Reviews

Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *Promises of 1968. Crisis, Illusion, and Utopia*, Budapest and New York: CEU Press: 2011.

Like the French Revolution, the "year 1968" has become another founding and never-ending event of contemporary history and politics, a *lieu de mémoire* permanently open for reassessments and interpretations, invoked, rejected, equally blamed and loved. The 18 articles the present volume gathers aim to contribute, with the historiographical resources of the year 2008, to a better understanding of the "historical puzzle" represented by the year 1968, discussing the year 1968 as "both global event and local moment of crisis".[1] The task the volume engages upon is not unproblematic, given the richness of meanings and interpretations that form the cluster of significance that "1968" as a crucial year of the postwar era is made of, culturally and politically.

The core of the present volume groups together the articles presented at the conference *Promises of 1968. Crisis, Illusion, and Utopia*, marking the anniversary of 40 years since the "mythical year"1968. The conference and the present volume are outcomes of a research project initiated in 2007 and coordinated by the Centre for the Study of Post-Communist Societies at the University of Maryland, under the direction of Prof. Vladimir Tismăneanu, the editor of the present volume. The potential and significance of this book are best revealed in the broader context of the research project, whose main aim is to provide "an overview of the global dynamics characteristic for the twentieth century and its lessons and impact upon the twenty-first".[2]

The volume is divided in three parts, and manages to find the equilibrium between global and local, universal principles and their particular fulfillments, between "the whole picture" and its constitutive elements, as well as between the developments in Eastern Europe and those in the Western Europe. Part One deals with the year 1968 at the crossroads of fragmentary personal memories and political theory: Martin Palous discusses his personal experience as a former participant to the Prague Spring in the "normalizing" Czechoslovakia, Irena Grudzinska-Gross speaks about the way she remembers the Polish March of 1968, at the crossroads of personal and generational memories, Dick Howard talks about his wanderings in 1968 Europe in the search of a New

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[1] Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, "Introduction", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *Promises of 1968. Crisis, Illusion, and Utopia*, Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2011, p. 6.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 18.

Left, Jeffrey C. Isaac tackles the problem of redefining "the political" scientifi-
cally in the light of the Eastern European experiences of 1968, Jan-Werner
Müller tries to make sense of the main Western political theories and ideas of
the year 1968, Aurelian Craiutu explores and contextualizes Raymond Aron's
reflections on the year 1968 in France, Karol Edward Sołtan deals with the
1960s as one sequence of "heightened-idealism" of the postwar world.[1]

Part Two evaluates the contemporary legacies of 1968, starting with Agnes
Heller's account of Hungary's *moeurs* in the 1960s, continuing with Jiri Pehe's
account of the use of Prague Spring in contemporary Czech mainstream po-
litical discourse, and with Bradley Adams' reflections of the legacy of 1968
legacy for both Eastern and Western Europe. Tereza-Brandusa Palade tackles
the possibility of an anti-utopian, post-Marxist politics, whereas Nick Miller
and Cristian Vasile tackle the failure of reform in Yugoslavia and Romania,
respectively.

Part Three is dedicated to specific case studies: Vladimir Tismăneanu
and Bogdan Iacob convincingly show that in spite of the open support for
the Prague Spring, the Romanian Communist Party and its leader, Nicolae
Ceausescu, actually professed a nationalistic Stalinism in Romania, contribut-
ing to the reinvention of local communism as a totalitarian movement. Mark
Kramer analyses the rationale informing the formation of the Brezhnev Doc-
trine, Jeffrey Herf discusses the terrorist actions of the Red Brigade in West
Germany in the aftermath of 1968, while Victor Zaslavsky provides an ac-
count of the tense relations existing between the Italian Communist Party and
the USSR in 1968, and Catalin Avramescu portraits Charles De Gaulle's visit
in Romania (May 1968) as a farce of Ceausescu's apparent rapprochement
to the Western Europe. In the concluding chapter of the volume, Charles S.
Maier analyses the significance of the year 1968 as the outcome of two de-
cades of postwar politics and society in both the East and West.

I believe that the major accomplishment of the present volume is to pres-
ent a European perspective of the "year 1968" as a coherent, unifying event
for a split continent. As reviewer I have chosen to privilege this direction of
inquiry, consistently present in the entire volume, as I believe that this direc-
tion reflects best the pressures of the end of the year 2011. It is just a possible
reading of this book, one story among many others, e.g. "1968" as failure,
"1968" as success, the immediate and long-run consequences of "1968", or
today's political uses of "1968".

The convincing story of Eastern and Western Europe in 1968 reacting to
the same burden of their historical time, as reflecting overall societal differen-
tiations in the postwar world[2], significantly nuances the reigning perspective

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[1] Karol Edward SOŁTAN, "The Divided Spirit of the Sixties", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU
(ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 131-156, 131.

[2] Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, "Introduction", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *op. cit.*,
p. 2.

of a heroic and tragic Eastern European 1968, as opposed to the "spoiled children" revolution of the 1968 Westerners, a perspective endorsed by influential and yet so different historians as Eric Hobsbawn and Raymond Aron.

Moreover, the common European story is coherent with the main lines of thought that structure the volume, as revealed by Vladimir Tismăneanu in the introductory chapter: the revolutionary year 1968 challenged both the present and the postwar past on three levels: generational, cultural and ideological, and strategic-historical. Along these three lines of thought, the volume manages to reflect the year 1968 as a moment of a common European history, both in the East and West.

The generational perspective allows Grudzinska Gross to recognize a common 1968 generation across Eastern and Western Europe: the same post-war generation of the outraged, acting against wars, social inequalities, against control of their private lives, engaging in an "antiauthoritarian revolt on both sides of the Iron Curtain".[1] In the same vein, Maier acknowledges the existence of a European generation that acted against "residual authoritarian regimes".[2]

The perspective of the cultural and ideological challenge to the past presents the different authors with the opportunity to define the year 1968 as a "great age of (political) theory" in both East (Palade) and West (Isaac), or as the moment of a "transnational, global cultural revolution", with Beatles, movies, theater and dance of the 1960s being performed beyond the Iron Curtain (Heller, Howard, Grudzinska-Gross). The same perspective allowed different authors to identify on both sides of Europe the effects of 1968 as a "vital shake-up of postwar societies"[3] (Craiutu in France, Adams in Central Europe, Mueller in Western Europe, Palous in Cehoslovakia). In the lack of immediate political gains and institutional evolutions in both East and West, the authors are still able to recognize the gains of 1968 in terms of political culture and the emergence of progressive politics, in both the East and West. On the other hand, the most significant of the 1968 failures found their way in both Eastern and Western Europe: the reemergence of nationalism and Stalinism in Romania (Tismăneanu and Iacob), the failure of intellectuals in Romania (Vasile) or Yugoslavia (Miller) to formulate a critical Marxist alternative, terrorism in West Germany (Herf), anti-Semitism in Poland (Grudzinska-Gross), Romania, and West Germany.

