
TRANSYLVANIAN REVIEW

/REVUE DE TRANSYLVANIE

Vol. XXXIII
No. 3
Autumn 2024

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60 × 100 cm

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Publication indexed and abstracted in the
Clarivate Arts & Humanities Citation Index®
and included in the products of EBSCO, ELSEVIER-Scopus,
CEEOL and ERIH PLUS.

ISSN 1221-1249

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<http://centruldestudiiitransilvane.ro/>
secretariat.cst@acad-cj.ro



Printed in Romania by COLOR PRINT
66, 22 Decembrie 1989 St.,
Zalău 450031, Romania
Tel. (0040)260-660598

Transylvanian Review continues the
tradition of **Revue de Transylvanie**,
founded by Silviu Dragomir, which
was published in Cluj and then in Sibiu
between 1934 and 1944.

Transylvanian Review is published
quarterly by the **Center for Transylvanian
Studies** and the **Romanian Academy**.

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should be sent to: **Transylvanian Review**,
Centrul de Studii Transilvane
(Center for Transylvanian Studies)
12–14 Mihail Kogălniceanu St.,
Cluj-Napoca 400084, Romania.

Beyond Unconditional Surrender Romania's Diplomatic Campaign for a Conditional Armistice (1942–1944)

MIHAI
ALEXANDRESCU

The fear was that an unconditional surrender would leave Romania vulnerable to severe postwar consequences, including Soviet domination and the loss of territorial integrity.

Romania's withdrawal from the war against the United Nations on 23 August 1944 came after more than two years of diplomatic probing. The changing conditions on the front were the central and constant topic on the agenda of the negotiations. Beyond the context created by the military offensives, the diplomacy of the Allied conferences during the war greatly complicated the dynamics of these negotiations, often leading to deadlocks. This article addresses the issue of the armistice that Romania would have liked to conclude with the Allies from the perspective of the negotiating positions of the parties involved in the discussions held between 1942 and 1944.

Mihai Alexandrescu

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Defining an Armistice and the Checkmate of Casablanca (1943)

THE TERM ‘armistice’ has evolved over time, reflecting the changing nature of conflicts. Initially, it was defined as an agreement to suspend hostilities between warring parties, often serving as a temporary measure to halt fighting. These armistices could be local, confined to specific conflict areas, or general, encompassing all fronts of a war. However, after 1918, the term ‘armistice’ took on a new meaning, signaling an intention to cease hostilities completely, often leading to a formal peace treaty. In modern usage, these temporary suspensions of hostilities are more commonly referred to as armistices or ceasefires, but these terms have become imprecise over time, leading to a certain level of ambiguity. In the literature, they can often be found under the name “preliminary peace agreements or treaties.”¹

Peacebuilding after the Second World War raised the issue of unconditional surrender. This was becoming a problematic precedent for the Axis powers to tolerate. While armistices are usually negotiated agreements that serve as a temporary measure to stop fighting, thus facilitating the initiation of peace talks and the eventual formulation of peace treaties, capitulation means that a belligerent party formally gives up resistance to its adversary. Surrender can be unconditional if the defeated party accepts all the conditions imposed by the victor or conditional if specific conditions are agreed upon before the cessation of hostilities.² Armistices may be subject to renewal until permanent terms are negotiated. If we look at capitulation, we note that this means the definitive cessation of military operations. Unlike an armistice, it often leads to the occupation of the territory of the defeated party, disarmament and the initiation of peace negotiations.³

The progression of the Second World War prompted several European states (Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Finland, and Czechoslovakia) to seek an armistice with the Allies. The terms of these armistice agreements were not solely determined by the international context, but also by the strategic interests of the three Allied powers, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the United States, who played a significant role in dictating these terms.

The Casablanca Conference, held on 14–24 January 1943, was a significant turning point in Allied strategic planning. During this conference, Allied leaders Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill declared that they would only accept the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. Apparently, “unconditional surrender” was not a premeditated goal of the British–American meeting in Casablanca, but a phrase with which President Roosevelt surprised his audience during the press conference that concluded that meeting. If Churchill’s

memoirs are to be believed, it was then that the British prime minister heard this expression for the first time and was overcome with enthusiasm.⁴ In any case, the Anglo-Americans remained faithful to this principle in their discussions with those Axis belligerents looking for options to exit the war in 1943 and 1944. This policy had dramatic implications for Romania's diplomatic efforts in 1943. Despite political pressure from the United States and other Allies, President Roosevelt wanted to create the aura of an uncompromising leader by repeating this condition in all his subsequent statements.⁵

The Romanian Diplomatic Offensive (1942–1944)

WHAT I call in this article the “diplomatic offensive of Romania” is a highly complex action through which various Romanian political leaders struggled, for almost two years, to pull the country from the edge of a precipice that had been opening since 1942, when the Allies began to outline the plan for a lasting peace in the postwar international system in which the Axis countries had at most a marginal role. Perhaps one of the most appropriate descriptions of this diplomatic offensive belongs to the Romanian historian Vasile Pușcaș, who labelled it “hope and despair.”⁶ This period falls between August 1941 and September 1944. This interval, which appears here more extensive than it is customary in the literature on this subject, can be divided into three major stages: (a) August 1941–the end of 1942 (negotiations within the Axis); (b) January 1943–23 August 1944 (negotiations with the Allies) and (c) 23 August–12 September 1944 (negotiations under Soviet occupation). In what follows, this article will explore the first two stages.

August 1941–End of 1942 (Negotiations Within the Axis)

IN THE first stage, the negotiations were initiated by the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mihai Antonescu, immediately after the start of Operation Barbarossa. As early as July 1941, with the arrival of Renato Bova Scoppa, the minister plenipotentiary of Italy in Bucharest, M. Antonescu tried to intensify Romanian–Italian relations in order to build a “Latin Axis” which would include Romania, Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. Such a diplomatic construction would have counterbalanced German supremacy and halted Slavic expansionism on the continent. On 6 August 1941, M. Antonescu suggested to Bova Scoppa a compromise whereby the war would end with a “Pax Germanica” in which the Mediterranean Entente would occupy a relevant place.

Reportedly, a similar perspective had been presented earlier to Bova Scoppa by Portuguese Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar, while on a mission to Lisbon. However, the Portuguese argument was that Italy should avoid entering the war precisely to avoid the Latin Axis coming under German rule.⁷ In parallel with this project, M. Antonescu presented to the Italian diplomat the outline of a possible institutionalized cooperation under the auspices of the Holy See. This cooperation was to include several neutral states, such as Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland, seeking to initiate a reconciliation of the European belligerents.⁸

On 21 November 1941, the Romanian foreign minister instructed the Romanian Legation in Lisbon to test Salazar's opinion regarding the Latin Axis. The Portuguese Prime Minister informed the Romanian envoy that his country could have only encouraged such an ambitious initiative if Italy had not been in a duet with Germany.⁹

However, in 1941, Mihai Antonescu's (secret) diplomatic actions were still in flagrant contradiction with Romania's military actions. Unofficially, Romania's initial participation in Operation Barbarossa, from June 1941, was part of an action intended to liberate the territories occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940, based on the agreement of August 1939 between Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler. However, the telegram that President F. D. Roosevelt sent on 18 July 1941 to Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, ruled out any possible benevolent attitude of the Allies towards the participation of Romania and Finland in the war against the USSR.

The Bucharest government faced a daunting task in justifying the continued presence of Romanian troops in the campaign against the Soviet Union, across the Dniester. In this context, on 15 August 1941, M. Antonescu instructed the Romanian Legation in Washington, D.C., to explain the geopolitical and geostrategic reasons for establishing a security buffer zone between the Dniester and the Bug. This was the moment when the Romanian foreign minister put forth the argument that the continuation of this war on Soviet territory was in the interest of the Anglo-Saxon world, as it created a barrier against the Bolshevik threat to European civilization.¹⁰ The discussions between the Romanian envoy to Washington, D.C., Brutus Coste, and the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, highlight on the one hand the fact that the Americans and the British considered that a continuation of the Romanian participation in the campaign against the USSR only prolonged the war and, implicitly, the Western costs of destroying Nazism. On the other hand, the Westerners suggested that Romania had positioned itself as an aggressor state, especially after continuing the fighting beyond Odessa. Already on 3 October 1941, the American diplomacy declared itself misled by the government in Bucharest.¹¹

The literature seems to prefer a synthesis of Mihai Antonescu's diplomatic efforts from the first part of 1942, creating a path for Iuliu Maniu, the unofficial leader of the democratic opposition in Romania. Until we get to him, it is appropriate to present some data that comes from the German archives, which we can corroborate with the Italian diplomatic documents and the archive of the United States State Department. In his extensive and rigorously documented study, the historian Sebastian Balta suggests that Mihai Antonescu "had already discussed in Bucharest with envoys of the neutral states issues related to the peace. When exactly these diplomatic attempts were initiated cannot be established."¹²

Four days after the first American air raid against the Romanian oilfields at Ploiești, Mihai Antonescu created, on 16 June 1942, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a "Commission for the collection of documentary material for the peace conference," also known as the "Peace Office." It was made up of approximately 80 personalities from political, military, scientific and cultural circles, including War Minister Constantin Pantazi, Army Chief of Staff Ilie Șteflea, Ion Petrovici, Constantin D. Bușilă, Pamfil Șeicaru, and Gheorghe I. Brătianu.¹³

Mihai Antonescu's parallel diplomatic efforts continued throughout 1942. An information note dated 17 October 1942 informed the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in the Romanian diplomatic missions to all countries, there were important people "whose main task was to carefully probe the state of mind and prepare Romania's transition to the side of the Allies."¹⁴

Diplomatic probes were active within the Romanian legations abroad. For example, Brutus Coste was visited on 18 May 1942 by an official from the State Department who presented him with the United States government's perspective on the evolution of the war and Romania's position. The American official told Coste that his government was not assuming any obligations regarding the postwar territorial configuration of Europe. Therefore, Romania did not receive any guarantee for its borders, either. At most, he was promised a solution to the Transylvanian issue.¹⁵ Such a discouraging perspective from the American diplomats confined the Romanian leaders to merely tentative options.

In his diplomatic pursuits, Mihai Antonescu turned his attention towards neutral states. Every week, the Romanian foreign minister met in Bucharest with diplomatic envoys of Switzerland, Portugal, and Turkey. Notably, the head of the Turkish mission held a key position as the main channel of communication with the Allied diplomats in Ankara, Istanbul, and Cairo.¹⁶ Likewise, the Romanian diplomatic envoy in Lisbon was one of the channels often used to transmit Bucharest's messages to British diplomats.¹⁷

Between the end of 1942 and September 1943, when Italy capitulated, the Romanian government intensified diplomatic efforts to find a way out of the

war. After the defeat at Stalingrad, the prospect of the collapse of the Wehrmacht and the imminent invasion of the Red Army led the leaders in Bucharest to intensify their diplomatic actions.¹⁸ In 1942, Mihai Antonescu tried to present his peace initiatives as being in Germany's interest, emphasizing the Soviet danger and the need for a joint strategy with the Western Allies. However, Ribbentrop categorically rejected any peace talks, considering the Romanian initiatives counterproductive. Dissatisfied with the German refusal, Mihai Antonescu criticized Germany for its attitude towards the allies and the lack of an effective strategy amid a military crisis on the Eastern Front.¹⁹

A discussion held in November 1942 between Mihai Antonescu and the German Minister of Science, Education and National Culture, Bernhard Rust, features a relatively singular position that the Romanian leader displayed in regard to a Reich already on the military defensive. The Romanian leader stated that despite an amply demonstrated loyalty to the Axis alliance, nothing prevented him from stating that "in Europe today, there is nothing but disorder, disorientation, hostility, and a prelude to chaos."²⁰

Beyond the strictly military aspect, Mihai Antonescu highlighted the absence of a political approach among the Axis countries. He criticized the fact that, unlike the Allied states, no vision of what the postwar world should look like had been formulated in the Axis space. In a discussion with the Italian minister in Bucharest, Antonescu repeated to him the thoughts he had conveyed to Baron Manfred von Killinger, stating that

Roosevelt speaks, he lists principles for the world of tomorrow, proclaims in his own way what the new order will be, gives the Allied nations a creed and a faith. On this side, we ignore everything; we do not know what our future will be, and we live in agitation and uncertainty. If Germany does not decide to leave the incandescent nebula in which it is in this time of war and give a body to the ideas and precision to the formulas, the peoples adhering to the Axis will end up losing faith.²¹

1942 was also a time of diplomatic endeavors for the leaders of the Romanian democratic opposition. The central figure remained Iuliu Maniu, the chairman of the National Peasant Party, who considered himself "a spokesman for the Romanian population before the Allies."²² Even if the British became exasperated by Maniu's "indecisiveness, inability to act and stubbornness,"²³ he created a real network of agents with diplomatic missions. He had discussions with the Americans through René de Weck (plenipotentiary minister for Switzerland in Romania) and Carol (Citta) Davila (ex-plenipotentiary minister for Romania in United States), with the British through the Turkish Embassy in Bucharest, and through Cornel Bianu (Maniu's envoy to London during World War II), Jean

Pangal (ex-plenipotentiary minister for Romania in Spain and Portugal), Prince Barbu Știrbey, to which others were added in the following years.

The first step by which he legitimized his position in these diplomatic efforts was taken in January 1942, when the opposition leader reached an agreement with Queen Mother Helen to maintain and develop contacts with the Western Allies in Romania. Constantin I. C. Brătianu (chairman of the National Liberal Party) and Barbu Știrbey also rallied in support of such an approach.²⁴

Maniu's task was difficult and hampered by the inflexible and often unimaginative approach of the Western Allies. The latter would have wanted Maniu to assume leadership of a coup to overthrow the Antonescu government and put the Romanian Army at the service of the Allies. Even assuming that such an action could have been carried out, Maniu still asked the Allies for a minimal set of guarantees for Romania: the independence of the state and the restoration of the borders of 1920, except for the Quadrilateral. These wishes were transmitted by Maniu through numerous channels, including a memorandum sent on 20 November 1942 to the government in London through the Swiss Legation in Bucharest.²⁵ On this occasion, the leader of the Romanian opposition explained that Romania's internal context was too fragile to risk the removal of Ion Antonescu from the government. The presence of German troops and secret services in Romania made it impossible to stop fighting the Soviet Union and turn against Germany, especially in the absence of consistent Allied military support.²⁶

Somehow reinforcing the message sent in May 1942 to B. Coste, the Foreign Office sent Maniu, in December 1942, an information note stating that the postwar borders of Romania were to be set by the Allies, based on the principles of the Atlantic Charter and of the British–Soviet Treaty of 26 May 1942.²⁷

It was almost impossible for Maniu to find a negotiation margin favorable to Romania's interests. Hoping to soften the Allies' position, the old politician sent an extensive memorandum to London in December 1942, trying to clarify the historical, geopolitical, and moral reasons that had pushed Romania to fight alongside Germany against the USSR.²⁸

January 1943–23 August 1944 (Negotiations with the Allies)

THE CASABLANCA Conference, held in January 1943, was a significant turning point in Allied strategic planning. The imposition of unconditional surrender complicated Romania's attempts to negotiate an armistice. The Romanian leaders, especially Ion Antonescu, were deeply reluctant and fearful of the harsh terms that this policy entailed. The fear was that an unconditional surrender would leave Romania vulnerable to severe postwar

consequences, including Soviet domination and the loss of territorial integrity. This policy made the Romanian leadership rather reluctant to break relations with Germany without concrete guarantees from the Allies.²⁹

The month of January 1943 was relatively rich in diplomatic discussions. On 4 January 1943, Iuliu Maniu wrote to Edvard Beneš, the president of the Czechoslovak government in exile in London, asking him “to defend Romanian interests with the Allies.”³⁰ The response received seemed quite discouraging. The Czechoslovak leader stated that creating a Romanian leadership in exile would have been much more effective: “I draw attention to the fact that if responsible politicians from the country do not come abroad in time, Romania’s interests will suffer all the more.”³¹ Beneš’ message later led Maniu to request clarifications on whether creating a government in exile in London could have given Romania’s cause more chances.³² In January 1943, the Foreign Office rejected Maniu’s request to create a Romanian government-in-exile in London, considering that this could damage relations with the Soviet Union. Although the United States offered the possibility of establishing a government-in-exile on American soil, Maniu refused, considering that the United States had no major strategic interests in Southeast Europe.³³

On the other side, dissatisfied with Mussolini’s refusal to support the Latin Axis project, Mihai Antonescu decided to intensify the attempts to have direct contact with diplomatic representatives of the Allies in neutral countries, in order to conclude a separate peace.³⁴ On 16 January 1943, Mihai Antonescu began discussions with the Turkish envoy in Bucharest, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, and informed Berlin through the German ambassador Manfred von Killinger about these contacts. What created additional nervousness in Berlin was that in these actions, Antonescu, through his diplomatic channels, let it be understood that these peace overtures were made at least with Hitler’s knowledge. Ribbentrop, Germany’s foreign minister, demanded clarifications, stressing that Germany was not interested in a peace but in the complete defeat of its enemies. In early February 1943, rumors of Mihai Antonescu’s peace talks were confirmed by German intelligence intercepts, prompting Antonescu to openly acknowledge these efforts to Killinger.³⁵

The news about the peace overtures that the Romanian leaders were making led Ribbentrop to send to Bucharest a denial of the fact that this was being done in the name of Hitler.³⁶ At a meeting between Joachim Ribbentrop and Giuseppe Bastianini, on 7 April 1943, the former told the Italian undersecretary of foreign affairs that he had learned that:

Minister Dimitrescu, a few weeks ago, allegedly told the ambassadors of Argentina and Portugal in Madrid that, at the request of the Führer, he had been instructed

by Antonescu to start peace negotiations. Telegraphic intercepts also corroborate this. On the other hand, the Romanian diplomats would have widely spread the news of the tentative contacts with a view to negotiations, not only in Madrid but also in Lisbon, Ankara, and Helsinki.³⁷

In April 1943, Hitler invited the Romanian leader to a discussion at Kleßheim Castle, where he presented information about Foreign Minister Mihai Antonescu's peace attempts and opposition leader Iuliu Maniu's contacts with the Western powers. Hitler demanded the dismissal of Mihai Antonescu and the arrest of Maniu, but Marshal Antonescu cautiously refused, claiming that the charges were based on misinterpretations by foreign diplomats. Instead of a resignation, the marshal asked Mihai Antonescu to take a few weeks off.³⁸ Once recovered from this "diplomatic illness," Antonescu resumed his activity, as indicated by the correspondence between Bova Scoppa and Ciano. The Romanian foreign minister regularly expressed his belief in the German defeat and, in May 1943, proposed creating a "Mediterranean Entente," hoping for Mussolini's involvement in this project.³⁹ Aware of the military and political crisis of the Axis states, Mihai Antonescu proposed to Mussolini to enter into contact with the Western Allies, but the Duke considered that it was still too early for such steps.⁴⁰

On 25 July 1943, two weeks after the Allied landing in Sicily, Mussolini was dismissed and arrested. Mihai Antonescu addressed Raffaele Guariglia, the new Italian foreign minister, renewing the proposal that the two countries initiate a joint action to withdraw from the war.⁴¹ The evasive answer the Italian diplomat gave on 30 July left the Romanian government struggling with indecision. Furthermore, Killiger was instructed to inform Antonescu of the Italian government's decision to continue the war alongside Germany. A few weeks later, on behalf of Prime Minister Pietro Badoglio, General Giuseppe Castellano arrived in Lisbon on 19 August to negotiate with the Allies, and on 3 September, he signed Italy's capitulation.⁴²

Iuliu Maniu urged Alexandru Cretzianu, the former secretary general of the Foreign Ministry, to accept his appointment as Romania's envoy to Ankara and to intensify contacts with the Western Allies. Maniu instructed Cretzianu to inform the British and American diplomats that Romania would turn against Germany once the Anglo-American troops arrived in Bulgaria. Antonescu authorized informing the United States about the resources available for a possible Allied landing in the Balkans.⁴³ However, in the autumn of 1943, plans for an Allied landing in the Balkans were abandoned in favor of operations in Normandy and southern France. At the Moscow Conference of October 1943, the Soviets strongly opposed the entry of British-American troops in Europe from the southeast. Arriving in Ankara in such a context, all he got from the Western

Allies was a categorical refusal for Romania to sign the peace only with the British and the Americans.⁴⁴

Returning to Bucharest in November 1943, Cretzianu presented the Romanian leaders with the new context of the negotiations, which increasingly limited Romania's negotiating options. Antonescu agreed with the position of Maniu and Brătianu, who considered the capitulation a military action, adding that he would leave power if the opposition obtained guarantees for Romania's independence.⁴⁵ Thus, they chose to appoint Barbu Știrbey as the Romanian emissary for the negotiations with the Allies in Cairo.

In all these diplomatic efforts meant to avoid an unconditional armistice or even a capitulation for Romania, one of the dilemmas that troubled the diplomats of the Allied states was who represented Romania in negotiating the terms of the armistice. Thus, in the note dated 2 February 1944, sent by James C. Dunn (director of the Office of European Affairs in the State Department) to John Gilbert Winant (the United States ambassador to the United Kingdom), certain "aspects of Romanian Surrender" were questioned. Among these issues was from which Romanian official the Allies should have received the capitulation. Accepting Ion Antonescu as part of this diplomatic action would have entailed that the government he led would implement the terms of the capitulation. For this reason, the Allies seemed to prefer replacing the Antonescu regime with a government led by Iuliu Maniu.⁴⁶

However, a memorandum of the Division of Southern European Affairs from March 1944, signed by Edward R. Stettinius Jr., indicated that

*so far both the Antonescu regime and the democratic opposition under Maniu have manifested no disposition (a) to turn actively against the Germans or (b) to submit without resistance to the Russians.*⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the Counselor of the Romanian Embassy in Madrid, Scarlat Grigoriu, established contact with the American Ambassador Carlton J. H. Hayes, in October 1943. The latter allegedly told the Romanian diplomat that the USA would be willing to secretly guarantee that Anglo-American troops would occupy part of the Romanian territory to prevent a complete occupation by the Red Army. However, the condition was for the Romanian foreign minister to send a statement expressing the Romanian government's willingness to negotiate based on the formula of unconditional surrender. Afterwards, it was necessary to authorize a Romanian general to go to the headquarters of the Allied forces in North Africa to discuss the military measures to be taken. Such an approach could possibly have protected the Romanian army from possible German reprisals in the context of the long-awaited Allied landing in the Balkans.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Marshal Antonescu was trying to convince the German leaders, including Hitler personally, of the need for peace between Germany and the Western Allies in order to avoid the victory of the USSR. A scenario that the leaders in Bucharest presented on 21 December 1943, through Grigoriu, assumed that the Romanian government would negotiate based on unconditional surrender but that the submission of the declaration of capitulation would take place only after an Allied landing in the Balkans or after the entry of Turkey in the war on the side of the Allies. However, the two conditions lost their relevance after the Tehran Conference (28 November–1 December 1943); the three Allied powers agreed to abandon the landing in the Balkans and that Turkey should not be included in the war.

On 17 March 1944, in Cairo, Barbu Ştirbey, acting as an emissary of the Romanian government, initiated negotiations with representatives of the three Allied powers: Lord Moyne (United Kingdom), Lincoln MacVeagh (United States), and Nikolai Vasilyevich Novikov (Soviet Union). Ştirbey, representing the democratic opposition led by Iuliu Maniu, boldly declared the government's willingness to exit the war as soon as possible. The democratic opposition conveyed to the Allies their respect for the commitments and their demand for minimal guarantees such as freedom, independence, and the recognition of the country's territorial rights.⁴⁹

On 12 April 1944, Barbu Ştirbey received from the Soviet ambassador Novikov a note addressed to both Antonescu and Maniu, which contained four minimal conditions of the Soviets: (1) the breaking of relations between Romania and Germany, with the Romanian Army turning against the Wehrmacht, in order to "restore its independence and sovereignty"; (2) the recognition of the Romanian–Soviet border from June 1940 and the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina; (3) the payment of reparations to the Soviet Union for the damage caused by war and occupation; and (4) the release of all Allied prisoners of war. It was indicated that these conditions could be changed to Romania's disadvantage if they were not accepted forthwith.⁵⁰

The note of 12 April 1944, in which the Soviet Union presented the capitulation conditions to the Romanian government, was seen by Washington diplomats as a violation of the principle of unconditional surrender. The Soviet message stated that the Romanian troops in Crimea, Odessa, and the Chişinău area had to surrender to the Red Army or immediately start fighting against the German Army. In addition, a Soviet commitment was made that the Red Army would not occupy Romania militarily but would demand freedom of movement on Romanian territory. In the end, the Soviet government communicated that it was committed to fighting alongside Romanian soldiers to integrate Transylvania into Romania, wholly or a significant part thereof. All these clauses in

the Note of 12 April were one-sided in regard to the Western Allies, who had often stated that territorial questions would be discussed at the peace conference. However, the Soviet Union did not want the Western Allies to have any influence in the postwar organization of Central and Eastern Europe. In the military context of the moment, the British and American representatives finally accepted the content of the Soviet Note.⁵¹

The Romanian authorities' acceptance of the Soviet conditions was equivalent to ceding Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, which is why Marshal Antonescu hesitated to answer.

Unbeknownst to many, a clandestine series of negotiations commenced in Stockholm, running parallel to the more publicized talks in Cairo. Led by Frederic Nanu, the Romanian Legation found themselves in unexpected discussions with the Soviet ambassador Alexandra Kollontai. After weeks of deliberation, on 12 April, Nanu was handed the Soviet conditions of capitulation, mirroring those sent to Cairo via Novikov.⁵²

On 29 May, without consulting Bucharest, Nanu presented the Soviet Embassy with four additional provisions to the armistice terms. These included: (1) a deadline of 15 days for the withdrawal of German troops from Romania, with the participation of Romanian troops alongside the Red Army if the deadline was not respected; (2) freedom of movement for the Allied forces on the Romanian territory, with the maintenance of the Romanian civil administration and a safe haven for the Romanian government; (3) the fate of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was to be decided at the peace conference, based on self-determination; (4) the need for a detailed analysis of Romania's economic situation before establishing final reparations. On 31 May 1944, the Soviets responded to Nanu's note, stating that three demands were non-negotiable: that Romania change fronts, cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and release Allied prisoners of war. However, they were willing to (1) grant a deadline of 15 days for the withdrawal of German troops, (2) allow the Romanian government to have a protected territory, (3) make a compromise regarding the civil administration, and (4) take into account Romania's difficult economic situation in establishing reparations.⁵³

Nanu highlighted the contradiction between the requirement to attack Germany immediately and the 15-day deadline for the withdrawal of German troops. He also asked whether Moscow would be willing to receive a Romanian delegation if Germany were to cut off communications with Bucharest or Stockholm. On 2 June, the Soviet government added that if the German troops withdrew within the designated time limit, they would have no objection to Romania remaining neutral. The Soviets also agreed to receive a Romanian delegation to Moscow.⁵⁴

Ion Antonescu's decision to reject the Soviet armistice terms, despite the concessions made on 2 June, was a momentous one. His deep distrust of the Soviet Union, based on a history of repeated invasions of Romanian territory and personal experiences, made him doubt the Kremlin's promises. However, it was his fear of the serious consequences of a change of allegiances that ultimately swayed him. These consequences included a possible German occupation of Romania, a scenario made even more likely by the Wehrmacht's invasion of Hungary in the previous months.⁵⁵

In July 1944, the German ambassador Carl August Clodius reported from Bucharest that Marshal Antonescu was affected by the military failures and the air raids on Romania, fearing the total disorganization of the country. Antonescu was criticized for allowing opposition emissaries to negotiate with the enemy and for not strengthening the internal psychological front, for believing that the war could not be won militarily but through a political understanding. At the same time, Clodius noted that, despite the criticism, Antonescu remained faithful to the German line but was reluctant to make financial and economic sacrifices. The Germans had to choose between imposing the necessary economic demands or risking a change of government with possible negative consequences.⁵⁶

The last meeting between Ion Antonescu and Adolf Hitler (5 August 1944) lasted five and a half hours. Hitler spoke of the new V-1 weapons, emphasizing the loyalty of the Allies and demanding a clear commitment from Antonescu. The marshal expressed his concerns about the Eastern Front, Romania's air defense, and the actions of Turkey, Bulgaria, and Hungary. In this context, Hitler promised him that he would provide additional planes and heavy artillery, assuring him that Germany would not abandon Romania. Although Hitler thought he could count on Antonescu, he was dissatisfied with the answers he received, considering them unsatisfactory.⁵⁷

In the last days of his regime, Marshal Ion Antonescu was pressured by the opposition leaders, Iuliu Maniu, Constantin Brătianu, and Gheorghe I. Brătianu, to conclude a truce. On 22 August 1944, Iuliu Maniu sent Ion Mihalache to Antonescu, who had recently returned from the front, to discuss the armistice. Antonescu recognized the gravity of the situation but refused to betray Germany, despite arguments that Germany had betrayed Romania. The next day, G.I. Brătianu informed Antonescu that the opposition was willing to assume all the consequences of the truce. Under these circumstances, the marshal said that he agreed to accept the truce under the required conditions if the opposition leaders offered him a written statement showing that they agreed to all conditions, including the definitive relinquishment of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. The opposition leaders pledged to deliver the signed statement.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, at the Royal Palace, an action group was created around King Michael I for the dismissal of the Antonescu government on 26 August. However, when Ion Antonescu and Mihai Antonescu requested an audience with the monarch following the morning discussions with the opposition, the group decided to move forward the dismissal procedure, especially since the marshal intended to leave for the front the next day. Faced with Antonescu's refusal to sign the armistice at the time of his visit to the Palace, when he stated that he needed 24 hours to receive answers from the diplomatic emissaries, the king agreed and proceeded with the arrest of Antonescu. On the evening of 23 August, the king sent a communiqué to the country announcing Romania's exit from the war against the Allies. The new government, led by General Constantin Sănătescu, had undertaken to negotiate and conclude an armistice with the United Nations.⁵⁹ On the night of 25 August 1944, Soviet Commissar Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov announced that the Soviet Union would respect Romania's independence and territorial integrity if it joined the fight against Germany and Hungary. Although Romania ceased hostilities and joined the Allies, between 60,000 and 160,000 Romanian soldiers were taken prisoner by the Red Army until the armistice was signed on 12 September 1944. The Romanian delegation, including Barbu Știrbey, Ghiță Popp, General Dumitru Dămăceanu, and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, arrived in Moscow for negotiations. Although they failed to obtain significant changes to the Soviet conditions, the armistice was signed, acknowledging Romania's defeat and placing its military forces under Soviet command.⁶⁰

Final Remarks

IN THE context of the permanent attempts at negotiation, Mihai Antonescu and Iuliu Maniu stood out as two politicians with opposite personalities and distinct negotiation styles. Each initially tried to ensure the legitimacy of their position in the discussions they initiated. Each of them tried to create networks of emissaries sent to the capitals of Allied and neutral states. Even though each showed creativity in finding solutions, they could not see the overall picture of the postwar system that the Allies seemed to envisage. These negotiations were almost impossible, as the Romanian negotiators were not allowed to choose their partners. They ran into the inflexibility of the United States and the British–Soviet geopolitical competition over East-Central Europe, where the Soviet Union had the upper hand.



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Abstract

Beyond Unconditional Surrender: Romania’s Diplomatic Campaign for a Conditional Armistice (1942–1944)

Romania’s exit from World War II on 23 August 1944 came after more than two years of complex diplomatic negotiations for an unconditional armistice. This article examines Romania’s diplomatic efforts undertaken between 1942 and 1944, highlighting the challenging conditions imposed by the Allies and the internal political dynamics. Romanian leaders like Mihai Antonescu and Iuliu Maniu endeavored to secure favorable terms to safeguard national interests despite significant hurdles. Their efforts, influenced by the strategic interests of the Allied powers and the changing military landscape, ultimately led to Romania’s shift from the Axis to the Allied side, with profound postwar consequences.

Keywords

Romania, World War II, unconditional armistice, diplomatic negotiations, Mihai Antonescu, Iuliu Maniu

At the Crossroads of Destiny

Romania's Tumultuous Journey from 23 August 1944 to the Armistice: Consequences

MARCELA SĂLĂGEAN

Romania's entry into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and its subsequent communization as a guarantee of its geopolitical subordination must be understood as part of a global transformation process within the international system.

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The Dichotomy of 23 August 1944

IN ROMANIA, 23 August 1944 is considered the day of enslavement by the opponents of communism and the day of liberation by its supporters. For the anti-communists, 23 August symbolizes the end of the old order, which, however imperfect it may have been, functioned according to Romanian principles within a Romanian national framework.

The historical representation according to which the communization of Romania was the direct consequence of the decisions taken in Bucharest on the afternoon of 23 August 1944 began to emerge at the time of the event itself. First, we have the rhetoric of the political leaders who were behind the event or hailed it as a historical fact of exceptional value, as was the case with the communists. Later, this image enjoyed a wide circulation in Romanian historiography before and after 1989,

as historians and analysts sought to unravel the roots and causes of the emergence of the communist regime in Romania.¹

Romania's Strategic Predicament

LOOKING BACK at the events occurred eight decades ago, any researcher can easily realize that in the summer of 1944, Romania's situation was rather difficult, both due to the Soviet victories on the Eastern Front and to the occupation of an important part of its territory. Domestically, in the summer of 1944, the old regime and its supporters faced two inimical forces, which had become increasingly powerful: the Soviet Union and its agent in Romania, the Romanian Communist Party. In that situation, the efforts of the politicians were directed towards the search for compromise formulas to guarantee the continuity of the Romanian nation, the Romanian society, and the Romanian political representation in an independent and democratic Romania. Moreover, for the fulfilment of this goal, the act of 23 August 1944² meant not only the separation from the Nazi coalition and the removal of the government led by Ion Antonescu, but also the beginning of Soviet influence in Romania, with the entry of the Romanian communists in the new government formed in the evening of 23 August and with the increase in the number of Soviet soldiers on the territory of the country.

The Immediate Aftermath and International Reactions

IN THE evening of 23 August 1944, the reality was much more difficult for Romania than one could have imagined. On the one hand, externally, after King Michael I's Proclamation to the country announcing the exit from the alliance with the Axis Powers and the immediate end of the war with the United Nations,³ Romania's status was that of an independent state, waging war against its former allies, on the side of its former enemies. On the other hand, internally, the hopes the Romanians had on 23 August 1944 were quickly dashed. A few days later, upon their entry into Bucharest, the Soviet troops found an interim government prepared to negotiate an armistice and hold free elections.⁴ However, the Soviet Command in Romania did not recognize the national authority of a state with which the government of their country had not yet concluded an armistice, and failed to take any measures against the abuses of the Soviet soldiers against the Romanian soldiers and civilians.⁵ Moreover,

it was only on 27 August that Moscow ordered its troops in Romania to stop treating the Romanians as enemies.

Hoping for help and political support, the king, the prime minister, diplomats and the leaders of the democratic parties requested Western assistance.⁶ Of primary importance was the attitude of the United States of America and the Soviet Union towards Romania. Nevertheless, given how the unofficial meetings between the representatives of King Michael I and of the government and those of the Western powers with a view to an armistice went, the situation must have been discouraging for Bucharest. The United States had little interest in Romania. Historically, the ties between the two countries had been insignificant. Few Romanians knew English, and even fewer had visited America. Likewise, few Americans had been in Romania before the war. There were not many who knew where to locate Romania geographically. The Romanian emigration to the United States was not numerous during the interwar period. American economic interests in Romania were limited to investments in oil companies and to a few subsidiaries of smaller American corporations. However, the leaders of the Romanian parties, except for the communists, but also representatives of the intellectual elite and the majority of the population looked at America as the savior of Romania due to the fall of France and the distrust in Great Britain.⁷ They even hoped to receive support in recovering the territories lost in 1940, even if, until 1944, the United States of America had refused to discuss any issue involving territorial changes pending the peace treaties to be concluded after the end of the war. This should not have been surprising since, at least in political circles, it was known that the United States had consistently spoken out against any intentions to examine and regulate matters that concerned the areas of interest and influence of the various great powers while hostilities continued on the front. The motivation for the American position was complex. Washington wanted the postwar order to be organized according to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the application of which should lead to “one world,” governed by the values of liberalism and democracy, in which the assurance of peace and security belonged to a world organization.⁸ However, starting in 1943, under the pressure of events and mainly due to the Soviet advance towards Central and Southeastern Europe, Washington had to start accepting arrangements that included solutions regarding the postwar world, including territorial solutions.⁹ Thus, in addition to the State Department of the United States, an Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations was established, under the nominal leadership of the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, but having, in reality, the Undersecretary of State, Sumner Welles, as its executive chairman. The most important departments within it were the Political Subcommittee and the Ter-

ritorial Subcommittee, which had, among other things, the mission to draw up the necessary recommendations regarding the solution to territorial problems.¹⁰

On the other hand, recognizing the need for a rapid and methodical transition from a state of war to a state of peace, after the Moscow Conference of October 1943, the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, and Great Britain decided, in a joint declaration of 30 October 1943, that the unity of action created during the war against their enemies should also be maintained in the process of organizing and ensuring peace and security.¹¹ However, the unity invoked by the three allies was no longer respected, even if, at the Moscow Conference in 1943, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin had declared that they would seek an agreement on the liberated countries. A secret arrangement was made in June 1944 between London and Moscow, more precisely, an agreement whereby, for three months, the Soviet Union would exercise predominant influence in Romania and Great Britain in Greece. Although the President of the United States of America initially disagreed, he eventually relented and accepted Churchill's plan, but on the condition that the agreement between London and Moscow be implemented only during wartime,¹² which did not happen.

It is true that the Americans, to a greater extent than the British, considered the Soviet presence to be temporary. However, we have no reason to believe that the American government was prepared at that time to oppose the Russian policy and plans for Romania, as later demonstrated by the evolution of events. As for the British, they were fully prepared to hand Romania over to Soviet rule in the fall of 1944. Churchill admitted that during his talks with Stalin he had agreed to a 90% Russian influence in Romania. Correctly understanding the intentions of the Soviet Union towards Romania, Churchill sought to obtain the greatest benefits for Great Britain in Greece.¹³

There are opinions in the historiography according to which King Michael I's decision of 23 August 1944 to withdraw Romania from the anti-Soviet war was partly influenced by the very attempt to thwart the implementation of the British and Russian plans in Romania, as well as to prevent their acceptance by the States United States of America. It is believed that doubts about Washington's determination to really oppose the establishment of a Soviet sphere of influence in Romania led King Michael I and his political associates to allow, on 23 August 1944, the inclusion of a communist leader, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, in the Sănătescu government constituted on that occasion.¹⁴

For his part, after 23 August, Prime Minister Constantin Sănătescu had some major priorities, but also few options for achieving them. First of all, he did everything in his power for Romania to conclude an armistice as soon as possible,

in order to regulate the status of the country at the international level and then focus on the territorial issues concerning Romania's borders, especially the one with Hungary. However, since the beginning of 1944, during the negotiations carried out by Romania with the representatives of the United States of America, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, the Western representatives had advised Bucharest to reach an agreement with Moscow with a view to an armistice that would establish the preliminaries of a peace. On 29 August the Romanian delegation left for Moscow, where it arrived the following day.

The Armistice and Its Aftermath

ONLY ON 8 September, after a week of waiting and after the Soviet troops had occupied the entire territory of the country, the Romanian representatives were received at the Kremlin in a glacial atmosphere. Vyacheslav Molotov read out the armistice clauses, refusing to discuss them with the Romanians.¹⁵ The Armistice Agreement was signed on 12 September 1944 by the Soviet General Rodion Malinovsky on behalf of the Allies, i.e., the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and the United States of America, although the representatives of the last two states, Archibald Clark Kerr and W. Averell Harriman, were present. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, Gen. Dumitru Dămăceanu, Prince Barbu Știrbey, and Gheorghe (Ghiță) Popp signed for Romania.¹⁶ The armistice clauses drawn up by Molotov were very harsh for Romania and allowed numerous abuses by the Soviets.

