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**ABSTRACT**

**Radu TUDORANCEA**, *Romanian Prisoners in German Camps during the First World War (II)*

This study examines (in two parts) a lesser-known dimension of Romania's participation in the First World War: the case of the Romanian POWs interned in various German camps. Based on archival sources as well as various works, papers, memoirs and war journals of the former combatants who survived German captivity, the article sheds new light on an under-researched topic. The mortality rate among the Romanian POWs was one of the highest (over 31% of the prisoners, mainly soldiers) among those interned in camps created by the Central Powers. This situation can be explained by two main factors. First, Romanians (especially the soldiers) experienced harsh, often degrading and inhumane treatment because of the deep resentment showed by Germany towards Romania, as the country had sided with the Entente, despite its initial alliance with the Central Powers. Second, Romanian POWs were victims of increasingly severe scarcity in Germany: as the country was hit by economic crisis, it struggled to cope with the growing numbers of POWs, which reached 2,5 million people.

**Keywords:** *First World War, Romania, Prisoners of War, Germany, Internment Camps.*

**Gabriela DRISTARU**, *Bulgarian Irredentism. It or Was It Not? A Possible Assassination Attempt on King Charles I (1914)*

The incorporation of southern Dobruja into Romania in 1913 confronted the Romanian state with Bulgarian irredentist movements. In the first six months of 1914, at least two irredentist societies concerning "the Dobruja question" were founded in Sofia. This was followed by a series of violent border incidents and a threat on the life of King Charles I. Despite this, the Romanian government did not take adequate measures to improve the administration in southern Dobrogea. Its representatives also failed to ascertain the real dimension of the Bulgarian threat as Romania joined the First World War on the side of the Entente Powers. This situation may explain the disastrous outcome of the military campaign in 1916.

**Keywords:** *Dobruja, First World War, Romania, Bulgaria, irredentism.*

**Camelia ZAVARACHE**, *Pre-school Education and National Culture in Interwar Romania. Women's Contributions*

This article focuses on the professional trajectory of Elisa Angela Nicolaide as a key figure of the national school policy regarding kindergarten teaching. It explores the contributions by her and her fellow teachers working in Normal Schools for kindergarten teachers to create an autonomous entity, which represented their professional objectives and interests. The article also

analyses how the Ministry of Public Instruction deliberately excluded all women from overseeing kindergarten teaching during 1920s, even though, prior to the First World War, women had been appointed inspectors. Only in the second half of the 1930s, female teachers were once again employed for such tasks, being in charge of evaluating the everyday activity of their colleagues. At the same time, the public perception on the role of kindergartens started to change. Initially, it had been perceived as having mainly national and social purposes, with rural minority communities and peripheral urban spaces as their target. Gradually, the focus expanded to social and cultural objectives, once such institutions were assigned the task of facilitating the civilizational uplift in the Romanian countryside.

**Keywords:** *Kindergartens, Nationalism, Gender, Primary Education, Interwar Romania.*

**Dragoş SUCIOAIA, *The Purity of the Nation. Official Discourse between Wartime Objectives and “Ethnic Ontology” (1940-1941)***

The article explores the relationship between the official discourse of the Antonescu regime (1940-1944) and the rise of racial thinking, promoted by eugenicists, medical professionals and intellectuals. Ion Antonescu promoted a new type of nationalist discourse in order to stabilize the country and mobilize the citizens in support of his dictatorship. Its representatives pursued racial discrimination towards ethnic or religious minorities to consolidate the state. The article analyzes the role of the state in the implementation by Romanian racial thinkers of their ideas about the biological improvement of the nation, during the National-Legionary regime and after the Iron Guard was removed from power.

The contribution examines the perceived dangers towards the nation, the main ideas and measures proposed to protect Romanian ethnicity and combat demographic decline. It assesses how “modernization” models from Germany and Italy were adapted to interwar social and demographic development in Romania. The outcome of such processes and discourses was a national identity based on “integral nationalism”, which included a biological perspective founded on the exclusion of certain minorities and those deemed social and economically undesirable.

**Keywords:** *Ion Antonescu, eugenics, nationalism, racism, minorities.*

**Cristian VASILE, *Mihail Ralea’s Trajectory during Ion Antonescu’s Rule, 1940-1944***

Using under-researched archives and other historical sources, the article examines the biographical path of Mihail Ralea during Ion Antonescu dictatorship (from 6 September 1940 to 23 August 1944). M. Ralea had been member of the National Peasant Party (1927-1938) and Minister of Labor under the authoritarian rule of Carol II (March 1938 – July 1940). He had reasons to fear for his life after the coming into power of General Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard, the most important Romanian fascist organization also called Legion of the Archangel Michael or the Legionnaire Movement.