The third line of reasoning, strategic-historical, reveals the formulation of the "year 1968" in the sphere of international relations, of the Yalta agreements and Cold War realities. Mark Kramer's article consistently tackles with

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[1] Irena GRUDZINSKA GROSS, in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 43-54, p. 44.

[2] Charles S. MAIER, "Conclusion: 1968-Dit It Matter?", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 413-434, 419.

[3] Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, "Introduction", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

the unwillingness of the leadership of USSR and of other Eastern European leaders to accept an alternative path to socialism as a mean to preserve the status quo established at Yalta (the formulation of the Brezhnev doctrine), and the loss of legitimacy this refusal caused in both Eastern and Western Europe. Maier, on the other hand, argues that the year 1968 was "effectively transforming an international politics dominated by East-West conflict".[1] Deepening the relationship between ideologies and international politics rationales, Maier arrives at the conclusion that the TET offensive in Vietnam was perceived in the epoch as a sign of weakness of Western imperialism, whereas the Prague Spring was perceived as sign of the failed reformation of Soviet imperialism, so that "both sets of events undermined the frozen Cold War equilibrium of force that had been supposedly sealed by the Yalta agreements."[2] From this perspective, 1968 becomes a forerunner of today's situation of a united Europe, announcing the possibility of strategically thinking of Europe beyond the spheres of influence and dividing lines established at the end of World War Two.

The volume not only brings together stories of 1968 in both Eastern and Western Europe, by highlighting the similarities existing between the two sides of the Iron Curtain, but it also provides synthetic and realistic analyses of the common causes, purposes and legacies of the year 1968 in today's Europe. In this continental account, the Iron Curtain becomes a two-sided mirror that reflects, transforms and unifies the European space that it once used to divide. Tismăneanu's comprehensive introduction structures and reveals the main lines of analysis coherently professed in the volume. Furthermore, there are two other articles that structure the European story, narrated between the "past" (1945-1968) by Charles Maier and 'future' (aftermath of 1968) by Bradley Adams, with Tismăneanu correctly pointing out that "1968…was simultaneously pregnant with its future and haunted by its past."[3]

Maier emphasizes some of the main common factors that could be of help in answering the question: why were the actions of 1968 so widespread? Dismissing as simplistic and insufficient the explanation of imitative mechanisms set in motion by a "traveling theater of protest", he wonders if there is no common logic, common challenge for the societies on different sides of the Wall[4] to underline these common developments. In this light, '1968' reflects some common factors that produced a "global outburst"), Eastern and Western Europe alike, revealing its significance "as a measure of the stresses of postwar society".[5] The first common cause of the year "1968" is the generational ex-

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[1] Charles S. MAIER, *op. cit.,* p. 420.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 429.

[3] Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, "Introduction", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[4] Charles S. MAIER, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

[5] *Ibidem.*

planation already mentioned above: the young people in both East and West "were striving for an agenda of expressiveness and self-realization rather than an agenda of discipline"[1] and their agenda constituted a "global reaction to public agendas of 1933-1963".[2]

Moreover, Maier acknowledges the similarities existing between the post-Stalinist societies of Eastern Europe and the welfarist democracy in the West, as two stances of an industrial society offering the same prospects of stagnation and bureaucracy. The paternalistic societies of the 1950s and 1960s were offering both East and West the boredom of "consensus politics" , and the "ugly gray" of social security in a "Weberian Iron Cage of instrumental rationality"[3] (see also Sołtan on this). Without experiencing the excesses of Stalinist times (also confessed by Grudzinska-Gross and Palous) or those of the postwar privations in the West (Müller), the 1968 generation was acutely sharing a sentiment of stagnation in both Eastern and Western Europe. In search for heroic actions and transcendence, the 1968 generation was trying to get rid of the soft power that was covering a repressive reality.[4]of the 1950s and 1960s. The 1968 generation was thus challenging the structures of industrial societies in both East and West, a reaction to the discipline practices constitutive for modern societies. The failure of the year 1968 in achieving immediate significant political change and institutional reform, a situation largely recognized in the volume, is explained by Maier and Adams by the political romanticism of its actors in both the East and West. Moreover, the lack of social basis for the 1968 movement, the protesters' failure to largely address the workers' class, was another significant factor for the unsuccessful outcome of the year 1968 in both East and West.

If Maier's article maps the past behind "1968" in all of Europe, Bradley Abrams charts the future of this year, focusing on its aftermath in both the East and West. His article is paradigmatic for the European story of the year 1968, as it underlines the common legacy of the year 1968 for the entire continent: the death of Marxism as political language and horizon of revolution and reform after 1968, not only in Eastern Europe but also in the West. And this failure represented "the end of certain illusions about the nature and limits of Marxist politics East and West", [5] the "clinical death of Marxism", in Kolakowski's terms.[6]

After the bloody end of the Prague Spring, critical thinkers that previously had hoped to reform communism by giving it a Marxist "human face" arrived

[1] *Ibidem*, p. 428.

[2] *Ibidem*

[3] *Ibidem,* p. 425.

[4] *Ibidem,* p. 428.

[5] Bradley ABRAMS, "From Revisionism to Dissent: The Creation of Post-Marxism in Central Europe after 1968", in Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-196, p. 180.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 184.

at the conclusion that "communism is unreformable" (Grudzinska-Gross, Palous). Aware of the lack of potential of Marxist language to attract a large social basis and to formulate practical solutions, most of the critical thinkers in Eastern Europe renounced their Marxist language and became dissidents professing faith in human rights and a "thick liberalism", with the help of a new language. After the Helsinki Declaration (1975), the new language crystallized as it became the language of rights, effective in creating the space for an autonomous civil society and for a critique of the "normalization" of communist societies.

Meanwhile, in Western Europe, there was a gradual split with Marxism, caused on the one hand by the brutal liquidation of the reformist movements of Eastern Europe, the massive immigration to the West of Polish and Czechoslovak intellectuals "disenchanted" with Marxism, and the 1976 split between the Western Communist parties and USSR (see Zaslavski). On the other hand, the Western experience of the year 1968, its failure (Howard) in formulating both viable theoretical solutions inspired by Marxism (Müller) and practical solutions, the lack of a political program and the advent of terrorism (Herf) showed the incapacity of Marxism to inspire an effective and constructive social critique of the bourgeois society. Under these conditions, most of the 1968 intellectuals "made peace with the capitalist welfare state and social democracy" (this movement included Euro-communist movements in Italy and Spain.)

The corresponding developments in the post-Marxist ideological space, both in the East and West, converged in the language of rights (human rights in Eastern Europe, minorities and women rights in Western Europe) and environmentalism and diverged on the issue of disarmament. These developments, as well as others featured throughout the volume, rather weaken the point Palade makes regarding the anti-ideological stance of post-Marxist mentality that emerged after 1968.

