarities and differences. We will also underline how the Soviet socialist ritual influenced Socialist Romania's spectacles and the planning of anniversaries. Our comparison will be based on 1970s and 1980s propagandistic spectacles and similar ones that took place on the Carlist Restoration Day, and the Soviet Physical Culture Day. The conclusions will highlight to what extent the spectacles can be considered original.

Keywords: propaganda, celebration, cult of personality, Nicolae Ceaușescu, King Carol II of Romania.

ARTYOM A. ULUNYAN, *The crucial 1974th: Ceaușescu's bet on the Third World in the Soviet diplomats' information and assessments*.....158

The author focused his research on the assessments made by the Soviet diplomatic representatives in Bucharest Romania's foreign and trade policy towards the Third national liberation movements in 1974, when the final cementing of N. Ceaușescu's autocracy took place. The latter's desire to use ideological and political postulates in order to implement unrealistic plans for the country's economic development and his own positions in the international arena was painfully perceived by the Soviet side, which saw this as a threat to the Eastern Bloc and its policies in the Third World. Particular importance in obtaining information by the Soviet diplomats was their close cooperation with diplomats of the member countries of the Warsaw Pact and CMEA and their joint consultations on wide range of the "Romanian agenda".

Keywords: Nicolae Ceaușescu, CMEA, Romania, Soviet diplomats, the Third World, foreign policy, trade policy.

DAN CĂTĂNUȘ, *Suicide or High-Level Murder? Mythological Constructions and Official Conclusions in the Case of Chivu Stoica, 1975-1976* 174

Chivu Stoica was one of the few Romanian communists who held some of the highest positions not only within the party but also in the state: President of the Council of Ministers (1955-1961) and President of the State Council (1965-1967). He attained these positions thanks to his very close relationship with Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. In 1969, Chivu Stoica was removed from the political forefront by the new leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu. On February 17, 1975, Chivu committed suicide with his hunting rifle. Numerous rumors and conspiracy theories emerged in connection with this event, suggesting that he was assassinated on Ceaușescu's orders. In contrast, the party leader accused Chivu Stoica of "moral decay" and attempted to use this case to launch a moral purification campaign, including an attack on Dej, whom he accused of encouraging, through his personal example, the immoral lives of party leaders. This article extensively debates the various theories created around Chivu Stoica's suicide, weighing them against the concrete data from the official investigation and correlating them with historical sources.

Keywords: Romanian Communist Party, Chivu Stoica, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, suicide, conspiracy theory, party dissidence.

FLORIN ȘANDRU, *Political and Diplomatic Preparations for the Space Mission of the First Romanian Cosmonaut, Dumitru Prunariu, 1980-1981* 194

Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu is the first and, so far, only Romanian astronaut. His mission was part of the “Intercosmos” program, which also included Soviet missions with astronauts from Bulgaria, Hungary, Vietnam, and Mongolia—countries from the former Soviet bloc. Later, under the same “Intercosmos” program, French, British, and Japanese astronauts also participated in space missions. This article presents the details of the preparations for the “Soyuz 40” mission, as described in the telegraphic communications between the Romanian Embassy in Moscow and the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led by Ștefan Andrei.

Keywords: Dumitru Prunariu, Soyuz 40, U.S.S.R., N. Ceaușescu, Intercosmos.

ANETA MIHAYLOVA, *Haunting Images of the Past: WWII Monuments in Post-Communist Bulgaria*..... 213

The pivotal role of the Bulgarian Communist Party in the anti-fascist resistance movement and of the Soviet Union in liberating Bulgaria from fascism were the two central pillars of the narrative of the history and memory of Second World War in communist Bulgaria. The end of communism marked the beginning of a new reading of the past and an increased public interest in topics and personalities, whose historical evaluation had been caught in the grip of the established ideological canon for decades. The reassessment of Bulgarian national history also referred to the period of the Second World War. The new historical narrative necessitated also re-evaluation of the memory of the period and its visual representation. In the new political environment after 1989, when Bulgarian society was desperately seeking to break away from its recent past, the presence in public space of the ideologically grounded monuments built during the previous regime became problematic, because they represented the most visible part of the communist legacy. The question of the fate of World War II-era monuments in Bulgaria is part of the larger issue of the fate of the communist legacy, which is relevant to the whole of Eastern Europe. The aim of this article is to present in a synthesized form the changes that took place in the memory of World War II and its visual representation in post-communist Bulgaria with a major focus on the fate of the monuments devoted to the war that were built during the socialist period.

Keywords: World War II, Bulgaria, post-communism, monuments, memory.