The manner in which the issue of the Armistice Agreement with Romania was treated, but especially Moscow's claims of total control over the interpretation of its application, made the adviser of the Embassy of the United States of America in Moscow, George F. Kennan, write (in September 1944) that the events of the fall of that year demonstrated the Soviet Union's categorical claim to become the "dominant power" in Central and Eastern Europe, with the Americans unable to understand the truth about Russia.¹⁷ Also convincing were the conclusions of General Cortlandt Van Rensselaer Schuyler, the American representative in the Allied Control Commission in Romania, who said that most of the articles of the Armistice Agreement with Romania had a "distinctly Soviet flavor."¹⁸

The Armistice Agreement stated Romania's obligations towards the Allies, especially the Soviet Union, in terms of its political, economic, and administrative life. For this reason, the Agreement constituted, for a period, the fundamental act on which Romania's relations with the Soviet state were based. In this sense, we consider it necessary to enumerate its most important provi-

sions: Romania's continuation of the war alongside the Allies, with 12 divisions; the retention of German and Hungarian subjects in the country; ensuring the movement of troops on the territory of the country; the release of prisoners and the repeal of Nazi laws; the dissolution of pro-Hitler organizations; collaboration with the Soviet High Command for the arrest and trial of war criminals; Soviet censorship of publications, films, performances, communications; the restoration of the Romanian administration behind the front at a distance of at least 50–100 km, etc.¹⁹ Also, the Armistice Agreement established, in a provisional manner, the fundamental conditions for ending the state of war between Romania and the United Nations, which were to remain mandatory until the Agreement was replaced by a peace treaty. In a single document, the Armistice provided all the military, political, territorial, economic, occupation, etc. provisions that Romania had to respect. Later, the Peace Treaty signed by Romania on 10 February 1947 resumed the provisions of the Armistice Agreement of 12 September 1944.²⁰

Territorial Issues and the Soviet Strategy

IN THE following period, it was easy to see that Stalin used the Armistice to undermine the effects of 23 August in Romania. This act threatened to deprive him of the initiative in Romanian politics. In order to regain this initiative, the Soviet leader transformed the Armistice Agreement into a legal framework, ensuring his dominant political and economic interests in Romania²¹ and beyond. Also, the Armistice between the Allied Powers and Romania (as well as those with Bulgaria and Hungary, for example) represented a confirmation of the political reconfiguration of the continent, both from the perspective of international relations (of the game between the great powers) and from the perspective of political regimes. On the other hand, Romania began to experience a series of internal political mutations that modified its evolution, as the terms of the imposed Armistice Agreement were also made possible by the non-inclusion of the country in the area of strategic interest of the Western Allies.²²

The Armistice Agreement also provided for the borders of the Romanian state. From the beginning, it must be stated that the Soviets kept Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Article 4 of the Armistice Agreement provided for the restoration of the state border between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Romania established by the Soviet–Romanian agreement of 28 June 1940.²³ Of course, the context in which the Soviet–Romanian agreement had been concluded in June 1940 was not mentioned. As regards the Romanian–

Hungarian border and the status of the Transylvanian territory ceded by Romania to Hungary on 30 August 1940, the situation was much more complex due to the provisions of Article 19 of the Armistice Agreement. Therefore, for the Romanians, the problem of Transylvania remained an open one. Article 19 states the following:

The Allied Governments regard the decision of the Vienna Award regarding Transylvania as null and void and are agreed that Transylvania (or the greater part thereof) should be returned to Romania, subject to confirmation at the peace settlement, and the Soviet Government agrees that Soviet forces shall take part for this purpose in joint military operations with Romania against Germany and Hungary.²⁴

The act of 23 August 1944 in Romania took not only Berlin by surprise, but also Budapest. It is already well known that neither of the countries that claimed Transylvania believed in the definitive validity of the situation created following the Vienna Award of 30 August 1940. Despite the German border guarantees given to Romania, the Hungarian side always believed in the re-annexation of Southern Transylvania, just as the Romanians believed in the restoration of the territorial unity of Greater Romania once the war ended. In part, this was the reason for the participation of both countries in the war, as they tried to fulfil the German demands: troops, war materiel, and raw materials.²⁵

As far as the Soviets were concerned, among the political issues they used in order to subjugate Central-Eastern Europe were also the ethnic and territorial disputes that, over time, had repeatedly manifested themselves in the region. Furthermore, to show how the Soviet Union insisted on making unilateral decisions in this part of Europe, the American professor, historian and diplomat Philip E. Mosely, rapporteur in the Territorial Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee attached to the State Department of the United States of America, analyzed the manner in which Moscow had approached the Romanian–Hungarian relations from the perspective of its attitude towards Transylvania. This analysis was published in a volume dedicated to the renowned American specialist.²⁶ Referring to the period between 23 August 1944 and 12 September 1944, Mosely considered that Molotov came to accept the return of all Transylvania to Romania as a result of Romania’s decision to leave the Axis, and especially because of the determination with which it joined the battle against the German troops and for the liberation of its territory. What is interesting in the said volume, however, is the observation that Philip E. Mosely did not note that the Soviet option was also determined by the attitude of the government in Budapest. Declaring war on Romania at the beginning of September 1944, Hungary

announced that it intended to fight not only for the preservation of Northern Transylvania but also in order to annex Southern Transylvania and, most importantly for the Soviets, that it was determined to remain in the war alongside Hitler's Germany. This explains why, in the early autumn of 1944, Moscow showed its willingness to recognize Romania's right over the whole of Transylvania, or, as the Soviet–American–British compromise formula was expressed in the Armistice Agreement, “the greater part thereof.”²⁷

After Romania joined the war against Hitler, together with the advance of Romanian and Soviet troops in Transylvania and with the re-establishment of the Romanian administration in the Transylvanian territory ceded to Hungary in 1940, starting with the end of October 1944, the Romanian authorities experienced numerous problems caused by Moscow's persistent refusal to accept the exercise of Romanian state authority over the province. From liberated Transylvania, increasingly alarming rumors about the province's future began to reach Bucharest. In the big cities of Transylvania, especially in Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár), there was more and more talk about an imminent takeover of the administration by the Soviet army.²⁸ Unfortunately, the rumors came true. Taking advantage of the increasingly difficult internal situation in which Romania found itself due to the pressure of the Communist Party and the Kremlin, who wanted to subordinate the Romanian government, invoking the desire to prevent interethnic incidents and the need to ensure security in the area behind the front, barely two months after the signing of the Armistice, Stalin decided to remove Northern Transylvania from under the authority of the Romanian state and introduce a Soviet military administration.²⁹ Thus began a new chapter in the history of Transylvania and of Romania, the Romanian authorities having to understand that, at least until the signing of the Peace Treaty, in terms of territorial issues, Moscow had secured, through its military presence, the right to have the last word. The Soviet military administration functioned until 9 March 1945, when, two days after the establishment of the Petru Groza government in Bucharest, a government accepted by the Soviets, Stalin allowed the reinstatement of the Romanian administration in Northern Transylvania.

Final Remarks

THE DAY of 23 August 1944 remains one of the most important in the contemporary history of Romania. Then, without any condition, Romania made available to the Allies (especially the Soviets) an important military potential, ranking fourth in terms of the troops engaged in the fight against Germany and contributing to the shortening of the war by about six

months, a fact recognized internationally both at that time and in the decades that followed. However, the primary beneficiary of the Bucharest act of 23 August was the Soviet Union because, from that day until 1990, Romania's internal and external policy was carried out under the strict authority of the Soviet government.³⁰ Naturally, Romania's entry into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and its subsequent communization as a guarantee of its geopolitical subordination must be understood as part of a global transformation process within the international system.³¹ The Soviets were determined to control Romania ever since the Red Army troops had crossed the country's borders, and in no case did they want a government in Bucharest that they could not control. Established on 23 August 1944, the Sănătescu government did not meet the conditions claimed by Moscow, and without the help of the Western powers it was doomed to failure. The same happened with the second Sănătescu government and with the one led by Nicolae Rădescu. Only the government of Petru Groza was accepted by Moscow. However, despite everything that happened, one of the objectives for which Romania had first entered the anti-Soviet war, then the war against Hitler, was fulfilled. The Romanian–Hungarian border drawn at the end of the First World War was restored. The Transylvanian territory ceded to Hungary in 1940 returned to the Romanian state, as a result of the act of 23 August 1944 and of the participation of the Romanian army in the campaign in the West, as well as due to the “diplomatic battle” that Romania won at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946–1947.



Notes

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Abstract

At the Crossroads of Destiny: Romania's Tumultuous Journey from 23 August 1944 to the Armistice: Consequences

The second half of 1944 was one of the most complex periods in Romania's contemporary history. It all started with the act of 23 August, after which Romania not only left the alliance with Nazi Germany, but had to endure Soviet pressure, to accept the entry of communist representatives into the government and the provisions of the Armistice Agreement, as well as the removal of Northern Transylvania from the administration of the Romanian state and the establishment of the Soviet administration in the region. However, despite everything that happened, one of the objectives for which Romania had first entered the anti-Soviet war, then the war against Hitler, was fulfilled. The Romanian–Hungarian border drawn at the end of the First World War was restored.

Keywords

23 August 1944, Romania's status, return of Northern Transylvania, Armistice Agreement

The Third Reich and the Act of 23 August 1944

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For the Third Reich, the political, economic, and military consequences of Romania's defection were devastating.

THE EVENTS of 23 August 1944, namely, the overturn of the political regime led by Marshal Ion Antonescu, the de facto dissolution of the alliance between Romania and the Third Reich, as well as Romania joining the coalition of the United Nations, have definitely attracted over time the constant interest of Romanian and foreign historians, as demonstrated by the publication of a significant number of papers, studies, document collections, and memoirs of the political and military personalities involved, both Romanian and German, etc. If during the communist regime most historiographical studies published in Romania, and dealing directly or tangentially with the act of 23 August 1944, endeavored—with few notable exceptions¹—to highlight, at the expense of falsifying the historical truth, the role played by the Romanian Communist Party in overturning Antonescu's regime, the situation would change radically following the events of December 1989. The end of the censorship imposed by the communist regime and the access of the scientific community to fundamental documentary sources created the premises necessary for approaching and analyz-

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ing, on real scientific bases, research topics which were forbidden, ignored or distorted before 1989, including the act of 23 August 1944. Although the results of the investigation of this crucial and, at the same time, controversial event in the Romanian contemporary history have generated a wide range of opinions and interpretations,² a succinct examination of the historiographical papers published after December 1989 dealing with this matter reveals the fact that there are still numerous “missing pieces” concerning the preparation and implementation of the act of 23 August 1944. In addition to the notable absence from the historiographical debate of studies based on Soviet documentary sources, kept in the archives of the Russian Federation, which would allow historians to clarify certain extremely important aspects concerning the position adopted by the Kremlin in relation to the events in Romania, among the less investigated issues, in our opinion, there is the manner in which the leaders of the Third Reich were informed about the evolution of the internal situation in Romania during 1944, and the way in which the Nazi decision-makers led by Adolf Hitler interpreted the information received through different channels (diplomatic, military, secret services) and reacted on 23 August 1944 and during the following days.³

The political and military events occurred in the summer of 1944 had a determinant influence on the internal and international situation of Romania. The success of the Normandy landings of the Allies, the attacks launched by the Red Army on the Eastern Front (the Bagration and Lvov–Sandomierz operations of June–July 1944) and, finally, the severance by Turkey of the diplomatic relations with the Third Reich at the beginning of August 1944 came to increase the skepticism of the public opinion and of the Romanian political and military circles towards the benefits of continuing the alliance with Germany. On the other hand, the alarming evolution of the internal political situation in Romania, the mounting dissatisfaction with the policies of Antonescu’s regime, the chronic war fatigue visible in the Romanian society and the initial measures initiated by the democratic opposition with a view to withdrawing Romania from the war did not go unnoticed by the leaders of the Third Reich. Although the number of warnings received by Berlin during 1944 about the possibility of Romania withdrawing from the alliance with Germany increased exponentially, the reports drafted by the German services present in Romania, namely, the German Legation, the German Military Mission, the information services (OKW/Amt Ausland/Abwehr, Amt VI-SD Ausland) or the German Ethnic Group, generally included contradictory data and thus failed to offer a coherent image of the real situation in the country. Despite this shortcoming, the reports drafted by the German services in Romania contain two common political and military elements which largely foreshadow the evolution of Romanian–German relations in the summer of 1944 and especially the final events of August 1944.

STARTING FROM the information in the German documentary sources consulted (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin, Bundesarchiv Berlin, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg im Breisgau, Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich, etc.), and from the existing specialized literature, in the following we will attempt to present succinctly and to analyze the evolution of the relationship between Romania and Germany in the period leading to the act of 23 August 1944, the information transmitted to Berlin by the German Legation in Bucharest, the German Military Mission, the leaders of the German Ethnic Group or by the two rival secret services—OKW/Amt Ausland/Abwehr and Amt VI-SD Ausland—concerning the internal situation in Romania, as well as to assess the way in which it was received in Berlin and, especially, to what extent it was taken into consideration in the decisions adopted by the leaders of the Third Reich as a response to the developments recorded in the internal political life of Romania.

Thus, in 1944 Berlin received through different communication channels genuine information about the actions initiated by the democratic opposition, the Royal House and, last but not least, the disgruntled elements within the Great General Headquarters, in order to remove the Antonescu regime from power and to conclude an armistice with the United Nations. However, the warnings failed to produce any concrete effects, as the leaders of the Third Reich constantly ignored them and seriously underestimated the ability of the democratic opposition to remove Marshal Ion Antonescu from power. This behavior can be explained by the unlimited confidence that Berlin and especially Hitler had in the leader of Romania. Most of the leaders of the Third Reich thought that as long as Marshal Ion Antonescu remained in charge of Romania there were no real reasons for concern for Germany. On the other hand, from a military point of view, the German services failed to correctly indicate the importance of the military factor in maintaining the stability of Antonescu's regime and, implicitly, the alliance with Germany. For example, in February 1944 the German Legation in Bucharest believed that as long as the military operations took place on the territory of Bessarabia, the Romanian Army would most likely resist. In exchange, if the Soviet troops crossed the Prut River and entered the Old Kingdom, it

would probably mean, to the extent that German help would not be made available, the political and military collapse of Romania, even if there were an attempt at a last-minute peace treaty with England and America.⁴

Another assessment of Romania's situation and attitude was performed during the same month by the "General Headquarters for the Liaison with Romania of

the German Navy—Marine-Verbindungsstab Rumänien,” based on the premise that the Marshal had a firm grip on power and there was no reason to doubt his loyalty towards Germany, even if his entourage was partially made up of Anglophile personalities. After presenting the position of the King, of the Army and of various political currents towards Antonescu’s regime and the alliance with Germany, the authors of the report reiterated the special importance of the Eastern Front for the Marshal’s position and the evolution of Romanian–German relations:

If the evolution on the Eastern Front is not unfavorable and Turkey remains neutral, there is no danger of Romania deserting. But unless these premises are met, then we must expect Romania’s withdrawal from the war, if there are no changes in the composition of the current government at the appropriate time.⁵

Even the invasion of the Romanian territory by the Red Army during the offensive operations of March 1944 did not seem to affect, in the opinion of the German military leaders, the position of the Head of the Romanian General Headquarters and the attitude of the public opinion, as the head of the German Military Mission, General of the Cavalry Erik Hansen, communicated to the OKW on 2 April 1944 that the Marshal’s will to fight was “unshaken,” and 3 days later the OKW representative, Fritz Poleck, a colonel with the General Headquarters, who had travelled to Romania on a work mission, reported to his superiors that “Romania is not failing, but it will continue to take part in the increased war efforts.”⁶ Berlin received similar information also from the Abwehr and, after it was subordinated to the SS and integrated in February 1944 within the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (The Central Security Office of the Reich) (RSHA), from the new German information structure—the Militärisches Amt. For example, a report drafted by Militärisches Amt on 5 August 1944 states that:

As before, the instruments of political power are exclusively in the hands of the Marshal and of the Romanian Army. The opposition is not supported by any movement willing to fight and capable of taking the power away from the Marshal.⁷

Even after the last high-level meeting between Adolf Hitler and Ion Antonescu, which took place in Rastenburg on 5 August 1944 and ended without the clarification Berlin was hoping for, given that the Marshal failed to provide a conclusive answer on the matter of continuing the war as an ally of Nazi Germany,⁸ the Führer and his close collaborators were convinced that they had managed to convince the leader of Romania to remain an ally of the Reich. This convic-

tion, incomprehensible at first sight and which lasted until the coup d'état of 23 August 1944, can be explained by the personal confidence that Adolf Hitler⁹ placed in Marshal Ion Antonescu, and by the reports submitted by the German authorities in Bucharest in August 1944, which highlighted the fact that the meeting with the Führer and the stabilization of the military situation on the Eastern Front had restored the faith of the Romanian leader in Germany's ability to redress the situation on the various war theaters, being convinced to remain an ally of the Reich¹⁰ until the very end. Nevertheless, the decisive factor which ultimately determined Romania's attitude was the military situation in the southern part of the Eastern Front, which was recognized and underlined in the reports submitted to the hierarchy in Berlin by the representatives of the Reich accredited in Romania. In this respect, the conclusion expressed by the German military attaché, Major General Karl Spalcke, a short time before the coup d'état, is quite telling:

*The situation on the Eastern Front and, particularly, the resistance of Army Group South [Ukraine] is and remains the decisive element for Romania's attitude.*¹¹

If the reports drafted by the representatives of the different German services (OKW, Auswärtiges Amt, Militärisches Amt) attempted to present the situation in Romania in an optimistic light, overestimating the political stability of Antonescu's regime and underestimating the role of the democratic opposition, the evaluations of the leaders of the German Ethnic Group led by Andreas Schmidt described the situation in Romania in a much somber light. Although at the beginning of 1944 Andreas Schmidt's position at the head of the German Ethnic Group was seriously eroded as a result of his totalitarian leadership style,¹² his reports to Berlin painted an image much closer to the real situation in Romania. Using information from a network made up mainly of SD officers of German ethnicity, which covered practically the entire territory of the country and which was very effective,¹³ during 1944 the leaders of the German Ethnic Group provided to the Third Reich very critical reports about the policies promoted by Antonescu's regime. Despite the presence of certain ideological and racial clichés—such as the alleged influence of Jews over the evolution of political life in Romania—these reports show a good knowledge of the state of mind in Romania as well as of the backstage actions undertaken by the main political and military factors in the government and the opposition, particularly the armistice talks with the Allies and the USSR.

Thus, Andreas Schmidt identified two opposing tendencies, which, in his opinion, were present in the policies promoted by the Romanian government and the Vice-president of the Council of Ministers, Mihai Antonescu. While the

Romanian leader was considered an advocate of the collaboration with Germany and of continuing the war, Mihai Antonescu was seen as the main exponent of the circles which struggled to “sabotage” the Marshal’s political line, with the aim of leaving the alliance with the Third Reich and withdrawing Romania from the war. The leader of the German Ethnic Group believed that the developments on the Eastern Front were especially important for Romania’s future attitude towards maintaining the alliance with Germany and continuing the war,¹⁴ an opinion constantly reiterated in the previously mentioned reports submitted to Berlin in the spring and summer of 1944. For example, in a note from the end of July–beginning of August 1944 he states that:

*In these notes, the political situation is characterized, overall, as stable, in the sense that only a change in the military situation in the southern sector of the Eastern Front could lead to political changes in Romania.*¹⁵

Moreover, Andreas Schmidt did more than just submit the abovementioned reports. Alarmed by the evolution of the situation in Romania, around 10 August 1944 the leader of the German Ethnic Group went in person to Hitler’s general headquarters in Eastern Prussia to personally present the situation in Romania to the leaders of the Reich. Received in audience by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Joachim von Ribbentrop, Andreas Schmidt drew his attention to the seriousness of the political situation in Romania, requesting that adequate measures be adopted. After the meeting, Joachim von Ribbentrop sent a telegram to the German Legation in Bucharest requesting them to check the information concerning the imminent defection of Romania. In his answer—dating probably from 15 August 1944—the plenipotentiary minister Manfred von Killinger qualified these statements as “vicious rumors” and claimed that there was no doubt about Romania’s loyalty.¹⁶ Andreas Schmidt appointed Fritz Cloos, head of department in the German Ethnic Group and leader of the organization of German workers in Romania, to inform Manfred von Killinger during the audience of 16 August 1944 about the tense internal situation. The German plenipotentiary minister ignored this warning as well, claimed that “the situation was under control” and gave assurances that all the necessary measures had been taken. “We must not lose our calm”—Manfred von Killinger said to his interlocutor.¹⁷ This shows that Berlin was informed in general about the political evolution in Romania and about the initiatives aimed at leaving the alliance with Germany and withdrawing from the war. Nevertheless, in most cases the data obtained were contradictory, unable to offer a unitary and convincing image of the real intentions of the decision-making circles in Romania. Even when the German services—such as the leaders of the German Ethnic Group headed

by Andreas Schmidt—received genuine information about the possibility of Romania's defection, the leaders of the Third Reich ignored it, and continued inexplicably to hold the conviction that for as long as Marshal Ion Antonescu was the leader there was no reason to worry.

Consequently, the events which occurred in Bucharest were a complete surprise for Adolf Hitler, the OKW and the Auswärtiges Amt, on the one hand, and the German authorities in Romania, on the other. Gathered in the building of the German Legation in Bucharest after learning the first news about the arrest of Marshal Ion Antonescu and his main collaborators, and about the intention of the new government to sign an armistice with the United Nations, the main representatives of the Reich in Romania came up with two scenarios based on their perception of the events in Bucharest, namely, the German reaction, and the offer of the Romanian government to grant 15 days to the German troops to withdraw from Romania. Seriously underestimating the importance, magnitude, and consequences of the events in progress, Lieutenant General Alfred Gerstenberg considered that the coup d'état had been the work of a small group, headed by the king, without the support of the population and of the army. Therefore, he was in favor of squashing the putsch and arresting its authors. In this respect, he proposed an air raid over the capital and sending the 5th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division stationed in Ploiești to occupy Bucharest.¹⁸ On the other hand, General Erik Hansen, Admiral Werner Tillesen, General Karl Spalcke and members of the diplomatic corps believed that the coup d'état was supported by the public opinion and the army and, thus, the conditions offered by the Romanians should be accepted.¹⁹ Adolf Hitler, informed about the events in the Romanian capital through the royal proclamation and the report of the head of the General Headquarters of the Luftwaffe, Aviation General Werner Kreipe, opted for the solution proposed by Alfred Gerstenberg, ordering the army on the night of 23/24 August 1944 to squash the putsch, to occupy the capital and to form a government led by a pro-German general, if Marshal Ion Antonescu was no longer available.²⁰ Also, the Führer subordinated all the authorities, the leading echelons and the German troops—Wehrmacht and SS—on the Romanian territory to the high command of Army Group South Ukraine.²¹

SHORTLY AFTER Adolf Hitler and the OKW—misinformed about the real situation in Bucharest by Lieutenant-General Alfred Gerstenberg—issued the order to squash the putsch and specified the details of the armed intervention, around 2 a.m., generals Erik Hansen and Alfred Gerstenberg, accompanied by the counselor of the Legation, Gerhard Stelzer, headed to the Palace to discuss with the Prime Minister, General Constantin Sănătescu, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Grigore Niculescu-Buzești about the possibility

of withdrawing the German troops from the Romanian territory. After a “cold, but fair” reception, the Prime Minister informed them that Romania had to seek an armistice and repeated the offer of free passage for the German troops, if they refrained from any hostilities.

Following a consultation over the phone with the German Legation, Erik Hansen and Alfred Gerstenberg agreed to convey the offer of the Romanian government to the German leadership. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs Grigore Niculescu-Buzești complained again that the German troops had opened fire in the Băneasa area, General Alfred Gerstenberg expressed his willingness—with the permission of the Romanian authorities—to go there in order to secure a ceasefire. After arriving in the German camp, Alfred Gerstenberg broke his promise, arrested the Romanian officers who accompanied him, Colonel Valeriu Șelescu and Captain Bogdan Florescu, and ordered the execution of the last preparations for the operations to occupy the capital, which would start at 7.30.²² Meanwhile, having returned to the Legation building, at around 3.00 a.m. General Erik Hansen send a radiogram to the head of the General Headquarters of the OKW, Colonel General Alfred Jodl, in which he presented the real situation in Bucharest and insisted against the planned actions which, considering the existing ratio of forces, he considered unpromising.²³ The same point of view was repeated insistently by Erik Hansen also in subsequent phone conversations with Colonel General Jodl (around 3.30 a.m.),²⁴ and with the leaders of Army Group South Ukraine (around 4.05 a.m.).²⁵ As expected, the efforts made by General Erik Hansen in order to convince Berlin to accept the offer of the Romanian government remained futile. According to his testimony, Colonel General Jodl “listened to my explanations in silence, and at the end he stated that ‘I will report adequately to the Führer.’”²⁶ However, Hitler maintained his decision to occupy the capital and to squash the putsch, which was reconfirmed by telephone to Army Group South Ukraine in the morning of 24 August 1944 (at 5.00 a.m.) by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel.²⁷ Shortly after this communication (at 5.10 a.m.), the order to initiate the German riposte was conveyed to Colonel General Alfred Gerstenberg, on the outskirts of the capital, who continued to be optimistic about the chances of success of the mission. Persuaded that “the new Romanian government was only a small group that ‘were wetting their pants’ and that Bucharest was defended only by a very thin layer of Romanian troops,” he ordered the attack at 7.30 a.m.²⁸

However, the German riposte was late and unrealistic. Because of the delay, of the insufficient preparation, and especially because they had seriously underestimated the potential of the Romanian Army and there was a lack of German troops with experience on the battlefield, the operations aimed at occupying the capital and squashing the putsch were destined to fail from the very beginning.

In fact, from the very first hours, the attack led by General Alfred Gerstenberg was met with the fierce resistance of the Romanian troops—well prepared and supplied with ammunition and weapons, including German tanks recently delivered by the Reich—under the command of General Iosif Teodorescu.²⁹ Thus, after some initial progress, the attack was soon stopped in the northern part of the Capital. At 11.30 a.m. General Gerstenberg reported over the phone to the leaders of Army Group South Ukraine that “the resistance is very strong and we cannot enter the city,” requesting that new troops be sent and increased air support.³⁰ The Luftwaffe had already attacked 150 points in the Capital around 11 a.m., but their effects were contrary to the expectations of the German authorities. As compared to the damages caused by the Allied aviation in the interval April–August 1944, the bombardment of the Luftwaffe—even if it hit important objectives, such as the Royal Palace or the building of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers—did not cause significant material damage or human losses, but politically it represented a serious mistake, as it increased the anti-German feelings of the public opinion and offered the Romanian authorities a pretext to declare war on the Third Reich on 25 August 1944.³¹

The coup d'état of 23 August 1944 and Romania's withdrawal from the alliance with the Third Reich accelerated the end of the hostilities on the southern sector of the Eastern Front, the situation of Army Group South Ukraine quickly becoming catastrophic. Because the Romanian Army carried out without hesitation the royal proclamation—which stipulated a ceasefire on the Eastern Front—and abandoned its positions, many German units were soon encircled, captured or destroyed by the Red Army. Thus, on 24 August 1944, Soviet units of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts met in Leova, surrounding 5 general commands and 16 divisions of the German 6th Army, which were captured or destroyed.³² Severe human and material losses were also suffered by the Luftwaffe, the Kriegsmarine, and other German services. For example, the German Fourth Air Fleet reported a number of 16,130 wounded or missing soldiers (officers, under-officers, troops, and administrative staff).³³ According to the official data communicated by the Soviet General Headquarters on 13 September 1944, the German losses were estimated at 256,000 people, with 150,000 dead and 106,000 prisoners. According to the same data, the German war material captured or destroyed was also impressive: 330 planes, 830 tanks, 3,500 canons, and 35,000 vehicles. Last, but not least, the total losses suffered by the Romanian and German troops amounted to 610,000 soldiers.³⁴ Even if the numbers offered by the Soviet sources are undoubtedly exaggerated, we can state with certainty that the human and material losses suffered by Army Group South Ukraine after the Iași–Chișinău operation and Romania's withdrawal from the alliance with Germany were extremely high.

This immense defeat cannot be ascribed exclusively to the coup d'état of 23 August 1944 and to Romania's withdrawal from the war. As explained by former German military leaders more or less involved in the events taking place on the Romanian theater of war, the delayed and incorrect measures adopted by the decision makers within the Reich are also to be blamed. As evidence, we believe that it is enough to mention the weakening of the military potential of Army Group South Ukraine in the eve of the Soviet offensive, as almost all of its tank divisions were transferred to other sectors of the front, the failure of the German intelligence services to learn the exact details of the plans aimed at removing Marshal Ion Antonescu from power, the errors of the leaders of Army Group South Ukraine during the military operations and, last but not least, underestimating the consequences and the support of the public opinion, of the political class and of the army for King Michael I's action. Could Army Group South Ukraine have been able to successfully resist for a longer period on the fortified line Focșani–Nămoloasa–Galați, even until “the occupation of Berlin,” as some German historiographical studies³⁵ claim, thus avoiding the occupation of the entire national territory and of the Balkan states by the Red Army? Taking into consideration the ratio of forces on the Romanian front in the summer of 1944, namely, the total air supremacy of the Allies,³⁶ we believe that the German and Romanian armies had absolutely no chance to resist on the Focșani–Nămoloasa–Galați defensive line.

FOR THE Third Reich, the political, economic, and military consequences of Romania's defection were devastating. From a political point of view, for Berlin the act of 23 August meant losing an ally and gaining a new enemy. In addition, the step taken by Romania considerably influenced the attitude of the other allies/satellites of Germany, namely, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, and Slovakia. From an economic point of view, the loss of the oilfields around Ploiești led to a dramatic decrease in the quantity of fuel supplied to the German war machine. Thus, according to a report submitted to the OKW on 13 October 1944, after the loss of the oilfields, fuel production as compared to April 1944—the last “normal” month before the start of the bombardments of the Allied aviation—had decreased by 95% for kerosene, 61% for gasoline, and 40% for Diesel fuel!³⁷ In short, the military losses incurred by Army Group South Ukraine represented a major obstacle for the potential of the German war machine. Thus, in the interval 1 January–1 December 1944 the German Land Army (including the Waffen ss) lost 88 divisions, the number of newly created or recomposed ones being estimated at 110.³⁸ Consequently, a sketchy estimate reveals that around 1/5 of the total losses of the German army in 1944 were due to the military disaster experienced by Army Group South Ukraine in

Romania. To these losses one should also add the fact that the German positions in the Balkans were annihilated, which forced the OKW to withdraw the German troops from Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia. All of these facts fully confirm the historians' opinion that the defeat of Army Group South Ukraine in Romania represented for the Wehrmacht a second Stalingrad.³⁹ For that matter, in the course of a subsequent conversation between Adolf Hitler and Ante Pavelić (18 September 1944), the Führer himself would name three major crises which the Wehrmacht had had to deal with in 1944: the Normandy landings, the fall of Army Group Center and, last but not least, "Romania's betrayal" on 23 August 1944.⁴⁰



Notes

1. See A. Simion, *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice ale insurecției române din august 1944* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1979), 421 sq.; Fl. Constantiniu, "Însemnările unui agent secret britanic în ajunul insurecției române din august 1944" (I–II), *Revista de istorie* 35, 1 (1982): 161–170; 35, 5–6 (1982): 735–739; Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *România și organizarea postbelică a lumii 1945–1947* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1988), 24–58; Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988), 145–190, 229–304; Ioan Chiper, "Actul istoric de la 23 August 1944 în contextul politicii marilor puteri față de România" (I–II), *Revista de istorie* 42, 9 (1989): 927–944; 42, 10 (1989): 1019–1034.
2. From the rich literature published after 1989 about the act of 23 August 1944, see especially Ion Șuța, *România la cumpăna istoriei: August '44* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1991); Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu and Ion Pătroi, *Anglia și România între anii 1939–1947* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1992), 217 sq.; Gh. Buzatu, *România și Războiul Mondial din 1939–1945* (Iași: Centrul de Istorie și Civilizație Europeană, 1995), 145–256; Apostol Stan, *Iuliu Maniu: Naționalism și democrație: Biografia unui mare român* (Bucharest: Editura Saeculum I.O., 1997), 412 sq.; Gh. Buzatu, *O istorie a petrolului românesc* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), 366 sq.; Alesandru Dușu, *Între Wehrmacht și Armata Roșie: Relații de comandament româno-germane și româno-sovietice (1941–1945)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), 214 sq.; Gh. Buzatu, *România și Marile Puteri (1939–1947)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), 351–402; Gh. Buzatu and Dana Beldiman, *23 august 1939–23 august 1944: România și proba bumerangului* (Bucharest: Editura Mica Valahie, 2003); Traia Udrea, *23 August 1944: Controverse istorico-politice: Studiu istoriografic* (Bucharest: Editura Alex Alex, 2004); Gavriil Preda, ed., *23 august 1944: Legende și adevăr: Controverse și evaluări. Studii și comunicări prezentate la Simpozionul Științific 23 August în Ploiești și Valea Pra-*

- bovei, Ploiești, 22 august 2005* (Bucharest: Editura Evenimentul și Capital, 2005); Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940–44* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire–New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Elena Iuliana Lache, *Statutul internațional al României de la război la pace 1939–1947* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2010), 260–274; Petre Otu, *Pace și război în spațiul românesc: Secolul al XX-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2010), 290–301; Ottmar Trașcă, *Relațiile politico-militare româno-germane: Septembrie 1940–august 1944* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut, 2013), 619–698.
3. A notable exception in this respect is represented by the papers and studies authored by Eugen Bantea, Ioan Chiper, as well as by Tiberiu Coliban and Nicolae Jurcă. See Eugen Bantea, *Insurecția română în jurnalul de război al grupului de armate german "Ucraina de sud"* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1974); Ioan Chiper, "Surse germane despre misiunea Chastelain în România," *Revista de istorie* 35, 12 (1982): 1339–1351; id., "Situția politică din România în primăvara și vara anului 1944 în lumina unor documente germane," *Revista de istorie* 37, 6 (1984): 518–533; id., "În culisele adversarului: capacitatea de reacție a Germaniei față de evoluția situației din România în ajunul lui 23 august 1944," *Revista de istorie* 37, 8 (1984): 782–792; Tiberiu Coliban and Nicolae Jurcă, "Actul de la 23 August 1944 în documente din arhivele vest-germane," *Cymidava* 14 (1989): 259–290.
 4. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin (hereafter cited as PAAAB), R 29711, Büro des Staatssekretärs-Rumänien, vol. 15, 1 November 1943–30 April 1944, E. 187204–187205, Telegramm Nr. 520 der deutschen Gesandtschaft in Bukarest vom 15.02.1944, gez. Manfred von Killinger.
 5. Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg im Breisgau (hereafter cited as BMF), RM 35 III/173, Bericht des Marine-Verbindungsstabes Rumänien vom 05.02.1944 über Lage und Stimmung in Rumänien.
 6. Percy Ernst Schramm in collab. with Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Andreas Hillgruber, and Walther Hubatsch, eds., *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*, vol. 4, *1 Januar 1944–12 Mai 1945*, introduced and explained by Percy Ernst Schramm (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1961), 774–775.
 7. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (Central Historical National Archives of Romania) (hereafter cited as ANIC), Bucharest, coll. Microfilme SUA—Documente germane microfilmate la Alexandria/Virginia (USA microfilms—German documents microfilmed at Alexandria/Virginia), rolls 59, fols. 5631433–5631434, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Wehrmachtführungsstab, Amtsgruppe Ausland, OKW/988.2. Bericht des Militärischen Amtes des Reichsicherheitshauptamtes vom 05.08.1944 über die innerpolitische Lage in Rumänien.
 8. For the high-level German–Romanian meetings of 5 August 1944 see BMF, RH 2—Generalstab des Heeres—/2911, fols. 11–14, Bericht über die Reise mit dem Königlichen Rumänischen Militärattache ins Führerhauptquartier, anlässlich des Staatsbesuches des Marschalls Ion Antonescu am 05-06.08.1944; *Antonescu–Hitler: Corespondență și întâlniri inedite (1940–1944)*, edited by Vasile Arimia, Ion Ardeleanu, Ștefan Lache, coord. by Florin Constantiniu, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Cozia, 1991), document no. 83, pp. 166–176; document no. 86, pp. 195–204;

- Sebastian Balta, *Rumänien und die Großmächte in der Ära Antonescu (1940–1944)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005), 401–407.
9. For Adolf Hitler, “Romania was Marshal Antonescu and vice versa.” PAAAB, R 29704, Büro des Staatssekretärs, Rumänien, vol. 9, 1 April–30 June 1942, E.159619–159621, Telegramm Nr. 1524 der deutschen Gesandtschaft in Bukarest vom 22.04.1942, gez. Manfred von Killinger; Balta, 469.
 10. BMF, RH 2—Generalstab des Heeres -/2911, fol. 24, Bericht des Militärattachés Bukarest Nr. 404/44 gKdos. vom 08.08.1944; RW 5—Oberkommando der Wehrmacht/Amt Ausland/Abwehr -/470, Bericht des Militärattachés Bukarest Nr. 483/44 gKdos. vom 14.08.1944, gez. Karl Spalcke. See also Heinz Guderian, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (Heidelberg: Kurt Vowinkel Verlag, 1951), 331.
 11. BMF, RW 5—Oberkommando der Wehrmacht/Amt Ausland/Abwehr -/470, Bericht des Militärattachés in Bukarest Nr. 483/44 gKdos. vom 14.08.1944, gez. Karl Spalcke.
 12. PAAAB, R 29711, Büro des Staatssekretärs, Rumänien, vol. 15, 1 November 1943–30 April 1944, E 187415–187420, Bericht Nr. 13/44 geh. des deutschen Konsulats Kronstadt vom 03.04.1944 betreffend Volksgruppenführer Andreas Schmidt, gez. Wilhelm Rodde.
 13. See Ottmar Trașcă, “Die Deutsche Volksgruppe und die Tätigkeit des Amtes VI des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes (SD-Ausland) in Rumänien 1940–1944,” in *Nationalsozialismus und Regionalbewusstsein im östlichen Europa*, edited by Burkhard Olschowsky and Ingo Loose (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 269–289.
 14. PAAAB, R 101118, Inland II geheim, vol. 427, Berichte und Meldungen zur Lage in und über Rumänien 1944–1945, E. 393363. Inland II 1634 g. Aufzeichnung über die politische Atmosphäre in Rumänien.
 15. Ibid.
 16. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu: Relațiile germano-române 1938–1944*, edited and bio-bibliographical study by Stelian Neagoie (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994), 396, n. 20.
 17. Michael Kroner, “Ahnungslosigkeit oder Hochverrat? Manfred von Killinger in Bukarest 1941–1944,” *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter* 43, 2 (1994): 128.
 18. See the note of 23 August 1944 from the personal diary of aviation General Werner Kreipe: “Telephone conversation with Manfred von Killinger (Plenipotentiary Minister) and Alfred Gerstenberg (Luftwaffe Attaché) in Bucharest. Both of them locked in the building of the Legation. Killinger, completely devastated, sends his regards to the Führer. Gerstenberg’s proposal concerning the use of the Stuka and of the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division, he wants to occupy the city! Telephone conversation with Hitler, who supports Gerstenberg’s proposals. He requests the arrest of the King. The telephone connection with Bucharest was restored again and then interrupted.” Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, F 29-Persönliches Kriegstagebuch des Generals des Fliegers Werner Kreipe als Chef des Generalstabes der Luftwaffe für die Zeit vom 22.07–02.11.1944. Eintragung vom 23.08.1944; BMF, RL 7–4—Luftflottenkommando 4 -/485, fols. 7–8, Bericht der Luftflotte 4 an OKL über Vertrat und Rückzug aus Rumänien vom 11.02.1945.

19. Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 1130, General der Kavallerie Erik Hansen, *Antworten in erweiterter Berichtform auf eine Anfrage des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte-München (Br/be vom 21.01.1956)*, gez. Erik Hansen, fol. 97; PAAAB, Nachlass Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, Aufzeichnung über die Ereignisse während meiner Tätigkeit als Leiter des Deutschen Konsulats in Czernowitz, in Jassy, wieder in Czernowitz und der Konsularabteilung der Gesandtschaft in Bukarest. Mai 1934–August 1944, Tübingen, den 30. Juni 1961, gez. Dr. Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, Generalkonsul außer Dienst, fols. 78–79.
20. The order issued by Hitler had the following content: “Führer’s Order: Immediately arrest the camarilla of traitors; stifle any possible rebellion. Form a new government headed by a philo-German General. I empower General Gerstenberg to ensure the execution in agreement with the German Plenipotentiary Minister. All available German forces are at your disposal. Communicate immediately if you have enough resources.” *23 August 1944: Documente 1944*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984), document no. 690, pp. 451–452; BMF, RH 19 V—Heeresgruppe Süd-ukraine –/36, fol. 57, Kriegstagebuch der Heeresgruppe Süd-ukraine, Eintragung vom 24.08.1944; Schramm et al., 4/1: 805; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 163, Ivo Thilo von Trotha, “Kämpfe der Heeresgruppe Süd-Ukraine (später Süd) von 20.08.1944 (Beginn des russischen Einbruchs nach Rumänien)-November 1944 (Verteidigung Budapests),” fol. 16; PAAAB, Nachlass Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, fol. 78.
21. Schramm et al., 4/1: 805; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 163, von Trotha, “Kämpfe der Heeresgruppe Süd-Ukraine,” fol. 16.
22. Constantin Sănătescu, *Jurnal*, with a foreword by Simona Ghițescu-Sănătescu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), 166, note from 24.08.1944; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 1130, General der Kavallerie Erik Hansen, *Antworten in erweiterter Berichtform*, fols. 98–99; *Diplomați germani la București 1937–1944: Din memoriile dr. Rolf Pusch, atașat de legatie, și dr. Gerhard Stelzer, consilier de legatie*, translated by Ileana Sturdza and Cristian Scarlat, edited with notes, index and selection of the illustrative material by Cristian Scarlat (Bucharest: All Educational, 2001), 196. According to the statements of the German General Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, who in the last 2 years spent as a Russian prisoner shared a cell with Lieutenant General Alfred Gerstenberg, the latter assured him repeatedly that he had acted on the orders he had received and he had arrested the officer who accompanied him because he was threatened by the Romanian troops. See also PAAAB, Nachlass Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, fols. 79–80.
23. “. . . The preparations were performed according to the order received on 23.8, at 23.45, to the extent that this was possible. However, in agreement with the German Plenipotentiary Minister, I inform you that this is not the putsch of the palace camarilla, but a well-planned coup d’état, announced to the population and the troops on the radio. The measure is supported by the majority of the population. There is no general who is against the King and wants to form a new government, because they are all faithful to the King. Extensive isolation measures were implemented against all German services and troops in Bucharest. The transmission of orders has become practically impossible. At the moment the ratio of forces fails to

provide any perspectives of a military or political success. . . . signed Erik Hansen.” BMF, RL 7-4—Luftflottenkommando 4 -/485, fol. 28, Funkspruch des Deutschen Generals bei der Oberkommando der Rumänischen Wehrmacht vom 24.08.1944, 02.58. Uhr.

24. Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 1130, General der Kavallerie Erik Hansen, *Antworten in erweiterter Berichtform*, fol. 99.
25. BMF, RH 19 V—Heeresgruppe Südukraine -/36, fol. 58, Kriegstagebuch der Heeresgruppe Südukraine, Eintragung vom 24.08.1944.
26. Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 1130, General der Kavallerie Erik Hansen, *Antworten in erweiterter Berichtform*, fol. 100.
27. BMF, RH 19 V—Heeresgruppe Südukraine -/36, fols. 58–59, Kriegstagebuch der Heeresgruppe Südukraine, Eintragung vom 24.08.1944.
28. BMF, RH 19 V—Heeresgruppe Südukraine -/36, fol. 59, Kriegstagebuch der Heeresgruppe Südukraine, Eintragung vom 24.08.1944.
29. BMF, RL 7-4—Luftflottenkommando 4 -/485, fols. 12–13; Schramm et al., 4/1: 806; Hillgruber, 260.
30. BMF, RH 19 V—Heeresgruppe Südukraine -/36, fol. 59, Kriegstagebuch der Heeresgruppe Südukraine, Eintragung vom 24.08.1944; Schramm et al., 4/1: 807.
31. PAAAB, Nachlass Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, fol. 80; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, zs 163, von Trotha, “Kämpfe der Heeresgruppe Süd-Ukraine,” fol. 16; Schramm et al., 4/1: 806–808; Hillgruber, 260–261; *Diplomați germani la București*, 196.
32. “After collecting all of the dispersed elements, the following Army Corps Headquarters and Divisions have to be considered destroyed: Gen. Kdo. IV., VII., XXX., XXXIV., LII., A.K.; 9., 62., 79., 106., 161., 257., 258., 282., 294., 302., 306., 320., 335., 370., 376., 384. Inf. Div.” BMF, RH 19 V—Heeresgruppe Südukraine -/98, fol. 23, Fernschreiben der Heeresgruppe Südukraine an OKH/Gen. St. d. Heeres, Nr. 3648/g.Kdos. vom 22.09.1944, gez. Helmuth von Grolmann; RW 4—Oberkommando der Wehrmacht/Wehrmachtführungsstab -/845. Zustand der Divisionen der Heeresgruppe Südukraine nach Wochenmeldung. Stand: 04.09.1944. See also Guderian, 333; Klaus Schönherr, *Luptele Wehrmachtului în România 1944*, translated from German by Elena Matei, 2nd edition, revised and expanded (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2015), 161–172; Hillgruber, 263. The losses reported by Army Group South Ukraine do not include the 76th German Infantry Division, almost completely destroyed, while the 10th Armored Division and the 13th Armored Division also suffered heavy losses. See Hans Kissel, *Die Katastrophe in Rumänien* (Darmstadt: Wehr und Wissen Verlagsgesellschaft, 1964), 153.
33. Kissel, 153.
34. Kissel, 153.
35. See Kissel, 160.
36. In a top-secret report addressed to Auswärtiges Amt on 19 August 1944, Plenipotentiary Minister Manfred von Killinger launched a final desperate appeal, showing that the defense of the oilfields could not cope with the airstrikes of the Allied aviation. He argued that on 18 August 1944, only 50 German and Romanian fighter planes were

available for the fight against 1,100 enemy planes and warned that: “if no superior fighter planes and air-defense artillery are made available, the oilfields will not be kept in operation.” PAAAB, R 27801, Handakten Ritter, Akten betreffend Rumänien, 1944, E 370518, Telegramm Nr. S. 57 der deutschen Gesandtschaft in Bukarest vom 19.08.1944, gez. Manfred von Killinger. The specialized literature convincingly demonstrated that the Romanian anti-aircraft defense, especially in the oilfields, was literally overwhelmed by the Allied aviation in the interval April–August 1944. See Aurel Pentelescu, *Aeronautica română pe Frontul de Est (1941–1944)* (Bucharest: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare “Carol I,” 2006), 178–186.

37. BMF, RW 19—Oberkommando der Wehrmacht/Wehrwirtschafts- und Rüstungsamt -/3168, Beitrag zum Monatsbericht vom 13.10.1944, geheim.
38. BMF, RH 2—Generalstab des Heeres -/1387, fol. 4, Verluste und Zugänge von Division Verbänden vom 01.01–31.12.1944 (Heer und Waffen ss).
39. B. H. Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War* (London: Cassell, 1970), 585; Kissel, 152.
40. Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler*, 2nd part., *Vetrauliche Aufzeichnungen über Unterredungen mit Vertretern des Auslandes 1942–1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1970), document no. 66, p. 511.

Abstract

The Third Reich and the Act of 23 August 1944

In 1944 Berlin received through different communication channels genuine information about the actions initiated by the democratic opposition, the Royal House and, last but not least, the disgruntled elements within the Great General Headquarters in order to remove the Antonescu regime from power and to conclude an armistice with the United Nations. However, the warnings failed to produce any concrete effects, as the leaders of the Third Reich constantly ignored them and seriously underestimated the ability of the democratic opposition to remove Marshal Ion Antonescu from power. For the Third Reich, the political, economic and military consequences of Romania’s defection were devastating. From a political point of view, for Berlin the act of 23 August meant losing an ally and gaining a new enemy. In addition, the step taken by Romania considerably influenced the attitude of the other allies/satellites of Germany, namely, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, and Slovakia. From an economic point of view, the loss of the oilfields around Ploiești led to a dramatic decrease in the quantity of fuel supplied to the German war machine. The Führer himself would name three major crises with which the Wehrmacht had had to deal in 1944: the Normandy landings, the fall of Army Group Center and, last but not least, “Romania’s betrayal” on 23 August 1944.

Keywords

Romania, Third Reich, Ion Antonescu, 23 August 1944 coup d’état

MAREK SYRNÝ

Slovak Reflections on the August 1944 Coup in Romania and Its Impact on the Slovak National Uprising

The Romanian coup did more than merely influence the (non)thinking of Slovak government circles about the further development of the war and the possible change of the previous collaborationist strategy.

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Introduction

AT FIRST glance, it would seem that the history of Romania and that of Slovakia in the years of the Second World War, or between 1938 and 1945, had a similar trajectory in many respects. In the reality of Nazi Germany's domination of Central Europe or the Balkans, both Romania and Slovakia more or less voluntarily found themselves in Berlin's sphere of influence and became its clients. They shared a similar fate, being affected by Hungarian revisionism in the form of the first and second Vienna Award, and in the new geopolitical situation their regional archrival—Hungary—paradoxically became at the same time their ally in the big “family” of pro-German satellites. They also had to participate in the Nazi campaign against the Soviet Union. It must be admitted, however, that Romania was considerably more

motivated by territorial disputes over Bessarabia, which Moscow had acquired in the summer of 1940 as a byproduct of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact. In fact, in the Romanian case of being dragged into the war against the USSR, one can speak of the same nationalist motivation to fight the Soviets as was invoked by Slovak nationalists in the participation of the Slovak state in the invasion of Poland in September 1939, although, of course, on a much larger scale. And after years of fighting on the Eastern Front and suffering great losses—again disproportionately greater in the Romanian case—in 1944 both satellites of Nazi Germany found themselves faced with the dilemma of how to continue a war in which their patrons were clearly beginning to lose. By 1944 this trend seemed to be irreversible, despite the propaganda and the pressure coming from Berlin and the illusions about the deployment of new miracle weapons that would stomp the Allies into the ground...

Especially after the elimination of Italy as the second most important European Axis power, or after a series of major Axis defeats on the Eastern Front culminating in the Battle of Kursk (July–August 1943), opposition groups in both countries began to think about the possibility of the front approaching their borders. While Romanian politics had to start dealing with the dilemmas posed by the presence of the Red Army on its borders about half a year earlier than in the case of Slovakia, here too we often find similar alternative developments. On the one hand, there was the prevailing line of the alliance with Germany, particularly popular in the more radical nationalist groups. On the other hand, opposition groups were declaring themselves against the previous collaboration with Berlin. It was seemingly the same dilemma in the anti-German camp, as to when and how to carry out a coup d'état that would return the country to its pre-collaborationist state of good relations with the Allied powers.

However, the similarities between the Romanian and the Slovak developments in the period under review end at this point. First at all, despite all the external similarities, the totalitarian regime of the Hlinka Slovak People's Party was markedly different from the political regime in Romania. The main differences concerned the structure of the ruling elites or the ruling group. Although in general we can speak in both cases about one more radical and one more moderate government faction, respectively about revolutionary nationalists and conservative elements, the unquestionable difference is mainly the attitude of the more moderate or conservative figures in terms of the government policy towards the coming dilemmas. In the Romanian case, the main personality of the coup was the monarch, alongside a part of the hitherto establishment and opposition groups (including the peripheral communists). In Slovakia, there was no catharsis in the government structures—not even in the more conservative ones headed by President Jozef Tiso. On the contrary, President Tiso, enjoying

the title of Leader (more to appease the radicals of the regime than to imitate the Führer), became—unlike King Michael I—synonymous with the obedient German collaborator until the end of the war. With the dignity of a priest, he effectively “sanctified” all German actions in Slovakia in 1944–1945, when virtually all of Germany’s European allies ended their alliance with Germany.

Finding the reasons for this diametrically opposed attitude of the conservative government structures as the front approached, or the war came to an end, may be more difficult. However, one of the main causes is the manner in which the Slovak state had been established in March 1939. Slovakia and the ruling establishment that led it for six war years were fully dependent on Nazi Germany. While the Slovak state was merely a product of Nazi foreign policy, which needed to use it to break up Czechoslovakia and for its subsequent power designs in Central Europe, Romanian statehood had a firmer foundation. It had already established power structures and the existence of the state was not totally dependent on the fate of Nazi Germany, as in the Slovak case.

Of course, the activities and composition of the opposition groups in the Slovak and Romanian cases were also significantly different. While in Slovakia one can speak of a full-fledged European resistance from 1943 onwards—including armed partisan groups, diversions or extensive anti-regime propaganda and intelligence for the Czechoslovak exile or for the Allies—Romanian expressions of resistance were considerably more modest. The structure of the opposition was also different. In Romania, it was based on the traditional political parties. In the Slovak case, however, it was either the new structures of civil resistance emerging from the ruins of the prewar non-left and predominantly liberal parties, or the communists, who held significantly more prominent positions in the Slovak resistance and in society than in the Romanian case.

The Romanian Coup and Its Military-Geopolitical Consequences

IN GENERAL terms, these are therefore the similarities and differences between the pre-coup developments in Romania and Slovakia. Let us now take a closer look at the situation that directly preceded the decisions to carry out the coups and the change of the stance from pro-German to anti-German. Here, first of all, the evolution of the war and the arrival of the frontline at the borders of the two states played a decisive role. From a military-geopolitical point of view, developments in Romania were much more important for both the Germans and the Allies, either because of the possibilities of deep penetration in the region or because of the country’s economic importance (especially

its oil production). Quite naturally, from March 1944 onwards the Germans concentrated on building up a solid defense on the Prut River or, more generally, the defense of the Romanian frontier. The Red Army's spring offensive clearly split the previously more compact Eastern Front into the northern Polish and southern Romanian lines. One month into the spring offensive, the Soviets had already occupied the northern part of Bessarabia and had even established bridgeheads across the Prut River that could serve for the advance into Romania proper.¹ Parallel to the main fighting in the southeast of Ukraine near the border with Romania, the conquest of Crimea took place with huge German and Romanian casualties, although some of the defenders managed to evacuate by sea.² The Red Army on Romania's borders and the ultimate loss of Crimea, despite extensive preparations by the German and Romanian defenders, left no one in the Romanian leadership optimistic about the further advance of the front towards the interior of the country. It was becoming clear that the upstart Red Army could not be held at bay with the available German or Romanian resources. And when secret Romanian probes with the Western Allies regarding Romania's withdrawal from the war did not work out³ (although for a few months the West tried to give the impression that a landing in the Balkans was also on the cards in the context of the deceptive operations in connection with the Normandy landings), the only alternative was an agreement with the Soviets. In April, the Soviets presented the Romanians with their conditions for an end to the fighting and a Romanian surrender, which, however, were clearly rejected by the Romanian leadership at the time in view of the non-acute nature of the situation.

The Soviets were thus faced with two possible directions for a future major operation after the end of the spring offensive, i.e., the Belarusian–Polish and the Romanian variant, geographically divided mainly by the Carpathian Mountains. The Soviets skillfully opted for the militarily very well prepared and successful Operation Bagration, which took them all the way to the banks of the Vistula in July 1944. And when it seemed that they would continue in a northerly direction directly towards Berlin, with an uprising already breaking out in Warsaw (effectively as militarily anti-German as it was politically anti-Soviet), Moscow decided, for political and military reasons, to favor a southerly direction, for a change. There were great opportunities for a quick penetration to secure advantageous positions not only in Romania or Bulgaria, but also to threaten the German troops in Yugoslavia or Greece and to reach the Hungarian plains. That is to say, to dominate the Balkans and the south of Central Europe. This looked much more tempting than retaking well-prepared German positions on the direct line to Berlin. Not to mention the fact that it could have potentially counted on Romania, Bulgaria, or Hungary trying to end the war alongside

Germany and defect to the Allied side, which would have made the conquest of these vast territories much easier. All of these preparations and calculations were taking place while Germany was having enormous difficulty in stopping the Allied invasion of France and the entire German economic sphere of influence in Europe was suffering from the systematic bombing of its infrastructure, including the oilfields and oil refineries in Romania by the US 15th Air Force.⁴

Then, when the Red Army launched the Jassy–Kishinev operation of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts on 20 August 1944, it was obvious from the number of deployed soldiers and especially of equipment that the German Army Group South Ukraine, together with the Romanian Army, would not be able to hold back the Soviets on the 580 km-long line from the Dniester to the Black Sea. The German propaganda nevertheless tried to reassure the Romanians, as well as the rest of their allies, and to entice them with well-constructed defenses on natural obstacles and the resulting heavy losses of the attacking armies. But neither the exaggeration of the German-Romanian defensive successes or, conversely, of the enemy's losses, nor the portrayal of the futility of Romania's struggle other than against the sinister Bolshevism (which, if victorious, would have supposedly meant Romania's annihilation),⁵ managed to change the decision of King Michael I and of opposition politicians that it was high time to prepare a post-war future for Romania other than alongside a defeated Nazi Germany. And, as in the case of the Warsaw or Slovak National Uprisings, it can also be added that this decision was made at the last possible decisive moment. At the time when the German troops found themselves surrounded near Kishinev,⁶ a "royal coup d'état" took place in Bucharest that definitively reversed Romania's direction from a pro-Nazi to an anti-Nazi ally.⁷ With minor exceptions, the army remained loyal to the king and stopped fighting the Soviets. The Red Army was thus able to end the Jassy–Kishinev operation as early as 29 August, with a famous result. In all, as many as 22 German divisions were eliminated, most of which had found themselves surrounded.⁸ Such a result would not have been possible without the Romanian coup, which in turn depended heavily on the Soviet offensive. This achieved the desired synergistic effect. The coup at first only disorganized the Romanian troops, which made up about half the strength of Army Group South Ukraine. Thus, the German defense could no longer count on several hundred thousand Romanian soldiers. The front advanced 600–700 km in less than three weeks without the Soviets encountering much resistance—the roads had already been opened by the Romanian troops. Subsequently, after the declaration of war on Germany, up to 450 thousand soldiers took part in the clearing battles for Romania, lasting until 31 August, eliminating about 70 thousand remaining German soldiers. In addition, the Romanian army, subordinated to the 2nd Ukrainian Front and numbering several hundred

thousand men (196 thousand Romanian soldiers were at the front on the day the war ended), participated in the liberation of Northern Transylvania (7 September–25 October 1944), in the Debrecen operation (6 October 1944—15 January 1945), as well as in the liberation of Czechoslovakia. Simultaneously with the loss of Romania, Germany lost the important Romanian oilfields. This drastically reduced the possibilities of supplying its armies with diesel and petrol.⁹ Naturally, considering the later developments under Moscow's rule and the uncompromising postwar communization of the country, the coup of 23 August 1944 may also cause embarrassment.¹⁰ One way or another, it was a very positive development for Romania and for the development of the Second World War as a whole in terms of the Allied victory. In a situation where a defeated Romania would have had to face unchallenged Soviet arbitrariness after the war, it was an attempt to salvage, from a very bad position, at least something of Romania's national interests. Not to mention the necessity, also vis-à-vis the Western Allies, to repair the tarnished image Romania had acquired as a German collaborator.

The significance of the Romanian coup for the development of the Second World War does not need much elaborating. The whole German scenario for a defense in Southeastern Europe fell apart, because suddenly German troops were threatened in Greece or Yugoslavia as well as in Hungary and towards Vienna. Despite the never-ending debate about whether the Romanian coup precipitated the fall of Germany by half a year or otherwise, it was undoubtedly a militarily very significant contribution to the defeat of Germany. This was so regardless of the extent to which it was only due to the coup and the Romanian change of sides, or to the impact of the strong Soviet offensive in the southern direction of the front. Naturally, reading the pro-German propaganda of the time, one has to admit the relevance of many of the assertions denouncing the Romanian coup decision, which neither stopped the heavy Romanian losses on the battlefields of World War II nor prevented the loss of Bessarabia or Moldavia to the Soviet Union. Of course, it also did not prevent the postwar Sovietization of the country, and—perhaps with the exception of the recovery of Northern Transylvania—one can only speak of human or political losses.¹¹ But Romania would not have avoided this even if it had stayed alongside Germany, as envisaged by the pro-German radicals. On the contrary, the human, economic and political consequences for postwar Romania in the absence of a coup would have been more significant than in a situation where Romania was suddenly just a former collaborator.

Pre-Revolutionary Slovakia and Government Reflections on Romanian Events

SLOVAKIA ITSELF did not experience the devastating effects of the war until the beginning of the summer of 1944. Although tens of thousands of Slovak soldiers were rotated on the Eastern Front at various times, after numerous desertions and planned-unplanned captures by the Red Army, the German command decided to withdraw the Slovak troops from the area in the third year of the eastern campaign. They also changed their status from combat to auxiliary technical units, tasked to build defensive positions in Romania and Northern Italy, respectively.¹² As the front approached the Slovak border, the Slovak army, in coordination with the German high command, began to form two new divisions in the spring and summer of 1944 to prepare the defense of eastern Slovakia and its Carpathian passes against the approaching Red Army. From the summer of 1944 onwards, eastern Slovakia became a frontline hinterland with a greater presence of Slovak¹³ and German troops. At the same time, political and social activities were curtailed and voluntary evacuation deeper into the Slovak interior was underway. There were also more obvious contacts with the approaching war and German defeat, especially in the form of the Allied bombing of Bratislava and other targets in Slovakia, the implementation of more extensive fortification works, the movement of tens of thousands of Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish refugees from the approaching front or the Red Army, and so on.¹⁴

The then smaller and, due to the relative moderation of the regime, less active or radical resistance movement began to look for ways to make Slovakia, still collaborating with Hitler, a pro-Ally country. At the end of 1943, the result of these efforts was the unification of the hitherto divergent non-communist and communist resistance under the platform of the umbrella resistance Slovak National Council and its programmatic so-called Christmas Agreement. The latter proclaimed as the primary goal of the Slovak resistance movement the achievement of a general anti-German and anti-government uprising with the aim of the Slovaks switching to the side of the Allies. This was to be an expression of the will for the restoration of a democratic Czechoslovak state, already nationally balanced (i.e., with national-political self-government in Slovakia, or federalization) and socially just (nationalization of large enterprises, land reform...). The first months of 1944 in the Slovak resistance were thus mainly marked by preparations for the uprising. Its basis was to be the armed appearance of the Slovak army's pro-resistance units at the moment of the Red Army's convenient approach to the borders of Slovakia, or at the moment of the German attempt to directly occupy Slovakia. The army was then to be joined by

other non-military parts of the resistance and the anti-German or anti-regime population.

In 1944, however, a certain “sorting out of the ghosts” also took place in the Slovak government camp. However, unlike in Hungary or Romania, the top leadership of the Slovak state, headed by the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso, never really contemplated a purposeful “betrayal” of the German ally, the main guarantor of Slovak statehood. Nor did it envisage switching to the side of the Allies, represented by the liberal Western democrats or the anti-religious Soviet Bolsheviks. Tiso and his entourage thus clung to the idea of preserving the People’s regime¹⁵ and Slovak statehood in the optimal variant for them of a separate peace between Hitler and the Anglo-Americans, or a potential alliance between Berlin and the West in an attempt to counter the Bolshevik domination of Europe. The only more rational thinker was the Minister of National Defense, General Ferdinand Čatloš, who realized the necessity of an agreement with the Soviets. He offered them, in effect, a Romanian version of the coup—i.e., “letting” the Red Army through the defended border along the Carpathians and bringing the Slovak army in the fight against the Hungarians and Germans, in return for preserving Slovak independence.¹⁶ However, the preservation of Slovak statehood was already passé with the Allies (including Moscow), not to mention the fact that the situation in Slovakia was developing differently from what Čatloš, the Germans, and the Slovak resistance had planned.

Slovakia was already too active in resistance during the summer of 1944 to remain without a German reaction. Airborne Soviet guerrilla organizers multiplied.¹⁷ Also, with the spontaneous rise of the domestic partisan movement, there were already open attacks against German soldiers, and later also against civilians.¹⁸ Even the government’s declaration of martial law on 12 August failed to stabilize the situation,¹⁹ at a time when the leadership of the resistance Slovak National Council or the resistance Military Headquarters²⁰ actually needed to prepare the uprising in peace. On the one hand, the inactivity and lack of unity of the regime and its forces pointed to an apparent significant disintegration of the pro-government and pro-German structures. On the other hand, however, the inability to contain the guerrilla movement (often led by Soviet commanders) or to prepare the army effectively in terms of personnel for a coup pointed to the limits of authority and a certain disorganization even in the case of the resistance leadership.

Then, like a bolt from the blue, came the first information about the Romanian coup. Naturally, it should be pointed out that news of what was happening in Romania reached the government with a certain time lag and, of course, only after the German side, which controlled the news flow on extra-German events, had “cleaned up” the information. It was therefore not until 25 August 1944

that the official regime press, in its own way, reported on the royal coup and the more significant first references to it reached the public domain. It is also worth looking at the way in which the regime propaganda in Slovakia—taking foreign information almost exclusively from German sources—portrayed pre-coup Romania.

On the one hand, “terrorist” air attacks by Anglo-Americans or Soviets were often written about. The bombing of oilfields was not mentioned specifically, but the ‘insidiousness’ of the Allied bombing of cities was emphasized (in an attempt to portray it as merely the deliberate killing of civilians).²¹ On the other hand, the Slovak pro-German propaganda worked to give hope for a solution to the situation in Romania and wrote about a determined and certainly successful defense against the barbaric Bolsheviks. The economic problems caused to Romania by the proximity of the front or by Allied bombing were downplayed. On the contrary, the almost trouble-free flow of supplies despite wartime conditions was emphasized, and a “rich” future was portrayed, with estimates of millions of hectares of grain being harvested.²² The “encouraging” words of a Romanian correspondent visiting areas near the front were quoted: “In every town I came to I found the same readiness to regard war as a necessity and as the only possibility for the realization of our national dream . . . No one here is deterred by death.”²³ The leitmotif of the articles touching on the situation in Romania was the calm and determination with which the Romanian nation was preparing for the “existential struggle against Bolshevism.” Although this was primarily pro-German propaganda, the selection of articles from the portfolio offered by the Germans already clearly points to Slovak selection preferences as well. After all, Romania was a relatively mentally and politically close country, the first in the direction of the approaching Eastern Front, which had to deal with similar dilemmas as the collaborationist Slovak regime. It was thus in the eminent interest of the People’s regime in Slovakia—and not only in the German wartime interest—that Antonescu’s Romania should fulfil its “historic role” in the best possible way. Slovak government politicians, too, under the impression of the impact on the stability of the Slovak regime of the fall of Italy or the recent partisan mobilization, were surely well aware of the negative impact for themselves of the loss of Romania. That is why, in addition to the constant hopes pinned on Hitler’s new “miracle” weapons, Slovak government propaganda clung to any hint of unity, strength, and a resolutely pro-German position of Romania, listing the vast amounts of Soviet military equipment already destroyed by the Romanians, etc.²⁴ Even if the loss of some Romanian territory had to be acknowledged, it was accompanied by information about the enormous losses of the Soviet invaders, about the strategic worthlessness of the lost territory, or about the coordinated and planned retreat to new, more defensible positions.²⁵

The first reports on the Romanian coup, taken from German sources of 24 August 1944, appeared in the Slovak government press a day later. Like the first one, the later official reports on the development of the situation in Romania follow an obvious, even strictly German template. The Slovak regime press did not dare (and technically, in fact, did not really have the possibility) to offer information and interpretations beyond what could be found in the articles and opinions coming from the German news agencies and press. The first articles on the coup of Michael I generally provide only basic information about the coup itself, the new pro-Soviet government, and the cessation of the fight against the Soviets. The king's action is, of course, regarded as a betrayal of the German alliance, a perfidious way removing Antonescu, a betrayal of Romanian national interests, and a sellout to the Bolsheviks.²⁶

The so-called democratic government appointed by the king, ostensibly led by the politicians Maniu and Brătianu, but in reality formed by the communists, offered Moscow the surrender of the country. In response, riots broke out all over Romania. A national group of patriots put themselves at the head of the movement against the king and his traitors and called on the Romanian people and the Romanian army to continue the struggle against the Bolsheviks for freedom and life, against death and destruction.

Also, in later articles on the Romanian coup and the post-coup situation, the high “hope” for a pro-German stabilization of the situation appears in the form of the establishment of a “national” anti-king government, willing to continue the fight alongside Germany against the Soviets. A longer passage is also quoted from the appeal of the “national Romanian government,” criticizing the king’s “betrayal” of Romanian national interests for a supposed vision of peace.

In reality, however, this peace entails only the occupation of Romania by the Red Army and thus the dehumanization of Romania, as well as the extermination of the Romanian nation. In a disgraceful ploy, the English and the Americans guaranteed the independence of Romania. The English and the Americans promised our country to Stalin long ago.

One is reminded of the betrayal of the country by the previous king, and of Michael I's readiness to also flee the country when it became clear that the population did not support him.²⁷

While until 25 August 1944 the front pages of the main Slovak regime daily were mainly filled with pro-German articles about the developments on the front or about the new “breakthrough” weapon V-1, or reflections on the in-

ternal development of Slovakia preparing for the front, the next 5–6 days were dominated by “bombastic” information about the current situation in Romania. In fact, they were displaced only by the even more “shocking” information about the domestic coup. During the first days of reporting on the Romanian coup and the post-coup situation, the following main claims can be identified in the official propaganda: the king and the coup organizers are not in control of the situation; the coup, which only caused chaos and violence, was opposed by a significant part of the army and the population still loyal to the Antonescu line of Romanian nationalism and pro-German cooperation; the coup organizers had been deceived by the Soviets, the Germans are in control of the situation and will severely punish any manifestation of hostility.²⁸

On the evening of 24 August, the head of the Slovak Propaganda Office (the equivalent of the Nazi propaganda ministry), Tido J. Gašpar, prepared a statement on the Romanian events. Exactly along the lines of the then German statements or declarations of the pro-German “Romanian National Government,” he stated that

the example of the Badoglio betrayal in Italy, with all its subversive implications, could not deter the Romanian clique of Allied-friendly political misfits, who betrayed the honorable alliance in arms protecting Europe from the Bolshevik hydra and the Anglo-Saxon auxiliaries. . . . The Slovak public is convinced that the Romanian National Council, given its military determination, will frustrate the treacherous designs and that the brave Romanians will deploy all their forces to save the Romanian nation and state from Bolshevism.

This not very original direct propaganda contribution of the Slovak government to the campaign against the Romanian coup was relatively singular. However, the implications of the coup for the weakening positions of Germany and its erstwhile allies were also evident in the regime’s propaganda writing in Slovakia. The measures taken in neighboring Hungary, which were supposed to stabilize the situation after the Romanian coup (changes in the government, cancellation of the ongoing vacations of civil servants, stopping the activities of any political entities, etc.), certainly increased the tension in the Slovak government circles as well.²⁹ As early as 24 August, the German High Command—while considering the possibility of stifling the Hungarian efforts to emulate the Romanian variant of the coup—was also considering Slovakia. In doing so, similarly to the Hungarian case, the imprisonment of the commander of the army in charge of the defense of the country closest to the front was envisaged.³⁰

The commander of the army in the frontline area was General Augustín Malár, who was actually arrested as a precautionary measure a few days later, even

without the Germans having any further idea of his involvement in Defense Minister Čatloš' preparations for a change of sides. But General Čatloš did not escape German attention either. Because of his firm refusal of the new German demands to create new or reinforce previously existing Slovak troops in support of the German efforts to halt the Allied advance in Romania, Italy, or toward Slovakia, the German intelligence services had long targeted him. However, they were not yet aware of his activities towards an agreement with Moscow. On the night of 24 August, Čatloš even had troops moved around Bratislava and reinforced the city's defenses, probably out of fear that the Germans would occupy Slovakia, thus defeating the possibility of implementing his plan to defect to the Allies. However, no occupation of Bratislava took place. The movements of German troops near Bratislava on the Austrian side were related only to the German preparations to deal with the situation in Romania.³¹ Furthermore, under pressure from Berlin, Čatloš eventually withdrew the troops from the city, or cancelled their alert. It was, however, this last matter that decided his political fate in the eyes of the Germans. At the instigation of the German ambassador in Bratislava and under pressure from Berlin, Čatloš was relieved of his executive command over the Slovak army. The post of commander-in-chief was filled by General Jozef Turanec, who had the full confidence of the Germans, and Čatloš remained only as political minister,³² effectively already under the supervision of the Germans. In doing so, he became a kind of "honorary prisoner" of President Tiso (but without direct restrictions on his personal freedom), who thus practically saved him from arrest by the Germans.³³ In the end, this solution was temporarily advantageous for both sides: the Germans no longer had to worry about Čatloš directing the army against the Germans, because he was no longer in command; on the other hand, Tiso and the Slovak government retained some credit when Čatloš was not dismissed as minister or even interned. This would have aroused unwanted fears in the public that something was amiss at the highest levels of the Slovak state. However, the illusion that all was well in Slovakia faded away very quickly.

The failure to maintain order in some mountainous areas with a guerrilla presence,³⁴ combined with the geopolitical consequences of the Romanian coup, suddenly brought Slovakia very close to a German intervention. The government was also clearly aware of this and tried to avoid this alternative—at least propagandistically, since it was not in control of the situation otherwise. In the evening of the third day after the Romanian coup d'état (26 August), Alexander Mach, Minister of the Interior and Commander-in-Chief of the Hlinka Guard (a kind of Slovak equivalent of the Nazi SA), made a crucial radio speech, seemingly intended to discourage anyone in Slovak society from any "adventures" similar to the Romanian one, although Romania itself was

not directly mentioned.³⁵ Minister Mach only propagandistically portrayed the beautiful recent past of the Slovaks in an independent Slovak state under the protection of mighty Germany, suddenly worried about Bolshevik saboteurs, bombing raids from the West or unreliable Axis allies. By highlighting the negative consequences that the coups had brought to the Italians and Romanians,³⁶ or the “senseless” uprising of the Poles, Mach appealed to the Slovaks to be calm, rational and not to engage in actions that would ultimately trigger a harsh (and justified) German reaction.

*The question is whether we ourselves will keep order here, or whether we should allow someone else to do it for us. Friend and foe alike look to us to see how we behave in these crucial moments. Our answer to the unanswered questions can be only one: to fulfil the will of the Slovak nation, and that will is to continue to live here freely, as we have lived freely until now in our independent state. It is therefore the duty of the Government to exert all its strength, to use all the possibilities of the nation, in order to preserve order.*³⁷

These words practically indicated how the government would behave in the coming days. Maintaining the former pro-German “peace and order” in Slovakia became its motto. However, it no longer had the strength to achieve this by itself, and it certainly did not have the will or the determination to resist Germany in any way. Then, when in response to the Romanian events the logical German reaction came in the form of a preemptive occupation of Slovakia—officially to prevent further partisan “saber-rattling”—the Slovak government and President Tiso merely played their role as pro-German collaborators, patiently and to the very end.

The Romanian coup did more than merely influence the (non)thinking of Slovak government circles about the further development of the war and the possible change of the previous collaborationist strategy. It also inadvertently triggered the upcoming uprising in Slovakia. This came precisely in its worst version, i.e., in the context of an attempt by Germany to militarily occupy the country, rather than in the ideal variant, with the Red Army already on the Miskolc and Kraków line,³⁸ and with the rebels better prepared and coordinated with the Soviets.

Contrary to the reasoning of German officials, who saw a direct link between the Romanian coup and the later uprising in Slovakia,³⁹ the Romanian coup did not have such an impact. The uprising had been long in the making and was not just a sudden reaction to the Romanian initiative. The uprising would have been carried out even without the Romanian coup, just in a different geopolitical situation, not just as a last resort for military resistance before the military paci-

fication of the country. Thus, on the one hand, the Romanian events certainly had a positive effect on the awareness of the irreversible disintegration of the German empire, and thus strengthened the resolve to resist. On the other hand, however, they triggered a German intervention that left the preparations for the uprising and its coordination with Moscow incomplete. This was fatal for the military development of the uprising. The German intelligence services had enough information about the unfavorable situation in Slovakia and were able to estimate the danger of losing this territory, the link between the northern and southern directions of the Soviet advance. After the major coup in Romania on 23 August 1944, the occupation of the Slovak territory became strategically necessary for Berlin...⁴⁰

The Slovak National Uprising and Its Post-Revolutionary (Non)Parallels with the Situation in Romania

THE POSSIBLE danger of Slovakia following the Romanian example⁴¹ was identified by the Nazi military and state leadership following the analysis of the new geopolitical situation in Southeastern and Central Europe. The local Nazi power structures in Prague or Vienna were also concerned about this situation and its possible impact on developments in Slovakia. The Nazi county party headquarters in Vienna warned Berlin clearly and firmly:

As a consequence of the approach of the Eastern Front, and in particular of the events in Romania, the immediate consequences of the sluggish and bad policy which we have hitherto pursued there are becoming apparent in Slovakia. According to Minister Mach's figures, there are already some 7,000 partisans in Slovakia at this time. The Slovak Government does not see this as a tragic development, because these partisans have so far ambushed and murdered exclusively Germans. . . . The Slovak armed forces, as predicted, are proving incapable of contributing to the fight against the partisans as a result of the Bolshevik infiltration. In view of this dangerous situation, the German envoy is said to have asked for a deployment of German troops, at a time when they are urgently needed on all battlefronts.⁴²

Even if we take into account the greatly exaggerated numbers of partisans at that time, it remains an unquestionable truth that the pro-German Slovak government had already lost control not only over the partisans but even over its own army. The latter, however, contrary to the Viennese Nazi party report, was not influenced by Bolshevik propaganda, but was fully involved in the prepara-

tions for a priority military coup, discussed mainly with the Czechoslovak exiled leadership in London.⁴³

At the end of August 1944, some villages and towns in central Slovakia were already being taken over by partisans, who were occasionally joined by resistance-oriented soldiers. In the context of this disturbing information for the Germans and fearing a repetition of the Romanian events in Slovakia, the German leadership decided on a preemptive occupation of Slovakia. This was initially aimed mainly at pacifying the Slovak districts in the Carpathian foothill zone of eastern Slovakia⁴⁴ and intended to crush smaller outbreaks of partisan resistance. With regard to the partisan movement, it was therefore perceived as a minor “police action” rather than a preventive pacification of the resistance-minded population groups. Even the Germans themselves, despite their intelligence and information from the structures of the German minority, did not have a clear idea of how unstable the Slovak state had become and how widespread the resistance was, preparing for a massive armed struggle.

The Germans began to implement their plan for the preventive pacification of the resistance movement in Slovakia on 29 August 1944. The natural reaction of the Slovak resistance was to declare the armed resistance of the Slovak army and population, i.e., the uprising, against the incoming German troops and against its own government, which had given its official “blessing” to this German action. The Germans, better prepared for such an eventuality, disarmed in short succession the two best armed and trained Slovak divisions, assembled in eastern Slovakia. Officially, these were to help the Germans stop the Red Army along the Carpathians, but in the plans of the rebels they were, on the contrary, to enable the Red Army to penetrate through the Carpathian passes. In addition, due to the unexpected occupation of Slovakia, from the insurgents’ point of view, the chaotic abandonment of military garrisons in western Slovakia was followed by the transfer of only part of the local units to central Slovakia. Here, the rebel defenses were to be formed and wait for the Red Army’s rapid penetration into Slovakia before merging with it. These losses of the first days of the uprising could not be later counterbalanced either by a reorganization or by a determined defense of the rebel territory centered in Banská Bystrica, or by a hastily realized effort by Moscow to help the uprising in the form of the Carpatho-Dukla operation.

In Slovakia, the Warsaw scenario was repeated in many ways, but with a much milder and partially successful end, despite the fact that the Slovak insurgents failed to timely coordinate their activities with the Red Army’s advance and operations. However, due to the full involvement of Slovak communists in the insurgency and as a result of positive Slovak–Russian relations or of the

relationship between the London Czechoslovak exile and Moscow, the uprising eventually gained Soviet support, even if militarily it was a very risky activity, with a low probability of success. To some extent, but far less tragically than in the case of Warsaw, the Slovak National Uprising also suffered from the division of the military-political spheres, which manifested itself only in the token material support of the uprising by the Western Allies.

The Slovak insurgents, politically led by the Slovak National Council (equally composed of non-communists and communists, respectively socialists)⁴⁵ and militarily commanded by General Ján Golian and General Rudolf Viest, the latter dispatched from London, managed to build a relatively well-functioning rebel state and defend it for two months. Although the Slovak insurgents did not escape the fate of an isolated uprising in the German rear (on 27 October 1944 they left Banská Bystrica and withdrew to the mountains, where some of the insurgents fought on as partisans), they fared considerably better than the Warsaw insurgents, both politically and in terms of the number of casualties. The Slovak National Uprising and the Slovak leadership engendered by it dominated Slovak politics for some time after the war and was respected as an equal partner to the Czechs. For a few years, the predominantly democratic political structure was also preserved, and only in 1948 did it openly turn towards communist totalitarianism. The direct insurgent casualties amounted to several thousands, and the ensuing guerrilla war and post-insurgent repression resulted in the deaths of some 5,000 Slovaks, Jews, and other members of neighboring or Allied nations fighting in the insurgency.⁴⁶ Militarily, the uprising was ultimately unsuccessful, but politically it was a great asset for postwar Slovakia, to which the Slovaks returned strongly even in the reformist 1960s.

It is here that we come to perhaps the biggest differences between the Romanian coup and the Slovak National Uprising. Although in 1944 Slovakia and Romania were in roughly the same unflattering positions as pro-German collaborators and faced the same necessity to change the wartime alliances—and although both nations, with varying degrees of agreement, succeeded in the practical implementation of this change—the postwar “fruits” of these coups were markedly different. Paradoxically, given the military defeat of the uprising in Slovakia, Slovak postwar (formerly resistance) politics gained significantly more in a political sense in the restored Czechoslovak Republic than it would have gained without any uprising at all. Also, the uprising was hailed as one of the most significant historical and social events also by the communist power after 1948.⁴⁷ On the other hand, in military terms the Romanian coup was a resounding success. However, it did not have a significant impact on Moscow’s more benign view of postwar Romania or in terms of the country’s milder com-

munization, not to mention the fate of the coup's former organizers. From a purely Romanian postwar domestic political point of view, it can thus be considered less successful than its Slovakian counterpart...