The post-1968 era witnessed the gradual "discovery" of Eastern Europe by its Western half, and the emergence of "Central Europe" on the symbolic map of Europe, as a metaphor for a third way, of a post-Marxist alternative of "thick" liberalism and of a non-consumerist society, formulating a set of concerns for a progressive politics suited for the concerns of the 21st century. [1]

My choice to underline the coherent European legacy of the "year" 1968 that the present volume puts forward was made under the pressure of our own times, of the global, but first of all European crisis that is going on in this moment. In this moment of crisis, of European turmoil, the pan-European legacy of 1968 becomes ever more necessary and updates to the year 2011 the original aims of the research project conducted by Vladimir Tismăneanu.

Corina Doboş

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[1] *Ibidem*, pp. 184-185.

Grégoire GAFENCO/ Grigore GAFENCU, *Préliminaires de la guerre à l'est, De l'accord de Moscou (21 août 1939) aux hostilités en Russie (22 juin 1941)/ Preliminariile războiului din răsărit, De la Acordul de la Moscova (23 august 1939) până la ostilitățile din Rusia (22 iunie 1941)*, ediție bilingvă, Avant-propos par/ Cuvânt-înainte de Teodor Baconschi, Préface,notes et index par/ Prefață, note și indice de Laurențiu Constantiniu, Traduction par Andrei Niculescu, Colecția: Seria Grigore Gafencu, București: Editura Curtea Veche, 2011.

Grigore Gafencu, journalist and politician in the inter-war period, has been for a while the object of a systematic effort for editorial recovery, with support from several Romanian public institutions, especially The Romanian Diplomatic Institute and the Institute for The Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exile (IICCMER). This approach is almost without comparison if we think that it concerns a character relatively unknown to the great public, who had disappeared from public life since the early forties. It is true that, at least for now, the emphasis seems to have been mainly on the years when the former journalist was in the middle of the major diplomatic crises of the Forties. It appears that his position as a witness to political events (as tragic as they were tense) is quite oversized in relation to his periods of "anonymity", especially those when he was "simply" a journalist and an MP (deputy).

The new version of the most important works of the former foreign minister during Charles II, *Préliminaires de la guerre à l'est*[1], could be a significant event from several points of view. Hardly attached to a specific kind, almost forgotten by historians and the general public, the book bring to our attention an unalterable author, a style of thought and expression in which the distance between reflection, writing and political action is indistinguishable.

Printed by a Swiss publishing house during the war, *Préliminaires de la guerre à l'est* could not enjoy a natural reception, although apparently it was reprinted several times and circulated in diplomatic circles during those years. The subject is both exciting and fraught with complicated memory. Difficult to be assumed from a moral perspective, hard to talk about, difficult to reconstruct historiograpically as such, particularly in the satellite countries of Eastern Europe, the coalition war against the USSR carried out by European countries associated with Germany in the Axis Anti-Comintern or anti-Bolshevik war (as it was called during that time) has had an unfortunate faith

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[1] **Grégoire GAFENCO/ Grigore GAFENCU:** *Préliminaires de la guerre à l'est, De l'accord de Moscou (21 août 1939) aux hostilités en Russie (22 juin 1941)/ Preliminariile războiului din răsărit, De la Acordul de la Moscova (23 august 1939) până la ostilitățile din Rusia (22 iunie 1941)*, **ediție bilingvă, Avant-propos par/ Cuvânt-înainte de Teodor Baconschi**, **Préface,notes et index par/ Prefață,note și indice de Laurențiu Constantiniu, Traduction par Andrei Niculescu**, Colecția: *Seria Grigore Gafencu,* **București: Editura Curtea Veche, 2011, p.** 592.

from the point of view of historiography. What position should one take in order to find the right tone? How is one to judge the main actors and political decisions involved? Who is really the aggressor and who is the victim?

This book was begun in the winter of 1941-42, completed in spring 1943, and published in 1944. As the title shows, this is actually a study of the diplomatic origins of the "campaign in the East" and its implications for Eastern Europe and Europe in general. The historical explanation which provides logic and soul to the narrative is based on a relatively simple reading scheme of the events: the analogy between Napoleon's and Hitler's campaign in Russia / USSR in 1812 and 1941 respectively. A truly striking analogy, at least at first sight.

Gafencu is aware of the handicap of writing "in the eye of the storm", informing himself, as he says, "almost exclusively from my personal notes and papers". He believed that in this way he would contribute to discussions to come at the conclusion of hostilities: "The War is not over, but its end is predictable", he notes, in the commentary that opens the volume. "Beyond the armed conflicts, reason seeks to find from now on the principles that will lead to peace. /.../ The causes for imbalance ought to be known in order to know how to fix them. To restore peace we need to know why and how it was harmed".

In this game, his attention is grabbed by the relationship between the two "totalitarian gangsters", as they were called recently by Vladimir Tismăneanu, Stalin and Hitler, who subverted, both through the agreements and disagreements among them, the order and balance in Europe.

What brings closer together, in his view, these two historical situations, which were over a century apart, is that, in Benjamin Constant's own words, the leaders involved have been misled about "the limits of the admissible".

However, what makes that work not just a mere exercise of historical reconstruction is its finality, openly stated in the Foreword, one which adds a tragic note to the book: how can Soviet influence in Europe be curtailed after the end of hostilities?

Gafencu was convinced that Hitler would lose the war (this was in April – May!), he knows that this is desirable in the interest of the civilized world, but he predicted that neither peace nor the destiny of Europe would be guaranteed by this.

The danger is the USSR, as he confesses quite explicitly: "European order, already so hard tried, would be in danger of a threat all the more alarming as it appears more complex and indefinite".

The threat stems both from what could be deemed "Bolshevik contamination" (emphasis by Gafencu!) of European countries, as well as the expansionism of the Soviet Union at the expense of the integrity of neighbouring states. Gafencu saw the solution not so much as the isolation of the Soviet Union, as had been the case until that point, but in the domestication of it, meaning

its "integration among Western countries", if it accepted "an order in which the limit is a general rule, and balance a principle of life". It was also necessary to set a limit to Russian expansionism by means of building some sets of balance, as Metternich had once tried. Now it was imperative, he believed, for Europe to be a "bloc" that could provide protection against other blocs: Soviet, Chinese, Anglo-Saxon (American, actually!). We have here an euphemism (the target is obviously Russia), but the interesting part is that, in this construction, a defeated Germany was to be part of this bloc, a truly visionary idea in that context, especially in relation to the order established at Versailles, after 1918.

The Foreword actually contains many ideas and passages of anthology, even if sometimes phrases are here more Sibylline and prudent than in the rest of the book. Gafencu knows that he must draw attention to the danger posed by the USSR, but without frightening the Allies, and especially without alienating Russia, which would have had a hard word to say in the post-war order. Obviously, therefore, that Europe does not represent for Gafencu a particular institutional physiognomy, but is more of a civilization, a system of values and a culture of balance.