The hypothesis of this article is that M. Ralea’s survival in a period characterized by political assassinations against the dignitaries of the Royal dictatorship is explained by objective and conjunctural factors. Firstly, I focus both on the nature of the Antonescu political regime and M. Ralea’s relation with the government from September 1940 to August 1944. Secondly, the article highlights Ralea’s motives, after 6 September 1940, for becoming an enemy of the Antonescu regime. In order to clarify complicated biographical aspects and political events I had to work with highly contradictory historical sources. Analyzing the complete biography of Mihail Ralea one can notice that the wartime years constituted a period of transition to strong pro-Soviet and pro-communist orientations.

**Keywords:** *Mihail Ralea, Royal Dictatorship, Ion Antonescu, Iron Guard, Romanian Communist Party.*

**Claudia-Florentina DOBRE**, *De-communization and the Recognition of the Suffering of Former Political Prisoners in Romania*

Former Romanian political prisoners constantly lobbied for the recognition of the suffering they endured during the communist period. Their struggle was not only for their rights and the condemnation of those responsible for crimes and abuses. They also sought to shed light on the institutions involved in successive waves of repression before 1989. Lastly, they pushed for public acknowledgement of their political persecutions in a country where the majority of the population did not have their experience. They publicly assumed an anti-communist identity, as fighters for the values of democracy and human rights, and as anti-victims of communism.

**Keywords:** *Communism, Identity, Women, Former Political Prisoners, Anticommunism, Recognition, Victimization.*

**Bogdan Cristian IACOB**, *Beyond the Nation: Karl Marx – Notes about Romanians*

The history of the publication *Karl Marx - Însemnări despre români* epitomizes the importance of interpreting from a transnational perspective the reformulation of national identity-scripts during communism. The context that underpins this editorial project highlights the fact that the identitarian transformation of the communist regime and the dynamics of the so-called historiographical front at the end of the 1950s and during the 1960s are inextricably tied to the evolution of the socialist camp and of Romania's European re-positioning during the Cold War. *Însemnări despre români* exemplifies the role of transfers, exchanges, and entanglements between socialist officials and academics, as well as across Europe despite its ideological divide. This case study defies narratives about presumed isolation of Romania and its representatives under the heavy shade of the Iron Curtain. The article shows how transnational histories alter our frameworks for understanding the international dimensions of local state socialism beyond the usual, exclusive focus on the diplomatic history.

**Keywords:** *Transnationalism, Historiography, Romania, Communism, Eastern Europe.*

**Mioara ANTON**, *Reclaiming a Historical Debt. Financial Negotiations between the United Kingdom and Communist Romania (1960-1975)*

This article explores the course of the negotiations between the United Kingdom and Communist Romania for the recovery of the historical debt that the government in Bucharest owed to the British one. The controversy started in 1948, when, against the background of the nationalization of the British oil companies, the Romanian state did not offer compensation and refused to pay the loan it had contracted during the interwar period. At the beginning of the 1960s, in the context of *détente* and motivated by mutual economic interests, Romania and the UK sought a solution for this financial dispute. It took them almost 15 years to reach a compromise. The protracted negotiations and deadlocks were mainly caused by the leadership in Bucharest not wanting to repay this historic debt. Specific political and economic interests allowed Romania and the UK to achieve an agreement in December 1975. As a result, Nicolae Ceaușescu gained access to British technology, favorable loans, increased exports as well as the promise of a state visit to London. In its turn, the British government secured a massive presence in the Romanian market, especially in the oil sector.

**Keywords:** *Debt, Romanian claims, United Kingdom, détente, Nicolae Ceaușescu.*

**Ovidiu BOZGAN, 1965 – Romanian-American Policy Review: Mike Mansfield's  
First Visit to Romania**

The article analyzes Romanian-American relations between 1964 and 1965, at a time when a new political stage in bilateralism began, marked by normalization and differentiated politics.