Notes

1. Chris Bellamy, *Absolutní válka: Sovětský svaz za druhé světové války—moderní dějiny*, translated from English by Pavel Vereš (Prague: Academia, 2011), 581–582.
2. Nigel Thomas, *Německá armáda za druhé světové války*, translated from English by Jan Mosbauer (Brno: Computer Press, 2007), 175.
3. Andrzej Koryn, “Augustový prevrat r. 1944 v Rumunsku—príčiny a dôsledky,” in *Varšavské povstanie a Slovenské národné povstanie—paralely a rozdiely: Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie Banská Bystrica 14.–15. október 2008*, edited by Marek Syrný (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania, 2009), 184–186.
4. Antony Shaw, *Druhá světová válka den po dni*, translated from English by Jan Krist (Prague: Naše vojsko, 2007), 142.
5. “Nová sovietska ofenzíva pri Jasoch,” *Slovák* 26, 188 (22 August 1944): 2; “Na východnom fronte ťažisko bojov zas v priestore Vilkovičky,” *Slovák* 26, 186 (19 August 1944): 2; “Sovieti sa chcú dostať k Dunaju,” *Gardista* 6, 190 (23 August 1944): 1; “Na východnom fronte nové ťažisko bojov pri rieke Seret,” *Slovák* 26, 189 (23 August 1944): 2.
6. Jozef Bystrický, “Letné a jesenné ťaženie Červenej armády v roku 1944,” in *Od Priesmyku Predeal po Kurovské sedlo: Boje vo Východných Karpatoch v roku 1944* (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2011), 25–27.
7. Marcela Sălăgean, “Reacția aliaților occidentali și sovietici la evenimentele de la 23 august 1944 din România,” in *Udalosti 23. augusta 1944 v Rumunsku a Slovenské národné povstanie z 29. augusta 1944: Ich vplyv na oslobodenie Rumunska a Slovenska a na ukončenie druhej svetovej vojny: Zborník príspevkov z 9. zasadnutia Komisie historikov Slovenska a Rumunska Alba Iulia, 19.–23. september 2011/Evenimentele de la 23 august 1944 din România și insurecția națională slovacă din 29 august 1944: Consecințele lor asupra eliberării României și Slovaciei și a sfârșitului celui de al doilea război mondial: Lucrările celei de-a IX-a Reuniuni a Comisiei Mixte de Istorie Româno-Slovace (Alba Iulia, 19–23 septembrie 2011)* (Banská Bystrica–Alba Iulia: Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania, 2012), 50–51.
8. Bystrický, 25–27; Nikolaj A. Jakuba, “Vplyv povstání v Rumunsku, Bulharsku, Poľsku a Slovensku na vojenské operácie Červenej armády v r. 1944,” in *Varšavské povstanie a Slovenské národné povstanie*, 192.
9. Koryn, 187–188; Constantin Hlihor, “Consecințele geopolitice și geostrategice ale Acțiunii de la 23 august 1944 asupra evoluțiilor regionale și globale postrăzboi,” in *Udalosti 23. augusta 1944 v Rumunsku a Slovenské národné povstanie z 29. augusta 1944*, 40–41.

10. Șerban Pavelescu, “23. august 1944 a rumunská historiografia: Konceptuálne zmeny vnímania historickej udalosti,” in *Varšavské povstanie a Slovenské národné povstanie*, 180–182.
11. Compare: Vasile Pușcaș, “Impactul evenimentelor de la 23 august 1944 din România în aria central-europeană,” in *Udalosti 23. augusta 1944 v Rumunsku a Slovenské národné povstanie z 29. augusta 1944*, 44–46.
12. Vilém Prečan, ed., *Slovenské národné povstanie: Nemci a Slovensko 1944: Dokumenty* (Bratislava: EPOCHA, 1970), 90. For more on the Slovak technical division in Romania see: Jozef Bystrický, “Slovenská I. technická divízia na území Rumunska v roku 1944,” *Historické štúdie* (Bratislava) 45 (2007): 33–49.
13. These were subordinated to the German Army Group North Ukraine. During this period, the priority of the Slovak government became clearly the defense of its own territory against the approaching “Red Danger.” In this context, it made several intensive but unsuccessful attempts to put Slovak war interests ahead of German ones by withdrawing technical divisions from Romania or Italy. Prečan, 124, 146. Among other things, the transfer of these divisions to Slovakia played a key role in the planned coup of Defense Minister Čatloš. Michal Štefanský, *Generál Ferdinand Čatloš* (Bratislava: Ministerstvo obrany Slovenskej republiky, 1998), 47–48. However, the Slovak troops in the Northern Ukraine army line-up did not enjoy the confidence of the German representatives in the Slovak Ministry of National Defense. They feared that the Slovak troops were mentally incapable of participating in the joint defense of the Slovak Carpathians and would tend to defect to the Soviets in the event of Soviet pressure, as had already happened on the Eastern Front. Stanislav Mičev, ed., *Slovenské národné povstanie 1944* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania, 2009), 80. For more about that Slovak army in eastern Slovakia see Helena Pažurová, *Východoslovenská armáda: Horúce leto 1944 na východnom Slovensku* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania, 2012).
14. Ondrej Podolec, “Ticho pred búrkou (Sonda do nálad slovenskej spoločnosti na jar 1944),” in *Slovenská republika 1939–1945 očami mladých historikov III.: Povstanie roku 1944 : Zborník príspevkov z tretieho sympózia Katedry histórie Filozofickej fakulty UCM Trnava Lúka 21.–22. mája 2004*, edited by Martin Lacko (Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda, 2004), 19–28; Michal Šmigel and Peter Mičko, *Evakuácia v znamení úteku: Utečenci z Ukrajiny a Poľska na Slovensku v roku 1944* (Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela, 2006); Michal Schvarc, “Evakuácia nemeckého obyvateľstva z územia Slovenskej republiky v rokoch 1944–1945,” *Historický zborník* 15, 1 (2005): 76–84; Igor Baka, “Nasadenie civilného obyvateľstva na Slovensku na opevňovacie práce v rokoch 1944–1945,” *Vojenská história* 11, 1 (2007): 70–84; Ján Stanislav and Jaroslav Švacho, “Bombardovanie rafinérie Apollo 16. 6. 1944,” *Vojnová kronika* 9, 2 (2012): 24–40.
15. The regime of the totalitarian Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party during the existence of the Slovak state (1939–1945).
16. See more in Štefanský, 60–61.
17. By 10 August 1944, the Ukrainian party and partisan leadership had sent 32 organizing groups to the German rear (12 of them to Czechoslovakia, 8 to Hungary, 7

to Romania, and 5 to Moldavia). Only the landings in Slovakia were truly successful, where Kiev had already registered 1,500 partisans in the mountains of central Slovakia by mid-August 1944. Prečan, 294–295.

18. See for example: Jozef Považský, *Koniec legendy o misii generála Paula von Otta* (Martin: Nový život Turca 1996), 41–45; Michal Schvarc, “Masová exekúcia v Sklenom 21. septembra 1944 v širšom dejinnom kontexte,” *Pamäť národa* 3, 3 (2007): 8–11; Marian Uhrin, “II. slovenská partizánska brigáda gen. M. R. Štefánika a represálie,” in *Perzekúcie na Slovensku v rokoch 1938–1945: Slovenská republika 1939–1945 očami mladých historikov VII: Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie Bratislava 21.–23. apríl 2008*, edited by Peter Sokolovič (Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2008), 305–319.
19. It was approached as a concession to the German side, which demanded total mobilization for the defense of Slovakia against the advancing Red Army and threatened that in the event that the Slovak government failed to eliminate the partisans by itself, the Germans would take care of it themselves. Prečan, 317.
20. The Military Headquarters—name of the leading group of the Slovak resistance movement in the Slovak army.
21. “Teroristický nálet na Bukurešť a Ploešti,” *Slovák* 26, 180 (11 August 1944): 2; “Nepriateľ nad Rumunskom a Bulharskom,” *Slovák* 26, 186 (19 August 1944): 1. There was even a fantastic accusation of Anglo-Americans dropping “explosive” toys or sweets aimed at killing children. “Zákernosť anglo-amerických letcov,” *Slovák* 26, 178 (9 August 1944): 3.
22. “Súčasná hospodárska situácia Rumunska,” *Slovák* 26, 174 (3 August 1944): 7.
23. “Front posilňuje bojovú vôľu Rumunska,” *Slovák* 26, 173 (2 August 1944): 2.
24. “Deň rumunského námorníctva,” *Slovák* 26, 184 (16 August 1944): 2.
25. “Tuhé boje medzi Prutom a Seretom,” *Slovák* 26, 190 (24 August 1944): 2.
26. “Zmätok v Rumunsku,” *Gardista* 6, 192 (25 August 1944): 1.
27. “Puč rumunského kráľa,” *Slovák* 26, 191 (25 August 1944): 1.
28. “Kráľ Michal nie je pánom situácie,” *Slovák* 26, 192 (26 August 1944): 1; “Bezpodmienečná kapitulácia Michala,” *Gardista* 6, 193 (26 August 1944): 1; “Pred útekem kráľa Michala z Rumunska?,” *Slovák* 26, 193 (27 August 1944): 1; “Rumunsko sa stane bojiskom,” *Slovák* 26, 195 (30 August 1944): 2.
29. “Zmena vlády v Maďarsku,” *Gardista* 6, 193 (26 August 1944): 1; “Všetky dovolenky v Budapešti zrušené,” *Slovák* 26, 192 (26 August 1944): 2. The Slovak leadership had no idea of all the preparations of the Germans for the possible domino effect of the Romanian events and the behavior of Hungary. In connection with Slovakia, the behavior of the Hungarian 1st Royal Army, which was in the order of battle of the German Heinrici Army Group and was supposed to protect the southern flank of the Slovak section of the Carpathian Mountains, was to be particularly observed. Already on 24 August the Germans foresaw possible Hungarian efforts to follow the Romanian example of a change of front. Prečan, 158.
30. Prečan, 159–160.
31. Štefanský, 63.
32. Prečan, 180–181.
33. Štefanský, 64.

34. Ten days before the uprising, Franz Karmasin, the main representative of the large German minority in Slovakia, complained to Himmler that partisans were spreading out and organizing ambushes everywhere in Slovakia, while the Slovak army was in disarray. He therefore decided to set up a German militia, the Heimatschutz, for the protection of the German minority. Prečan, 304.
35. A few months earlier, Romania had been touted as a successful example of how to resist the Soviets and how to be motivated to protect the regained territory. Prečan, 33.
36. The Slovak government press, for example, stressed the “disgraceful” terms of the armistice with the Soviets, including the hundreds of thousands of Romanians who were forced to participate in the restoration of the Soviet Union. “Poldruha milióna rumunských robotníkov do ZSSR,” *Slovák* 26, 194 (29 August 1944): 1.
37. “Len od nás závisí, či si udržíme slobodu,” *Slovák—pondelník* 6, 34 (28 August 1944): 1.
38. Stanislav Mičev and Ján Stanislav, “Insurecția Națională Slovacă—una dintre componente rezistenței antifasciste europene,” in *Udalosti 23. augusta 1944 v Rumunsku a Slovenské národné povstanie z 29. augusta 1944*, 17–19.
39. Prečan, 210.
40. Compare: Mičev and Stanislav, 18–20.
41. A high official of the Foreign Office in Berlin, after his visit to Slovakia, described the great change in the mood of the Slovaks towards Germany in the last weeks of the summer of 1944 in very eloquent terms: “Faith in Germany and in our victory has suffered considerably from the events of 20 July and the betrayal of the Romanian king...” Prečan, 195–196.
42. Prečan, 167.
43. Jozef Jablonický, *Z ilegality do povstania: Kapitoly z občianskeho odboja* (Banská Bystrica: Dali-BB, 2009), 178–235.
44. The final decision to disarm the two Slovak divisions (about 30–40 thousand men) was taken by the commanders of Army Group North Ukraine on 27 August 1944 on the basis of preliminary directives from Berlin. Due to the element of surprise, the disarmament took place without much resistance from the Slovak soldiers, who ended up interned in German prison camps. Mičev, 87. Only a small part of them managed to join the partisans in eastern Slovakia, to break through to rebel Central Slovakia, while the airmen flew across the front to the Soviets.
45. For more information on party-political relations in the uprising, see: Marek Syrný, *Slovenskí demokrati '44–48: Kapitoly z dejín demokratickej strany na Slovensku v rokoch 1944–1948* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania, 2010), 10–31; id., *Slovenskí komunisti v rokoch 1939–1944* (Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela, 2014), 145–164.
46. See more in Jozef Jablonický, *Povstanie bez legiend: Dvadsat kapitol o príprave a začiatku Slovenského národného povstania* (Bratislava: Obzor, 1990); Mičev, 59–91; Ľubomír Lipták, *Slovensko v 20. storočí* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 1998), 242–260; Martin Lacko, *Slovenské národné povstanie 1944* (Bratislava: Slovart, 2008), 39–80.
47. Although, paradoxically, as in the Romanian case, the insurgent communists escaped much of the later party criticism and purges for subversive collaboration

with the “bourgeoisie.” Miroslav Hysko, “Zradcovská úloha buržoázie a západných imperialistov v Slovenskom národnom povstaní,” in *Slovenské národné povstanie* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 1954), 249–250. For the latest on the trials of the so-called bourgeois nationalists, see Branislav Kinčok, *Husák: Buržoázny nacionalista 1951–1963* (Bratislava: Marenčin PT, 2023).

Abstract

Slovak Reflections on the August 1944 Coup in Romania and Its Impact on the Slovak National Uprising

In July and August 1944, the former dominion and stability of the Third Reich began to shake at its foundations. First, a new front opened up in Western Europe and Germany began to fall into the Allies' encircling pincers. Shortly thereafter, an unsuccessful attempt to change Hitler's government took place, and a highly successful Soviet offensive was underway, which in a matter of weeks pushed the Red Army hundreds of miles closer to Berlin. The most decisive, however, was still August 1944, when as many as four major uprisings or coups took place in territories controlled or occupied by Germany. After the urban uprisings in Warsaw or Paris, there was a major reversal in Romania and, shortly afterwards, a broader uprising in Slovakia. This paper will address the possible inspiration of the Romanian coup for the decision and the developments in Slovakia at the end of August 1944. It will focus on Romania's and Slovakia's position in the German great power system up to that time. It will analyze the dilemmas of pro-German governments facing the prospect of a Soviet invasion of their country and of an overall German defeat. In particular, however, it attempts to answer the central question of the possible effects of the Romanian coup on the development of the situation in Slovakia in the context of the Slovak National Uprising.

Keywords

World War II, great power politics, sphere of influence, Romania, Slovakia, resistance, coup d'état

Jesuit Education in Cluj (1579–1785)

FERENC
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A Historical and Historiographical Overview

We can firmly state that without knowing the Jesuit educational system we could not comprehend the European educational system from the 16th to the 18th century.

CREATING IDENTITIES—the creation of a loyal citizen of the state, who possesses standardized knowledge, and who is Catholic (the school contributed to the Catholic reconversion campaign in Transylvania)—was the main purpose of Jesuit education. In this endeavor, ethnicity was relegated to a secondary position. However, Jesuit education meant much more, as it had a major contribution to Transylvanian intellectualism for more than two centuries after the end of the 16th century.

Researching the past of educational establishments in Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár) and Romania is an important requirement, even from the perspective of European educational history. The higher education establishments that operated in Cluj, although during those times they bore titles such as Major College, Academy, and even University, are not currently known in the relevant published literature. For example, the Jesuit school in Cluj is

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not mentioned in the volume published by Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548–1773* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019), one of the latest scholarly publications in the field.

The Jesuit Major College, subsequently known as the Academy of Cluj and then as the Royal Academic Lyceum, functioned in a city with a predominant Protestant population. The thorough research of the establishment's history is also particularly interesting from the vantage point of interethnic and interconfessional cohabitation. If at the beginning of the 17th century the Jesuit establishment was destroyed by the Protestants, who feared the Jesuits and the Catholics in general, considering them agents of the Habsburg Empire, during the 17th century there was a relative peaceful cohabitation, nonetheless dominated by the Protestants, and in the 18th century the Catholic establishments received massive moral, material and military support from the imperial central administration at the expense of the Orthodox and Protestant establishments.

The Jesuit Major College was the most important institution in Cluj, just like Babeş-Bolyai University is today. Their students represented then, and still represent nowadays, the main social, demographic, and economic development factors of the city that lies on the banks of the Someşul Mic River. A thorough investigation of the history of educational establishments is both a moral obligation, and a source of inspiration for the future, especially because the community of these establishments can be seen as an innovative and reflexive society, favorable to inclusion, for its period of time.

However, we cannot forget that the Jesuit schools were instruments of conversion and reconversion to Catholicism. We can say that they were true schools for the elites, although amongst the pupils and students attending the Jesuit schools, academies and universities, only a small number belonged to the aristocracy, the rest being the children of landed gentry, city dwellers, and even peasants, who managed to study thanks to the scholarship system administered by the Jesuits.

The Jesuit colleges represented a model for all the educational establishments in Central Europe, even for the Protestant denominational schools (Unitarian, Calvinist, Lutheran) and the Orthodox ones, which did not have the obligation to adopt the Jesuit Rules and Methodologies, and they did not even come under the Regulations: *Ratio educationis* of 1777, *Norma regia* of 1781, and *Ratio educationis* of 1806. In other words, if one does not understand the Jesuit educational system, they could not understand the way the educational establishments functioned between the 16th and the 19th centuries.

The Jesuit Major College in Cluj was the first higher education establishment founded on the territory which is now Romania. Its history, even though it has been researched in the last decades, still has insufficiently known periods.

We do not even have a clear picture of how this establishment functioned during the 17th century, or of the events which happened there in the first half of the 18th century.

Many histories of the educational establishments in Cluj have been published since the 19th century. Much information can be found in the impressive monograph of Cluj written by Elek Jakab (*Kolozsvár története*),¹ complete with volumes of collections of documents. At the beginning of the 20th century, historian Endre Veress wrote the first study based on the research of the Jesuit archives in Rome about the history of the Jesuit Major College in the 16th century, publishing it under the title “A kolozsvári Báthory-egyetem története lerombolásáig, 1603-ig”² (The history of Báthory University until its demolition in 1603), completing it with “Oklevéltár a Kolozsvári Báthory-egyetem történetéhez”³ (Document collection regarding the history of Báthory University in Cluj). Many series of documents from the Jesuit archives were published during the 20th century. We shall mention here the ones published in the editions signed by the Jesuit Ladislaus Lukács: *Catalogi personarum et officiorum Provinciae Austriae S. I.*⁴; *Monumenta antiquae Hungariae*⁵; *Monumenta Paedagogica Societatis Jesu*.⁶ Of the studies and documents published in the last few decades, we mention the study of historian Sándor Tonk, who wrote about “The Formation of the Romanian Intellectuals in Transylvania and the Piarist High School in Cluj”⁷; the volume entitled *A kolozsvári jezsuita gimnázium és akadémia hallgatósága 1641–1773*⁸ (The auditorium of the Jesuit gymnasium and academy in Cluj between 1641 and 1773), by researcher Júlia Varga, who processed data regarding the Catholic school’s students in Cluj; the volumes of documents *Operarii in Vinea Domini: Jesuit Missionaries in Transylvania, Banat and Partium (1579–1715)* by Vasile Rus⁹; the important synthesis signed by the historian of educational establishments László Szögi and by the aforementioned researcher Júlia Varga about *A Szegedi Tudományegyetem és elődei története: I. rész: A Báthory-egyetemtől a Kolozsvári Tudományegyetemig 1581–1872*¹⁰ (The history of the University in Szeged and its predecessors: From Báthory University to the Science University in Cluj, 1581–1872). One of the most complete syntheses regarding the history of this establishment was recently published at Babeş-Bolyai University, coordinated by the rector of the university, Daniel David—*Tradition and Excellence: Academic Schools of Science at Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (1581–1872–1919–Present)*.¹¹

THE JESUIT Major College of Cluj was the first higher education establishment in present-day Romania. Although its existence was interrupted several times, we can talk about a history of almost two centuries (1579–1773). Furthermore, the institution itself survived after the Jesuit Order

was disbanded. There are establishments that are its direct successors, such as Babeş-Bolyai University and István Báthory Theoretical High School in Cluj-Napoca, respectively the University of Szeged (Hungary).

The Jesuit College in Cluj was a European institution. It was under the patronage of the Jesuit Order, or the Society of Jesus, as it was also called, a Catholic order of monks established as an instrument of the Catholic Church during the Reformation. The order was present practically in all countries of Europe (and not only), creating a network of educational establishments, many of which were established in places where the Catholic Church was affected or menaced by the propagation of Protestant teachings. Firstly, the Jesuit schools were prepared to offer education to the future Catholic priests, but they also provided exceptional training to the political elites. Most of the Jesuit schools were secondary educational establishments (colleges), offering 5–6 years of study, and only where the conditions required it they also set up elementary educational establishments.

The most important Jesuit institutions were the so-called major colleges, which offered higher education in philosophy and theology, equivalent to the established universities. The Jesuit major colleges were capable of providing education from the elementary to the higher level. The higher education entailed the study of philosophy (in that period students were studying philosophy proper on the one hand and, on the other hand, natural sciences such as mathematics, physics etc., as well as philology and history), for three years, and the study of theology for four years. Theological studies were compulsorily preceded by studies in philosophy. Law and medicine were not taught in Jesuit establishments.

Between 1545 and 1616 the Jesuit Order developed a regulation, known as *Ratio Studiorum*, which established precise rules and norms both for the organization of their own establishments and for the educational process, teaching methodologies and curriculum development, also indicating which authors and works were to be used in the educational process. This regulation remained in use until 1773, when the order was disbanded, but its remnants were present in the schools' syllabuses and methodologies for many years to come. The unitary school syllabus and pedagogical methodology of the Jesuits assured a unitary education in all their establishments. This system facilitated the mobility of both students and professors between the different Jesuit centers in Europe. That explains why in Cluj many Polish, Hungarian, German, Italian, and other Jesuit professors taught, and how the Transylvanian students could complete their studies in other Jesuit educational establishments.

We can firmly state that without knowing the Jesuit educational system we could not comprehend the European educational system from the 16th to the

18th century. This also holds true for the educational system in Banat, Crișana, and historical Transylvania.

Jesuit monk-professors were present in the Principality of Transylvania starting with the middle of the 16th century. In 1579, in Cluj-Mănăștur (Abtsdorf, Kolozsmonostor, nowadays a neighborhood in the city of Cluj-Napoca), at the initiative of the Prince of Transylvania and King of Poland, Stephen Báthory, the Jesuit Order set up a school.¹² In the following years this school was moved inside the city of Cluj and it developed until it became a major college, in other words, the most important Catholic educational establishment in the principality. According to its founder's wish, it had to be just like the established universities in Western Europe. Unfortunately, the establishment was forced to cease its activity in 1603,¹³ the country's Diet banning the presence of the members of the Jesuit Order in the principality.

The history of the Jesuit educational establishment in Cluj can be divided into several stages. The first stage took place between 1579 and 1603, and the second one between 1618 and 1659. In 1616, due to a favorable political context, the Jesuits returned to Transylvania. The Diet granted them permission to establish their headquarters in Cluj-Mănăștur in 1618 and to open a school there. However, they could only teach up to gymnasium level (secondary education, according to the period's division). Nevertheless, the faculty of the establishment was a highly qualified one, with exceptional professors such as István Színi (a former schoolmate of Prince Gabriel Bethlen, appointed to lead a mission in the Ottoman-occupied territories), Dániel Vásárhelyi (a former student at the Jesuit College in Cluj), a very popular author at the time, Martin Fejérdi, István Mory (himself a former student in Cluj between 1598 and 1599), the Romanian Jesuit Gheorghe Buitul, István Makó, György Gulik, Miklós Magyar, Imre Bajnay, and others.

Between 1659 and 1690 came another stage in the establishment's history. Given the Ottoman danger, the Jesuit school in Cluj-Mănăștur was granted permission to move back again inside the city of Cluj; they even requested to set up a church inside the city walls.

The true resurrection of the establishment was to come only when the Principality of Transylvania became an integral part of the Habsburg Empire. In 1698 the Jesuits popularized their educational establishment in Cluj, calling it Academy and even University. Starting with 1698, we have a new stage in the history of the Jesuit establishment in Cluj. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Jesuit establishment in Cluj is mentioned under the name of *Collegium Claudiopolitanum* or *Academia Claudiopolitana*. The establishment was led by a rector, and in 1725 he was mentioned as *rector magnificus*. After 1753, the

complete title of the rector was *Collegii Academici et Almae Universitatis Rector Magnificus*, the title containing the phrase *Universitatis* (University), which shows the rank of the establishment.

Collegium Academicum was a term that designated an educational establishment which offered elementary and secondary level education, and higher education in the fields of philosophy and theology. In the first half of the 18th century the establishment was granting the titles of *Baccalaureus*, *Magister*, and *Doctor*. In 1759 the establishment already bore the title of Academic University College.

In the first half of the 18th century, many scholarly personalities of the time were present in Cluj as professors, all belonging to the Jesuit Order. We could mention here Logic professor János Dévai, Philosophy professor Ferenc Bileczki, and Theology professor Ferenc Szunyogh.

Starting with 1753, during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa, the Jesuit Academic College in Cluj grew into a full university, having four faculties: Philosophy, Law, Medicine, and Natural Sciences. The first two faculties to be organized were the ones of Philosophy and Theology.

In 1773 there was a significant change in the history of the establishment. The Jesuit Order was disbanded at the decision of the Holy See, and the imperial authorities complied and had the order disbanded in the entire Habsburg Empire. A few years later, Empress Maria Theresa decided to offer the College in Cluj to another Catholic order, specialized in education: the Piarists. During the years of these important changes, the University expanded, with the founding of the Faculty of Law in 1774 and of the Faculty of Medicine in 1776. At that time the Academy in Cluj had four faculties: the Faculty of Philosophy with 5 departments (logic and metaphysics, physics, mathematics, geometry and history); the Faculty of Law with the departments of canon law and criminal law, civil law and Roman law; the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery with the department of anatomy, surgery and obstetrics; and the Faculty of Theology with 4 departments.

The elementary and secondary levels of education, respectively the Faculties of Philosophy and Theology, were under the care of the Piarist professors who were also in charge of the establishment. Laic professors taught at the Faculties of Law and Medicine.

In 1777, an educational decree was issued for Hungary, known as *Ratio Educationis*. This act organized in minutest details the entire Catholic educational system in Hungary. By Catholic educational system we understand the public educational system, as it was financially supported by the repossessed fortune of the Jesuit Order, which lay at the foundation of the Study Fund. In 1781,



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the 1777 *Ratio Educationis* was adapted to the specificity of the establishments in the Great Principality of Transylvania, published under the title of *Norma Regia*.¹⁴ In the following decades, this act underpinned the educational system in the Principality.

The University with the four faculties lasted for only a few years. In 1778, the Faculty of Theology was moved away from Cluj, and in 1784 Emperor Joseph II decided to change the status of the establishment to Royal Academic Lyceum (*Lyceum Regium Academicum*), and then in 1785 he discontinued a

series of institutions of the Lyceum (*Convictus Nobilium*, St. Joseph's Seminary, St. Mary's Congregation). The Faculty of Medicine could not develop and it only carried out its activity as a secondary school, with just the department of surgery.



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Abstract

Jesuit Education in Cluj (1579–1785): A Historical and Historiographical Overview

The objective of this article is to present the history and historiography of the educational establishment operating under the patronage of the Jesuit Order in Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár), known during time as the Jesuit Major College, the Claudiopolitan Academy, and the Academic College with the rank of University in Cluj.

Keywords

Jesuit schools, Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár), *Ratio Educationis*, *Norma Regia*

Tuberculosis Mortality in Transylvania

Some Data and an Analysis

DANIELA MÂRZA

This paper provides an examination of tuberculosis mortality in Transylvania during the 19th and early 20th centuries, shedding light on the significant impact this disease had on the population.

DURING THE 19th and early 20th centuries, tuberculosis was a leading cause of mortality in Transylvania, accounting for 10%–15% of all deaths.¹ At the beginning of the 20th century, it claimed more lives than any other infectious disease.² Despite its significant impact, comprehensive and consistent data on this phenomenon remain scarce, and large-scale, in-depth studies are lacking. Existing research has only partially addressed tuberculosis mortality in Transylvania, often focusing on limited areas or specific time periods.

One such study is an article by Elena Crinela Holom and Nicoleta Hegeđűs, which examines tuberculosis within the context of historical mortality in Transylvania between 1850 and 1920. The article emphasizes that pulmonary tuberculosis was among the most common causes of death during this period, appearing in records under 219 different terms—a consequence of the region’s linguistic diversity. Often categorized as an unspecified respiratory disease, its high prevalence is evident from the numerous mentions in historical data. The analysis highlights

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the challenges in standardizing these records due to variations in terminology and the lack of medical precision from those documenting causes of death at the time.³ Another example is an article on mortality in Arad County during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, based on a demographic analysis examining factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation, and education level. Quantitative demographic data derived from sources like parish civil status registers and statistical records also allow for the investigation of tuberculosis as a cause of death in this county.⁴

The limited extent of the research on this topic is partly due to issues related to the existing sources. To study the causes of death in Transylvania, we have two categories of sources: civil registers—which include parish records and, since 1895, those maintained by state authorities—and official statistics.

However, parish registers present significant challenges. Maintained by each of the many denominations in Transylvania—such as Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Orthodox, Unitarian, Calvinist, and Mosaic—the quality of information they contain is highly inconsistent. Often, the causes of death were recorded not by physicians but by individuals with minimal training. This led to entries using various popular terms or merely listing symptoms like fever, cold, or diarrhea. Additionally, the norms of the time classified causes of death into “natural/common” (those caused by disease) versus “violent deaths” (accidents, homicide, suicide). As a result, many parish registers simply noted the cause of death as “natural” or “common” without further details, rendering them useless for any detailed analysis.

During this period, only about 50% of the causes of death were established by doctors; many were recorded by so-called death inspectors. Established under the Sanitary Law of 1876 in Transylvania, the death inspectors played a crucial role in certifying deaths, without which burials could not proceed. They served as intermediaries between the occurrence of death and its official registration, reporting mortality rates and epidemic outbreaks to the local authorities. With minimal formal medical training, the death inspectors relied on practical knowledge in identifying the signs of death, rather than on scientific methods. Handbooks authored by Transylvanian doctors served as primary guides for these inspectors. These manuals detailed their responsibilities, including identifying the signs of natural, violent, epidemic, and apparent death. Training required literacy, familiarity with the signs of death, and maintaining a “flawless moral character.” Often, the death inspectors were literate individuals from rural areas—farmers, teachers, or mayors—responsible for preparing reports and ensuring the application of correct procedures following a death.⁵

Another significant source on the causes of death are the official statistics compiled by the Budapest Statistical Office, although these also contain many

gaps. They only began recording tuberculosis as a cause of death in 1892, despite including other diseases in the previous two decades. Several explanations exist for the late inclusion of tuberculosis in official statistics. Though ravaging, the disease was perceived as a family or societal problem rather than an issue concerning the authorities.⁶ The contemporary press featured numerous articles aiming to educate the population on combating tuberculosis, proposing individual measures rather than calling for government action. Furthermore, the disease was often unreported. To protect patients and their loved ones from the emotional impact, doctors often colluded to keep the diagnosis hidden. The illness was widely considered a death sentence, and the truth was concealed whenever possible to avoid diminishing the patient's will to fight for their own recovery. This practice, documented from the late 19th century until World War I, hindered the adoption of effective prophylactic measures.⁷

After 1895, data recording became more accurate due to the obligation to declare deaths to the state authorities and the comprehensive census conducted in 1900. However, extracting complete data from official statistics is hindered by the inconsistent manner in which the entries were made in the records. For some years, deaths from tuberculosis are recorded only in absolute numbers; for others, rates or percentages are calculated. Sometimes, the data are broken down by region and county; at other times, they are presented globally at the level of the whole of Hungary (of which Transylvania was a part until 1918).⁸

In this article, I aim to reconstruct the data on tuberculosis mortality in Transylvania as they appear in official statistics from the end of the 19th century to the First World War, and to see how they can be correlated with the economic and social context of the time. For this purpose, I used the following sources:

- Statistical Yearbooks (*Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv*), 1892–1918;
- Statistical Bulletins (*Magyar Statisztikai Közlemények: A Magyar Korona országainak*), 1900–1918;
- A special statistical analysis devoted to tuberculosis in Hungary during 1901–1915 (*A Magyar Szent Korona országainak 1901–1915. évi gümőkórhalálózása*, 1925). This analysis divides the period into three intervals—1901–1905, 1906–1910, and 1911–1915—with data representing the averages for each year included in these periods.

Although uneven and fragmentary, these data provide information on the number of deaths from tuberculosis—broken down in some years by county—and tuberculosis mortality rates in general, broken down by age, gender, denomination, county, and occupation (note that the rates for occupations are calculated for the whole of Hungary, Transylvania not being indicated separately). Deaths are recorded under the generic term “tuberculosis” or “pulmonary tuberculosis.” After 1900, other types of tuberculosis are also recorded, insofar as

they were established by a physician, but these data refer to Hungary as a whole, not to Transylvania separately.

According to contemporary data, Hungary was considered one of the European countries most severely affected by tuberculosis—a situation highlighted by the numbers presented in the table below:

TABLE 1. MORTALITY BY TUBERCULOSIS IN HUNGARY COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

	Mortality by tuberculosis (‰)				
	Hungary	Transylvania	England	Germany	Spain
1901–1905	3.89	3.36	1.74	2.07	1.99
1906–1910	3.07	3.25	1.57	1.75	1.76
1911–1915	3.28	3.06	1.42	1.49	1.52

Although the data are partial and were collected differently across various periods, they consistently reveal a similar situation for Transylvania.⁹

TABLE 2. MORTALITY BY TUBERCULOSIS IN TRANSYLVANIA, 1892–1915

TB deaths in Transylvania (‰)	
1892	2.32
1893	2.45
1901–1905	3.36
1906–1910	3.25
1911–1915	3.06

Data collected at that time by statisticians indeed show that tuberculosis mortality in Hungary was significantly higher than in other European countries. Where available, we also included data from Transylvania, which closely mirrors the situation in Hungary as a whole. Moreover, mortality had been on an upward trend since it started being recorded in official statistics. This situation was blamed on the lack of state involvement; the government was very late in adopting measures to prevent and combat the disease, despite tuberculosis being responsible for as much as 10%–15% of all deaths.¹⁰ The public health system suffered from an insufficient number of doctors—who were paid unreasonably low salaries—and a small number of hospitals and sanatoria. Regarding tuberculosis, it was not until 1906 that the Minister of the Interior, Count Gyula Andrásy the Younger, announced his intention to initiate measures to fight it.¹¹

The very nature of the disease made it difficult to reduce the number of deaths. Treatment lasted for months and often required radical changes in life-

style and environment; the main approach was to strengthen the body through rest, fresh air, and nutritious food. The poor and marginalized population of Transylvania obviously could not afford such things. Hospitals were scarce, and few could afford to remain isolated and thus miss months of work or family obligations. Under these circumstances, county authorities discussed constructing dispensaries specifically dedicated to tuberculosis. The tasks of these dispensaries would have been complex: providing medical care by doctors and nurses, consulting with patients, establishing and monitoring treatment plans (or referring patients to sanatoria or private doctors if they could afford it), educating the public on prevention and the lifestyle necessary for recovery, monitoring patients and their family members, offering financial aid for better living conditions and better food, and installing hygienic spittoons in public places (since the practice of spitting on the ground was considered largely responsible for transmitting the disease), among other duties. The state supported such initiatives with 5,000 crowns; the remaining funds had to be sourced elsewhere.¹²

In 1911, a dispensary was established in Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben) and, according to a report from 1912, it consulted 173 patients—109 men, 44 women, and 20 children under 12 years of age—107 of whom were diagnosed with tuberculosis. Thirty-two patients received treatment under the dispensary's supervision and received financial aid for rent and food. Providing a glimpse into the reality of the time, the aid included: 1,964 portions of 500 grams of meat, 19.5 kg of bacon, 159 kg of rice, 14.25 kg of honey, 43.5 kg of pasta, 35 kg of corn flour, 861 pieces of butter, 1,560 eggs, and 845 loaves of bread. The dispensary also sanitized the homes of these patients and installed spittoons. The chief physician delivered lectures, wrote articles, and distributed pamphlets throughout the county on disease prevention.¹³

Despite the usefulness of such initiatives, they were far from sufficient in number. For instance, in Fogaras (Făgăraș) County, the possibility of establishing a similar dispensary was only being discussed at the end of 1912.

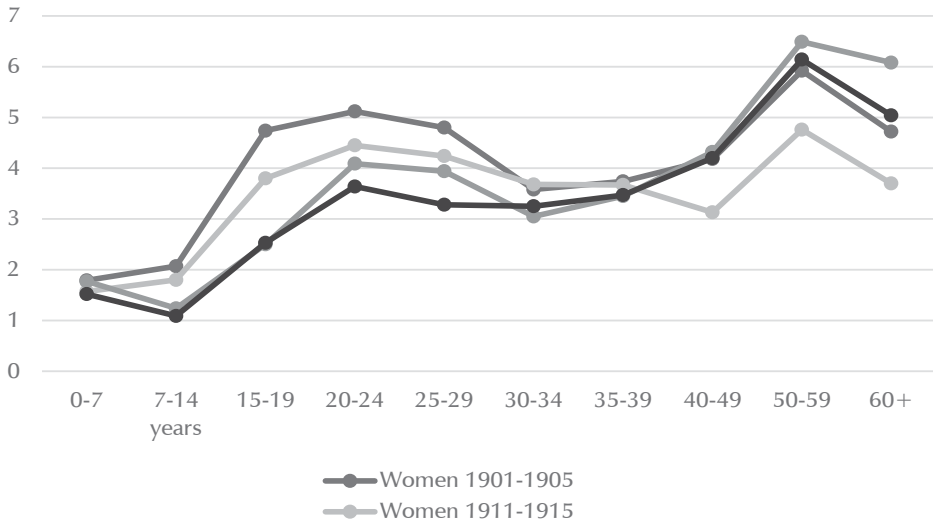
THE AVAILABLE data allow for the analysis of certain aspects of tuberculosis mortality. Regarding the distribution of deaths by gender, more women than men died of tuberculosis in Transylvania,¹⁴ as shown below:

TABLE 3. TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY IN TRANSYLVANIAN BY GENDER, 1901–1915 (‰)

	Men	Women
1901–1905	3.2	3.7
1906–1910	3.1	3.5
1911–1915	3.6	3.3

Official statistics offer detailed data on mortality broken down by gender and age for only two periods: 1901–1905 and 1911–1915, as shown below:

CHART 1. TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY BY GENDER, 1901–1915



The graph shows that adolescents, young adults, and the elderly are the age groups most vulnerable to tuberculosis. Mortality is highest among those aged 15–30, due to a combination of factors such as poor working conditions, prolonged contact with many people, poverty during the early stages of their careers, and limited access to healthcare. A contemporary account¹⁵ notes that mortality among young children aged 0–7 was primarily due to exposure to disease from their sick parents, compounded by poor living conditions—poor hygiene, lack of movement and fresh air—and inadequate nutrition; these children were raised “as candidates for death.” However, once they reached school age, children spent more time exercising and outdoors, which contributed to better health and reduced their chances of contracting the disease.

The rise in mortality after age 15 was ascribed to the many young people working in improper conditions—in factories, shops, or offices—confined all day in unhealthy spaces and too poor to eat properly. After a long period during which tuberculosis was considered hereditary, doctors realized it was a contagious disease that particularly affected weakened bodies. Surprisingly, mortality was not as high among school-aged children (7–14 years), even though some doctors at the time considered school conditions—crowded, small, and unventilated rooms—to be significant factors in the transmission of tuberculosis.¹⁶

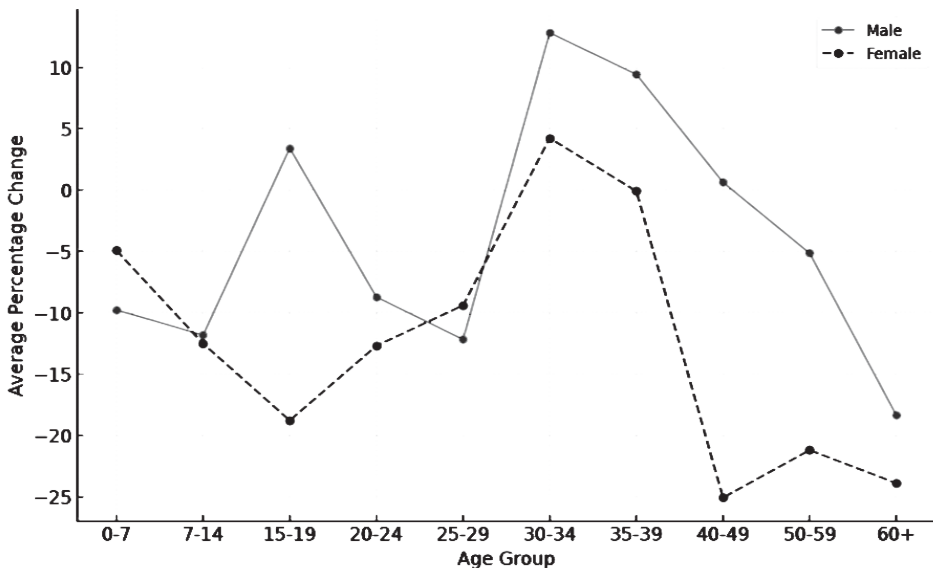
The graph also shows that the age group most affected is 50–59 years, which some authors consider to be a reactivation of a latent primary infection rather than a new infection;¹⁷ however, current data do not yet allow us to verify whether this explanation is valid for Transylvania. Notably, this age group is the only one where mortality is higher in males than in females, a situation that may be explained by a decrease in quality of life and care, possibly due to the loss of a life partner.