The 14 chapters of the book were been organized into two parts, unequal in size and different by approach. The first part, more extensive, is conceived as a "study of political and diplomatic events that preceded the war between the Third Reich and the USSR", between 21 – 23 August 1939 (the *Moscow Agreement*, known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) and 22 June 1941, the beginning of *Operation Barbarossa*. Gafencu briefly analyzed here in tense chapters how things went from the agreement reached in Moscow, which upset the political order in Eastern Europe, to the attack of 22 June 1941. He reenacted the decay of the geopolitical order designed by the two dictators, from the "first crack", the guarantees provided by the Axis to Romania after "arbitration" in Vienna on August 30, 1940, to the deaf dispute over the mouths of the Danube, the signing of the Tripartite Pact on 23rd of September 1940, which ignores the USSR, Japan's entering into the game, the close relationship between Germany and Bulgaria, the agreement between the USSR and Yugoslavia (April 6, 1941), up that country getting attacked by Germany a few days later.

From a historical point of view, this is the most interesting part of this work, in which one could find dense analysis and a remarkable sense of context. It is both an overview by the analyst and an insight by the witness. We see here that the author predicts not only the German failure in Russia and USSR's victory (he wrote this in late 1942 and early 1943!), but points out, free of any ideological partisanship, that within the new context, the USSR is the danger for peace in Europe.

The second part contains five chapters, it is more concentrated, but less spectacular from an ideatic and factual point of view. 'The drama of the

countries situated between the USSR and the Third Reich', as this sequence is called, seems to be written in the key of an ancient tragedy. The memorialistic feature is clearly visible: his stories of his mission to Moscow are some pages of prose of an excellent quality. Its aim here is definitely to explain why Romania was part of Hitler's war, and the way this country should be treated after the war.

Gafencu thus clarifies Romania's position in the new context of agreements between the main revisionist powers in the region, Germany and the USSR, this country's pathetic attempts to reconstruct the geopolitical repositioning in order to preserve its territorial integrity, the abandonment of neutrality with the collapse of the front in Flanders, on 10 May 1940. The last chapter accounts for the terrible circumstances of the ultimatum of June 26 1940, experienced personally by the author. It is the most dramatic and personal part of the work.

Today's reader may be surprised by the tone of moderation, especially with regard to the two dictators (Stalin and Hitler), who are treated almost like partners. It is not just the portrait of a diplomat, if one is familiar with the style of Grigore Gafencu as editor or as a politician. Gafencu always judges the gestures of the actors in international relations from the perspective of a rational analyst. He methodologically ignores the ideological component of political action. It is rare and with great care that he produces any kind of ideological criticism, and most often discusses open policy options, or discusses diplomatic instruments being used, as well as their practical consequences. Where some would see ideological and mental pathologies, he sees casting, interests, abilities: a game of power and intelligence. As a result, he does not make a clear distinction between tyrants and democrats. It is true that that would have been contrary to the practical purpose of this paper, which is to contribute to the discussion on how to achieve peace, that is, a Europe of order and balance.

Generally classed as a work of historiography (first by the author himself), the book is rather an essay in the frame of political and moral philosophy. The disadvantage of writing a book so close to events is offset by the intimate understanding of different contexts and characters, details which a historian can miss, as well as by a certain reflexivity, which ensures consistency beyond discrepant realities.

Remarkably carefully written, with clear and tight phrasing, sometimes alert, as of a reporter, sometimes lazy, as if descriptive, measured through judgments, with vivid and expressive titles, the book may surprise the reader, especially in relation to style: a remarkable prose of ideas! At the same time, it is striking to note today how little Gafencu was wrong in his analysis, both in the understanding of events and especially with regard to their significance. His direct knowledge of the political and diplomatic circles of the time, and his experience as a journalist and politician accustomed to always being in a

certain proximity to, if not in direct relation with the events, is crucial here. The author knows when to be cautious, when to make decisive judgments, and when to use euphemism.

The text does not pose significant problems for the editors. As far as we could tell, the translation is excellent, a fact also facilitated by the clarity of Gafencu's own writing. The preface and notes are written by Mr. Laurențiu Constantiniu, and they amend or complete the text. Perhaps it could have been useful to see some nuances, especially regarding the hypothesis of the Napoleon-Hitler/Alexander I – Stalin analogy, and also a brief overview of the role played by this book in the literature. A set of illustrations and an index were added to the Romanian version in this new edition of the book.

Florea Ionicioaia

Stephen KOTKIN, Jan GROSS, *The Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, New York: Modern Library, 2009.

Le dernier livre de Stephen Kotkin, « The Uncivil Society : 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishement » (avec une contribution de Jan Gross) vient à mettre en question la thèse largement rependue du rôle fondamental joué par les sociétés civiles de l'Europe de l'Est dans l'effondrement du communisme[1]. Selon l'historien américain, les causes des bouleversements de 1989 doivent être cherchées moins dans la mobilisation des opposants anticommunistes, et plus dans l'évolution du contexte géopolitique et dans la dynamique interne des nomenklaturas de l'Europe de l'Est. Ainsi, plus qu'une « explosion » due aux actions de la société civile, la chute du communisme représente une « implosion » du système, qui s'est avéré incapable de survivre aux contraintes de l'économie globale. Le motto du livre, qui cite le dernier leader communiste hongrois Karoly Grosz, résume bien la thèse de Kotkin « Le Parti n'a pas été détruit par ses opposants, mais, paradoxalement, par sa propre direction ». Cette perspective - que l'on retrouve d'ailleurs dans les travaux inaugurés à la fin des années 1990 par Mink et Szurek sur la conversion

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[1] Pour le rôle de la société civile dans la désagrégation des régimes communistes voir Andrew ARATO, « Civil Society against the State : Poland 1980 – 1981 », *Telos*, nr. 47/ 1981; Jean COHEN, Andrew ARATO, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), MIT Press, 1992; François FEJTO, *La fin des démocraties populaires. Les chemins du post-communisme*, Paris: Seuil, 1997; Jaques RUPNIK, « Dissident in Poland, 1968 – 1978: The End of Revisionism and the Rebirth of Civil Society », dans Rudolf TOKES (éd.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979; Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, *Reinventarea Politicului. Europa Răsăriteană de la Stalin la Havel*, (*La réinvention du politique. L'Europe de l'Est de Staline à Havel*), Iaşi: Polirom, 1999.

des élites communistes après 1989[1] - questionne donc les lieux communs portés par bon nombre de chercheurs sur la fin des régimes communistes de l'Europe de l'Est.