DOCUMENTS

DORIN-DEMOSTENE IANCU, OCTAVIANA JIANU, The Romanian Revolution of

December 1989 as seen by Italian diplomats, I..... 230

The Romanian Revolution of December 1989, during and after this historical moment, kept in the *Archivio Storico della Presidenza della Repubblica Italiana, Ufficio Affari Diplomatici*. These documents concern several aspects: the authorities and events in Romania; the interventions by the Italian authorities in Romania; telegrams congratulating President Francesco Cossiga for his attitude towards the bloody repression of demonstrators, telegrams and declarations of solidarity with the Romanian people, issued either by Italian politicians or by Romanian refugees in Italy; telegrams urging international adoption procedures, sent by Italian adoptive families and addressed to President Cossiga; telegrams concerning international aid to Romania.

Keywords: Romanian Revolution of December 1989, international adoptions, international aid, Oddo Biasini, Gianni de Michelis, Stefano Jedrkiewicz.

BIOGRAPHIES

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Gabriel Bălănescu was among the legionary journalists well-known during Second World War, considered to be one of the journalists responsible for the country's disaster, after the removal from power of Marshal Ion Antonescu. A member of the Legionary Movement since 1932, he was an important contributor to the far-right and anti-Semite newspapers: *Buna Vestire, Cuvântul, Sfarmă Piatră, Porunca Vremii*. Following the outbreak of the Legionary Rebellion (1941), he was sentenced to 2 years in prison. He came to the attention of the authorities again in the context of the "Trial of nationalist journalists" (1945). He was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment and civic degradation for 10 years. Arrested a year later, when he was already holding leadership positions in the clandestine Legionary Movement. Sentenced again to 25 years of hard labor, he was released in 1964. Thirteen years later, he emigrated to the Western countries, where he was very active as an anti-communist and legionary journalist. He died in the United States.

Keywords: Legionary Movement, anti-communism, journalism, emigration, political prisoner, far right, anti-Semitism, Gabriel Bălănescu.

ANA-MARIA CĂTĂNUȘ, Cornel Burtică (1931-2013) 245

Cornel Burtică was a high-ranking Communist leader during the 1960s and the 1970s. Born in 1931 in a poor peasant family, Burtică resented the social inequity during childhood and became drawn to the egalitarian communist ideas. Parallel to being a good student, he enrolled on party youth organization and no later than 1949 he became a secretary of the high school U.T.M. committee. He studied at the Faculty of Geology and Electromechanics. After graduation, Burtică embarked on an academic career and worked as a university assistant at the Institute of Oil, Gas and Geology. Later on, he earned a PhD in world economics. At the beginning of the 1960s, Burtică started his diplomatic career being assigned as counsellor at the Romanian Embassy in Paris. In 1966, he was appointed ambassador to Italy, Morocco and Malta. On his return, he was appointed Ministry of Foreign Exchange during 1969-1972 and 1978-1982. Politically, Burtică advanced in the party hierarchy. In February 1960 he was elected secretary of C.C. of U.T.M. and president of the National Council of U.A.S.R. Ten years later, he was already a member of the C.C. of P.C.R., and in 1972 he was in charged with propaganda, and also became a suplimentary member of C.C. Executive Committee. The peak of his political career registered in 1977, when he was appointed member of the C.P.Ex Permanent Committee, and vice prime minister of the government. Burtică was removed from state and party positions in 1982 due to charges of abuses that damaged the national economy. He was downranked and appointed director of the „1 Mai” factory in Ploiesti, until 1990.

Keywords: Cornel Burtică; P.C.R.; propaganda; diplomacy; Ministry of Foreign Exchange; party hierarchy.

FLORIBĂLĂNESCU, Victor Gomoiu (1882-1960) 251

An erudite spirit, graduate of the Faculties of Medicine and Law, Victor Gomoiu distinguished himself through pioneering work in the fields of medicine, culture, social assistance, and surgery. Considered the „father of the history of Romanian medicine”, he was a member of 17 science academies worldwide. He contributed to the development of plastic surgery, peripheral nervous system surgery, urology, and traumatology. His most renowned achievement is the hospital in Bucharest that bears his name, built through his efforts in the 1920s to provide medical assistance to the underprivileged. During World War II, he protected many Jews as Minister of Health. He was imprisoned by the communist regime between 1950–1954 and refused any form of collaboration.

Keywords: communism, political detention, medicine, pioneering, Victor Gomoiu.

ALEXANDRU-CRISTIAN VOICU, Ilie Verdeț (1925-2001) 257

One of Romania's most authentic communists, with a working-class background such as mining, Verdeț achieved an impressive political rise even in a "workers' state". Along with Janoș Fazekaș, Vasile Patilinet, Ion Iliescu and Paul Niculescu) were staunch supporters of Nicolae Ceausescu, both before and after his takeover. He is best known for his handling of the 1977 miners' revolt in the Jiu Valley, when he chose dialogue to armed intervention. The fall of the communist regime in December 1989 did nothing to change his political convictions.

Keywords: Ilie Verdeț, Romanian Communist Party, Romanian Prime Ministers, Jiu Valley, Miners' Strike of 1977.

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