Overall, female mortality from tuberculosis was noticeably higher than that of men—a pattern also observed in other parts of Europe.¹⁸ The data do not provide explanations for this disparity; however, when combined with information from other sources, particularly the contemporary press, we can speculate on possible causes:

- women’s immune systems may have been weakened by factors like child-birth or menstruation;
- women might have been more exposed to the illness because of their roles as caregivers for sick family members;
- cultural norms may not have encouraged women to prioritize their own health or seek medical attention when ill, especially among those living in poverty.

The graph below illustrates the changes in tuberculosis mortality for both genders during two periods: 1901–1905 and 1911–1915.

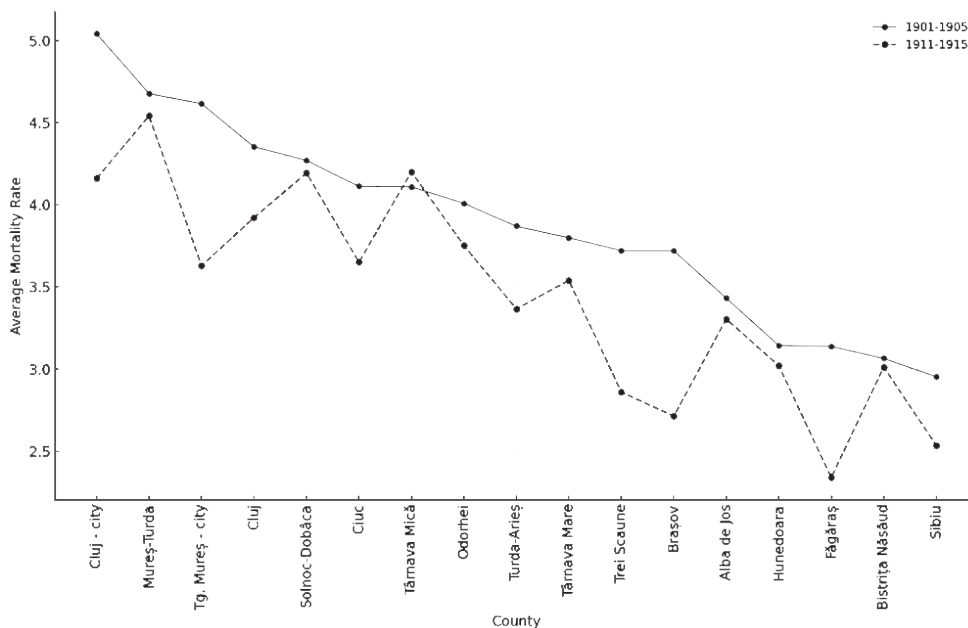
CHART 2. CHANGES IN TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP, 1901–1915



The graph shows the average percental change in tuberculosis mortality for males and females across all counties between the periods 1901–1905 and 1911–1915. Males (represented by the solid line) exhibited greater variability; some age groups, such as those aged 40–49, showed an increase in mortality, while others experienced decreases. Women (represented by the dashed line), on the other hand, experienced more consistent reductions in mortality, particularly among older age groups (60+). Overall, women saw greater improvements in survival rates, whereas men had mixed results—with certain age groups experiencing higher mortality rates.

Furthermore, the available data allow for an analysis of tuberculosis mortality at county level, as illustrated by the graph below:

CHART 3. TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY BY COUNTY, 1901–1915



From 1901–1905 to 1911–1915, tuberculosis mortality generally declined, especially among individuals aged 40 and older, although some younger groups experienced increases. Changes in mortality varied significantly by gender and age, with some counties showing sharp declines for one gender and smaller changes or even increases for the other. The counties with the highest TB mortality were the city of Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár) in 1901–1905 and Maros-Torda (Mureș-Turda) County in 1911–1915.

An analysis of mortality trends by age group and gender indicates the following:

- Young children (0–7 years): in most counties, male mortality decreased, with reductions ranging from 1.7% in Beszterce-Naszód (Bistrița-Năsăud) to 45.9% in Brassó (Brașov, Kronstadt). However, Făgăraș stands out with increases in both male (+ 22.5%) and female (+ 49.2%) mortality. Changes in female mortality were more varied; some counties showed increases—for example, Alsó-Fehér (Alba de Jos) saw an increase of 12.9%—while others experienced declines, such as Brașov, with a 41.9% decrease.

- Adolescents (15–19 years): the general trend in this age group is a decrease in mortality, particularly among females. Brașov and Făgăraș showed significant improvements, with reductions in female mortality of 14.1% and 47.8%, respectively. Male mortality changes were more variable: some counties experienced increases—for instance, Alba de Jos saw a 26.3% increase—while others saw reductions, such as Brașov, with a 27.4% decrease.

- Middle-aged adults (40–49, 50–59 years): among these age groups, male mortality increased in some counties—Alba de Jos saw a 42.7% increase for ages 40–49—but experienced significant decreases in others, like Brașov, with a 21.9% reduction for the same age group. Female mortality generally decreased across most counties and age groups, with notable reductions in the 50–59 age group in counties like Brașov (– 39.0%) and Făgăraș (– 45.6%).

- Elderly (60+ years): mortality reductions in the elderly population are particularly significant. Counties like Făgăraș and Brașov showed strong decreases in male mortality by 54.5% and 21.3%, respectively. Female mortality in this group also saw sharp declines, such as in Brașov (– 37.6%) and Bistrița-Năsăud (– 26.1%).

The data reveal a complex picture of tuberculosis mortality, with marked improvements for some counties and age groups, while other regions experienced a worsening mortality. Overall, most counties show a general decline in tuberculosis deaths, particularly among older age groups and females. However, younger children and adolescents in some areas saw increasing mortality, notably females in Făgăraș and males in Alba de Jos.

Statistical records also provide some data on tuberculosis mortality by marital status:

TABLE 4. TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY BY MARITAL STATUS, 1911–1915 (‰)

	Men				Women			
	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Divorced
1911–1915	2.31	3.64	6.51	7.85	2.69	3.78	4.04	4.58

Notably, most deaths occurred among unmarried men, which emphasizes the role of women as caretakers. It should be noted that the statistics include children among the unmarried.

Mortality rates by occupation are unavailable specifically for Transylvania; they are only provided for Hungary as a whole. However, existing sources indicate that the categories most affected by tuberculosis were:

- low-income individuals: smallholders, day laborers, and servants;
- workers in industries with poor air quality: this includes miners, leather workers, textile workers, stonemasons, millers, and others who were exposed to dust on a daily basis;
- factory workers: especially those employed in small, crowded factories.

Additionally, the urban population was more affected than the rural population due to higher population densities in cities and poor public hygiene. The spread of the disease was also exacerbated by certain habits of the time, such as spitting on the ground—a practice condemned by both doctors and the educated elite.¹⁹

THIS PAPER provides an examination of tuberculosis mortality in Transylvania during the 19th and early 20th centuries, shedding light on the significant impact this disease had on the population. By utilizing parish records, civil registers, and official statistics, it reconstructs mortality trends, demonstrating the high prevalence of tuberculosis, which accounted for 10–15% of deaths during the period. The findings indicate that tuberculosis disproportionately affected certain demographics, such as the urban poor, women, and individuals in high-risk occupations. Although public health initiatives began to emerge after 1906, their reach was limited, and the disease continued to claim lives, especially among the most vulnerable populations. Despite these insights, it is important to recognize that this research offers only a partial overview of tuberculosis in Transylvania. The data used, while informative, is fragmentary and inconsistent due to the limitations of historical records, the variations in medical terminology, and the quality of the entries made by non-medical personnel. Furthermore, official statistics from the period often lacked a comprehensive coverage, particularly before 1900, and much of the data reflects Hungary as a whole rather than focusing specifically on Transylvania. This makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about certain aspects of the impact of the disease in the region. More research is needed to address these gaps. Future studies should aim to collect more granular data on tuberculosis mortality in Transylvania, particularly by occupation, social class, and geographic region. Additionally, exploring the effects of the public health measures implemented after 1915 and

during subsequent decades could offer valuable insights into how tuberculosis was eventually brought under control. While this research provides useful data for understanding tuberculosis in Transylvania, much remains to be done in order to fully grasp the impact of the disease and the historical context in which it manifested itself.



Notes

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Abstract

Tuberculosis Mortality in Transylvania: Some Data and an Analysis

Tuberculosis was one of the most significant causes of mortality in Transylvania during the 19th and early 20th centuries, accounting for 10–15% of all deaths. This study examines the historical context, demographic factors, and mortality trends of tuberculosis in the region, from 1850 to 1920. Relying on a variety of sources, including parish records, civil registers, and official statistics, the research highlights the challenges posed by inconsistent data, linguistic diversity, and the medical practices of the time. The study provides a comprehensive overview of tuberculosis mortality patterns in Transylvania and explores their correlation with economic and social factors. Additionally, it evaluates the public health measures implemented, particularly after 1906, when government attention to tuberculosis increased. While some improvement in survival rates was observed, particularly among females, mortality remained high among the working poor and rural populations, emphasizing the limitations of medical intervention in combating this disease.

Keywords

tuberculosis, Transylvania, mortality trends, public health, 19th century, historical epidemiology, infectious disease

Entre innovation et appel à la tradition : l'État médiéval en Europe centrale-orientale aux XI^e-XIV^e siècles

Perspectives historiographiques et discours identitaire

FLORIAN DUMITRU
SOPORAN

L'assimilation des expériences institutionnelles et culturelles du monde chrétien occidental et les disponibilités innovantes des élites des communautés central-européennes ont conféré aux États de la région un profil institutionnel spécifique.

L'INTERVALLE CHRONOLOGIQUE compris entre la quatrième croisade et le début du grand schisme dans l'Église occidentale réunit, aux yeux de l'écrit historique de spécialité, tant l'apogée de la civilisation médiévale, qui sait profiter des opportunités offertes par l'expansion de l'économie d'échange pour se forger un profil politique et culturel distinct, que les effets de la crise structurelle provoquée par le recul démographique et la dépression économique, phénomènes qui, à leur tour, catalysent des actes de contestation des forums traditionnels de légitimité. Ces évolutions engendrent dans le mental collectif des attitudes qui oscillent entre les innovations institutionnelles et l'appel au conservatisme social et confessionnel. L'apparente contradiction entre la restauration de l'unité de la Cité de Dieu évoquée par

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saint Augustin à la fin de l'antiquité et le sentiment d'insécurité généré par les premières manifestations de la compétition entre les nouveaux acteurs institutionnels et les garants traditionnels de l'ordre médiéval – phénomènes secondés par l'intériorisation des manifestations de la piété individuelle –, continue à alimenter les débats historiographiques sur les significations profondes du Moyen Âge pour l'évolution de concepts comme nation, État, religion ou liberté. Les sinuosités enregistrées par l'histoire du XIII^e siècle démontrent la justesse des considérations de l'historien Johan Huizinga, qui était d'avis que la note dominante du développement des institutions médiévales est la quête d'un équilibre entre les structures aux disponibilités universalistes et la multitude de juridictions apparues sur les décombres de *l'orbis Romanus*.

Selon l'historiographie de l'époque, la soi-disant monarchie papale constitue le triomphe de la conception de la *christianitas* du Saint-Siège, à la fois sous aspect politique que du point de vue du paradigme éthique qui en assurait la fonctionnalité. Dans la logique ecclésiologique inspirée par la réforme initiée dans l'abbaye de Cluny, la primauté du pape découlait de sa position de successeur du Christ, mentionnée dans les documents conciliaires de la fin du XII^e siècle, alors que sur le plan de la réalité effective, l'Église était en train d'achever la réorganisation de la société en conformité avec ses propres normes de conduite. La compatibilité entre les objectifs de la politique ecclésiastique initiée par la papauté et l'agenda de la société légale a assuré les ressources de la victoire du Saint-Siège dans sa longue dispute juridictionnelle contre l'empire et d'un succès temporaire dans la compétition contre le Patriarcat œcuménique, dans le contexte de la quatrième croisade et de la fondation de l'Empire romain d'Orient. L'ascension de nouveaux vecteurs des loyalismes collectifs favorisés par de multiples solidarités ont obligé le Saint-Siège à identifier des réformes institutionnelles capables d'assurer un exercice concret de l'autorité en rapport avec la société ou d'accommoder son agenda avec des intérêts et des projets d'inspiration locale, tels que les ordres monastiques militaires du Proche-Orient et de la Prusse. Elles visaient à renforcer l'autorité des forums ecclésiastiques en relation avec les facteurs séculiers de pouvoir, dans les conditions où les tentatives de restauration du pouvoir impérial initiées à la fin du premier millénaire ont fini par activer la compétition juridictionnelle et morale entre le sacerdoce et l'empire – tout comme l'intégration dans l'ordre politique et spirituel chrétien des États slaves des Balkans a fini par générer des disputes similaires entre Byzance et les dynasties bulgares et serbes.

La complexité des changements qui affectaient les institutions de la *christianitas* ont eu des conséquences essentielles pour les États situés à ses frontières est et sud, espace devenu un point de départ pour des initiatives missionnaires destinées à convertir les populations païennes ou à implémenter des politiques

d'incorporation de l'Église grecque dans les cadres institutionnels des diocèses catholiques. Si la relation avec les communautés récemment entrées sous la juridiction du Saint-Siège a supposé la réalisation d'un équilibre entre les priorités visant la consolidation institutionnelle de l'Église locale et la dévotion des habitants envers les valeurs chrétiennes, les objectifs politiques avaient en vue de transformer le patronage formel de la papauté sur les royaumes apostoliques de la région en une réalité effective. Étant donné cette dualité des objectifs, les initiatives destinées à les mettre en œuvre ont été des plus diverses, depuis l'implication active des légats pontificaux dans la vie des royaumes, principalement dans les litiges entre les souverains et leurs sujets, à l'utilisation des instruments coercitifs, tels que l'interdit et l'excommunication, mais aussi la médiation des alliances familiales de nature à lier les facteurs de pouvoir de la région aux partenaires laïcs de la papauté. Les manifestations de la piété collective ont bénéficié du support pontifical accordé à des membres de l'élite laïque en vue de la fondation des établissements monastiques, et le clergé paroissial a été protégé dans la relation avec les détenteurs du pouvoir local. Le contact avec les réalités régionales a généré des partenariats informels entre les forums ecclésiastiques et les diverses composantes de la société libre tchèque, hongroise et polonaise, dont les objectifs se distinguaient nettement de ceux dynastiques. Ces défis, qui s'ajoutaient aux anciennes difficultés liées à l'accommodation des intérêts généraux de l'Église avec les objectifs des évêchés germaniques de l'est et du sud de l'empire, où la papauté était intéressée à soutenir des centres régionaux de pouvoir dans la confrontation avec la dynastie des Hohenstaufen, ont imposé à la Curie romaine d'employer une stratégie sinieuse. Elle oscillait entre l'appel à des interlocuteurs qui devaient leur légitimité justement à cette relation privilégiée et l'identification de partenaires parmi l'élite locale ou les communautés faisant l'objet des actions missionnaires, qui étaient intéressées à officialiser leur position politique et patrimoniale, position menacée par les effets connexes de la croisade interne.

L E MIEUX exemple en ce sens est la croisade baltique, identifiée à la carrière de l'ordre des chevaliers Teutoniques, qui avait bénéficié d'une injuste célébrité à cause de la propagande nationaliste manifeste pendant les premières décennies du siècle passé. Sa genèse est intimement liée aux significations initiales de la croisade, du pèlerinage aux Lieux saints, et a eu pour but de fonder des établissements destinés à soutenir les participants germaniques à la deuxième croisade, mise sous la protection de sainte Marie des Teutons. L'implication des principautés germaniques dans l'effort de défense de Jérusalem et l'intérêt du Saint-Siège de protéger les fondations croisées au Proche-Orient ont conduit à l'établissement de relations privilégiées entre le nouvel ordre mili-

taire et la Curie romaine, en dépit des confrontations avec l'empire et du soutien accordé aux tentatives du grand-maître Hermann de Salza (1210-1239) de placer l'ordre dans l'avant-garde des autres initiatives croisées, proches des zones d'origine de ses membres. L'osmose entre la vocation missionnaire et les loyautés sociales et familiales, la composante ethnique comprise, se voit très bien dans le fait que tant l'établissement temporaire des chevaliers germaniques au Pays de Bârsa (Terra Borza, Burzenland, Barcaság), en Transylvanie, que, surtout, l'acceptation de l'invitation du duc Conrad de Mazovie de prendre les territoires de l'ancien diocèse de Culm (Chełmno) avaient bénéficié de la double ratification de l'empereur et du souverain pontife, la protection du dernier assurant la survivance du patrimoine de l'ordre même pendant la crise de pouvoir ressentie après 1250. La nouvelle fondation militaire-religieuse de Prusse a répondu à des appels locaux visant la défense devant les Coumans ou les Slaves païens de Prusse, incorporant aussi des structures missionnaires préexistantes, tel que l'ordre des chevaliers du Christ de Livonie (Port-Glaive), fondé à l'initiative de l'évêque Albert de Buxhövden, et l'ordre des chevaliers de Dobrzyń, fondé en Mazovie en 1216. Elle a été en contact permanent avec les principautés germaniques, qui lui ont assuré les ressources nécessaires à une bonne gestion, étant mise au service de la croisade systématique destinée à convertir les populations slaves et baltiques et étant marquée par l'apparition de centres urbains et par quelques épisodes d'extermination effective de la population locale. La promotion rigoriste de la croisade dans son paradigme carolingien a eu une contribution indirecte à l'échec des efforts du Saint-Siège de capter l'intérêt des knèzes russes pour une éventuelle union religieuse. La défaite subie par l'ordre dans la « bataille sur la glace » (la bataille du lac Peïpous, 1242) contre les forces de Novgorod dirigées par Alexandre Nevski a été surévaluée par l'écrit historique, qui lui a conféré les significations d'un affrontement entre les civilisations. Cependant, ses effets sur le plan de la spécificité identitaire des Russes ont généré les ressources de légitimité à l'autorité des knèzes, sous les auspices de l'hostilité envers l'Église romaine, qui s'identifiait avec les intérêts patrimoniaux des croisés germaniques et, sur le long terme, avec les influences étrangères, nocives pour la mission spirituelle des Russes.

Du point de vue des réalités de l'Europe centrale-orientale, l'analyse de l'écrit historique témoigne de l'accélération du processus d'assimilation des concepts et des normes postulés par l'écrit historique occidental, mis au service d'objectifs d'intérêt local, familiers au public ou aux commanditaires. Cette dimension innovante, qui témoigne d'une nouvelle étape dans l'évolution des États situés aux confins est de l'empire – qui étaient passés de l'état de récepteur du paradigme chrétien occidental à celui de contributeur au développement de celui-ci – s'est matérialisée aussi sur le plan des loyautés sociopolitiques. Ici, le choc

provoqué par l'invasion mongole de 1241-1242 a représenté une bonne opportunité de redéfinir la position apostolique de la Hongrie et de la Pologne, par l'affirmation de ses significations pour la défense de la *christianitas*. Le catalyseur immédiat de cette dynamique a été une nouvelle relation avec la proximité des steppes, à la suite de l'impact mongol qui avait mis en cause l'existence de l'État hongrois et s'était arrêté aux frontières de la Silésie et, surtout, de l'apparition du khanat de la Horde d'Or. Le risque d'annihilation de l'individualité politique de certains États à vocation impériale a entraîné des mutations au niveau de l'infrastructure institutionnelle, générées par une participation plus active à la vie publique des éléments situés à la périphérie de la société privilégiée, à qui la prolongation de la guerre aux frontières offrait l'opportunité d'une carrière de succès. L'une des conséquences de cette dynamisation des forces de pouvoir a été l'ascension de quelques pôles d'agrégation des solidarités communautaires situés aux frontières des États de la région, qui ont influé sur le revirement des loyautés sociales et ethniques, dont l'importance allait s'avérer essentielle durant les deux prochains siècles. Les interférences objectives générées par la proximité du monde des steppes ont influencé la conduite de l'élite politique des États-frontière, au sens d'un relativisme moral gouvernant les relations successorales et le loyalisme dynastique, et ont fait accroître l'importance du succès militaire comme prémisses de l'ascension sociale.

L'exemple de l'ancien duché de Bohême est significatif pour les similitudes avec les évolutions contemporaines aux frontières occidentales de la *christianitas*. L'évolution de cette structure de pouvoir située aux confins de l'empire avec les royaumes apostoliques fondés autour de l'an 1000 démontre les capacités de l'élite des nations central-européennes d'assimiler les innovations institutionnelles et les ressources culturelles de l'ancienne *christianitas*, ainsi que les défis qui empiétaient sur leur participation à la compétition politique. Les succès remportés par le duc, puis roi Ottokar I^{er} Přemysl (1198-1230) devaient créer une stabilité politique intérieure, grâce à l'habileté dont il avait fait preuve durant le conflit entre l'empereur et le Saint-Siège, la diplomatie du duc assurant la reconnaissance du statut royal pour l'ancien duché de Bohême, avec la stipulation de sa position distincte par rapport à l'empire. Le règne de son successeur, Venceslas I^{er} (1230-1253), est un bon exemple de continuité des mêmes démarches politiques destinées à consolider la position du nouvel État, par l'alternance des engagements militaires avec les pourparlers diplomatiques. Ces dernières initiatives se sont matérialisées dans des alliances familiales conclues avec les dynasties germaniques de proximité, qui allaient légitimer l'engagement de la Bohême dans la compétition pour les fiefs des Babenberg, après la disparition du margrave Frédéric II dans la bataille de la rivière Leitha (1246) contre les forces du roi Béla IV de Hongrie. Cette déshérence qui a coïncidé avec le Grand Inter-

règne (1250-1273), durant laquelle le trône impérial du Saint-Empire romain fut vacant, a catalysé une dispute impliquant les nations de la frontière orientale de la *christianitas*, la diversité des forces participantes et les solutions envisagées anticipant les défis que la maison d'Autriche allait relever deux siècles et demie plus tard. L'impossibilité de concilier les prétentions formulées par les souverains de la Bohême, les Arpadiens et la famille germanique des Babenberg a imposé des actes de conduite politique innovante. Les accords de partage de l'ancienne marche autrichienne entre le roi Ottokar II de Bohême et l'héritier du trône de Hongrie ont dépendu du support de l'élite locale, intéressée à garder son statut privilégié et à restaurer rapidement l'ordre mis en cause par le spectre de nouvelles attaques mongoles. L'intervention militaire du roi tchèque en faveur des rebelles styriens révoltés contre le prince Étienne, fils du roi hongrois Béla IV, qui allait mettre fin aux prétentions hongroises sur l'Autriche après la victoire remportée à Kressenbrunn (1260), a été justifiée par la nécessité de protéger les habitants contre la barbarie des auxiliaires coumans et orthodoxes du roi de Hongrie. Les options des habitants des territoires disputés par les litigants et la légitimité de la position de ces derniers par des arguments légaux ou confessionnels ne firent qu'alimenter la dimension diplomatique et de propagande du conflit, qui influait sur l'engagement militaire. Or, ce fait était extrêmement important, dans les conditions où les forces participant aux combats représentaient des coalitions réunies de loyautés féodales, familiales et ethniques, dont le poids est difficile à établir, vu la précarité des sources. Ces multiples loyautés étaient influencées par un certain type de pragmatisme, qui rendait l'autorité du roi tchèque plus confortable que celle d'un souverain hongrois, étant donné qu'il était connecté aux relations de pouvoir de l'empire et gouvernait un espace familier aux habitants des principautés sud et est.

La solution de la question autrichienne s'est imposée comme une conséquence de l'option des électeurs germaniques pour l'élection du comte Rodolphe de Habsbourg comme empereur et des efforts de celui-ci de restaurer l'autorité impériale aux confins orientaux, qui avait été usurpée par les initiatives du souverain tchèque, dont le patronage s'exerçait aussi sur la faction royaliste de Hongrie. À la veille de l'affrontement final du nouvel empereur Rodolphe I^{er} de Habsbourg (1273-1291), l'ancien champion de l'ordre légal et participant actif à la croisade contre les Slaves restés païens se recommandait comme le défenseur des libertés polonaises menacées par l'empereur germanique, comme l'indique le Manifeste des Polonais rédigé en vue de la mobilisation de ces derniers contre l'ennemi commun des Slaves. Le texte appartenait à l'Italien Henri d'Isernia (Henricus de Isernia), qui identifiait la liberté à l'acceptation corporative, que l'on retrouve aussi dans les prises de position des barons anglais soulevés contre les abus des Plantagenêts, et supposait le droit exclusif des représentants de la

nation, les privilégiés, aux offices laïcs et ecclésiastiques du pays d'origine. L'activation de ce type de solidarité s'est matérialisée à court terme, entraînant les forces des ducs de Wielkopolska (La Grande-Pologne), les duchés méridionaux de la Pologne gravitant dans la sphère d'influence de la Hongrie, qui était du côté de l'empereur. L'apport de la cavalerie coumane s'est avéré essentiel dans la bataille décisive de Dürnkrut (Marchfeld) (1278), et le succès des forces impériales a signifié le transfert de la base de pouvoir des Habsbourg des régions occidentales de l'empire vers les confins des royaumes slave et hongrois. Sur le long terme, cette victoire a conduit à l'identification de la famille impériale à l'ordre politique et moral légitimé par le support du Saint-Siège, une constance durant l'existence de ce projet politique. Pour le royaume de Bohême, la défaite militaire a empiété sur la capacité de la monarchie de consolider son autorité sur l'aristocratie et les centres urbains, qui tendaient à capitaliser au niveau politique l'accumulation des ressources obtenues à la suite de l'expansion des échanges commerciaux régionaux. L'apparente faiblesse des derniers Přemysl leur a assuré le support de quelques factions des États voisins, dans les conditions des déshérences dynastiques du début du XIV^e siècle.

La réinterprétation de la légitimité du pouvoir et, surtout, l'impact des options confessionnelles du souverain ou sa préférence pour des collaborateurs appartenant à des groupes minoritaires ont fait carrière dans les deux royaumes apostoliques voisins de la Bohême, de la Hongrie des derniers Arpadiens et de la Pologne des Piast.

Le règne d'André II (1205-1235) offre les ressources d'une véritable étude de cas en ce sens et met en évidence les difficultés qui bloquaient la réformation d'un État aux aspirations quasi-impériales, affecté par des vulnérabilités structurelles. Les chroniques de l'époque et les historiens modernes s'accordent à blâmer les initiatives de l'ancien rebelle, devenu roi de Hongrie après la mort de son frère, Émeric I^{er} (1196-1204), qui ont attiré l'hostilité à la fois de la noblesse, des élites urbaines et du clergé, ses échecs mettant sur un plan secondaire une série d'actions de politique étrangère avec des implications à long terme pour les évolutions de la région. Les interventions dans les knézats russes occidentaux, qui ont épuisé les ressources économiques du pays, ont créé aussi une certaine légitimité pour les prétentions de la Couronne sur ces territoires, titres qui allaient justifier la participation de la maison d'Autriche au premier partage de la Pologne, en 1772. Selon la même logique, la participation à la croisade est devenue un instrument d'extension des possessions du royaume dans la péninsule balkanique, vu le vide de pouvoir généré par l'écroulement de l'Empire byzantin, mais aussi un moyen de médiation des litiges avec le Saint-Siège, provoqués par l'ascension économique des créanciers non-chrétiens de la Couronne. L'incompatibilité entre une politique étrangère active et la précarité

des ressources mises à la disposition de la monarchie a accentué la méfiance à l'égard de l'influence des étrangers sur le roi. Ainsi, l'entourage de la reine Gertrude de Méran a mis en cause même la loyauté dynastique et a provoqué des actes de révolte de la noblesse, qui ont culminé par l'assassinat de la reine (1213). L'impossibilité de trancher la dispute entre le souverain et l'aristocratie et l'ascendant de cette dernière, assuré par le contrôle effectif exercé sur l'administration du pays, a imposé la quête d'une solution légale, matérialisée par la Bulle d'or émise en 1222 et devenue la clé de voûte de l'identité sociale de la nation noble hongroise. Le caractère tout à fait innovant de ce document consistait dans le soi-disant *ius resistendi*, le droit de la noblesse de s'opposer aux mesures royales en raison de leur caractère abusif. Cette approche qui légalisait en fait des attitudes manifestes au sein de la noblesse par rapport à l'autorité légale et principalement sa réactualisation par le biais des confirmations qui précédaient les couronnements royaux institutionnalisait le caractère pluraliste de l'autorité étatique, légitimé sur le plan historique par les premières gestes latino-hongroises. Les difficultés rencontrées dans la réglementation des relations juridiques entre les communautés qui disposaient d'un statut privilégié se sont manifestées principalement dans les régions frontalières. Si la présence épisodique des chevaliers Teutoniques au Pays de Bârsa n'a pas laissé de traces durables en ce qui concerne l'autorité royale en Transylvanie, les tentatives répétées des communautés germaniques du sud du voïvodat d'obtenir une structure ecclésiastique autonome allaient déclencher un litige avec l'évêché d'Alba Iulia (Weißenburg, Gyulafehérvár). Dans le contexte de la crise d'autorité qui a affecté le royaume après la mort du roi Étienne V (1270-1272), les Saxons soulevés ont incendié en 1277 la résidence épiscopale et massacré les habitants hongrois, « à la tatare », comme le consignent les documents de la Diète du début du XIV^e siècle.

Les alliances dynastiques conclues par les derniers souverains arpadiens dans le monde ruthène et couman ont accru l'hostilité de la noblesse, aux craintes liées à l'influence des étrangers sur les décisions politiques et le patrimoine de la Couronne s'ajoutant aussi les suspicions à l'égard des options confessionnelles des auxiliaires du roi. Même si l'apport militaire des Coumans aux campagnes hongroises en Autriche et en Moravie avait été considérable, l'hostilité à l'égard de l'installation de potentiels compétiteurs dans des régions faiblement peuplées, de même que les suspicions liées au caractère formel de leur conversion au christianisme ont généré la solidarité de l'élite sociale hongroise sur les positions d'un nationalisme défensif et xénophobe. Elle se légitimait sous aspect idéologique par la nécessité de continuer la mission apostolique dans le paradigme rigoureux envisagé par les thèses du concile Latran IV (1215) et était accentuée

sous aspect économique par l'accaparement de fiefs dans des régions habitées par des communautés non-catholiques.

Ces convulsions ont alimenté de nouvelles crises dynastiques pendant la septième décennie du XIII^e siècle, activées par l'échec des tentatives d'accaparement de fiefs impériaux en faveur du duc Étienne. Les affrontements entre celui-ci et son père, le roi Béla IV (1235-1270), ont acquis les dimensions d'une guerre civile, où la lutte entre les générations s'est superposée sur une dispute entre deux factions qui opposa les représentants des anciens clans solidarisés autour du roi à la nouvelle élite militaire. La rébellion de ces forces n'a pas empiété sur la sécurité du royaume, le futur roi Étienne V de même que ses partisans des familles Aba et Csák s'avérant les promoteurs d'une politique offensive aux frontières est et sud. La compétition interne a ainsi généré une régénération des ressources administratives du royaume et un degré accru de participation des habitants de condition libre à la gestion des affaires publiques. En témoigne le grand nombre de mentions documentaires relatives à la convocation des forums représentatifs locaux et régionaux, qui reçurent des attributions plus larges dans les conditions de la défensive de la monarchie. Cette évolution vers une république nobiliaire a été inhibée par l'existence des pôles régionaux de pouvoir formés autour des fiefs des magnats, qui usurpaient à la fois le pouvoir royal et le pouvoir des nouvelles institutions des comitats, assumant des actes de politique étrangère, comme dans le cas des clans Borsa et Kán, à l'est de la Tisza, avec des effets bénéfiques à court terme en ce qui concerne la résistance devant l'attaque mongole de 1285, mais assumant aussi des actes de *nota infidelitatis*, tel que l'assassinat du roi Ladislas IV le Couman (1272-1290). La force des solidarités corporatives au sein de l'élite sociale hongroise s'est manifestée durant la convocation des premières diètes du royaume, et leur dimension confessionnelle a offert au Saint-Siège les ressources d'influence nécessaires pour résoudre la crise provoquée par la déshérence de la dynastie arpadienne en 1301 en faveur de Charles Robert d'Anjou (1308-1342), en opposition avec les options des grandes familles des magnats qui exerçaient le pouvoir effectif dans le royaume. D'ailleurs, la carrière napolitaine de la dynastie angevine illustre la vision politique de la Curie romaine, selon laquelle l'octroi de la dignité royale dans l'ensemble de la *christianitas* était l'attribut et la responsabilité du souverain pontife, et le principal argument de la propagande initiée par les légats papaux a visé la descendance du nouveau roi des anciens et saints rois de Hongrie. L'appartenance aux dynasties qui avaient donné à la chrétienté des rois comme saint Louis, saint Étienne et saint Émeric, devint la principale source de légitimité de la position de la dynastie angevine en Hongrie et dans le sud de l'Italie. Le retour de la nouvelle dynastie au paradigme apostolique sous les auspices duquel le royaume hongrois s'était placé dès ses origines a supposé l'abandon de la tolérance que l'écrit

historique attribuait au saint Étienne (997-1038) en vue de la restauration de l'autorité royale sur les catégories bénéficiant d'un statut légal et du renforcement de leur loyauté par le partage de la même foi. Dans les régions de l'est de la Tisza, les efforts du roi Charles Robert et surtout de son successeur, Louis I^{er} (1342-1382), de conditionner l'appartenance à la noblesse d'un diplôme émis par la chancellerie royale, droit réservé principalement aux fidèles de l'Église romaine, ont supposé l'intégration partielle de l'élite nobiliaire roumaine dans la soi-disant société légale, au prix de la perte de son identité confessionnelle ou de la dégradation sociale des dissidents. Ces options de politique intérieure ont contribué à l'accélération du processus de formation des États médiévaux roumains, par la croissance de la base de ressources humaines des structures politiques du sud et de l'est des Carpates. Cette croissance a été alimentée par l'apport des Transylvains expatriés, tout comme le partenariat ad-hoc entre la nouvelle monarchie et la moyenne noblesse qui dominait les forums des comitats a assuré au souverain les ressources nécessaires pour triompher dans la guerre civile contre les anciens magnats des frontières nord et est. La relation entre la loyauté envers le souverain, l'ethnie et la confession et le poids qu'elle avait acquis dans le mental des hommes éduqués du temps est mis en évidence par les écrits du vicaire franciscain de Bosnie, Bartholomé d'Alverne, prélat profondément impliqué dans l'organisation de la mission catholique au Banat.

LACTIVATION DES solidarités nationales, au niveau des groupes privilégiés ou ethniques, a généré une stabilisation des rapports de pouvoir en Europe centrale-orientale au début du XIV^e siècle, par la restauration de l'unité du royaume de Pologne sous l'autorité d'un représentant de la dynastie Piast. La matérialisation de ce projet, envisagé par les souverains Přemysl de Bohême tout au long du siècle précédent, a été catalysée par la réaction défensive des nobles polonais qui, selon les relations de Jan Długosz, étaient mécontents du fait que le roi Venceslas II (1278-1305) avait nommé des officiels tchèques dans les cités polonaises. La xénophobie motivée par la compétition politique a été précédée d'une certaine nationalisation de l'Église, qui a été accélérée par l'opposition de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique polonaise à l'influence croissante des prélats germaniques, favorisée par la proximité territoriale de l'ordre des chevaliers Teutoniques. La force de cette attitude de la plupart des habitants, transformée en état d'esprit par l'intermédiaire du clergé paroissial est documentée par les résolutions des synodes provinciaux organisés entre 1288-1305 à l'initiative de l'archevêque de Gniezno, Jakub Świnka. La médiation du grand prélat s'est avérée essentielle pour les accords conclus entre les descendants de la dynastie Piast en vue de la coordination des actions militaires contre les Tchèques et pour l'acceptation d'un candidat commun au trône de Pologne. La mobilisa-

tion de la noblesse au service de la cause du roi Ladislas I^{er} le Bref (Łokietek) (1320-1333) s'est réalisée sous l'impulsion de la relation entre l'appartenance à une catégorie sociale à l'origine ethnique implicite et les droits politiques et patrimoniaux. La loyauté à l'égard des intérêts nationaux prévalait contre la loyauté dynastique dans le cas de la petite noblesse de Głogów qui a annulé, par les résolutions des diètes locales, les droits héréditaires des fils du duc Henri III de Głogów sous l'accusation de l'alliance qu'ils avaient conclue avec les ennemis germaniques de la Pologne, et a reconnu l'autorité du roi Ladislas. La participation de la communauté au combat de restauration de l'unité interne a impliqué la nation au sens ethnique, au-delà des appartenances sociales médiévales, fait démontré par la participation de la population rurale aux combats contre les citadins germaniques de Cracovie, soulevés contre le roi et alliés avec le souverain germanique de Bohême. Le succès de la restauration des Piast sur le trône de Pologne a été dû aussi à une redéfinition des priorités de la politique du Saint-Siège, les papes d'Avignon étant moins sensibles à l'agenda offensif de l'ordre des chevaliers Teutoniques, mais surtout à l'alliance avec la Hongrie angevine qui allait générer après 1370 la première union personnelle des deux royaumes apostoliques sous le règne de Louis I^{er}. Les intérêts généraux de la croisade en Europe centrale-orientale ainsi qu'un certain pragmatisme ont déterminé les souverains de Hongrie à assumer les options politiques des magnats des familles Aba et Csák, qui soutenaient la rébellion polonaise contre le roi de Bohême. L'équilibre entre le militantisme identitaire des sujets et une vision politique ancrée dans les réalités de la proximité du royaume a inspiré la politique du roi Casimir le Grand (1333-1370), remarquable par ses disponibilités presque xénophiles à l'égard des communautés extrêmement dynamiques de commerçants et artisans juifs et arméniens, qui reçurent des privilèges juridiques et des immunités fiscales afin d'activer les échanges économiques dans les régions affranchies de l'autorité des Tatars. En même temps, le recours de l'Église polonaise à la persuasion dans ses tentatives de convertir les païens et les schismatiques à la foi catholique a favorisé les alliances temporaires conclues avec la Lituanie. La seule nation européenne restée en dehors de l'Église chrétienne y avait édifiée une expérience politique de succès, fondée sur la dualité du pouvoir des deux fils du grand-duc Gediminas, Jaunutis et Algirdas, responsables de la défense et d'une éventuelle extension des frontières ouest et est du grand-duché.

L ASSIMILATION DES expériences institutionnelles et culturelles du monde chrétien occidental et les disponibilités innovantes des élites des communautés central-est-européennes ont conféré aux États de la région un profil institutionnel spécifique, différant de l'archétype bureaucratique français, de la confédération knéziale russe et du pragmatisme suffisant du monde

des steppes, un profil dominé par l'équilibre entre les exigences du pouvoir et les intérêts de la société, dans son acception légale.



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Abstract

Between Innovation and the Recourse to Tradition: The Medieval State in Central and Eastern Europe in the 11th–14th Centuries: Historiographical Perspectives and Identity Discourse

The assimilation of the institutional and cultural experiences of the Western Christian world and the penchant for innovation shown by the Central and Eastern European elites led to the distinct institutional profile of the states in the region, one that differed from the French, Russian, and Mongol ones and was defined by the balance between the demands of the powers-that-be and the interests of society.

Keywords

christianitas, Holy See, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, dynastic alliances, national solidarities

Education Policy

1945–1946

The Experience Of Montenegro

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NATALIJA MILIKIĆ

Although during the reconstruction not everything that was planned could be implemented, solid results were achieved, especially given the financial possibilities of Montenegrin society and the profound lack of professional staff in all fields.

Introduction

THE TERM “reconstruction” in the postwar development of the Yugoslav socialist state extends chronologically from the liberation of Yugoslavia in 1945 to the adoption of the First Five-Year Economic Development Plan in 1947. The Yugoslav population was decimated by the war, with more than a million victims, while the scale of destruction in the country was one of the biggest in Europe, just behind that in the Soviet Union and Poland. One of the most important issues for the new government and its core, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), was the issue of the postwar reconstruction of the country. The reconstruction work in Yugoslavia and the Federal Republic of Montenegro included the alleviation of the devastating effects of the war, the initiation of economic flows and the provision of the most essential financial basis for the transition to planned production and social activities in the next phase,

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over which the state would have an economic monopoly, whereas state property would be the predominant form of property. The model for centralized governance and the seizure of private property was found in the experience of the Soviet Union, but in Yugoslavia it was implemented at a faster rate compared to the other socialist countries. By 1949, the measures of confiscation, nationalization, agricultural reform and colonization undertaken by the state and the KPJ had eradicated private property. After the liberation, the government blocked and suppressed any kind of black market, profiteering, unrest, etc. Reconstruction had to begin immediately, although there was an obvious shortage of everything needed: housing, professional staff of various profiles (reduced by 35–40% during the war), machines and roads for normal traffic and the movement of people and goods. The estimated war damage caused to Yugoslavia amounted to 46.9 billion dollars calculated in the prices of 1938. According to the estimated loss expressed in annual national income, Yugoslavia had the largest financial losses of the Second World War, ahead of Poland and the Soviet Union (Petranović 1988, 79-80; Bilandžić 1979, 111–113).