Dans un premier temps, l'auteur appuie sa démonstration sur la démythification des oppositions anticommunistes d'avant 1989, considérant que leur conceptualisation en tant que « société civile » n'est pas heuristique, comte tenu de leur dimension réduite et de leur manque d'agrégation. Il est vrai qu'à part en Pologne et en Hongrie, dans aucun autre pays de l'Europe de l'Est, il n'y pas a eu de groupes sociaux capables de s'organiser et de se mobiliser indépendamment de (et contre) l'Etat. Toutefois, il nous semble que Kotkin minimalise trop les interactions entre le pouvoir communiste et son opposition, bien que cette dernière soit faible et chaotique. Sans embrasser la perspective héroïque qui survalorise les sociétés civiles est-européennes, nous considérons que dans tout système politique, le pouvoir et l'opposition – soit-elle de grande ou petite envergure - doivent être appréhendés comme des structures qui interagissent et se modèlent mutuellement[2]. Bien que désorganisés, les opposants et les dissidents du régime participent, eux aussi, au creusage de la légitimité communiste et influencent sur les stratégies de positionnement des élites officielles. Leur rôle réside particulièrement dans la création d'un idéal de mobilisation pour les libertés fondamentales, qui « agit comme un mythe politique puissant » dans un climat de coercition et d'autoritarisme[3].

Cette critique ne touche pourtant fondamentalement la thèse de Kotkin, qui porte sur la participation active des anciennes nomenklaturas à la désagrégation du régime. D'une part, il évoque la gestion d'une économie peu productive, encombrée par des dettes énormes, perdante dans la compétition avec l'Occident et surpassée par le marché asiatique. D'autre part, il insiste sur le rôle de Michail Gorbatchev, qui, dans ce contexte d'échec économique, décide l'abandon de la « doctrine Brejnev » et entame, à partir de 1987, des réformes économiques et politiques. Ces mesures et leur écho immédiat dans des pays comme la Pologne ou la Hongrie vont affaiblir le monopole du Parti et ouvrir la voie du pluralisme. Kotkin insiste sur le caractère « du haut vers le bas » de la réforme, qui n'est pas décidée suite aux pressions de la société

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[1] Georges MINK, Jean-Charles SZUREK, *La Grande Conversion. Le destin des communistes en Europe de l'Est*, Paris: Seuil, 1999; Fréderic ZELWESKI, Paysannerie et politique en Pologne. Les transformations du parti paysan polonais, PSL, 1945 – 2000, Paris: Editions Michel Houdiard, 2006; Marta TOUYKOVA, *La conversion identitaire du Parti Socialiste Bulgare*, Thèse: Sciences Politiques, Institut d'Etudes Politiques Paris, 2003.

[2] Michel DOBRY, *Sociologie des crises politiques*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1992, (1ère édition 1986); PRZEWORSKI Adam, « The Games of Transition », dans Scott MAINWARING, Guillermo O'DONNEL, Samuel VALENZUELA (éds.), *Issues in Democratic Consolidation*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.

[3] Vladimir TISMANEANU, « Understanding 1989: Civil Society, Ideological Erosion, and Elite Disenchantment », article non-publié fourni par l'auteur, à paraître dans *East European Studies*, 2011.

civile, mais en raison de la tentative d'assainissement des économies socialistes. En même temps, il place l'origine des Tables Rondes dans la conviction de l'appareil communiste polonais et hongrois qu'une négociation avec l'opposition constitue une stratégie nécessaire pour sortir de l'impasse dans laquelle se trouvent leurs pays. Ces mutations mises en place par les élites réformatrices en Union Soviétique, en Pologne et en Hongrie vont également déstabiliser les nomenklaturas conservatrices est-allemandes, tchécoslovaques et roumaines, bien que celles-ci demeurent imperméables à l'idée de changement et ancrées dans une culture de la main de fer. En Allemagne de l'Est et en Tchécoslovaquie, face aux manifestations populaires éclatées en 1989, les élites communistes abandonnent le pouvoir. Quant à la Roumanie, l'auteur pointe correctement vers la montée sur le devant de la scène politique d'une ancienne nomenklatura marginalisée, qui, en collaboration avec l'Armée, crée et dirige les institutions provisoires du pouvoir, en décembre 1989.

Effectivement, partout en Europe de l'Est, certaines catégories d'anciens communistes participent au changement du régime et deviennent par la suite des acteurs structurants de la transition.

Cette thèse, que nous trouvons heuristique, pèche pourtant parfois par essentialisation. D'un côté, bien qu'il évoque la dynamique interne de la nomenklatura comme facteur important de la chute du régime, Kotkin accorde peu d'attention aux divisions internes apparus au sein des partis communistes. Pas de détails sur les luttes intestines entre « les réformateurs » et « les conservateurs » magyars et polonais, pas d'hypothèses sur les différents groupes de nomenklatura à l'intérieur des partis communistes roumain et est-allemand, qui sont présentés comme de structures monolithiques.

De même, à la différence de Szelenyi et Szalai[1], Kotkin considère que la « technocratie » n'a jamais réussi à s'imposer par rapport à la « bureaucratie » de parti. Toutefois, les études sur les nomenklaturas de l'Europe de l'Est montrent qu'à partir des années 1970, la professionnalisation des cadres et l'intégration des technocrates dans la direction administrative communiste représentent des priorités pour les partis communistes. En Pologne et en Hongrie, le besoin du changement impose une indépendance croissante de l'économie face au politique et les directeurs d'entreprises et les cadres ministériels sont sélectionnés dans les années 1970-1980 de plus en plus selon leurs compétences[2]. Ce sont d'ailleurs ces jeunes technocrates recrutés au sein de

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[1] Erszébet SZALAI, « The power structure in Hungary after the political transition », dans Chris. G. A. BRYANT, Edmund MOKRZYCKI (éds.), *The New Great Transformation? Change and Continuty in East Central Europe*, Londres: Routlege,1994; Ivan SZELENYI, Szonja SZELENYI, « Circulation or reproduction of elites during the postcommunist transformation of Eastern Europe », *Theory and Society*, 1995, n° 24.

[2] Jean-Charles SZUREK, « Les communistes de l'après-communisme », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1993, n° 48, p. 95.

la nomenklatura qui élaborent les lois de privatisation de la fin des années 1980, lois qui vont faciliter une transition pacifique vers le capitalisme. De plus, comme le montre Szalai, une certaine croissance du pouvoir décisionnel individuel est enregistrée au sein de la technocratie à la fin du régime, favorisant la création d'un « esprit de corps », par l'autonomisation de l'économique par rapport au politique[1]. Certes, ce type de relation n'est pas caractéristique pour la Roumanie ou pour l'Allemagne de l'Est, mais des tensions existent également dans ces pays entre différentes générations au sein du Parti et entre la bureaucratie et la nomenklatura technique et économique[2].

De ce point de vue, nous considérons qu'une analyse plus fine des rapports de loyauté, déloyauté ou semi-loyauté (dans les termes de Juan Linz[3]) vis-à-vis du régime communiste s'imposerait pour mieux saisir la dynamique des relations à l'intérieur des partis communistes et au sein de leurs oppositions. Une approche sociologique des différents groupes d'élites et de contre-élites et de leur interaction serait également heuristique pour tester les hypothèses des transitologues comme O'Donnell et Schmitter ou de Przeworski[4] sur la libéralisation et l'effondrement des régimes autoritaires (bien que cela ne soit pas le but du livre de Kotkin).