The decision of pursuing autonomy toward the Soviet Union – signaled by the famous ‘Declaration from April 1964’ – intertwined with the intensification of linkages with the West. The latter could provide loans, technology and cooperation to accelerate the modernization of Romania’s economy. To a lesser extent, the West also offered political support. In May 1964, a mission led by Gheorghe Gaston Marin, the Vice-President of the Government and the President of the State Committee for Planning, was dispatched to the United States of America. The delegation may have had unrealistic expectations (e.g., obtaining the clause of the most favored nation as soon as possible), yet the visit had significant economic and political outcomes - Gaston Marin met with the US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk.

One of the economic objectives pursued by Romania in its early interactions with US officials was to obtain the technology for Neoprene (synthetic rubber) production. It seemed that an agreement had been reached with the Firestone Company. Yet, in 1965, the negotiations were abandoned by the US company, after pressure from anti-communism organizations – overcoming ideological differences seemed premature.

Despite this setback, other events revitalized Romanian-American relations, most importantly the visit of the leader of the Democratic majority in the US Senate, Mike Mansfield. He was a politician close to President Lyndon B. Johnson. Mansfield came to Romania in November 1965, along with other colleagues from the Senate. The visit was part of a tour of France, Poland, the Soviet Union and other states in the Far East. Even though the main topic of Mansfield’s discussions with Romanian officials was the Vietnam War, bilateral affairs were also brought up. Mansfield’s presence in Romania signaled that the US intended to deal with Bucharest differently from other East European states, thus setting in motion a complex bilateral partnership.

**Keywords:** *Firestone agreement, Détente, Mike Mansfield, Vietnam War, Romania, USA.*

**Dan M. ȚĂLNARU, Behavioral Deviation in Romania during the 1970s and the  
1980s. Social Parasitism, Usury, Alcoholism and Prostitution**

Confronted more and more with unemployment, deviance and anarchism, daily life in Romanian communism since the early 1970s entered a new stage of re-disciplining. This process was supposed to mold society in line with the demands required by the new ideological program announced at the 10th Congress of the PCR, „The Program for the Creation of a Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society”.

Refusal to work, vagrancy, hooliganism, alcoholism, prostitution, profiteering, from and other forms of were associated with the behavior of young people. These problems were targeted by a special law, the "law of social parasitism", as it remained in the collective mind until today, so as not to contradict socialist lifestyles.

The restriction of rights and freedoms, the generalized shortage did not make society an ally of this law. On the contrary, a series of antisocial practices that the population resorted to in the name of survival, often placed it under its influence.

The lack of goods and food in the shops of towns and villages, the time wasted waiting for them, the poor quality of the products, together with other difficulties and humiliations of everyday existence created a „black market”, a parallel supply network based on profiteering, from overpriced goods. The lack of services, including social ones, kept alive the institution of favors, a system of relationships in which access to medical services, housing, education or a job had to be additionally rewarded in order to pass the customs of corruption in the public administration. The compression of incomes, the regimentation in increasingly difficult occupations, also destroyed the civilizing myth of work. Unemployment, non-existent in official reports, became a recurrence among the youth.

The „law of social parasitism” was nothing more than a way in which the state tried to re-discipline the behavior of a generation that, for a short time, had looked through the folds of the Iron Curtain. The law countered the ideological dilemmas generated by the relaxation of the 1960s and the 1970s as well as the fallout from the severe economic recession of the 1980s.

**Keywords:** *Communism, social parasitism, shortages, black market, Nicolae Ceaușescu.*

**Simion GHEORGHIU, *The Economic and Financial Problems of Perestroika and the End of the Cold War: „Permissible Opening” vs „Maximum Transparency”***

Based on documents from former Soviet archives and specialized literature published by Russian researchers, this article traces the efforts made by Mikhail Gorbachev to restore the Soviet economy by imposing a series of reforms. In the first years after acceding to power, the reforms were not significantly different from those attempted by his predecessors. The major differences would appear later, when, towards the end of the 1980s, under the pressure of financial crisis, Gorbachev sought to reach an agreement with the US regarding the nuclear arsenal. In parallel, the economic reforms moved away from centralized planning and explored the principles of the free market.

In this context, M.S. Gorbachev and his team turned their attention to the massive imbalances concerning military spending, which alleviation conditioned the success of perestroika. Therefore, the leaders in Kremlin resorted to radical measures, such as the asymmetric reduction of military contingents. What they did not understand was that the Soviet economic system could not be reformed. It had to be completely changed.

**Keywords:** *Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Perestroika, Soviet economy, Permissible Openness, Transparency.*