Postwar reconstruction plans began to be contemplated while the war was still in progress. When the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ) was established as the executive body of the new government, the Commission for Economic Reconstruction was set up under it in order to develop basic concepts and plans for the postwar reconstruction of the country. The Commission itself had the task of organizing bodies for the reconstruction of the country in the Yugoslav republics. The Presidency of the Montenegrin Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation (CASNO) set up the Department for Economic Reconstruction at its first session held in Kolašin on 17 July 1944. At the seventh session of the Presidency of the CASNO, held in Cetinje on 27 December 1944, in place of the Department for Economic Reconstruction, the Presidency established the Commission for Economic Reconstruction, which would operate as a body of the newly-formed Economic Council. The Presidency of the CASNO envisaged two stages of economic reconstruction of the country: the war and the postwar stage. The war stage mainly involved the most necessary work, which would serve the needs of the army and the bare minimum needs of the population. At this stage, the reconstruction of only the most important enterprises (e.g., sawmills) was foreseen, and the issue of rebuilding destroyed and burned buildings and flats, primarily flats for the families of fallen soldiers, disabled persons, internees and families of soldiers and rear-line workers imposed itself as necessary. In order to define the postwar reconstruction plan as precisely as possible and identify priorities, on 7 October 1944 the CASNO Presidency sent a letter to all district national liberation committees, i.e., their departments for economic reconstruction, in which it requested that

they provide it with data on the number of enterprises in each district (*srez*), the actions that needed to be taken for the purpose of their reconstruction, the number of various tools each region needed, the measures necessary for the reconstruction of agriculture, transport, postal services and the provision of food for the population, the raw materials that were to be purchased, as well as to collect data for the reconstruction of cities, the colonization and the decolonization, and to prepare a clear overview of the available workforce. All requested data had to be submitted to the Department for Economic Reconstruction no later than 10 November 1944 (Lakić 1975, doc. no. 14, 20, 56).

The reconstruction process in Montenegro was primarily designed to rebuild, as soon as possible, the transport infrastructure, economic enterprises and educational and cultural institutions that had been damaged in the war. Given that the territory of Montenegro was liberated in January 1945, and the entire territory of Yugoslavia in May 1945, the preparation and execution of reconstruction work began in different time periods in the liberated territories. The reconstruction as a whole consisted of two phases: the first phase included the reconstruction from the liberation of the country until March 1946, which was carried out without a general plan and without a sufficiently developed organization, while the second phase lasted between March 1946 and April 1947, when the first Five-Year Plan was adopted. For objective reasons, the reconstruction plan was intended to achieve the greatest possible impact with the modest financial resources available. For this reason, it was necessary to use voluntary unpaid work as much as possible, primarily members of the People's Front. The establishment of the Fund for the Reconstruction of the Country and Aid to the Affected Regions on 8 July 1945 was an important milestone for the financing of the reconstruction of the country (Petranović and Štrbac 1977, doc. no. 94). The financing of the reconstruction was carried out by allocating funds to the republics, which transferred them further to the national committees. As early as the beginning of January 1945, elections were held for the district and party leadership, and as a result, the People's Government of Montenegro was formed in April 1945. The government of the federal state was formed in March 1945 under the name of the Government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFJ). Following the adoption of the Constitution in 1946, it changed its name to the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY). The formation of local government bodies and the formation of republic and federal governments made possible the institutional action of the state authorities that directed the process of reconstruction through laws and regulations. In 1945, the Government of Montenegro approved 58,934,477 dinars for reconstruction, while the Government of the FPRY allocated 80 million dinars to Montenegro for 1946 in the form of a loan from the Reconstruc-

tion Fund (Marović 1987, 37). In addition to relying on own forces and sources, significant help came through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which was founded in 1943 with the aim of providing reconstruction assistance to countries that did not have the means to rebuild themselves. The UNRRA sent significant aid to Yugoslavia in terms of transport, hospital equipment and professional personnel, totaling more than 2.5 million tons of goods for the period 1945–1946 (Petranović 1988, 80–84).

State Measures to Stabilize Educational Conditions

AFTER THE liberation in 1945, the KPJ policy in the field of education in Yugoslavia sought to increase the number of secondary and lower vocational schools, especially technical and agricultural ones. The greatest shortage concerned the teaching staff. It was necessary, on the one hand, to satisfy the great desire of the population for study and education and for new primary schools. On the other hand, the pre-war legacy was such that, following the liberation of Yugoslavia, around 45% of the population was illiterate. In 1946, the number of children included in primary education in Yugoslavia doubled compared to the prewar period. The authorities particularly tried to change the social structure (composition) of the students, which had been unfavorable for the children of workers and peasants in prewar Yugoslavia (Petranović 1988, 142–146).

In order to understand the magnitude of the task that faced the Yugoslav authorities with respect to the reconstruction of the school system, consideration should be given to the extent of the destruction caused by the war and the infrastructure damage suffered in the domains of education and culture. In particular, Yugoslavia lost 65% of the buildings used for primary, secondary and higher education, out of the 11,000 that existed before the war. The buildings of almost all faculties in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Skopje, and Subotica were devastated. All theaters in the country were looted, while archives, museums and libraries also suffered enormous damage due to looting and destruction (Doknić, Petrović, and Hofman 2009, 20). In Montenegro, 290 primary school buildings sustained war damage amounting to 85 million dinars. Grammar school buildings and collections, teachers' and civic schools, teachers' libraries suffered damage worth 104,800,000 dinars (DACG, f. MPNRCG, folder 3, doc. no. 272/2/1945). A total of 320 school buildings in Montenegro were damaged or destroyed (Kovačević 1986, 33). Owing to the quickly completed work on the renovation of school buildings, the school year of 1945/1946 saw

570 primary and extension schools and 13 grammar schools operating in Montenegro (*Statistički 1955*, 186–194).

While carrying out activities on the renovation of school facilities, the Ministry of Education did not neglect other activities that were supposed to advance the teaching process and improve educational conditions. As early as August 1945, the Ministry of Education proposed a single curriculum for primary and secondary schools. The proposed curricula were not to be ideologically oriented; however, the Party and the new government did not approach this issue in a consistent manner. The ideological guidance of students was visibly present in the curricula for the subjects of history and the Serbian language, where special attention was devoted to the study of the role and development of the KPJ in the interwar period and during the Second World War. For instance, Serbian language lessons required students to learn by heart the songs glorifying the role of the KPJ in the war. History classes went one step further. Although other areas of national and general history were also represented, it was easy to see that the history curriculum gave particular prominence to the history of the KPJ, its ideological and partisan struggle and its role in the war. In the desire to present the Party and the new government in the best possible light and to show the importance they had in their historical development, there were some discrepancies in the curricula, such as chronological inconsistency in the approach to thematic lessons. Thus, for example, the Year 3 history curriculum first explored the Second World War with special emphasis on the situation in Montenegro, only to teach the historical development of Montenegro in the Middle Ages afterwards. Later interventions by the Ministry of Education gradually removed inconsistencies and irregularities from the curricula, although the subjects of history and the Serbian language could never be completely freed from ideological influence in teaching. Subjects in the field of natural sciences and foreign languages, as well as the subjects of singing, calligraphy, physical exercises, drawing and agricultural lessons, were not burdened with ideological content. There was no religious teaching in the curriculum. There was only an option for a religious studies teacher to define a religious education curriculum as a subject if parents decided to send their children to religious education (*Nastavni plan i program 1945*, 6–7, 16). Given that most social activities were under Party control and with strong ideological overtones, it was considered that there was no room for the old religion next to the “new religion” of communism. The population in Montenegro slowly drifted away from the church, which was especially manifest among the Orthodox population, even though the state passed laws that were the same for all three confessions in Yugoslavia and Montenegro. The Yugoslav and Montenegrin Constitutions adopted in 1946 separated the state from the church; religion was declared a private matter, which freed the

state from religion intervening in its activities, which meant the same for other areas of social activity: education, science, culture (Kovačević 1986, 276–277). Religious education in Montenegro was initially provided on an elective basis, and as such it was almost never provided. Already in the 1945/1946 school year religious teaching was not foreseen in the curriculum. At the Fourth Session of the Ministerial Council of Montenegro held on 16 March 1946, it was decided to abolish religious education in Montenegro (Bojović 1989, 93).

The reconstruction of the school system meant not only the repair of school buildings, but also the opening of new schools and the introduction of new forms of education. The transition to seven-year compulsory education took place without significant legal rigor, because eight-year education had been introduced in some federal republics even before the war (Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina). On 26 October 1945, the Provisional National Assembly of the DRJ passed the Law on Compulsory Seven-Year Education. In accordance with the federal law, during 1946 the republics were to pass laws on seven-year schooling, which would have a positive effect on the further development of primary and secondary education (Petranović 1988, 146–147). The Constitution of the FPRY, adopted by the assembly on 31 January 1946, provided a framework for the institutional consolidation of schools, cultural and other educational institutions (*Ustav FNRJ 1946*, Article 38).

Particular attention in the reconstruction of the school system was given to the literacy of the population. Following the war, the literacy rate in Yugoslavia was about 45%. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, before the beginning of the Second World War, Montenegro occupied the third place after Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of the number of illiterate people. Archival data suggest that after the liberation, there were 79,741 illiterate people in Montenegro, out of a total population estimated at around 371,000. Of that number, 6,000 became literate in 1945, and another 6,293 in 1946—a total of 12,293 inhabitants. In the winter literacy campaign (November 1946–March 1947), another 17,071 people were included until the end of January 1947, which was 25.30% of all illiterates. This reduced the number of illiterate people to 50,377. Of that number, there were 23,000 people over the age of 69 who were not eligible for literacy programs due to their age. Therefore, in 1947, there were still 27,377 persons left for literacy programs (DACG, f. MPNRCCG, doc. no. 1; 1/1947). From December 1945 to the middle of February 1946, 226,289 dinars were collected for literacy programs in districts and towns (back then there were 17 districts and three towns) in Montenegro. In addition, 708 lectures, 282 events and 510 conferences were held in the entire Republic during one week (1–7 January 1946) with the aim of popularizing the work on general education, presenting it as a general problem, as a national priority, which

in truth it was. Thanks to the adoption of the working week, 943 students were introduced to schools, people who otherwise would have been forced to attend literacy seminars and courses (AJ, f. 315–20–42, doc. no. 20–121/1946). Considering the objective difficulties of Montenegrin society, the process of literacy development in the population suffered from improvisations and haphazard work, so some problems were repeated. In the battle against illiteracy, special attention was paid to the youth, i.e., their literacy and their greater involvement in the educational process. In November and early December 1946, an average of 15 new literacy courses were opened in each district (six in Danilovgrad, 14 in Nikšić, 17 in Titograd). Between 10 November and 20 December 1946, the number of people enrolled in courses increased by 3% of the total number of illiterates. In each region, an average of 10 new reading groups were formed, and groups that almost dissolved during the summer due to irregular meetings were reactivated (DACG, OSOAGP, f. PK KPJ CG, no doc. no./1946). Considering the results achieved in the literacy campaign, the National Youth District Committees of Cetinje and Berane predicted that during this campaign all illiterate youth would become literate, which still turned out to be an overly optimistic prediction. For the 1946/1947 school year, a total of 227 multi-education courses were planned for the districts and towns of Montenegro: the town of Cetinje—63, the district of Bijelo Polje—44, the district of Bar—38, the district of Kolašin—34, the town of Nikšić—33, and the district of Danilovgrad—15 courses (DACG, f. MPNRCG, folder 86, doc. no. 22; 2/1947).

Tables 1 and 2 give a statistical representation of the literate population in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and Montenegro in the reconstruction period 1945–1946. The large percentage of the literate population in the FPRY indicates that the state, confronted with undeniably difficult financial and other circumstances, managed to significantly reduce the illiteracy rate in the population and prepare it for the next phase, which would be implemented in the First Five-Year Development Plan 1947–1952 (AJ, f. 317–50–73).

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF COURSES AND LECTURERS

People's Republic	Courses and lecturers	Numbers by years	
		1945/1946	1947
TOTAL in FPRY	Courses	17,584	31,470
	Lecturers	19,548	34,323
Serbia	Courses	9,235	12,318
	Lecturers	10,987	12,655
Croatia	Courses	1,750	7,632
	Lecturers	6,123	10,052

Continued on next page

Table 1—Continued

People's Republic	Courses and lecturers	Numbers by years	
		1945/1946	1947
Slovenia	Courses	–	6
	Lecturers	–	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Courses	5,091	8,319
	Lecturers	900	7,981
Macedonia	Courses	1,000	2,188
	Lecturers	1,030	2,315
Montenegro	Courses	508	1,007
	Lecturers	508	1,310

SOURCE: AJ, f. 317–50–73.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF COURSE PARTICIPANTS MADE LITERATE

People's Republic	Participants and those who became literate	Numbers by years	
		1945/1946	1947
TOTAL in FPRY	Participants	464,341	678,962
	Became literate	319,203	455,077
	%	68.7	67.0
Serbia	Participants	231,584	284,058
	Became literate	171,213	211,751
	%	73.9	74.5
Croatia	Participants	52,000	102,049
	Became literate	35,350	59,861
	%	68.0	58.7
Slovenia	Participants	–	244
	Became literate	–	226
	%	–	92.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Participants	131,450	207,157
	Became literate	87,024	126,742
	%	66.2	61.2
Macedonia	Participants	32,307	60,973
	Became literate	13,323	37,411
	%	41.2	61.4
Montenegro	Participants	17,000	24,481
	Became literate	12,293	19,086
	%	72.3	78.0

SOURCE: AK, f. 317–50–73.

The literacy campaign continued in the following years and yielded good results. According to archival data, until 1950 the FPRY achieved good results in increasing the literacy of the population, as a still poor and underdeveloped country. In 1950, 24,000 illiterates were registered in Macedonia, 19,000 in Serbia, more than 17,000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, no data were given for Croatia, while for Montenegro it was stated that there was almost no illiterate population anymore (AJ, f. CK KPJ, folder VIII, II/2-d-40/1950).

In accordance with the proclaimed goal of training the necessary professional staff, the state tried to endow the institutions of lower and higher education as soon as possible. The pre-war universities in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade began their work in November 1945, and, with the opening of the Faculty of Law in Sarajevo in October 1946, the foundations of the future University of Bosnia and Herzegovina were practically laid (Petranović 1988, 147–149). Since there were no higher education institutions in Montenegro, and there was a great need for professional staff in all fields, they immediately began to think about sending future students to larger education centers. Until October 1945, the following numbers of students from Montenegro applied for studies in Belgrade: 89 students for the Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Engineering—62, Faculty of Law—115, Agronomy—35, Pharmacy—30, Medicine—68, Higher Commercial School—44, Academy of Arts—1 and the Music Academy—1, a total of 445 (DACG, f. MPNRCG, folder 4, doc. no. 571; 1/1945). The orientation of Montenegrin students towards Belgrade and other major Yugoslav cities and university centers for the purpose of schooling and education at institutions of higher learning would remain significant in the coming years and even decades.

The Main Problems in the Implementation of Education Policy

THE SITUATION in education (especially in financial terms) was quite difficult in 1946. Even though many buildings for education had been renovated in the previous year, due to their insufficient numbers, numerous private houses were used as schools, which, however, did not correspond to the teaching process in both pedagogical and hygienic terms. In order to somewhat improve this bad situation, in 1945 the Ministry of Education allocated the sum of 6,943,970 dinars for the repair of schools. Thanks to this, 229 schools were repaired, while the repair of 200 school buildings was planned for 1946 and of 149 school buildings for 1947. At the end of the first quarter of 1946, there

were six higher primary schools with 200 students, taught by nine teachers, almost all of whom also worked in primary schools, so they were very burdened by the number of classes they had to teach. In the same period, two schools for national minorities were opened, so there were 13 in total, and another four new planned schools could not be opened due to the lack of teaching staff. There were 10 kindergartens with 420 children enrolled and 13 employees. The teaching process in this period was confronted with several problems that were pointed out by the education inspectorates in their reports: lack of appropriate school buildings, furniture and teaching aids, insufficient number of textbooks in all subjects, lack of stationery and other student accessories, lack of professional teachers, the irregular attendance of students, especially the girls. Due to the unhygienic conditions, there were children suffering from flu, smallpox, mumps and scabies in several districts, while in the districts of Podgorica and Bijelo Polje there was one case of spotted typhus, and in the district of Rožaje there was one with a fatal outcome. Nevertheless, when considering the hygienic and financial conditions of that time and the poverty of the population and society as a whole, it can be concluded that the health of the students was relatively good (AJ, f. 315–22–50, doc. no. 22–177/1946).

In secondary schools, in addition to the financial difficulties that affected primary schools as well, during inspections by the Ministry of Education, certain shortcomings were noticed in terms of understanding and interpreting the teaching subjects, as well as in terms of the methodological procedures of some teachers and their attitude towards students (AJ, f. 315–22–50, doc. no. 22–189/1946).

In upper secondary schools (gymnasiums), great difficulties were met due to the continuous shortage of teaching staff and teaching aids, primarily textbooks and school supplies. In order to make up for the lack of school supplies in the districts of Šavnik, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, and Nikšić, the population made their own writing boards and chalk at home. In many school buildings, especially private ones, the classrooms were small and dark with a large number of students. During the winter months, some schools were without stoves to heat the classrooms, without windows and lighting, even though classes were held in the afternoon as well. Housing conditions for students in some towns were very poor, which forced students to travel from their villages to schools which were several kilometers away. In truth, the economic circumstances of their parents also did not allow the students to live in the place of education, so this caused a lot of tardiness and missed classes. The Ministry of Education of Serbia helped schools in Montenegro by providing a number of textbooks, which, however, could not meet the real needs. Textbooks on the general history of the ancient, middle

and modern ages (2,900 copies), Russian language (4,100), botany (2,290) and logarithmic tables (1,450) were received. The schools were partially provided with various school and office supplies, and due to the marked shortage in aids and other textbooks, two sets of physics textbooks were acquired, and three more were ordered in order to at least partially alleviate the shortage (AJ, f. 315–22–50, doc. no. 22–181/1946).

The lack of teachers, especially qualified ones, was also reflected in the significant decrease in number of classes in all subjects in all schools. Due to the lack of textbooks, teachers often resorted to dictating the content, so the Ministry of Education instructed that this method of teaching should be avoided because students are passive during dictation and thus time is wasted in class. Due to the poor financial situation of a part of the students, student kitchens worked at all schools and in three student dormitories. In particular, 2,350 students (1,992 boys and 358 girls) were fed in these kitchens, which represented an increase in the number of students by about 380 compared to the end of December 1945. A total of 375 students (259 boys and 116 girls) were admitted to the halls of residence. Of the total number of students, 25% ate in the student kitchens. Of that, 2.5% paid the full monthly price, which did not exceed 500 dinars. Of the total number of students in secondary schools, there were 2.3% of children without both parents, about 26% without one parent, while there were about 15.6% of students of poor parents with many children (six and more) (AJ, f. 317–48–71, no doc. no./1945).

In this period, the Ministry of Education, on its part, took all necessary measures to improve teaching in schools. It regularly sent out inspectors and issued various instructions and directives through communiques: Rules on the Teacher's Diploma Exam, the Law on Compulsory Primary Education, Rules on Lower Course Exams, as well as various recommendations regarding discipline in schools, the expulsion of students from schools, shortcomings in teaching and educational work, etc. The improvement of conditions for holding classes was not forgotten, so a project was devised to build new school buildings in Andrijevića, Bar, Kolašin and Pljevlja, as well as to repair the existing ones in Bijelo Polje, Danilovgrad, Nikšić, Podgorica, Ulcinj, and Cetinje. In order to modernize the teaching process, five sets for laboratory teaching (for physics and chemistry), history, algebra, natural history textbooks and other necessary school accessories were acquired at the same time. The books were purchased from the Belgrade-based Prosveta publishing company and from the Zagreb-based Nakladni zavod. All textbooks were immediately distributed to the schools, and the most necessary teaching equipment was purchased: blackboards, rulers, etc. (AJ, f. 315–22–50, doc. no. 22–86/1946).

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YUGOSLAVIA

Year	FPRY	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	Croatia	Macedonia	Slovenia	Serbia			
							TOTAL	Central Serbia	Kosovo	Vojvodina
Primary schools										
1939	9,190	1,111	464	2,581	817	946	3,271	2,333	258	680
1945/6	10,666	743	596	3,433	1,047	926	3,921	2,973	428	520
1946/7	11,752	1,064	616	3,522	1,052	1,277	4,221	3,176	515	530
Secondary schools										
1939	1,086	158	83	241	105	116	383	156	13	214
1945/6	959	83	16	212	39	218	391	240	26	125
1946/7	1,169	111	21	269	55	249	464	285	31	148

SOURCE: *Jugoslavija* 1988, 357, 360; *Jugoslavija* 1965, 291–292.

Statistical data show that during the reconstruction, the number of primary and secondary schools in Yugoslavia increased, which fulfilled a very important condition for the further planned improvement of educational and cultural conditions in the coming period, foreseen in the First Five-Year Development Plan 1945–1952.

By sending students to other cities for education, and given the arrival of already trained professional staff for work in Montenegro, before the beginning of the Five-Year Development Plan, Montenegro had 2,600 skilled workers of various profiles and levels of qualification and 1,350 intermediate professional staff, which was still insufficient in relation to real needs. The professional staff that was available was distributed in the state administrative apparatus and in larger companies. All ministries felt the lack of professional staff; for instance, 163 teachers and one lawyer were registered at the Ministry of Education. It is clear that despite all the efforts made to overcome the lack of qualified staff, this problem was still significant. This, as expected, slowed down the development of education in Montenegro (Marović 1987, 138).

Conclusion

THE RECONSTRUCTION of old institutions and the creation of new ones in the fields of education, science and culture ran parallel to the creation and reconstruction of the Yugoslav state and its government and administrative bodies in 1945–1946. By abolishing private, cooperative and endow-

ment ownership, it was intended that all financial and technical means become the basis for a new economic, cultural and educational life shaped by the state and the KPJ. A new socio-economic order had to be formed and consolidated, which would rapidly replace the pre-war underdevelopment. In order to carry out the planned reorientation towards the construction of an industrial society from a hitherto predominantly agrarian society, importance was also given to the renewal of educational activity, which in practice meant the fight against illiteracy, the renovation and opening of new schools, compulsory primary education, the availability and openness of secondary and higher education to the population and the constant improvement of the teaching process. The modernization of society could only be carried out comprehensively, and education and training were planned as very important levers in the development of society. Although during the reconstruction not everything that was planned could be implemented, solid results were achieved, especially given the financial possibilities of Montenegrin society and the profound lack of professional staff in all fields. To grasp the extent of the work done in the reconstruction, it is enough to point out that the number of primary schools increased from 596 in the 1945/1946 school year to 616 in the 1946/1947 school year. Similarly, the number of secondary schools for general education grew from 16 in the 1945/1946 school year to 21 in the 1946/1947 school year. In this period, Montenegro did not have a developed network of higher education institutions, as there was only one teachers' school, and this problem would be addressed in the next period of the development of society, between 1947 and 1952.



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Abstract

Education Policy 1945–1946: The Experience of Montenegro

The paper analyses the education policy and the development of schools in Yugoslavia and Montenegro during the reconstruction period of 1945–1946. In this period, the state had to urgently solve a number of problems in society, with the improvement of educational conditions posing a special challenge. In Montenegro, this was especially difficult to organize, keeping in mind its socio-economic underdevelopment. The plan of the state and of the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to rebuild the country economically, educationally and culturally also included fixing the situation in education. It was considered impossible to start the modernization of society and of the economy if these processes were not simultaneously implemented in education and schooling. Given the economic and financial conditions affecting Montenegrin society at that time, the achieved results in education take on greater importance when viewed against these realities.

Keywords

culture, school system, education, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, Communist Party of Yugoslavia

GORDANA ROVČANIN
PREMOVIĆ

Hotel Avala in Budva Pioneer of Tourism and Tourist Architecture on the Montenegrin Coast



THE OLD HOTEL AVALA

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chitecture, University of Montenegro.

Introduction

THE DEVELOPMENT of tourism in Montenegro was influenced by the expansion of tourism in its vicinity, particularly within the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which Montenegro was a part. The general periodization of tourism development on a global level also applies to the development of tourism in Montenegro, albeit with a noticeable lag compared to other Mediterranean countries. Compared to most European countries, organized tourism in Montenegro developed with a delay of about four decades.¹ The Montenegrin coast has undergone fundamental sociological, economic, social, and tourism changes in the last two centuries. The development of organized tourism intensified after the Berlin Congress of 1878, when Montenegro expanded its territory and gained international recognition. Natural and social assets gained tourist value as people started using them for leisure, visiting clean and

healthy natural environments for health reasons, relaxation, and recreation.² Initially, tourists visited the coast for medical reasons, due to the healing properties of seawater and the presence of sulphur springs. During that time, forms of tourism such as thermalism, seaside and lake tourism, and spa tourism developed.³ Almost all hotel facilities that appeared in the first half of the 20th century serviced the health and therapeutic tourism.

The development of tourism and tourist construction during this period was significantly influenced by the general development of transportation, the emergence of new means of transport and communication methods. In the early phases of tourism development, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the impact of tourism on an area or a region was linked to the public transportation means of that time and the expansion of the transport network. At that time, transport mainly involved trains and ships. Tourist zones developed near or around railway stations, following a nodal concentration principle. However, later on, with the advent of mass tourism, the location of tourist spots changed. Automobiles became the primary means of transport, thus increasing the traffic between tourist centers. Thus, larger areas became spaces for building tourist facilities. Contrary to the previously dominant polycentric development, a longitudinal development of tourist zones emerged.⁴ Mass tourism steadily occupied the coastal areas, completely taking over entire areas and transforming the natural coastal landscape into a new type of landscape—a *tourist landscape* that strives to appear natural, though it essentially is not.⁵ The construction of the Adriatic Highway on the southern Yugoslav coast in the 1960s led to a new way of developing tourist zones along the coast, prompting the development of numerous spatial plans. Some municipalities began the planned use of the coast for tourism purposes earlier, in the first half of the 20th century, as was the case with Budva.

General tourism recorded a steady growth only from 1939, with a more intensive development after World War II. In Montenegro, tourism first developed in Cetinje, the capital of Montenegro at the time, in the first half of the 19th century, and then on the Montenegrin coast in the Bay of Boka Kotorska. More intensive tourist movements towards the southern part of the Montenegrin coast, which includes Budva, were not recorded in this initial period of tourism development. The Budva area played a very significant role in tourism development due to its favorable geographical position and tourist attractions. This was influenced by favorable geomorphological, hydrographic, and climatic conditions, as well as by the numerous cultural-historical monuments of this part of the Adriatic.

Several researchers have extensively studied the topic of tourism development in Montenegro and the former SFR Yugoslavia. Two characteristic periods

of tourism development and construction are recognized globally: the development of tourism until 1945, that is, until the end of World War II, and the development of tourism from 1945 to 1991, after the end of World War II. The first period lasted until World War I and is divided into two parts: the period of tourism analogues, which lasted until 1845, and the period of organized tourism.⁶ During the period of tourism analogues, a limited number of people travelled, so such movements did not have a significant social impact. These social movements continued until the first half of the 20th century, when rapid economic development brought with it the beginning of organized tourism. The period of mass tourism is actually the period of working people's tourism, characterized by mass tourist movements. In this second case, participation in tourism is based on paid annual leaves and free time, which was common throughout the former SFR Yugoslavia. The period of mass tourism is associated with modern tourism, characterized by two periods: the initial period between the two World Wars and the second period after World War II, with a major expansion of tourism.

Conditions for the Emergence and Development of Tourism on the Budva Riviera

Natural Conditions for Tourism Development

THE FACTORS that conditioned the emergence and development of tourism in Montenegro were primarily natural: geographical—the Adriatic coast, climatic—a favorable climate for tourism development, and morphological—suitable locations for building tourist facilities. The southern and central parts of the Montenegrin coast, which include the Budva, Bar, and Ulcinj Rivas, differ geographically and morphologically from the northern part, which comprises the Bay of Boka Kotorska, including the towns of Tivat, Kotor, and Herceg Novi. The southern and central parts of the Montenegrin coast are characterized by greater openness to the Adriatic Sea compared to the northern part, which is more enclosed, in the form of the Bay of Boka Kotorska. Compared to the Bay, which has a longer overall coastline, the southern and central parts have a longer coastline suitable for swimming (table 1). The coastal region of Montenegro encompasses an asymmetrical narrow strip which starts at the Bojana River, which forms the border with Albania. In the northwest, the coastal area is wide and continuous up to Budva, unlike the Bay of Boka Kotorska, where the coastline is more indented. In the southeast, in the Bar

hinterland, the coastal area narrows significantly, in some places reaching widths of less than two kilometers. From Bar, the low coastal plain expands into the spacious Ulcinj Field. The total Montenegrin coastline is 277,925 meters long, with 52,250 meters of coastline suitable for swimming.⁷ Percentage-wise, 24.6% of the coastline suitable for swimming belongs to Budva, i.e., 12,850 meters of the Budva Riviera's coastline are suitable for swimming.

TABLE 1. THE TOTAL BALANCE OF THE MONTENEGRIN COAST
AND THE PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUAL PARTS

	TOTAL length (m)	(%)	Suitable for swimming (m)	(%)	Not suitable for swimming (m)	(%)
Boka Kotorska	161,000	57.9	15,850	30.3	145,150	64.3
Budva	38,075	13.7	12,850	24.6	25,225	11.2
Bar	46,150	16.6	8,450	16.2	37,700	16.7
Ulcinj	32,700	11.8	15,100	28.9	17,600	7.8
TOTAL	277,925	100.0	52,250	100.0	225,675	100.0

SOURCE: Dokić, 10.

Budva occupies the central part of the Montenegrin coast, which is 21 km long, 3–5 km wide, and has a total area of 122 km² (fig. 1).⁸ The altitude of the coastal area reaches up to 100 meters, making this part most suitable for tourism development. The Municipality of Budva comprises three entities: Budva with Jaz, the coastline from Kamenovo to Petrovac, and Petrovac with Buljarica.⁹ Budva has large fields: Budva, Bečići, Buljarica, and Mrčevo. The most attractive geomorphological part of the Budva Riviera is the island of Sveti Stefan, connected to the mainland by a sandy isthmus.¹⁰ The Budva Riviera includes several smaller islands.¹¹

The Budva Riviera has 38 km of indented coastline with islands, of which one-third is suitable for swimming—12.7 km. Budva has 35 Mediterranean beaches, 23 accessible from the land and 12 only from the sea. The length of sandy beaches in Budva is 9.4 km, and pebble beaches are 3.3 km. The total area of beaches on the Budva Riviera is 358,000 m².¹² The Budva Riviera extends from Jaz beach in the north to Buljarica beach in the south, near the border with the Municipality of Bar. The total length of beaches in Budva is approximately 5,300 meters, with an area of approximately 160,000 m².¹³ The Budva Riviera boasts an attractive coastline and a large number of beaches suitable for swimming (table 2).¹⁴

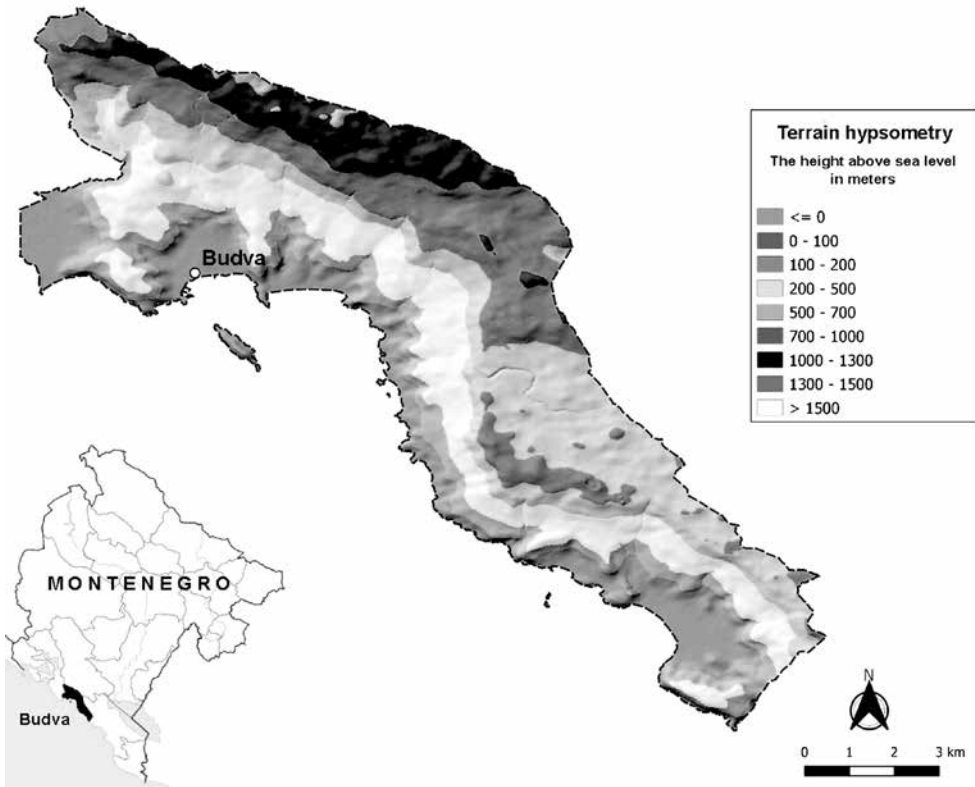


FIG. 1. GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF BUDVA
SOURCE: Excerpt from the Geographic Information System.

TABLE 2. BEACHES ON THE BUDVA RIVIERA

Location	Beaches	Beach length (m)
Budva town	Jaz—big beach	900
	Jaz—small beach	300
	Trsteno	100
	Mogren first and second beach	370
	Slovenska beach	1,500
	Zavala	110
	beaches on the island of Sveti Nikola	
Bečići	Bečići beach	1,950
Sveti Stefan	Sveti Stefan—two beaches	750
	Miločer—big beach	260

Continued on next page

Table 2—Continued

Location	Beaches	Beach length (m)
	Miločer—small beach	130
	Drobni pijesak	270
Pržno	Pržno	260
	Kamenovo	350
Petrovac	Petrovačka beach	650
	Lučice	250
	Buljarica	2,150
Perazića do	Perazića do	300

SOURCE: Data on the length of beaches from the *Revizija Generalnog urbanističkog plana Budve—Osnove plana Budva*, 15.

Valuable Architectural Heritage of Budva

BUDVA IS one of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic coast, dating back to the 4th century BC. It is two and a half thousand years old. The Old Town of Budva was built on a small island connected to the mainland by a sandy isthmus. Over the centuries, Budva was ruled by Illyrians (4th–2nd centuries BC), Romans (2nd century BC–4th century AD), Byzantines, Stefan Nemanja (12th–14th centuries), the Venetian Republic (15th–end of the 18th century), and briefly by the Austro-Hungarians at the end of the 18th and in the early 19th centuries, as well as the French in the early 19th century, and again by the Austro-Hungarians before becoming part of Montenegro in 1918.¹⁵ These different periods of rule greatly influenced the development of the town, creating a unique urban core with a multi-layered system of fortifications. The Old Town of Budva was located on a peninsula connected to the mainland on its western side. The Citadel, also known as the Castle of St. Mary, is situated on an elevation towards the open sea to the south, while the harbor was located in a sheltered position to the north of the town.¹⁶ The Old Town of Budva is surrounded by thick walls built in the 15th century, which have undergone several modifications in later periods. In the 16th century, Budva was enclosed by walls with six towers, and the town fortress had two towers.

Today's Old Town of Budva forms a unique architectural and urban entity of the Mediterranean type, consisting of densely built structures within a network of narrow, cobblestone streets and squares surrounded by walls dating from the late medieval period. The Budva Riviera extends over the Budva Field, occupying the coastal strip from Jaz to Buljarica. The historical heritage of Budva

includes the well-preserved old town, encircled by well-preserved city walls and buildings from the medieval era. The following churches are situated in the Old Town: St. Ivan (7th century), St. Mary (9th century), St. Sava (15th century), and the Holy Trinity (15th century). Above Budva is the Austrian fortress on Spas Hill. Archaeological excavations in 1936 uncovered material culture from the Greek, Illyrian, and Roman periods.¹⁷

Budva has suffered multiple times from Turkish attacks, fires, and particularly from earthquakes, the most notable being in 1667, which completely destroyed Budva, leading to the reconstruction of new walls on the foundations of the old ones. The current appearance of Budva closely resembles its state after the reconstruction from that earthquake. The second major earthquake struck Budva in 1979, causing extensive damage to historical and cultural monuments, especially the walls and buildings in the Old Town. Immediate restoration and rehabilitation efforts followed, fully restoring and reconstructing Budva. During the rehabilitation and restoration of the heavily damaged old town, new archaeological discoveries were made, enriching the scientific knowledge about Budva's historical development.

Tourist Facilities Development on the Budva Riviera

THE ACCELERATED development of transportation significantly influenced the growth of mass tourism on the Montenegrin coast and the Budva Riviera. The development of road and then rail transport in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries was crucial. Some roads existed earlier, such as the Kotor–Budva road, built during the French rule, from 1807 to 1813. The construction of the Cetinje–Budva road in 1931, which connected the Budva Riviera with Montenegro's interior regions, and the opening of air traffic between Belgrade and Podgorica in 1930, were of major importance. During the interwar period, Budva became an exceptionally attractive tourist destination. Budva was the first tourist destination to prioritize tourism as a long-term societal and economic development strategy.¹⁸ Air traffic in Montenegro developed only after World War II, with the construction of the Adriatic Highway through the Budva Field in 1965, further stimulating the development, planning, and utilization of Montenegro's coastal area. The Adriatic Highway connected Budva, Bar, and Ulcinj with Kotor, Dubrovnik, and further to the central and northern Adriatic.¹⁹

The origins of tourism on the Budva Riviera date back to the late 19th century. However, tourism was not yet an economic activity; rather, it was the

beginning of visits by a small number of people to attractive coastal areas. Organized tourism developed between the two world wars. After World War I, foreign tourists, and later domestic ones, visited the Budva area. In 1934, Budva had the following accommodation facilities: Hotel Balkan (9 rooms, 17 bed places), Hotel Beograd (16 rooms, 25 bed places), Hotel Budva (7 rooms, 12 bed places), and Hotel Mogren (7 rooms, 13 bed places).²⁰ The first exclusive tourist facilities on the Budva Riviera were the Karađorđević royal family's summer residence Miločer in Miločer, Grand Hotel Avala in Budva, and Hotel Palas in Petrovac (built in 1938).²¹ Tourism development also led to the expansion of Budva beyond its historical boundaries. The emergence of the new settlement outside the Old Town's fortified walls dates back to 1938, when Hotel Avala was built near the Old Town.²² This hotel's construction outside the Old Town's boundaries opened up new perspectives and indicated future directions for Budva's tourism development.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, hospitality services in Budva were taken to a higher level. There was an increase in the number of bed places in the tourism sector, necessitating the introduction of a new categorization system under which the hotels in Budva were categorized as follows: *first class*—only Hotel Avala, as it had hot and cold running water and electric lighting in the rooms; *second class*—no hotels, as they lacked electric lighting; *third class*—hotels and villas with over ten rooms and running hot and cold water in the rooms, including Hotels Balkan and Mogren, Villa Rajković and Villa Medin; *fourth class*—hotels with fewer than ten rooms and private accommodations without running water in the rooms.²³

The construction of houses near the old town core began only in the early 20th century, with few structures existing earlier. Tourism development between the two world wars spurred the construction of new residential and tourist buildings outside the Old Town and the reconstruction of some buildings within the historic core.²⁴ The first urban plan for Budva, the Regulatory Plan of Budva, created in 1939 by architect Bogdanović and engineer Gusina, was one of the first urban plans on the entire Montenegrin coast. Tourism development also led to the construction of private vacation homes in Budva. Shortly after the first urban plan was adopted, World War II interrupted and halted the construction of both tourist facilities and private homes.

After World War II, a new socio-political system emerged with the formation of the new state, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.²⁵ Tourism development in the postwar period was so intense that it became the leading and almost the only economic activity in the area. In this period, Budva began to expand territorially beyond the Old Town walls into the Budva Field, with the construction of public, residential, and tourist complexes. Two urban entities

were formed in Budva, with different structures and physiognomies: the Old Town of Budva and the new part of the town in the Budva Field. Construction went unplanned until the urban plan for Budva was devised in 1955. Architects Aleksandar Đorđević and Uroš Martinović created the spatial plan for Budva, laying the foundation for the urbanization of the Budva Field and the Budva Riviera. The planned construction of Budva followed.²⁶ Structures were built in three zones: at the base of Spas and Topliš hills in the northwest Budva Field, on the Budva Field between the Adriatic Road and Slovenska Beach, and on the eastern edge of the Budva Field.²⁷ Old Budva expanded towards Mogren, the Budva Field, and Slovenska Beach, while the Budva Field between Slovenska Beach and the Adriatic Highway was designated for hotels and tourist facilities.