D'un autre côté, bien qu'il évoque le besoin des élites communistes de chercher d'autres sources de légitimation, Kotkin n'insiste pas suffisamment sur les choix rationnels des acteurs, notamment les stratégies d'adaptation et survie politique. Par exemple, l'auteur laisse de côté l'analyse des effets des lois de privatisation adoptées en Hongrie et en Pologne en 1988 et 1989. Les études de Hankiss et Staniszkiss[5], mais aussi celles de Szurek et Mink[6], éclairent la façon dont l'ouverture vers l'économie du marché permet à une partie de la nomenklatura d'entrer en possession des actifs des entreprises et d'accumuler un capital financier et commercial important, base pour le développement de ses démarches entrepreneuriales dans l'après-communisme. Cette conjoncture

[1] Erzebet SZALAI, « The Metamorphosis of Elites », dans Bela KIRALY, Andras BOZOKI (coord.), *Lawful Revolution in Hungary 1989 – 1994*, New York, Columbia University Press.

[2] Voir Mihai Dinu GHEORGHIU, *Intelectualii în câmpul puterii. Morfologii și traiectorii sociale* (*Les intellectuels dans le champ du pouvoir. Morphologies et trajectoires sociales*), Iași: Polirom, 2007; Raluca GROSESCU, *La conversion des élites communistes roumaines après 1989*, Thèse: Sciences Politiques, Institut d'Etudes Politiques Paris, 2010.

[3] Juan LINZ, « Crisis, breakdown, and reequilibration », dans Juan LINZ, Afred STEPAN (éds.), *The breakdown of the democratic regimes*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978.

[4] Guillermo O'DONNEL, Philippe SCHMITTER, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracy*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989; Adam PRZEWORSKI, *Democracy and the Market. Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

[5] Elemer HANKISS, *East European Alternatives*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990; Jadwiga STANISZKIS, *The Dynamics of the Breakthrough in Eastern Europe*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford: University of California Press, 1991.

[6] Georges MINK, Jean-Charles SZUREK, *op. cit.*

économique va de paire avec l'émergence d'un intérêt direct d'une partie de la nomenklatura pour une transition pacifique vers le capitalisme.

L'auteur exploite en revanche très bien l'incapacité du régime de réinventer la mission historique de son Parti et l'épuisement de la foi des cadres communistes dans l'idéologie officielle. Dans les années 1980, la désidéologisation et le manque de confiance dans la capacité du régime d'évoluer caractérisent les élites communistes partout en Europe de l'Est. La nouvelle technocratie qui émerge à la fin des années 1970 n'est plus attachée au socialisme et seule une partie très restreinte de la nomenklatura politique espère encore dans un renouveau idéologique et économique. Dans ce contexte, la plupart des élites communistes sont prêtes à faire le saut vers un autre système, sans pourtant ignorer leurs intérêts directs de maintenir le contrôle et l'influence sur différents types de ressources.

Au-delà de ces remarques, le livre de Stephen Kotkin présente deux avantages incontournables. Premièrement, il dépasse l'illusion héroïque du rôle fondamental de la société civile dans l'effondrement du communisme, pour s'intéresser aux causes structurelles de la désagrégation du régime, notamment la faillite des systèmes de type soviétique dans le contexte de l'économie globale. C'est d'abord ici que doit être cherchée l'origine des bouleversements de 1989 et seulement ensuite dans la mobilisation de différents acteurs pour les droits civiques. Deuxièmement, Kotkin nous suggère un regard plus fin et plus profond à l'intérieur des nomenklaturas de l'Europe de l'Est, qui, tout en étant les « ennemis » des sociétés ouvertes, représentent les principaux « artisans » de l'implosion de 1989 et implicitement du passage à la démocratie et à l'économie de marché. Ce groupe, avec ses failles et divisions internes, avec ses mutations et son évolution à travers le temps, mérite sans doute plus d'attention qu'on lui a accordée, afin de mieux comprendre la dynamique du régime communiste et la logique de sa fin.

Raluca Grosescu

Mircea STĂNESCU, *Reeducarea în România comunistă (1948-1955). Târgșor și Gherla*, Iași: Polirom, 2010.

The goal of creating a 'new man' informed the ideology and practice of both totalitarianisms of the 20th century, the main difference between them being the methods used to attain this purpose: if the Communist totalitarianism used reeducation and terror, its Nazi counterpart used control over reproduction and extermination of those considered biologically inferior.[1]

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[1] Tzvetan TODOROV, *Memory as a Remedy for Evil*, London: Seagull Books, 2010, translated from French by Gila Walker.

However, among the different techniques the two totalitarian systems used in order to forge a 'new man', the (in)famous "Pitesti reeducation" occupies a special place. The illustrious Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn believed that the "reeducation" practiced at Pitesti was the "most atrocious ferocity the contemporary era has ever invented".

The second volume of Mircea Stănescu's book, *Reeducarea în România comunistă(1948-1955),* vol.2, *Târgșor și Gherla*,[1] brings a valuable contribution to the scholarship dedicated to one of the most terrifying "experiments" instrumented by the communist regime at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, the so-called "reeducation process".[2] This volume is the second in a trilogy that has the purpose of "presenting the history of both attempts and achievements the communist regime in Romania made in order to reshape (reeducate) the political prisoners, that is, to transform them from imagined or real enemies into real adepts of communist doctrines and practices."[3]

In the first volume of his study[4], Stănescu identified both the source of insipiration and the final goal of the reeducation experiment. The original source of inspiration of the Romanian reeducation experiment was identified by Stănescu in the work of the Soviet educator Makarenko. Stănescu was also able to conclude that the final goal of the reeducation experiment in communist Romania was the ideological reeducation of the prisoners and their transformation into a conformist type of human being, unable of opposing the regime.

The second volume of Stănescu's trilogy, *Reeducarea în România comunistă (1948-1955)*, vol. 2, *Târgșor și Gherla*, reconstitutes the significant and specific features of the processes of reeducation organized in the Târgșor and Gherla penitentiaries at the end of the 1940's and beginning of the 1950's. Given its unitary structure and the information it provides for further research in this area, this volume constitutes an important work instrument. The volume is organized in two case studies, each dedicated to the reeducation processes in the above-mentioned penitentiaries. The author coherently presents a short history of the two prisons, the social composition and the different waves of prison population subjected to reeducation in the two prisons, descriptions of administrative personnel of the two penitentiaries, effective descriptions and analysis of the two processes of reeducation, the role the central

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[1] Mircea STĂNESCU, *Reeducarea în România comunistă (1948-1955).* vol.2., *Târgșor și Gherla* (*Reeducation in communist Romania (1948-1955), Târgșor and Gherla*), Iași: Polirom, 2010

[2] See Dumitru LĂCĂTUȘU, Alin MUREȘAN (eds.), *Casa teorii. Documente privind penitenciarul din Pitești (1947-1977) (The Houseof Terror. Documentsrearding the Pitești penitentiary (1947 1977*, Iași: Polirom, 2010, Alin MUREȘAN, *Pitești. Cronica unei sinucideri asistate (Pitești. The Chronicle of an Assisted Suicide.)*, Iași: Polirom, 2010, 2nd ed.

[3] Mircea STĂNESCU, *Reeducarea în România comunistă (1945-1952)*(*Reeducation in communist Romania (1948-1955),* vol.1, Iași: Polirom, 2010, p.11.

[4] *Ibidem.*

administrations of two prisons had in theses experiments, and conclusions Stănescu reaches for the two case studies.

Whereas the prison population of Târgşor was primarily constituted by pupils, brought in between the spring of 1948[1] and during the 1949 [2], the inmates in Gherla were mainly workers, peasants and the so called *frontierişti*, prisoners accused of illegal attempt to cross the country's frontiers. Between May 1950 and June 1951, in Gherla were brought in several waves different groups of the 'reeducated prisoners' from Piteşti penitenciary: the first inmates from Pitesti were brought in May 1950, other groups (including the tortioner-prisoner Alexandru Popa) in June 1950. Subsequently, all the prisoners from Pitesti penitentiary, including the famous prisoner and torturer Eugen Ţurcanu (August 1951), were transferred to Gherla.[3] In December 1950, when the reeducation process ended in Târgşor, the inmates of Târgşor prison were also transferred to Gherla.

The comparative presentation undertaken by Stănescu in this volume allows him to convincingly argue that the two case studies present both similarities and differences, in what the involvement of the prison administration in reeducation and the characteristics of the two cases of reeducation are concerned. Initially, the direction of both the prisons only simulated the reeducation processes in the penitentiaries they administrated, which eventually led to the replacement of the two prison directors and of some of the guardians. They were replaced with persons who seemed more prepared to administer the reeducation process, namely the fresh graduates of Jilava School of Guardians, organized during the period in office of Nicolae Maromet, director of Jilava prison and notorious torturer of the 1950s.

In August 1950, Târgşor prison was inspected by three officers of the *Securitate* (Secret Police), and it was decided to replace the commander of Targşor, Spirea Dumitrache, with Captain Valeriu Negulescu. In addition, some of the inmates that proved to be refractory to the reeducation process were put into isolation, while other groups of inmates were transferred to the [Danube-Black Sea] Canal. The new commander, "a cruel beast", with a "cold flat gaze" quickly enforced in Târgşor conditions of detentions similar to the ones existing in the other political penitentiaries in the country. Thus, the regime of detention introduced by Captain Negulescu did not make any difference between the "reeducated prisoners" and those who openly resisted reeducation process. In September 1950, some groups of the Târgşor inmates (former policemen and members of the Special Services of Information) were transferred to the Fagaras prison, and the prison cells left free were subsequently occupied with other groups of the Târgşor inmates.

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[1] Mircea STĂNESCU, *Reeducarea în România comunistă*, vol. 2, *Târgşor şi Gherla*, p. 8.
[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10.
[3] *Ibidem*, pp. 60, 109, 151.

We can notice a growth of intensity in the process of reeducation, after the command of the Inspection Offices in the two prisons was taken over by graduates of the General Direction of People Security's School, under the strict supervision of Tudor Sepeanu, head of the Inspection Service of the General Direction of People Security between 1950- 1951, the highest period of the "Pitesti reeducation". The prisoners from Târgşor had to take part in reeducation meetings where propaganda readings such as the daily *Scînteia,* the official journal of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP), and various propaganda books had the role to reshape their political, moral and religious convictions. At the same time, those inmates who adhered (or at least, seemed to adhere) to the reeducation process lived and worked in common, according to the pedagogical principles enounced by Makarenko. They felt inspired by different propaganda readings, e.g. *The Pedagogical Poem,* in creating organizations such as the '23 August Squad', a 60 persons-working group of the inmates engaged in the process of reeducation. Although The prisoners who were resisting reeducation process were forced to participate to these propagandistic meetings, but "most of them refused to read propaganda materials, not even in order to get some daily information." Stănescu believes that refusal of these prisoners to cope with the reeducation measures could be best explained with the help of the legionnaire educational background obtained in the *Brotherhoods of the Cross* (*Frăţii de Cruce*).[1] The reeducation meetings ended with a recital of communist songs. Mircea Stănescu suggests that some of the prisoners were mislead to participate to these reeducation meetings by being offered certain perks. On the one hand, the converts enjoyed the comfort of bunk beds, mattresses, sheets and blankets. On the other, prisoners and the guards employed strategies such as promising they would be released in exchange for them to engage in the reeducation process.

The appointment of Iancu Burada, a former common law prisoner and Secret Police non-commissioned officer, as political educator in Târgşor meant the transformation of the reeducation process from one that looked like a 'political entertainment' into one where cruel reeducation measures were enforced. The most dangerous converts proved to be those who "believed they have a mission to serve the purpose of reeducation, and to reeducate all the prisoners, including those who did not want to engage in reeducation".[2] After the reeducation process stopped in Târgşor (December 1950), the inmates were transferred to Gherla and Canal where the similar actions were much more violent and pitiless than in Târgşor.

The conclusions Stănescu reaches in the case-study of Târgşor, suggest that the reeducation in Târgşor had dramatic consequences for the lives and mental state of the prisoners, but failed in converting more than 120 prisoners out of a total of 700 to 800 to the communist ideology. The prisoners remained faithful to the beliefs they had before reeducation. According to the author, the reeducation in

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[1] Young legionnaires' organizations destined to less than 18 years old pupils.
[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 21-28, 37-40.

Târgşor did not get to the same level of violence from Piteşti, for three main reasons: in the first place, the pupils who formed the majority of inmates in Târgşor were not seen as "holders of big secretes", and consequently there was no need for them to get though the 'exposure' stage. Secondly, the reeducation actions did not enjoy the support of the prison's administration. Thirdly, the conditions for reeducation were not met: the prison had only three detention rooms, so that the guards were unable to isolate the inmate, a prerequisite for the preliminary shock to be effective.[1] Stănescu concludes that reeducation in Târgşor was "rather a part of the bigger process of social engineering aimed to destroy the bonds between generations and to ideologically recuperate some of the inmates, given the fact that the majority of the political prisoners [in Târgşor] had little or no anti-communist activity which could have justified for the class-hate discourse of the regime."[2] The similarities and differences between the reeducation in the two penitentiaries the volume investigates become more clear: there is a similarity in the attitude toward reeducation professed by the administrations of the two prisons, which led to their replacement, and a important difference between the two case studies, that lies in the character of reeducation. Târgşor was rather a nonviolent form of reeducation, while Gherla was a violent one.