In the first postwar decade, tourism development was modest, with minimal use of the Budva Riviera's tourist potential until 1958. Tourism development in this period mainly involved activating existing tourist accommodations built before the war. For the most part, this was constrained by limited transportation links and undeveloped supporting activities. The first hotels that opened immediately after World War II were: Hotel Avala in 1946 (96 rooms, 186 bed places)²⁸ and then Hotel Miločer in 1947. In the following years, vacation facilities for organized worker, youth, and children's holidays were built. Hotels Avala, Balkan, Mogren, Budva, and Villa Medin were nationalized during this period.²⁹ New commercial hospitality capacities, including the new Hotel Mogren (78 bed places), were built and opened in 1959. The town-hotel Sveti Stefan (226 bed places), which emerged from adapting and repurposing traditional fisherman's houses into luxurious tourist apartments, was opened in 1960.³⁰

During the 1960s and 1970s, tourism became the primary economic activity in Budva, experiencing a dynamic and intensive growth. This growth was facilitated by the development of transportation, particularly the construction of the Adriatic Highway. All hotels built and opened during this period on the Budva Riviera were categorized as B-category hotels, with the exception of Hotel Maestral in Pržno, which was an A-category hotel. In this period, the first major hotel complexes were built on Slovenska Beach and Bečići Beach, and Hotel Avala villas were built as well.³¹ Tourist complexes and hotels were also constructed near the Budva Old Town. Such a direct contact between the Old Town and the new tourist facilities, along with the impact of tourism on the Old Town's functioning, is best exemplified by the construction of Hotel Avala in Budva (fig. 2).

The dynamic growth of tourism typical of Budva in the 1960s and 1970s was abruptly halted by the devastating earthquake of 1979.³² Many buildings of various purposes were destroyed or damaged. Some hotels completely disappeared in the earthquake, while others were heavily damaged, resulting in the



FIG. 2. POSITION OF HOTEL AVALA CLOSE TO THE OLD TOWN OF BUDVA

SOURCE: Đurđe Crnojević, National Library of Montenegro, Budva (Photo Archive), photo no. 37.

loss of 80% of tourist facilities on the Montenegrin coast. The entire tourist resort on Slovenska Beach, consisting of five hotels with a total capacity of 1,654 bed places, 815 rooms, and a total area of 44,044 m², was destroyed. The hotels in question were the old Plaža, Slavija, Adriatik, Internacional, and the new Plaža.³³ In a very short period after the earthquake, the Municipality of Budva was restored with the help of domestic and international experts. Most of Budva area's planned reconstruction and construction programs were implemented in the first decade following the earthquake. Damaged tourist facilities, the Old Town of Budva, cultural-historical, and public buildings were restored. In the Old Town of Budva, structural repairs and the restoration of buildings returned them to their pre-earthquake functions, while also introducing new functions and content, particularly on the ground floors. The buildings in the Old Town acquired new commercial functions such as tourism, hospitality, trade, craftsmanship, culture, and others.³⁴ One of the most significant post-earthquake endeavors was the construction of the Slovenska Plaža tourist resort. On the site of the previously destroyed hotel complex on Slovenska Beach, the first phase of the new tourist resort with a capacity of 2,400 bed places in aparthotels was built in 1984, followed by a second phase with a capacity of 1,200 bed places completed by 1988. This was the largest investment project in the period of reconstruction in Montenegrin tourism following the major earthquake.³⁵ It can be concluded that tourism in Budva recorded a marked progressive growth until 1990, peaking in 1987 (table 3).

TABLE 3. TOURIST ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN BUDVA FROM 1939 TO 1990

Types of tourist facilities	1939	%	1973	%	1978	%	1984	%	1987	%	1990	%
Hotels and tourist complexes	598	64.5	6,218	24.2	6,230	17.2	7,709	20.8	7,717	18.4	8,373	22.1
Camps	–	–	5,000	19.4	11,000	30.4	8,500	23.0	9,249	22.0	6,850	18.1
Resorts	–	–	4,704	18.3	5,123	14.2	9,502	25.7	10,500	25.0	9,200	24.2
Private accommodation	329	35.5	9,791	38.1	13,799	38.2	11,289	30.5	14,504	34.6	13,531	35.6
TOTAL	927	100.0	25,713	100.0	36,152	100.0	37,000	100.0	41,970	100.0	37,954	100.0

SOURCE: Duletić, 309, 314.

From the last decade of the 20th century, a period of crisis and stagnation in tourism began as regards the construction of tourist facilities. This situation was caused by the breakup of the former SFR Yugoslavia and the wartime atmosphere in the region, which affected the development of tourism in Montenegro. No new tourist accommodation facilities were built, and the existing ones were inadequately maintained, leading to the rapid deterioration of a number of tourist facilities. Due to the ensuing crisis, Montenegro lost foreign tourists, and domestic tourist traffic was very low. However, although there was no significant construction of basic tourist facilities, from the 1990s onward, a new type of building emerged—apartments for the market intended for temporary stays and vacations. In recent decades, new functions in accommodation facilities have emerged, not solely of a tourist nature. This includes the emergence of mixed-use functions in tourist areas, driven by transitional development.

Hotel Avala in Budva

HOTEL AVALA is considered the pioneer of major and intensive tourism development on the Budva Riviera, as a high-end tourism zone. It was one of the most important hotels on the Montenegrin coast at the time it was built, in the first half of the 20th century. The opening of the modern hotel attracted high-end guests from the country and abroad, turning Budva into a modern and attractive tourist destination, a reputation it still holds today. Based on archival research—original design documentation published for the first time in this paper—Hotel Avala has been thoroughly analyzed and described.

Location and Position of the Hotel

HOTEL AVALA and its villas are located near the Old Town of Budva, 30 meters from the fortified walls of the historical core, at the end of a wide city promenade (fig. 3). The old hotel is situated next to a small city beach, with Mogren 1 and Mogren 2 beaches nearby. The new hotel building is positioned near a hill west of the old building. The hotel villas are on the hill, cascading toward the beach. Vehicular access to the hotel is provided by the local Mediteranska road from the north, connected to the city's road network and thus to the Adriatic Highway that passes over the hill west of the hotel.

Construction, Historical, and Tourist Development of the Hotel

THE IDEA of building a hotel to stimulate tourism development on the Budva Riviera emerged in the 1930s. The initiator and main financier of Hotel Avala's construction was businessman Radomir Stojić from Belgrade. Construction of Hotel Avala began in 1937. The hotel's designer was engineer Ivo Valand, who began the construction. Due to financial problems, the construction was later continued by engineer Dragomir Tadić from Bel-



FIG. 3. WIDER SITUATION PLAN OF THE POSITION OF HOTEL AVALA CLOSE TO THE OLD TOWN OF BUDVA (LEFT).
SITUATION PLAN OF THE HOTEL (RIGHT)

SOURCE: Digitized cadastral map of Budva Municipality; Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Technical Documentation, folder 111.3.

grade.³⁶ During the construction of Hotel Avala, the Budva necropolis from the Illyrian, Greek, and Roman periods, dating from the 4th century BC onwards, was discovered, significantly contributing to the city's tourist development. This ancient site is evidence of the specific blending of various cultures and influences that have alternated throughout history in this area. During the construction process, it was decided to add a fourth floor to the hotel. Hotel Avala was built and outfitted in one year and eight months and was officially opened on 16 July 1939, as the first exclusive facility on the Budva Riviera (fig. 4).³⁷ Its appearance, good personnel organization, and service level marked the beginning of high-end tourism in the area. Hotel Avala became a symbol of Budva and of the still modest tourism on the Montenegrin coast at the time.

As a hospitality facility, the hotel operated until 1941 despite the outbreak of World War II. During World War II, the hotel was closed and inactive. It was among the first hotels that reopened immediately after the war, in 1946. The hotel villas were built later, in 1963. The 1979 earthquake damaged the hotel, followed by a rehabilitation and renovation project. A new hotel was built in 1983, designed by Montenegrin architect Vladislav Plamenac.³⁸ The new hotel's design was fully urbanistically and functionally integrated with the existing hotel and the spatial context of the Old Town of Budva.

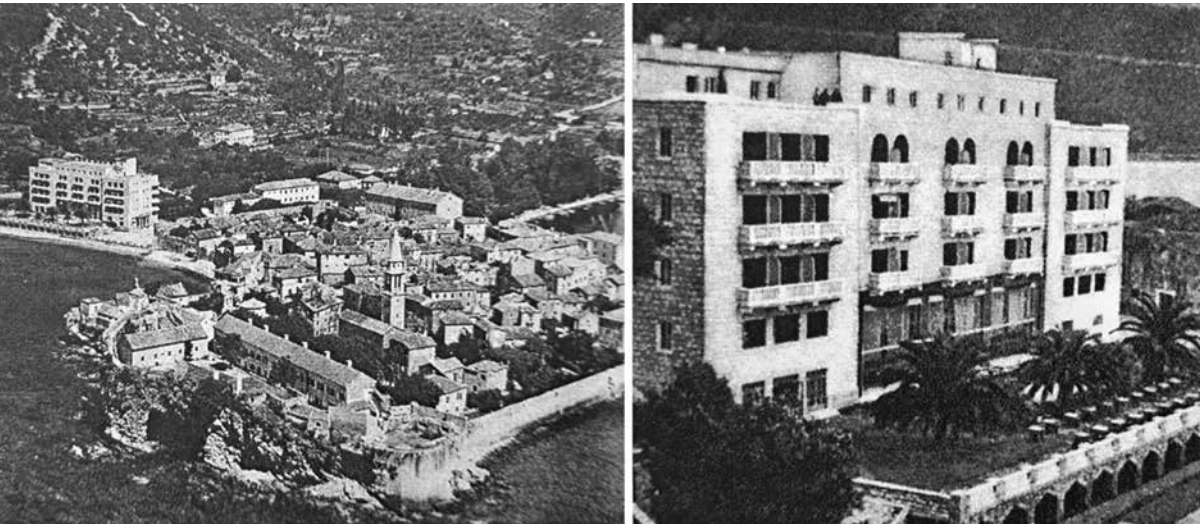
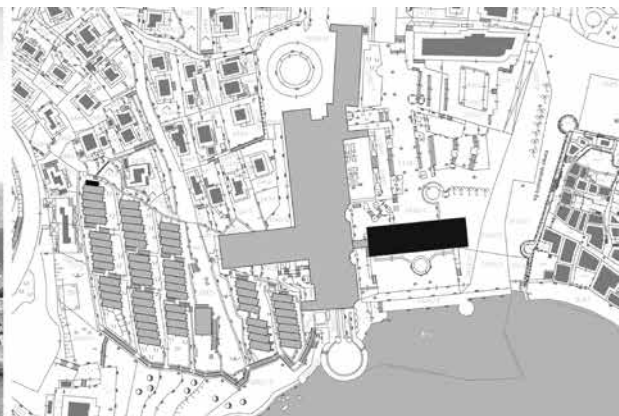


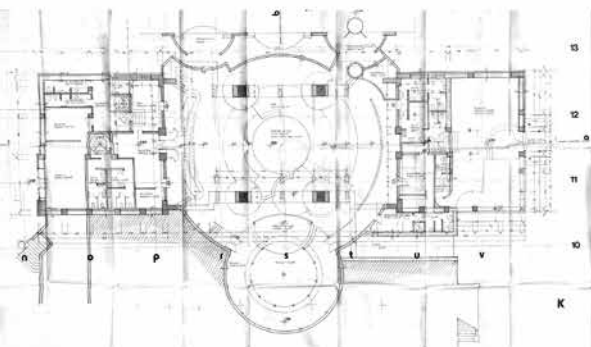
FIG. 4. HOTEL AVALA AND THE OLD TOWN OF BUDVA AFTER OPENING IN 1939
SOURCE: Luketić, 126, 74.



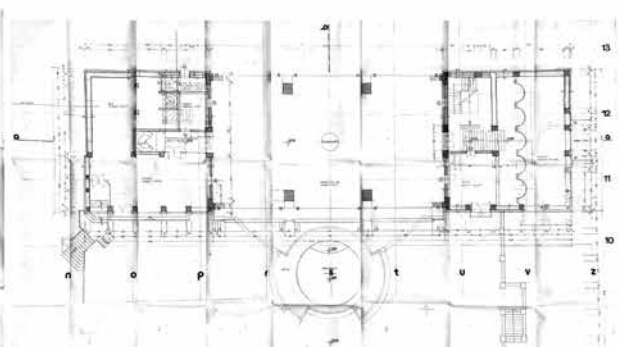
The old Hotel Avala



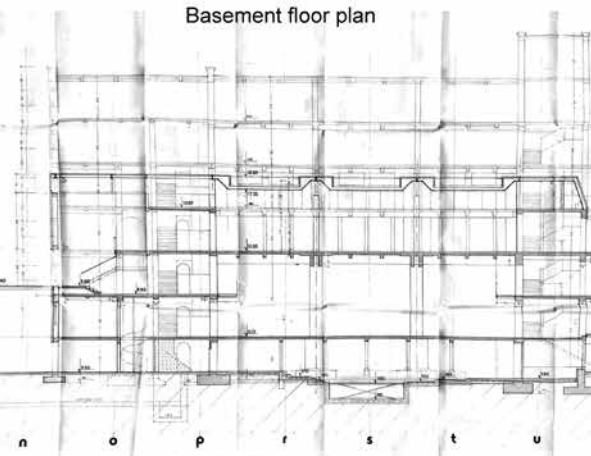
The position of the old hotel



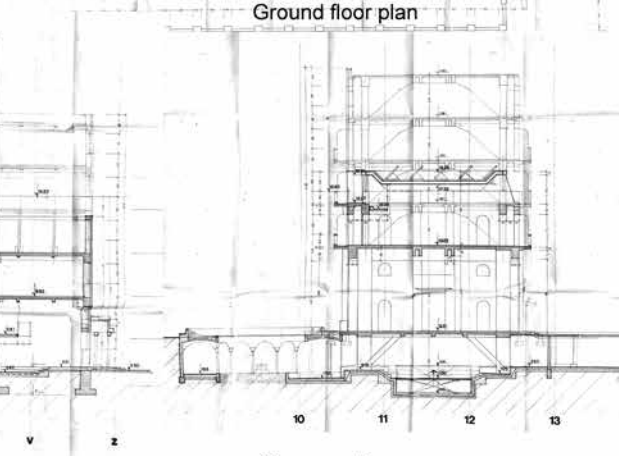
Basement floor plan



Ground floor plan



Longitudinal section



Cross section

FIG. 5. PHOTO OF THE OLD HOTEL AVALA; PROJECT DOCUMENTATION—ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

SOURCE: Photo from Đurđe Crnojević, National Library of Montenegro, Budva (Photo Archive); situation plan—digitized cadastral map of Budva Municipality; architectural drawings from the Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Technical Documentation, folder 111.3.

Architectural Design of the Hotel

THE CONCEPT of the Hotel Avala complex comprises three distinct architectural, spatial and design entities developed in different periods of the 20th century. These are: the old hotel built before World War II, the new hotel constructed in the 1980s, and 55 individual villas. The old hotel is parallel to the small city beach, offering good views of the sea and the old town. Built in the first half of the 20th century, the old hotel features a monumental design using local stone as an autochthonous material of the local area. Its form is a simple cubic volume with characteristic openings and terraces on the facades (fig. 5).

The villas, built in the mid-1960s, are simple cascading houses with dominant terraces and staircases. They are positioned on a hill and cascading down with stairs, paths, and plateaus following the terrain's slope to the beach. This villa concept represents a good example of integration with the natural terrain (fig. 6).

The new hotel was built four decades after the old one on partially steep terrain between the villas and the old hotel. It is connected to the old hotel by a closed passageway (bridge). During the construction of the new hotel, a total of five underground and aboveground floors from the old hotel were retained, while the annexes and other parts damaged in the earthquake were removed. The large bulk of the old Hotel Avala building did not adequately correlate with the urban fabric of the Old Town of Budva. Understanding the existing urban fabric's characteristics, Montenegrin architect Vladislav Plamenac enhanced the hotel's relationship with the Old Town through the new hotel's design. This was achieved by visually reducing the mass of the existing building and freeing up the ground floor to connect pedestrian paths between the city promenade and the terrace in front of the sea.³⁹ At the time of the opening, the hotel had the following capacities: the old hotel had 186 bed places, the new hotel had 440 bed places, and 55 villas had 284 bed places. The new hotel has a modern architecture with white facades and horizontal elements (fig. 7). It has large openings and rhythmically arranged terraces on the facades. The new part of the hotel complex fully embraced public programs and functions, partly city-public and partly hotel-specific. All functions are organized across five floors of the older part and a new sixth floor, which serves as a service zone and connection with the new hotel below the old part's basement level. Functional connections between the old and new hotels were planned on the ground floor and first floor. The basement floor houses a wine cellar, shops, a bar, and terraces facing the sea. The ground floor features a restaurant with a large terrace and a covered plateau directly connected to the city square next to the Old Town on the hotel's eastern side. The old hotel is connected to the new hotel's ground floor on the western side at the mezzanine level.

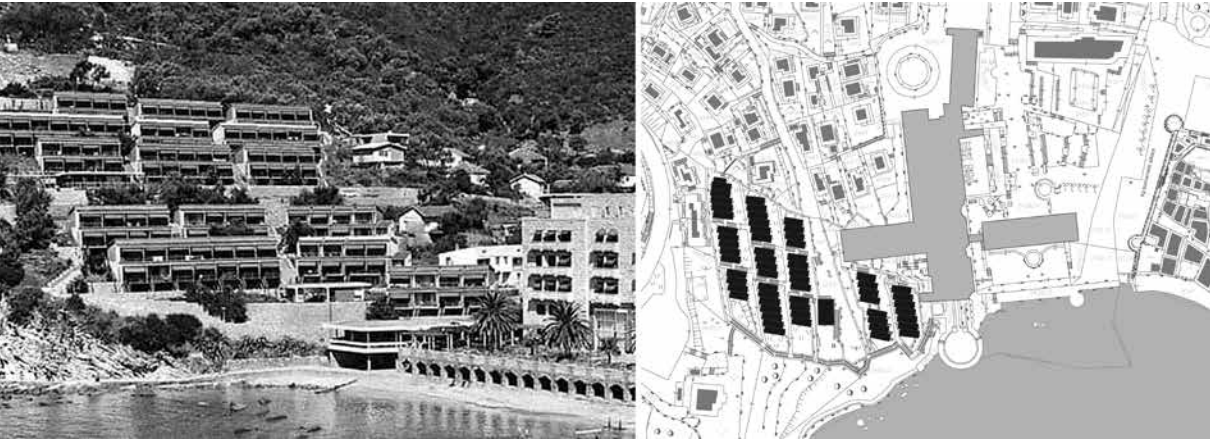


FIG. 6. VILLAS OF HOTEL AVALA (LEFT); THE POSITION OF THE VILLAS (RIGHT)
 SOURCE: Postcard (Private Archive); situation plan—digitized cadastral map
 of Budva Municipality.

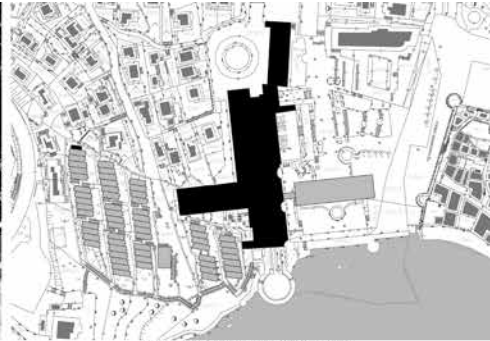
The first and second floors of the old hotel initially housed multifunctional rooms, with an open salon on the first floor overlooking the Old Town. Later, the rooms were adapted into exclusive suites and rooms. In the new hotel, standard rooms and suites are located on the floors.⁴⁰ Individual suites can be found in the villas on the hill. The hotel has two outdoor and one indoor swimming pools and a spa center, along with additional commercial amenities.

Hotel Avala has received numerous prestigious awards and distinctions (fig. 8). These are: The First Prize at the 1978 Invitational Yugoslav Competition for the urban-architectural design of the Avala-Mogren hotel complex and part of the town square, the “13. jul” Republic Award in Montenegro in 1985 (the highest state award in Montenegro), and the Republic Award for Architecture in Montenegro by the *Borba* newspaper in 1984.⁴¹

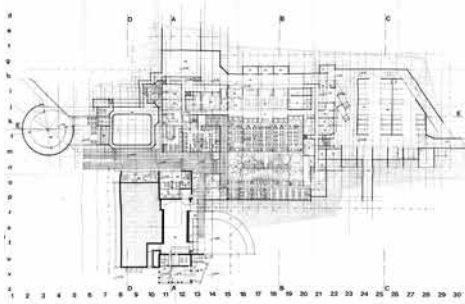
Privatized in 2004, the hotel underwent a comprehensive reconstruction and adaptation of both the old and new hotel sections in 2009. The most recent reconstruction significantly altered its original state. This renovation introduced new materials to the facades and interiors, changing the facade design and color scheme. Currently, Hotel Avala is operating and in excellent condition, with a 4-star category. Following the latest reconstruction, it offers 303 rooms (117 standard and 77 superior rooms), 54 suites, and 55 villas, with a total capacity of 809 bed places.⁴² As a valuable and rich architectural heritage from the 20th century, influenced by various architectural styles of early and late modernism, Hotel Avala should be maintained and utilized with great care. Guidelines for its protection as a valuable 20th century heritage site should primarily focus on



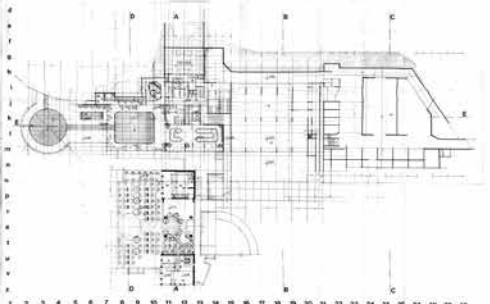
The new Hotel Avala



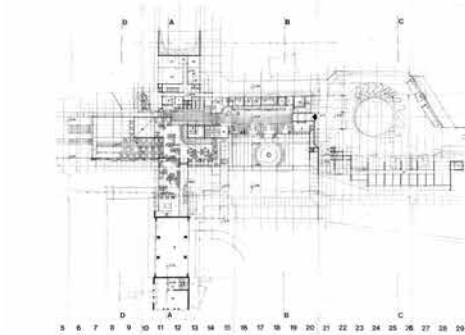
The position of the new hotel



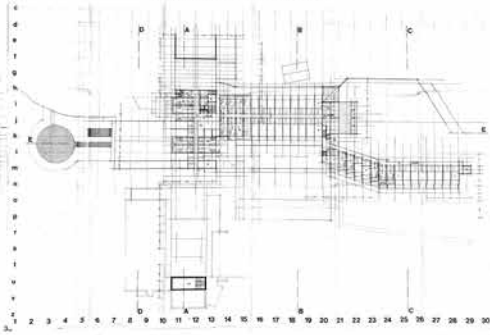
Ground floor plan of the new hotel - Level I



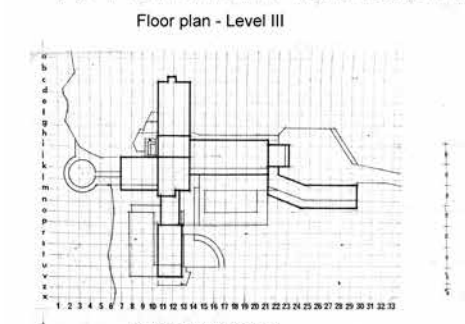
First floor plan - Level II



Floor plan - Level III



Floor plan - Level IV



Scheme of the hotel



Hotel rooms

FIG. 7. PHOTO OF THE NEW HOTEL AVALA; PROJECT DOCUMENTATION—ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS
SOURCE: Postcard; situation plan—digitized cadastral map of Budva Municipality; architectural drawings from the Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Technical Documentation, folder 111.7.

restoring the original condition disrupted by the post-privatization reconstruction and expansion. Future interventions could include landscaping and activating an archaeological park in the hotel's immediate surroundings. Sustainable development should be based on preserving the original architectural state as much as possible while integrating contemporary tourism functions and amenities in line with future tourism development.

Current Tourism Construction Types in Budva

IN RECENT decades, Budva has undergone a transition period marked by increasingly uncontrolled construction, leading to major problems in Budva's urban planning and spatial development. There has been a shift in the approach and methods of tourism construction as well as a change in the perception of tourism and hotels as a public service industry. The proliferation of new buildings of varying sizes and heights and new capitalist tendencies among investors have blurred the lines between tourist and private functions. New models of tourist facilities have emerged, which are not exclusively for tourism

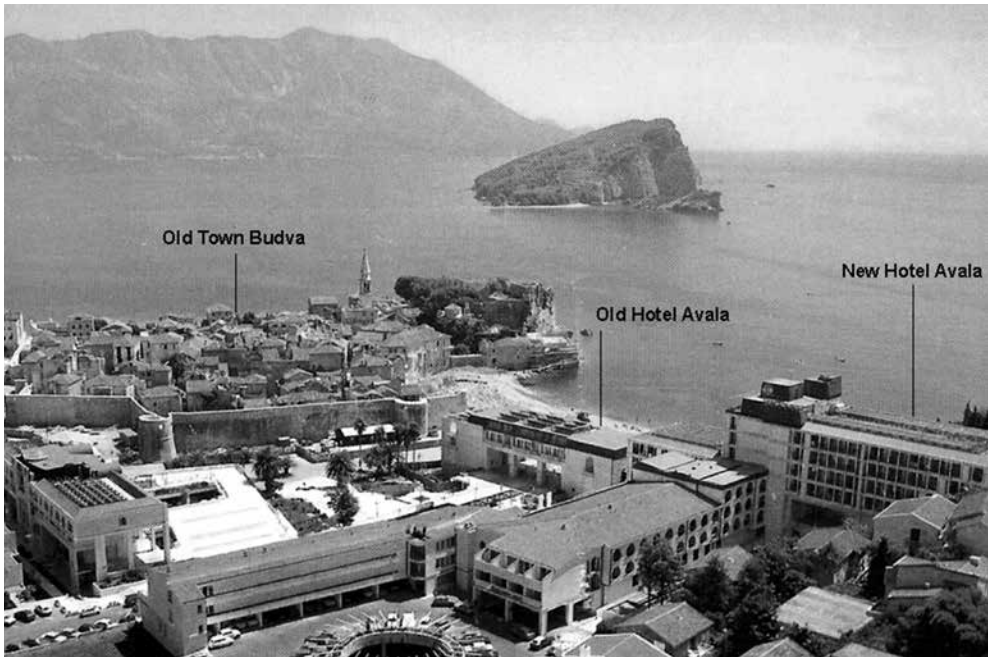


FIG. 8. THE HOTEL AVALA COMPLEX
SOURCE: Postcard (private archive).

but have semi-tourist functions. The once clear boundary between tourism and residential areas has been blurred, with these functions becoming mixed. There is uncontrolled construction of luxury residential buildings in the primary tourist zones of coastal cities. The newly built accommodations are not intended for permanent residency but for temporary use by the owners or for rental purposes. This phenomenon has led to the emergence of temporary residences or housing without residents. The following types of mixed tourist-residential accommodations are prominent on the Budva Riviera: *semi-tourist capacities*, *housing without residents*, and *temporary housing*.

Semi-tourist capacities are private apartments primarily rented out for tourism. These accommodations are often found in large buildings in attractive locations and have become prevalent along the Montenegrin coast over the past two decades. *Housing without residents* refers to private units and apartments used seasonally without year-round occupancy. These units remain empty and unused for most of the year and fall under the temporary housing category. In addition to changing functions and primary uses, there have been alterations in the structures and volumes of mixed-use buildings. Instead of the former smaller and more dispersed physical structures that once fit well into Budva's inherited spatial context, there is now a growing trend towards constructing taller buildings and larger volumes along the coast, often blocking the view of the sea. These high-rise structures, often unnecessarily large, occupy prime locations in narrow coastal zones and frequently degrade the natural coastal landscape, hotels, tourist complexes, and other elements of the architectural heritage.

From an architectural and urban planning perspective, and in terms of maintaining the basic tourism function, the value of Budva's prominent tourist destination lies in its inherited active hotels along the Budva Riviera. These certainly include hotels that are still operational today—the Avala and the Morgen near the Old Town of Budva, the tourist resort of Slovenska Plaža, the hotel complex on Bečići Beach, Maestral Hotel in Pržno, and the town-hotel of Sveti Stefan. These hotel complexes have been the recognizable brand of the Budva Riviera for decades worldwide.

Conclusion

THE TRANSITION period of recent decades has significantly impacted the construction and transformation of the Adriatic coast. The current state of excessive construction of mixed accommodations, which are not exclusively for tourism, has completely changed the perception of tourist facilities, altering the coastal image and spatial identity of the Montenegrin coast and of

the Budva Riviera. This issue raises questions about the future development of tourism on the Montenegrin coast.

Solutions to the problems of tourism development can be found by applying proven contemporary scientific achievements and experiences from countries with long tourism traditions. Significant attention is now given to modern methodologies of tourism valorization, contemporary tourism trends, and their impact on sustainable development. This primarily involves the protection and sustainable development of the valuable tourist architectural heritage, including many hotels and hotel complexes built on the Montenegrin coast in the second half of the 20th century. Hotel Avala exemplifies the rich architectural heritage from this period, deserving protection and sustainable development. The three distinct architectural units of the Hotel Avala complex are characterized by different architectural designs in line with the periods they were built in—the first half and second half of the 20th century, namely, early and late modernism. This valuable architectural and tourism heritage should be protected primarily by restoring the original state disrupted during the last reconstruction and expansion post-privatization, in the first decade of the 21st century. Preserving the original condition as much as possible while integrating contemporary tourist functions and equipment should be imperative for the sustainable development of inherited hotel facilities. Due to its proximity to the Old Town of Budva, Hotel Avala holds significant spatial importance and a close connection with the heritage that requires careful treatment. Alongside its rich historical development and tourism significance for Budva's growth throughout the past century, Hotel Avala holds substantial social importance. Given its spatial, tourism, and social impact on Budva, Hotel Avala symbolizes tourism and tourist architecture on the Budva Riviera and is a worldwide tourism brand of the entire Montenegrin coast.



Notes

1. Miljan Radović, “Jedan pogled na inicijalnu fazu inostranog turizma u Crnoj Gori,” in *Razvoj turizma u Crnoj Gori u XIX i prvoj polovini XX vijeka: Radovi sa naučnog skupa, Cetinje, 18–19. novembra 1996. god.*, edited by Dušan Martinović (Podgorica: Ekonomski fakultet, Institut za društveno ekonomska istraživanja; Kotor: Fakultet za pomorstvo, Skupština prijestonice, 1997), 109.
2. Miloš Perović, “Razvoj turizma na području Bara i Ulcinja u XIX i prvoj polovini XX vijeka,” in *Razvoj turizma u Crnoj Gori u XIX i prvoj polovini XX vijeka*, 73–74.
3. Milorad Vasović and Živadin Jovičić, *Važnije turističko-geografske regije Evrope* (Belgrade: Rad, 1974), 35.

4. Ante Marinović-Uzelac, *Naselja, gradovi, prostori (studije i razmišljanja)* (Zagreb: Tehnička knjiga, 1986), 270.
5. Marinović-Uzelac, 277.
6. The period of organized tourism is associated with the year 1841, when Thomas Cook founded the world's first travel agency. Radović, 106.
7. Risto Vukčević, "Razvoj materijalne osnove turizma u Crnoj Gori," *Turizam: časopis za turistička pitanja* 22, 11 (1974): 5–8.
8. Vlado Duletić, "Razvoj turizma na Budvanskoj rivijeri u drugoj polovini XX vijeka," in *Turizam Crne Gore u drugoj polovini XX vijeka: Radovi sa naučnog skupa, Cetinje, 23–24. maj 2002. godine*, edited by Dušan Martinović (Cetinje: Prijestonica Cetinje; Podgorica: Ekonomski fakultet; Kotor: Fakultet za turizam i hotelijerstvo, 2004), 297–298.
9. Željka Hadžović, "Mogućnosti razvoja zdravstvenog turizma u klasteru Budva–Bar–Ulcinj," Master's thesis, Univerzitet Crne Gore, Fakultet za turizam i hotelijerstvo, 2019, 43.
10. Dušan Martinović, *Budvanska rivijera: Uslovi za razvoj turizma: Geografsko-turistička monografija* (Cetinje: Obod, 1973), 25.
11. The Budva Riviera also includes the following smaller islands: Vatulja and Mravinjak (along Dubovica), Sveti Nikola (near Budva), Kršić and Golubinj (near Sveti Nikola), Smokvica (near Reževići) and Katič and Sveta Neđelja (near Petrovac). Hadžović, 43.
12. Duletić, 299–300.
13. Miroslav Luketić, *Turizam u Budvi 1918–1941* (Budva: n.p., 1997), 55.
14. Data on the length of the beaches from *Revizija Generalnog urbanističkog plana Budve—Osnove plana Budva* (Budva: Opština Budva, 1983), 15.
15. Pavle Mijović and Mirko Kovačević, *Gradovi i utvrđenja u Crnoj Gori* (Belgrade–Ulcinj: Arheološki institut, Muzej Ulcinj, 1975), 100–101.
16. Mijović and Kovačević, 101.
17. In addition to individual cultural monuments, valuable monastic complexes are located in the vicinity of Budva. Mirko Dokić, *Turistička valorizacija užeg gravitacionog područja pruge Beograd–Bar* (Belgrade: Institut ekonomskih nauka, 1978), 13.
18. Radović, 116.
19. The development of tourism in the southern part of the Montenegrin coast was particularly driven by the construction of the Belgrade–Bar railway, which opened in 1976. The Belgrade–Bar railway was functionally connected to the Port of Bar, which is the largest port on the Montenegrin coast, and through it, all major overseas traffic connections of Montenegro with other countries take place.
20. Luketić, 66.
21. Luketić, 86.
22. Martinović, 123–124.
23. Luketić, 67–68.
24. Luketić, 220.
25. After World War II, a new state was formed after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia under the name of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, in 1945. On 29 November 1945, the

state changed its name to the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, while in 1963 it finally took the name of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which it kept until 1991, when it disintegrated into several republics: the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (comprising Serbia and Montenegro), Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia.

26. Gordana Rovčanin Premović and Zlatko Karač, "Arhitektura i kontekst u konceptu turističkog naselja 'Slovenska plaza' u Budvi," *Annales: Series Historia et Sociologia* 31, 4 (2021): 636.
27. Martinović, 123–124.
28. Luketić, 61.
29. Luketić, 87.
30. Duletić, 305–307.
31. Since the 1960s and especially the 1970s, the following tourist facilities have emerged on the Budva Riviera: a large hotel complex on Slovenska Beach, a hotel complex on Bečići Beach (with a total capacity of 2,380 beds, including the following hotels: Splendid, Bellevue with annexes, Montenegro, Montenegro A, and Mediteran), Hotel Maestral in Pržno, several hotels in Petrovac (Oliva, Oliva Villas, Riviera, and Castellastva), and Hotel As in Perazića Do. Duletić, 304–320.
32. The Montenegrin coast was hit by a major earthquake on 15 April 1979. The intensity of the earthquake in the epicentral zone was IX degrees on the MCS scale (7.0 degrees on the Richter scale) with the hypocenter depth at 17 kilometers. The epicentral area was in the Adriatic Sea, in the area between Ulcinj and Bar, at a distance of about 15 kilometers from the coastline and at a depth of about 30 kilometers. In this earthquake, 101 people lost their lives in Montenegro and 35 in Albania, while around 1,700 people were injured to varying degrees. A total of 250 settlements were affected. Gordana Rovčanin Premović and Miroslav Doderović, "Obnova i revitalizacija spomenika kulture na crnogorskom primorju oštećenih u potresu 1979. godine," *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam* 28, 2 (60) (2020): 414.
33. Rovčanin Premović and Karač, 637–638.
34. Duletić, 314.
35. Rovčanin Premović and Karač, 637–645.
36. Luketić, 73–87.
37. Luketić, 82–83.
38. The design studio that created the detailed design for the new hotel and the adaptation of the old hotel was SPO. Ambient from Ljubljana, and the architects engaged in the design were R. Popović and E. Ravnikar.
39. Rifat Alihodžić, *Arhitektura u Crnoj Gori 1965–1990. (Kroz prizmu "Borbine" nagrade)* (Podgorica: Crnogorska akademija nauka i umjetnosti, 2015), 136.
40. Based on design documentation from the Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Cetinje—Republic Fund for the Renewal and Construction of the Area Affected by the Catastrophic Earthquake, Technical Documentation, designs 1979, folders 111.1.–111.3. and 111.7.
41. Alihodžić, 134.

42. *Informacija o statusu privatizacije hotelsko-turističkih preduzeća* (Podgorica: Ministarstvo održivog razvoja i turizma Crne Gore, Sekretarijat za razvojne projekte, 2014), 11–12.

Abstract

Hotel Avala in Budva: Pioneer of Tourism and Tourist Architecture on the Montenegrin Coast

Hotel Avala is the first exclusive building in Budva and is considered the driver of a more intensive tourist development on the Budva Riviera and the entire Montenegrin coast, dating back to the first half of the 20th century. The construction of Hotel Avala marks the first spatial intervention and the impetus for the spread of tourist infrastructure and of a new town beyond the historical confines of the Old Town of Budva. Based on archival research—documentation of architectural design—this article presents Hotel Avala, opened in 1939, followed by the construction of villas in the 1960s and a new hotel in 1983. The Hotel Avala complex includes three distinct architectural entities built in accordance with the periods they originated in, characterized by rich and diverse architectural designs. Hotel Avala is an example of valuable architectural heritage from the past century, which should be protected with sustainable development and careful use, without unnecessary interventions that could compromise its originality and uniqueness. The hotel's sustainable development should be based on preserving its original state while applying contemporary tourist functions and using modern equipment in line with ongoing innovations and changes in the tourism sector.

Keywords

Hotel Avala, Budva, Montenegrin coast, tourist architecture, architectural heritage

C O N C E R T A T I O

Hope and Disappointment

GEORGE CIPĂIANU

I am a historian and a professor. I always ask the students to tell in their activity all the truth, as only telling the half of it is a lie. It is even worse to lie to oneself.

THE DEMOCRATIC-minded people in Vietnam, Syria, Afghanistan, and more recently in Ukraine, based their hopes for freedom and a civilized life on American help. What did those hopes become? Disappointment, frustration, and suffering. It seems that NATO will lose its cohesion and force if Donald Trump becomes president of the United States. For Romania and all Eastern European countries this will be a disaster.

The hesitation of Western Europe and the procrastination of the Americans will permit Russia to play its aggressive game and annihilate freedom and democracy in the world. This is what happened after the Second World War in Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world. The present received by the Soviet Union in those years will now be given to Russia, a result of the ignorance and egotism of the West.¹

Following exclusively the direction opened by Article 5 in the NATO statute can one day become a very slippery slope. I could have never imagined that the misfortune of Eastern Europe could be caused by the Congress of

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the United States, the country considered to be the defender of freedom and democracy.

Russian propaganda produced results: in Poland, the tractor of a demonstrator sported a banner that said “Putin, solve your problems in Ukraine and come save us from Brussels.” Also in Poland, lorries transporting weapons from Germany to Ukraine have been stopped at the frontier. In Romania, a taxi driver told me that the gallant Putin knows how to defend his country against the tyranny of the globalists in Brussels, who oppress us. The farmers who demonstrated all over Europe had been convinced by Russian propaganda that the prices they got for their products are low because of the competition represented by the Ukrainian grain, which is utterly false. The Romanian authorities, for example, did not authorize the sale of Ukrainian cereals in the country, only transporting them to other regions of Europe. Those farmers only thought of their interest and profits and did not understand how important it is to help Ukraine in her war against Russia.

The stupidity of the sovereigntists in Romania prevents them from remembering that thousands of Romanians work in the European Union, sending home important sums of money, that hundreds of young Romanians study in Western universities, that roads, schools, hospitals, bridges and so on have been built with European money, that cities like Cluj, Oradea, or Timișoara benefited greatly from a steady influx of European funds. With material help came the European atmosphere, new ways of doing things, a way of life, in a word, civilization. What would be the proper punishment for those who want to take Romania out of the European Union?

When speaking about the present-day situation in international relations, it is important to take into account the possible perverse effects of democracy. There are people who keep asking for negotiations with Russia, ignoring the fact that appeasement brings aggression, damaging Ukrainian interests and helping Putin, who could easily resume the aggression in a few years’ time, as this appeasement will convince him that the West is too weak to stop him. We have to remember what Catherine the Great wrote to Voltaire: “We have not found any other means of guaranteeing our frontiers than to expand them.”²² That is what the United States Congress does not seem to understand. This is stupidity, repeating the idiocy of 1938. Who could negotiate with a man like Putin, who is accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Court? Who could trust a man who kills his own countrymen in Russia and abroad, who began a war of extermination in Ukraine?

One can go from bad to worse: Trump has every chance to become president of the United States. I heard today, on 2 July 2024, that the Supreme Court of the USA has decided that Donald Trump had presidential immunity when he

committed the crimes for which he was sentenced some weeks ago by a Court of Justice in the USA. Long live America's justice system! This man can destabilize NATO. This will bring disaster to Romania, because Article 5 would not protect us anymore. The destabilization of NATO will cause chaos all over the world. Isn't it preposterous to think that international relations could come to depend on the whims of a such an individual? This man incited a rebellion near the Capitol of the United States government and nothing has happened so far. Where is the famous Justice of that state?

World War II demonstrated that the United States of America cannot isolate itself between the two oceans in case of a World War as, against all odds, the war came to America even if the United States did not want to go to war. Today, the United States of America controls the world through NATO, and without this alliance it will become a power among others, losing its prestige and status as well as the possibility to defend freedom and democracy, at a time when countries like China seek superpower status without being democratic. The members of the House of Representatives of the American Congress should think of this.

I hope that people will learn that freedom and democracy are not acquired forever. They must be protected, defended, consolidated. But how long will this take? In the Second World War the Americans had to pay with the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people their isolationism of the interwar period, while the European Powers had to suffer the terrible consequences of their cowardice of 1938 (Munich) and following the German attack on Poland (1 September 1939).

I am a historian and a professor. I always ask the students to tell in their activity all the truth, as only telling the half of it is a lie. It is even worse to lie to oneself. According to the Marquis de Custine, the characteristic feature of Russian history, from the very beginning, has been the lie.³ The Marquis says that Russians live like slaves in their country (1839), but at the same time they want to conquer the world and civilize it.⁴ This would be ridiculous if it were not dangerous, as we can see nowadays. They combine lies with cruelty and aggressiveness. They do not respect any treaty, any convention, any signature. Now they want to destroy a free country, killing people, massacring, raping. Some years ago, the Russians signed an international treaty guaranteeing the independence and integrity of the state of Ukraine.

There are people (politicians, political commentators) who say that the war in Ukraine must be ended through negotiations. How to negotiate with an individual like Putin? He killed Alexei Navalny, who comes at the end of a long list: Boris Berezovsky, Anna Politkovskaya, Alexander Litvinenko, Boris Nemtsov, and others.

When writing about all these we are obliged to tell the truth, the sheer truth, if we want people to understand where the danger is coming from, especially since in our country there are a lot of stooges of Putin and his government. In the 19th century, Russia, a Christian country, still used to sell peasants, with or without land; now in Ukraine the Russians kill people, civilians, at point blank range.

In 1938, in England, people said: “Why do we have to get into trouble for Czechoslovakia, a distant country, which we don’t even now very much?” Likewise, today, some Americans think that Russia is far away and the Russians have been their allies. So, why help Ukraine since the war cannot reach us? This means to hide behind someone’s hopes.

Today, in a complicated mixture of stupidity and ignorance, a taxi driver told me that he did not want Ukraine to be helped because we live in poverty. I sought to understand what was the source of this man’s total incapacity to comprehend the reality of the contemporary world. Such people are the slaves of Russian propaganda. If in Romania a man like George Simion can become the president of the country, that will mean that the Almighty God has turned his back on us and most Romanians are bloody idiots. I think that the civilized part of the Romanian society is not stupid to this point, but they will have to face the consequences of the votes of the others. I am horrified by the words of very many compatriots who attack the European Union, some even saying openly that we’d better be on the side of the Russians.

On Romanian TV, I heard that the European Parliament is full of Russian spies. NATO countries are full of Russian agents, paid by Moscow, and the same holds true for Western societies. This is why Putin’s regime can easily kill opponents abroad. There are many examples.

The Russians speak again about the possible use of atomic weapons. In my opinion, Putin is mad and the use of atomic bombs by him is not to be excluded. The great majority of Russians agreed with Putin and this increases the danger to the world. When one has to deal with insane people, all programs for organizing a defense become problematic. This creates uneasiness and fear in the free and democratic societies. I really don’t know what to think. To believe that a man like Putin thinks reasonably, like we do, could be not only an error but a huge blunder. We only have one way to follow: help Ukraine to resist and arm ourselves.

The times seem to be like the ones at the beginning of World War II, when Western governments did not take into consideration the reports sent home from Berlin by their ambassadors. Their foreign policy was dominated by appeasement (1933–1939). Nowadays, negotiating with Putin would be suicidal. The only solution would be a massive help to Ukraine. To negotiate with the Russians as long as they are not defeated would be an enormous mistake. The Russians will never

keep their word. A negotiated peace to the detriment of Ukraine will enable them to attack again at a time of their choosing and cause greater damage.

Some people are incredibly stupid. Another man told me one day that Romania would have been much better off in association with the Russians, that the Americans only caused trouble by meddling into European affairs, and that they are as bad as the Russians. Unfortunately, there are many such individuals in Romania, very receptive to the propaganda carried out by Russian agents. Putin is a killer and Russia is a terrorist state. Why do they kill people? Because they are Russians. They are proud of their history, a curse on their neighbors, and the enemies of freedom and democracy. Russian propaganda relies largely on lies, profiting from the ignorance, the lack of culture and the stupidity of its recipients. Its false ideas are spreading in society, causing uneasiness and an unjustified sentiment against Romania's belonging to the European Union, turning upside-down the principle of independence.

I agree that every sane person must have the right to express his/her beliefs, but this right cannot be granted to idiots if we do not want this world to become a bedlam.

Putin threatens with atomic weapons in order to intimidate the populations of Western democratic countries. How far is he determined to go? Does he really want to use them? Is he really mad? His supporters in Romania are certainly irresponsible, if they are not traitors to our country!

There are very few things worth sacrificing one's life for: the life of a family member, the defense of one's country. Sacrificing one's life for a people like the present-day Russians is debatable. Alexei Navalny did exactly that. His return to Russia when he knew that Putin would try to get rid of him puzzles me. I am terribly sorry that he died, killed by Putin. Alexei Navalny is the latest victim of Putin, a victim of the struggle for liberty. What are those who in Russia uphold Putin and his regime? Are they all criminals, in the good tradition of Lenin, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Yagoda, Yezhov, Beria? No! But what are they?

The President of France, Emmanuel Macron, proposed some days ago that Western troops be sent to Ukraine if the military situation becomes disastrous, and many politicians and political commentators criticized him. Historians did not, because perhaps the historians know better to what disastrous consequences appeasement can lead.

Still in regards to appeasement, which encourages the enemy to attack if you showed that you are incapable to resist him, it would be a good idea for the contemporary leaders to study more carefully the unfortunate event of 1938 (Munich) and its horrendous aftereffects.

Peoples are or seem to be indifferent to the actual danger of aggression in the world. The Russians are behaving wildly in Ukraine half a century after World War

II, and the soldiers of Moscow repeat what the ss did over a huge territory. If Europe wants to remain free she has to arm herself, now that American help has decreased and in the future, if Trump becomes president, it will cease altogether.

Speaking about the American help, we must remember that Franklin Delano Roosevelt refused to accept Jewish immigrants when this was still possible (1938). No country wanted Jews on their territory, except for Pope Pius XII, who saved thousands of them.

Now the European and American peoples began protesting the aid given to Ukraine in order to resist the Russian invasion, demanding that the funds transferred to this country in need be used at home and not abroad. People have not become more intelligent since the time when their leaders thought that negotiations with a monster could solve the problems of the peace (1938). Some members of the United States Congress fail to understand that later on they may deeply regret dealing with another monster and suspending the aid to Ukraine. To them, squabbling in Congress appears to be more important than world peace and freedom. These are the perfidious effects of democracy.

The people around me are afraid. In Ukraine, Putin wages a war of extermination. Relatives, colleagues, friends, acquaintances ask me if there will be a war with Russia. Almost every family still has memories of how the Russians behaved when they were in Romania. What answer can one give to such a question?

Because denazification was a bad joke in Germany, I am sorry to say that criminals like Putin will never be punished and human life will remain again undefended. It is necessary for the United States to resume the aid for Ukraine, to prevent Russia from winning the war. Otherwise, the result will be a disaster for Europe, for democracy.

Presently, as Russia tries hard to destabilize Western governments, I am sure that Putin will succeed. The citizens of those countries reluctantly accept to help Ukraine. The greatest Russian writers and journalists published books and other materials showing what the Russians really are. All these have been translated in many languages. So what? Nobody read them carefully. When trying to measure the depth of Putin's folly it is enough to remember that not even Stalin threatened the world with atomic weapons.

“Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.” “It depends on what side we situate ourselves.”

Let us remember at every moment of our life the words of Saint John the Evangelist, who said about God (John 1:4): “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Today, the Russians are still at war against Ukraine, killing civilians in their homes. Will all these things dishearten us? No!



Notes

1. Françoise Thom, “La Paralyse de la volonté,” *Desk Russie*, 7 January 2024, accessed 10 June 2024, <https://desk-russie.eu/2024/01/07/la-paralyse-de-la-volonte.html>.
2. Apud Thom, “La Paralyse de la volonté.”
3. Marchizul de Custine, *Scrisori din Rusia: Rusia în 1839*, edited, foreword and dossier by Pierre Nora, translated from the French by Irina Negrea (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2022), 321–326.
4. Thom, “La Paralyse de la volonté.”

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Abstract

Hope and Disappointment

The hesitation of Western Europe and the procrastination of the Americans will permit Russia to play its aggressive game and annihilate freedom and democracy in the world. When speaking about the present-day situation in international relations, it is important to take into account the possible perverse effects of democracy. There are people who keep asking for negotiations with Russia, ignoring the fact that appeasement brings aggression, damaging Ukrainian interests and helping Putin, who could easily resume the aggression in a few years' time, as this appeasement will convince him that the West is too weak to stop him. World War II demonstrated that the United States of America cannot isolate themselves between the two oceans in case of a World War as, against all odds, the war came to America even if the United States did not want to go to war. It is necessary for the United States to resume the aid for Ukraine, to prevent Russia from winning the war. Otherwise, the result will be a disaster for Europe, for democracy.

Keywords

Russia, Vladimir Putin, propaganda, Ukraine, United States, NATO

BOOK REVIEWS

MARCHIZUL DE CUSTINE

Scrisori din Rusia: Rusia în 1839

(Letters from Russia: Russia in 1839)

Edited, foreword and dossier by PIERRE

NORA

Translated from the French by IRINA NEGREA

Bucharest: Humanitas, 2022

ASTOLPHE-LOUIS-LÉONOR, Marquis de Custine (1790–1857), a French aristocrat and writer, entertaining friendly relations with Chateaubriand, Stendhal and Balzac, had the idea to go to Russia and spend some time there in 1839. He was in search of a political system which would confirm his disappointment with the performance of the democratic European governments. The Marquis spent some time there, saw everything, understood all he had seen, and wrote a comprehensive and penetrating analysis of a society very different to that of Europe.

His book *La Russie en 1839* (1843) remained a permanent bestseller for almost three centuries, except in Russia, where it has been banned until nowadays. The letters of the Marquis de Custine could help Western European society and the world understand what Russia and the Russians were. And, nevertheless, the European societies and governments, the political milieus, did not understand what Russia really is. Thus, to our great misfortune, the civilized world is again faced with Russian brutality and aggressiveness.

Why did the Marquis de Custine go to Russia, precisely at a time when this immense state represented a danger to Eu-

rope and particularly to the international prestige of France, which Russia had vanquished at the end of Napoleon's reign?

The Marquis de Custine was not an aristocrat like the others. He was a curious, investigative nonconformist. Perhaps some nagging unpleasant happening in his life had to be left behind. He was the subject of a homosexuality scandal at the age of 34 years, which destroyed his personal prestige in a world dominated by the aristocracy and the great names of the literary milieu. This extremely intelligent, cultured, sensible man, who was also rich, would remain for the rest of his life an outcast, and his literary merits were to be recognized only later.

Having been accustomed since his youth to long journeys to Northern Europe and Italy, accompanying his family—his mother (his father had been executed during the Revolution), his elder brother, and his mother's lover (Chateaubriand)—the Marquis found an antidote to his overwhelming sadness and romantic sensibility in a long and dangerous voyage to Russia. He was perhaps attracted by the charm of this half-savage Asian empire, which was to the Europeans another world, as he had heard many comments about in France. He had heard a lot of things about Russia in his country without having the basic factual information about this huge country which represented a real danger to European civilization, beginning in the 18th century and until our times. The Marquis wanted to understand why this was the case.

The journey of the Marquis began in 1839, when he was 49 years old. The voyage

was full of risks, in such an underdeveloped and primitive country, reputed for its most reactionary regime under Tsar Nicholas I, with different social relations, another way of life, other religions, mentalities and practices, other relations with God.

However, what really shocked him was the complete lack of freedom. Russia was a country where peasants were still sold, with or without the land, the tsar was regarded like a God and the people like slaves. The penetrating spirit of de Custine cuts deep into the different strata of a backward and primitive society, which took pride in its anti-Catholicism, anti-Europeanism, in its ambition to “reorganize” and “civilize” the world.

His analysis highlights the omnipresence of lies, of a terror that governed everything. That is why Russia is a danger for all its neighbors and not only for them. The individual is not free in Russia. Not being free, but a slave in his country, he seeks to conquer the world by way of compensation. Russia cannot be without aggressiveness, without violence. In Russia, deeply embedded in everything, you will find violence and oppression, whatever the outward appearance.

The Marquis de Custine put all his findings on paper and published his book in 1843, under the title *Russia in 1839*. In Romania it has been translated in 2007 and 2022, under the title *Scrisori din Rusia: Rusia în 1839*. In fact, *Letters from Russia* are not letters. They are not addressed to anybody, as at the Russian postal offices everything was censored. They are personal notes taken during his travels throughout Russia and brought to France in his luggage.

The Marquis de Custine had travelled throughout Europe but he had never found so much lying as in Russia, where

the people enthusiastically praised the foreigners, only to say the contrary in their absence. In Russia this seemed to be an omnipresent social sickness. Was this the explanation for the ever present lying in the Russian political milieu and governments?

Russian politicians were always lying, to foreign governments and to their own people, they were never true to their word, never respected their promises, never respected their signatures on international documents, treaties, conventions. On the occasion of the joint war against Turkey, the Russian government concluded with the Romanian United Principalities a convention promising to respect their frontiers, but after the war they reoccupied several Romanian counties (Cahul, Bolgrad, and Ismail), “justifying” this fact as follows: “We take what is not ours (the three counties) and give you what is not ours either (Dobruja).” In 1917, the gold of the Romanian National Bank was deposited in Russia on the basis of a written guarantee that after the war it would be given back to Romania. It never came back.

When the Ukrainians accepted to give Russia their atomic weapons and their strategic aviation, which had remained on their territory after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia signed a memorandum guaranteeing the integrity of the Ukrainian state. Then, Putin attacked Ukraine and tried to destroy it. That strategic aviation is the very one used these days against Ukrainian cities and civil infrastructure.

Writing about the mentality of the Russians, whom he had seen living like slaves in their own country, the Marquis considered that by way of compensation they wanted to conquer the world.

This is the philosophy of the slave conqueror! Nowadays, another deranged

conqueror, Putin, wants to conquer, reorganize and “civilize” the world! It is amazing how this madness continues to obsess the minds of the Russian rulers and of the population. This shows that the analysis of de Custine was accurate and helps us understand why his book, an international bestseller, has been perpetually banned in Russia, because it puts before the Russians’ eyes a mirror which shows what they do not like to see.

The best epilogue to all this would be Gabriel Liiceanu’s blurb featured on the front cover of the 2022 edition of the Marquis de Custine’s book, *Letters from Russia*: “the best description of a centuries-old historical nightmare, ghastly confirmed by posterity.”



GEORGE CIPĂIANU

IOAN BOLOVAN

**Asociația Națională Arădeană pentru
Cultura Poporului Român: Între local,
regional și național (1863–1918)**

(Arad National Association for the Culture of the Romanian People: Between local, regional, and national, 1863–1918)
3rd edition, revised and enlarged

Introductory word by NICOLAE BOCȘAN

Foreword by LIVIU MAIOR

Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2023

THE HISTORY of the modern Romanian nation has generated lively historiographical controversies over the last century. Its reception has benefited from public interest in the past and the resurgence of identity introspection in the past decade. Analyses dedicated to key moments in

the assertion of the national agenda of the Romanians from the Principalities or from territories incorporated by neighboring empires, such as the 1848 Revolution, the unification of the Principalities, and the Great War followed by the series of unions decided in 1918, have generated interpretations inspired by the enthusiasm of the participating historian or the skepticism of those disappointed by later developments in interwar and contemporary Romania. These oxymoronic approaches represent a challenging obstacle for authors concerned with the objective knowledge of the Romanian past from a perspective compatible with the critical demands of contemporary historical writing. In the same vein, the disappearance of interpretative constraints generated by nationalistic militancy and the totalitarian experiments of the last century has been succeeded by the placement of the nation at the periphery of historiographical interest, or by its juxtaposition with the issues proposed by the so-called *longue durée* history. Adapting these research directions to the specifics of Romanian history has also generated a series of opportunities, such as the interest in the history of civil society and the institutions established by it. The social commitment of the elite trained in the educational institutions of the Habsburg Monarchy in service to their community of origin led to the evolution of national affinities from concepts familiar to the educated public to a form of solidarity capable of successfully competing with dynastic loyalty and integrating the entire population, regardless of confessional affiliations.

The reprinting of Professor Ioan Bolovan’s work, resulting from the author’s long-standing interest in the history

of institutional structures of the Romanians in western Transylvania, establishes a *modus vivendi* between the thematic options of traditional Transylvanian historiography with which the author identifies and the methods of social history and historical demography that he has promoted through an invaluable body of work and active involvement in international historiographical forums. The research is placed under the auspices of an ethical commitment explicitly assumed towards the author's community of origin. This latter loyalty signifies an act of courage in relation to the risk of exposing oneself to skepticism from specialists who place local history studies at the edge of historiographical interest. Any potential depreciation of a work with evident scientific significance is counterbalanced by the very nature of the subject. The protagonist of the work is a collective character, the Romanian community in Arad, a region of exceptional contacts, open to Hungarian and Serbian influences, connected with the national life of the Romanians in Transylvania proper, and undertaking initiatives to form a Romanian intellectual and entrepreneurial elite. The chronological interval considered by the author coincides with a turning point in Central-Eastern European history, dominated by the efforts of the Habsburg Monarchy to find functional solutions to preserve its state unity in the face of emerging competing national initiatives. Not least, the work provides an outline of social history through a meticulous analysis of the mechanisms of diffusion of national values from the cultural elite to various social categories. This process generated institutional resources capable of ultimately ensuring the success of the union decreed at Alba Iulia on 1 December 1918.

The legitimacy of this historiographical endeavor is also ensured by its placement in the succession of research by two normative personalities for Romanian historical writing. The introductory word by Professor Nicolae Bocșan highlights the peculiarities of the Arad Association in comparison with other similar initiatives of the Romanian elite in the mid-19th century. The foreword written by Professor Liviu Maior places the institutional developments in Arad in the context of efforts to build a Romanian civil society and the institutional innovations initiated after 1860 by imperial liberalism. The actual introduction provides the author with the opportunity to assume familial and ethical loyalties that illustrate the privileged relationship with the subject addressed and with the Romanian nation's past in general. The first chapter dedicated to the genesis of the Arad Association offers a brief analysis of the state-culture-society relationship in the context of modernization in Europe, followed by a review of developments in the emergence of Romanian cultural-national institutions after the Revolution of 1848-1849, highlighting local peculiarities. The final section addresses the initial phases of the organization of the association itself, in the atmosphere created by the reforms initiated by the imperial administration and the coexistence of liberalism with moderate nationalism. The second chapter is a brief outline of institutional history and analyzes the objectives of the Association specified in the statute approved by the General Assembly in 1863, the governing and operational bodies, and the resources provided by its members. The examination of documentary sources justifies identifying a peak stage of its action in 1871-1880,

followed by stages of decline and revival, dominated by controversies reflecting the Romanian nation's political commitment in the context of dualism. The third chapter offers the opportunity for a cultural sociology excursion, dedicated to the composition of the Association, relevant for the mutations occurred at the level of Romanian society in western Transylvania in the context of modernization. These developments included the rise of intermediate categories such as lawyers and clerks, as well as the involvement of students in the diffusion of national culture into the depths of Romanian society.

The fourth chapter considers the dynamics of the Association's concrete action, as reflected in the annual general assemblies, which became sources of significant cultural initiatives relevant to the evolution of modern Romanian culture, such as the unification of orthography or compatibility with the themes frequented by the proponents of the Junimea (The Youth) literary society (circle). The final section of the chapter constitutes an analysis of the concept of civil society and its meanings over the past decades. The fifth chapter focuses on the interference of the political factor in the Association's cultural action from a dual perspective: the objective partnership between Viennese authorities and the Romanian bureaucratic elite aimed at limiting the process of Magyarization, and the dual involvement of the members of the cultural forum in organizing the political structures of the Transylvanian Romanians. Controversies regarding political tactics impacted cultural action, but significant moments for the identity manifestations of the Romanians in the Monarchy, such as the Memorandum movement and electoral campaigns, dem-

onstrated the results of efforts to integrate the masses into the national movement. The sixth chapter addresses the Association's relationship with other similar structures in the Romanian space and its role in supporting the formation of a Romanian intellectual elite at foreign universities or organizing campaigns to combat illiteracy or alcoholism. The final section emphasizes the significance of the cultural retreat of the Romanian elite, capable of ensuring the resources for militant national action within a specific political framework.

Despite the author's assumed affinities, the work does not constitute an apologetic analysis of a reality constrained by the limits and the enthusiasm of personal life experiences but proposes a snapshot of the community that made an undeniable contribution to realizing the political program preliminarily reflected by the 1848 movement. From the perspective of the ethics governing the historian's profession, returning to the initial research is a plea for persistent work, generating lasting achievements even in the absence of facile glory.



FLORIAN DUMITRU SOPORAN

BEATRICE BEDNARIK and ALEXANDRU DAVIDIAN
Familia Bednarik în arta românească
 (The Bednarik family in Romanian art)
 Bucharest: Editura Vellant, 2020

THIS WORK is an excellent reconstruction of the life and activity of a Romanian family of artists who are not well known among the general public, but who made significant contributions to Romanian and world culture. It brings into focus three important personalities of the Bednarik family, Ignat, Elena, and Beatrice, shining a light on their remarkable artistic contributions and lifting them out of unjust anonymity.

The work dedicated to these extraordinary artists is a comprehensive four-volume set, accompanied by a chronology of the most important events in the life of the Bednarik family and two appendices. The first appendix contains excerpts from catalogues of exhibitions signed by Ignat Bednarik, from home and abroad, while the second features a series of photographs capturing the three artists in various moments throughout their lives. Additionally, the publication successfully reconstructs the individual, family and artistic life cycles of the three characters, placing each important event in the context of the epoch and of the circumstances in which they lived, enriched with their personal emotions and reflections.

The most substantial part of the work, Book I, brings Ignat Bednarik to the foreground, detailing his childhood and formative years. It provides insights into his early life in Turnu Severin, his precocious artistic talent and his introspective and contemplative character. The book recounts a devastating local fire and the

tragic fate of his blind friend, who lost his life in the blaze. This death abruptly ended the potential literary career of a promising talent, and it is striking that years later, the painter Ignat Bednarik would suffer from the same disability as his childhood friend. We then follow him through his early school years, at high school and at the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, where he created a series of artistic works that attracted the attention and appreciation of his teachers. However, life in Bucharest brought challenges for the young artist, as he faced hunger, misery and shortages, which he described in his memoirs.

But life in the Romanian capital also brought moments of happiness, such as meeting Elena Alexandrina Barabas, who would later become his wife. In terms of his artistic career, during this period, he created a series of drawings inspired by nature, based on the time he spent at his parents' home in Turnu Severin and later on in Rahova. He also produced a series of illustrations for newspapers, which provided him with the necessary income to cover his daily expenses.

Between 1901 and 1905, Ignat Bednarik was an auditing student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, where he was deeply influenced by the artistic and cultural effervescence of the city, as well as by the museums and collections he visited. However, he faced numerous physical challenges that affected his health, forcing him to spend an extended period of time in hospital. To make a living, he had to work as a painter's laborer.

An important moment in Ignat Bednarik's life was his marriage to Elena in 1908. The following year, the couple enrolled at the Royal School of Decorative Arts in Munich, where they spent approximately two years. This period in the Ger-

man city had a major impact on their artistic development. In 1912, they returned permanently to Romania and settled in Bucharest, where they founded the Free Academy of Decorative Arts, thus contributing to the formation and development of the artistic sensibility of the capital's inhabitants. This period also marked the artistic maturity of Ignat Bednarik, who also began to collaborate with Queen Marie of Romania.

The year 1916 brought another important event in the life of the Bednarik family, with the birth of their first child. That same year, Romania joined the Triple Entente and entered the First World War, an event that the artist immortalized in a series of compositions. In the early interwar years, Ignat Bednarik was the protagonist of several exhibitions, held in 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1927 and 1928, with the last one taking place in New York. An additional significant moment in his family life occurred in 1922 with the birth of his daughter, Beatrice Ioana.

The economic crisis of the late 1920s marked the beginning of the artistic decline for Ignat Bednarik, who also suffered from failing eyesight. The year 1939 brought a series of difficult trials, including the death of his wife and the outbreak of World War II. The artist's health continued to deteriorate after the war, leading to the complete loss of his vision and the ability to create, despite him having much more to offer culturally. His life came to an end in Bucharest in 1963.

Book III of the work is dedicated to Elena Bednarik, an artist as remarkable as her husband, who had major achievements in painting and graphic arts. She was born in 1883 in Bucharest, where she attended the School of Fine Arts between

1900 and 1908. She continued to hone her skills in Munich and applied and perfected her knowledge in the studio opened in Bucharest together with her husband. The difficult period of the First World War, involving the occupation of Bucharest by the German army, found her living alongside her son and mother, but with her thoughts and heart with her husband, who had been drafted into the army. After the end of the conflict, she and her husband enjoyed two decades of personal and artistic fulfilment, including the birth of their daughter Beatrice Ioana in 1922. However, this period of success was followed by one of decline marked by her husband's blindness, Elena's own health problems and, ultimately, the end of her life in 1939.

Book IV is dedicated to Beatrice Ioana Bednarik, a painter and graphic artist, and the daughter of Ignat Bednarik. Throughout her artistic life, several key moments stand out: her studies at St. Mary's Institute in Bucharest between 1936 and 1941, followed by a period of studies at the Faculty of Law in Bucharest between 1944 and 1949. From 1955 to 1959, she continued her artistic training at the Nicolae Grigorescu Institute of Fine Arts in the capital of Romania.

Beatrice Bednarik would become her father's main support after he began experiencing vision problems and following her mother's death. In addition, she dedicated the topic of her doctoral thesis, drawn up between 1964 and 1975, to her father, in a work suggestively entitled "Contributions to the Study of the Evolution of Romanian Art in the First Decades of the 20th Century: The Life and Work of the Watercolourist Ignat Bednarik."

The present publication follows the same line, describing the life and work of

the three members of the Bednarik family, as well as their contribution to the development of Romanian art in the 20th and 21st centuries. It can be stated without hesitation that it thoroughly covers in detail all the relevant aspects concerning the three artists, drawing on a wealth of sources and deeply exploring their thoughts, feelings and emotions through their memoirs and journals. The abundance of reproductions of the Bednarik family's photographs and documents, combined with the excellent graphic and editorial design, makes this book a remarkable achievement that invites both reading and reflection, as a delight for both the eyes and the soul.



ELENA CRINELA HOLOM

TRAIAN SANDU

Ceaușescu: Le dictateur ambigu

Paris: Perrin, 2023

TRAIAN SANDU is a historian who teaches at Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris and specializes in Romanian history, especially the interwar and the communist periods. His recent monograph is a well-documented biography, even if rather conventional in its approach and a bit too *French*—wearingly bombastic—in its style.

Its conventionalism is quite straightforwardly accepted by its author, and manifests itself at multiple levels: not only the conventional form of the biography as a genre, whose fetishism of subjective self-determination and all-roundedness might seem obsolete in an age of intersectionality, multicausality and combined and unequal developments. But also the rather conven-

tional conceptual tools that are put to use in the reconstruction of Ceaușescu's trajectory—namely, the concept of totalitarianism (even in the culturally infused more recent articulation), and the consequent emphasis on discourse and ideology, both aspects (totalitarianism + ideology) that constitute the pillars of the official condemnation of the Romanian communist regime established in Tismăneanu's Presidential Commission Final Report from 2006. Where Sandu's approach differs from Tismăneanu's is in its lesser interest in the mechanisms of terror and coercion, and in his emphasis instead on the popular support of the regime—a social grounding that Sandu explains (and evades) through the category of charisma, as the mysterious elucidation of Ceaușescu's discourse and ideology's hold on the population. In this articulation, the concept of 'charisma' reveals all its Weberian utility and aporias: it subjectivizes and thus turns into a mystery the mechanisms of power, de-socializing and de-historicizing the question of the efficacy and legitimacy of the political regime, the link between its discourse, ideology and performance, and the population's tacit or explicit support.

As problematic as this concept of 'charisma' is, it is nevertheless quite structurally indispensable for Sandu's approach. This is because, on the one hand, both in its conceptual design and in its main sources, the book focuses mostly on Ceaușescu's *discourse*, his various allocutions, whether in the Politburo's meetings, international gatherings, informal settings, or public speeches. On the other hand, however, Sandu rarely credits these discourses with any credibility. On the contrary, the book mostly consists in Sandu's acid comments on Ceaușescu's predicaments—in

a constant pendant for sarcasm, moral judgement and hyperbole, which make its style so tiringly “French.” Now, the only mechanism through which one can explain—but precisely as a mystery—the holding power and social efficacy of such a silly and vacuous discourse, besides mere coercion, is that of “charisma,” which notoriously also presents the advantage of pre-explaining its own limits, through the notion of “routinization of charisma,” the necessary realist shadow of this otherwise magical concept: charisma magically functions until it no longer functions because it is no longer magic, but merely routine.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the book is a useful companion in the study of Romanian communism. It goes through, in rich detail, the long yet ineluctable path of Ceaușescu’s ascension in the party and state structures; it documents well the mis-timing of his international strategy of interbloc mediation and relative autonomy—which, because of Ostpolitik and détente, became useless for both major powers and political blocs precisely when it was more desperately needed at home, because of the strategy of endless economic mobilization and hence dependence on foreign trade. It shows well how Ceaușescu’s political and economic strategy ultimately forced him to integrate into his ideological worldview both neoliberal, mercantilist traits (in its emphasis on productivity, exports and comparative advantage), as well as feudal remnants—even though these ideological imports apparently never altered, pace Sandu, its basic Marxist or Stalinist grounding. It contrasts aptly the free hand and self-centered nature of Ceaușescu’s rule at home, with the shrinking opportunities and constraining limitations imposed by the international

and regional context—a debilitating contrast that Ceaușescu, but also Sandu on his tail, tried to evade through increased ideological mobilization, through the voluntaristic and subjective “inner reserves” of the people that have to be animated and channeled so as to overcome any objective underdevelopment and obstacles. This ideological mobilization is, of course, the bread and butter of the operation of charisma—though, as argued above, the enchanting power of “palingenesis” (the mobilizing recourse to the myth of national rebirth), a central category in Sandu’s reconstruction, could be less mysteriously and more historically-sociologically grounded: after all, its charisma functioned when it was not needed, when its alluding tones of national progress and sovereignty were quite plausible and visible in the social context of the 1960s; and it ceased to function as charisma, it became mere routinized formula precisely when it ought to exert its magical powers, in covering and embellishing the declining social conditions in the late 70s and 80s. A charisma that holds only when it is persuasive could perhaps be better explained in more sociological terms as perceived social interests and class consciousnesses.

It is not clear whether this emphasis on discourse, this belief in the self-realizing capacities of ideological mobilization is a peculiar, defining aspect, or maybe an ultimately forced choice for Ceaușescu’s regime—forced to retreat into this repetitive call to palingenesis by the closing doors of the political and economic international contexts—, or whether it is a corner into which the book and its author deliberately painted themselves, through their methodological and conceptual choices. Its effect is, nonetheless, a certain imbalance

between the rich detail of the reconstruction of Ceaușescu’s decisions and utterances, and the much more fleeting reconstruction of the local and international social, political and economic contexts—which are briefly brought into discussion only when Ceaușescu happened to talk about them.

In its epilogue, the book returns to the question of this mysterious charisma—“En quoi résidait cette popularité paradoxale?” this enduring power of an otherwise clearly flailing perspective of national redemption. “Sans doute,” answers Sandu, “dans le dépassement de la malediction détectée par Cioran des petites puissances et le défi fasciste lancé à leur destin mineur . . . La seule issue était celle de l’exceptionnalisme dont se réclament tous les nationalismes, fondés sur l’indépendance internationale et le génie autochtone” (pp. 454–455). But if the fate of Ceaușescu’s palingenesis and its charismatic hold was fatally inscribed into Romania’s frustrating condition of “petite puissance,” this final explanation leaves the reader with more questions than answers: why, then, if this palingenetic mobilization is the necessary delusion of small states, do we find it, for instance, in the patriotic frenzy of the MAGA campaign of the world’s superpower; and why instead, and more to the point, was it then not the default position of the other “petites puissances” from the socialist bloc, which also had to negotiate, like Romania, a “minor destiny” in the shadow of an overbearing neighbor.



ALEX CISTELECAN

BELLA DEPAULO

Single at Heart: The Power, Freedom, and Heart-Filling Joy of Single Life

N.p. [New York]: Apollo Publishers, 2023

I FOUND OUT about the book in the title from a post on LinkedIn, the only ‘social’ (professional, though) platform I have an account on. I do not use it too often either, but I do check in on the activities of those who make up my little network from time to time. I thought it was an interesting research topic, innovative in general and, as far as I knew at the time, not at all known in Romania,¹ so I sent the author an enthusiastic message. I am very grateful to her, who not only replied, but also provided me with the electronic version of her work, so that I could make it known to the Romanian reading public, which is increasingly eager to be informed about new research and approaches.

Bella DePaulo is a social psychologist, a graduate of Vassar College of Liberal Arts (New York) and a 1979 Ph.D. from Harvard University. She taught psychology for two decades at the University of Virginia, and is currently affiliated with the Department of Psychology and Brain Sciences at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has been writing the *Living Single* blog for *Psychology Today* magazine since 2008, has had a monthly column at *Unmarried Equality* since 2015, and has published pieces on the topic in the *Washington Post*, *Time*, and the *New York Times*, becoming the undisputed expert in the field that has emerged thanks to her.

She knows exactly how long she has been studying people alone: since 17 December 1992, when she created a ‘secret’ folder on her computer. Secret from

whom, I immediately wondered. I would find out as I read on. She was 39 and living alone, by choice, but she had not bothered with it until then.

Her professional interests had been directed for many years towards research into the psychology of lying and lie detection, and the list of studies and books published in this field is very extensive. I mention here two titles that are very descriptive in terms of content: *Behind the Door of Deceit: Understanding the Biggest Liars in Our Lives* (Lexington: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2009); *The Hows and Whys of Lies* (Lexington: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010).²

The transformation of personal lifestyle into a research topic was natural, and it materialized with the publication of *Singled Out: How Singles Are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), which debunked society's myths about single people and their lives.³ This was followed by *How We Live Now: Redefining Home and Family in the 21st Century* (New York etc.: Atria Books; Hillsboro, Oregon: Beyond Words, 2015), which takes a survey of home life, from the 'normality' of the more-or-less large family to the 'revolutionary' solitary life.

At this point, I must share something I noticed throughout the reading: *single* and *alone* are two words with different meanings in English, but in Romanian they are one and the same: *singur*. This somehow limits the wide range of nuances and I wonder if this truth is directly related to the narrow Romanian perspective on the subject. I also think it would be a challenge for a future translator of the book into Romanian. The title itself is difficult

to translate. Translated back into English, the Romanian for *Single at Heart* would be *Alone Out of Conviction*.

As I read Bella's book I kept remembering how others have tried to explain to me, throughout my adult life, that I am living wrong. I never wanted to get married: immoral. I do not want children: my life has no purpose. I do not care what other people think: unacceptable. Anyway, the list could go on, but you get the idea. Unfortunately, prejudices of this kind also exist at a much broader level, at the level of populations, cultures, regions. They are perpetuated in space and time beyond the times when they made sense, because if they had not been useful to mankind, they would not have been invented. This happens because too many of us are still uneducated, taking everything for granted from our predecessors, because we do not know ourselves, we have no idea of what and who we are or who we want to become.

Bella de Paulo elegantly makes it clear that the rejection or non-acceptance of the viability of living happily alone is directly related to politics, be it local or state. Let us not forget that unmarried people, especially but not only women, in most parts of the world, have no legal and/or social protection. And the author also gracefully reviews (by shaking her head!) the politically established rules, supported in journalism and extolled in literature. Because, she tells us, she does not want to make waves, but to "create a tsunami." She aims, in fact, to revolutionize the way people think about being single. Great, just in time!

Because my text is intended to be printed in a humanities research journal, I will confine myself to scholarly consid-

erations. However, I cannot avoid mentioning prejudice, because that is what the book and contemporary society are mainly about: wanting to remain alone is not natural or normal. This somehow comes with another prejudice: it is natural (therefore obligatory) for women to want children! Is it? Says who? Being happy is a choice. And, let's be honest: if we measure the time we invest in those we live with, we realize that it takes up most of our lives. If we directed our "time, money, emotional resources" towards ourselves, we might even be able to see ourselves and, with a little goodwill and patience, get to know ourselves. But let us not digress!

There are many lessons from this book that should be learned by as many as possible. A global lesson (sadly already forgotten by most) gave us the pandemic that started in 2020. We are not debating the subject, of course, but Bella DePaulo tells us that this was the moment when people in general, alone or not, facing their natural fears, also faced themselves. Statistics tell us that a good proportion of the couples existing at the beginning of 2020 broke up within two years. The main reason: they no longer had the freedom to do what they wanted when they wanted and how they wanted, let alone where they wanted. There were also couples who became stronger, who took full advantage of this unexpected opportunity to spend time together and learned about each other, or saw, perhaps for the first time, each other as they never had before. But it was those who chose to live alone as an assumed way of life who fared best. For the first time, no friend, colleague or family member tried to 'fix' them (and by this term, of course, I mean the silly attempts to set them up with somebody else, often equally "flawed").

Most often one enters life with information gleaned from the experience of others: family, friends, books. Many make rash decisions, often final or difficult to undo, without having enough information about themselves to be able to make an informed choice about how to live. The important thing is to be authentic, whether you choose to be part of a couple or a partnership. But not many understand what it means to be authentic.

The book is a plea for a way of life that is extremely hard to accept by others, who are very quick to judge, without understanding that people are not, that the world is not, like them. But the lesson that most people never learn is that in life nothing should be marked "must"; we lie to ourselves both when we do "what the world does" and when we deny ourselves something. These problems arise in those who do not know what they want because they do not know who they are, in the weak who feel safer imitating the mob, and in those with limited resources, perhaps financially, but mostly from an emotional perspective.

If you are not like them, the many, you are not defective, though the desire to fix you appears in them. Bella manages to describe many inventive variations and many types of tools used by the "do-gooders," managing the feat of not writing a single word about selfishness. Her text is a continuous and assiduous encouragement to those too embarrassed to accept who they are.

I could comment chapter by chapter on the entire work, but the last thing I want to do is deprive any potential reader of the pleasure of discovering the experiences and truths within its pages. Suffice it to say that it has 306 pages organized into an Introduction, nine chapters⁴ (structured into

many thematic sub-chapters), Notes, and a Word of Thanks.

This book has given me the opportunity to contemplate my whole life and thus understand decisions I once made intuitively. I will save the personal confessions, but I must mention that I, in a (stable but non-legalized) couple relationship of 20 years, am *single* only *at heart*! Thank you, Bella, that I learned this from your book, which confirmed many of my suspicions and revealed a lot about myself.



ANDA-LUCIA SPÂNU

Notes

1. In the meantime, researching the author of the book presented here, I learned from her blog about the studies of Adriana Savu, who even wrote a Ph.D. thesis titled “Adults Unrepeated: A Study of Urban Life Without a Partner and Children,” defended in 2023 at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. Bella DePaulo, “Single and Ignored in Romania: Guest Post by Romanian Scholar Adriana Savu,” 11 august 2019, <https://belladepaulo.com/2019/08/single-and-ignored-in-romania-guest-post-by-romanian-scholar-adriana-savu/> and <http://doctorat.snsparo/sustinerea-tezei-de-doctorat-adulti-ne-pereche-studiu-asupra-vietii-urbane-fara-partener-si-fara-copii-de-catre-candidata-savu-n-adriana-emilia/> (accessed 1 July 2024).
2. Full list and further details at <https://belladepaulo.com/books/#books-about-deception-and-dexter> (accessed 1 July 2024).
3. List of texts dedicated to the life fulfilled alone, at <https://belladepaulo.com/books/#single-people--single-life> (accessed 1 July 2024).
4. These are: 1. “Are You Single at Heart”; 2. “The Pressure to Live a Coupled Life and How We Conquered Them”; 3. “Freedom”; 4. “Solitude”; 5. “The Ones”; 6. “Our Kids, Other Kids, No Kids”; 7. “Intimacy”; 8. “How Life Turns Out”; 9. “The Resistance.”

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