According to the author, there was another important particularity of the reeducation process in Gherla, namely the so-called 'disguise' of the prisoners, who played different characters. Stănescu argues that this method "was a technique of exposure which wanted to destroy the prisoner's faith and religious beliefs. It was a form of amusement for the prison's administration, a mockery of a prisoner's confession."[3] This kind of 'artistic performance' aimed to ridicule religious rituals was also practiced in Piteşti prison.

Stănescu identifies other particularities of the reeducation process in Gherla:[4] on one hand, the Gherla administration was more involved in the reeducation measures, and it significantly supported the reeducated prisoners, especially after Tiberiu Lazăr was replaced by Constantin Gheorghiu.[5] On the other hand, in Gherla prison there were two competing groups, each claiming the leading role in reeducation; one was the Alexandru 'Țanu' Popa group[6] (who was brought in Gherla from Piteşti in June 1951), the other was the Eugen Țurcanu group (who was brought in Gherla from Piteşti in August 1951.)[7]

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[1] *Ibidem*, p. 51.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 52.

3 *Ibidem*, pp 215- 216.

[4] also identified by Alin MUREŞAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-109.

[5] Mircea STĂNESCU, *Reeducarea în România comunistă*, vol. 2, *Târgşor şi Gherla*, pp. 69-70.

[6] The Alexandru Popa group was composed of Aristotel Popescu, Ion Cerbu, Gheorghe Popescu, Ion Voin, Vichenţie Morărescu, Cornel Popovici, Vasile Puşcaşu, Grigore Romanescu, Mihai Livinschi and Vasile Păvăloaie, *Ibidem*, p. 85.

[7] *Ibidem*, pp. 60, 151.

Stănescu argues that Alexandru Popa did not lose his central position in reeducation even after Eugen Țurcanu's coming to Gherla. Alexandru Popa had the support of the Inspection Office, and of a group of prisoners loyal to him (Alexandru Matei, head of the informant network in Gherla prison, Octavian Grama, Cristian Paul Șerbanescu, Constantin P. Ionescu, Constantin Stoica and Gheorghe Bărăgoanu).

One of the first measures taken by Popa 'Țanu' for the success of the reeducation process, was the creation of a network of informers necessary for the preparation of exposure activities. With the help pf the Inspection Office, Popa 'Țanu' placed faithful supporters of reeducation in key positions in Gherla prison (the Sanitary service, the orderly duty service, the chiefs of the prison's work groups, etc.)[1] These measures were taken not only in order to increase the success of reeducation process, but also in order for the administration to get valuable information for the Secret Police Services *(Securitate)*. This information was obtained during the exposure phases, when the prisoners were tortured for weeks or months.[2] Among the methods of torture preferred by the artisans of reeducation in Gherla, Stănescu mentions beatings with blackjacks, ropes, legs of beds and broomsticks. Also, the prisoners were forced to stay in stress positions, staring at flashing lights standing on one foot, or carrying weights of 20-40 kilos, all while facing the wall and with their hands pointed down towards their feet. Other forms of torture were forcing the prisoners to eat extremely salty food without getting water, or eating their own excrements or of their colleagues.[3] The acts of exposure were written on pieces of soap and then transcribed on sack paper. Information obtained during the episodes of exposure was 'confirmed' by beatings, torture and confrontations with the other prisoners. Then, the confessions were written in rooms reserved for this purpose. Sucigan, head of the Inspection Office, had the responsibility to categorize the newly obtained information into 'reliable, probable and suspicious'. The prisoners' statements were supposed to be delivered to Bucharest by Sucigan himself, as Sepeanu, the chief of the Central Office for Inspection consider their sending by regular mail was not safe enough.[4] Sepeanu had the obligation to hand in the information to his superiors: Gheorghe Pintilie, Alexandru Nicolschi, Gavrila Birtaş and Stoilescu Coman. The Secret Service officers even made jokes about the heavy bag of information Sepeanu brought to Bucharest.[5]

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[1] *Ibidem*, pp. 85-88.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 94.

[3] Arhiva Consiliului National pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securitatii (ACNSAS), Fund *Documentar*, File 19, vol. 1, ff. 1-7 şi *Ibidem*, p. 94.

[4] *Ibidem*, vol. 2, pp. 94-96.

[5] Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale (ANIC), Fund *CC al PCR – Secţia Administrativ Politică*, File 33/1953, ff. 38, 299.

Stănescu shows that after being transferred form Pitesti to Gherla prison (August 1951), Eugen Țurcanu proposed to the Inspection Office of the Gherla penitentiary a coherent and innovative plan for reeducation, in three stages. In the first stage, Țurcanu planned to mobilize the legionnaires' organization in prison and to elevate their spirits. He also believed that it was necessary to create a 'reeducation group', that was supposed to stir up the problem of legionnaires' organization. The second step was the public exposure of the legionnaires' organization and of its leaders, followed by their reeducation during periods of isolation. The success of the leaders' reeducation was to be confirmed if the "reeducated" leaders were able to convince their followers form the first phase to engage in to the third phase.[1] The third stage began with the reeducation process for the rest of the inmates, through Marxist readings and thematic conferences.

In order to put in practice this plan, an operative group was set up, made of Țurcanu, in charge of reeducation and diversion, Alexandru Popa, supervisor of staff, Gheorghe Bărgăoanu, in charge of production, and Constantin P. Ionescu, in charge of the cellar and liaison with the Inspection Office. Mircea Stănescu believes that this plan was carried through until the beginning of its third stage. The plan ended in December 1951, when the reeducation process inspired by its Pitești model was abandoned by the administration of Gherla penitentiary. During the same month, a group of the Gherla inmated, including both Țurcanu and Popa, was transferred to Jilava.[2] This part of the volume also deals with those prisoners who lost their lives during the reeducation episodes, whose majority was constituted, as Stănescu shows, by workers and legionaries. In the third sub-chapter of this part, Mircea Stănescu analyzes the post-exposure period (1952-1955), focusing in particular upon the thesis of the reeducation regime, disavowal of the Pitești model of reeducation, and the death of Ion Flueraș.[3]

Stănescu's second volume boasts an important critical apparatus. The sources used by the author are of three categories: archival documents, interviews with the survivors of reeducation, and the specialty literature written on this subject. The reeducation process in communist prisons did not end with the condemnation of its main artisans, but continued under different forms during the entire period of the communist regime in Romania. The nonviolent reeducation from Aiud in the beginning of the 1950s and of the 1960s, or the acts of exposure of factory workers during the 1970s support the conviction that reeducation was a characteristic of the detention regime during communist rule in Romania.

Dumitru Lăcătușu

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[1] Mircea STĂNESCU, *Reeducarea în România Comunistă*, vol. 2, *Târgșor și Gherla*, p. 162.
[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 162-163, 175.
[3] *Ibidem*, pp. 258-278.

Charles KING, *Odessa: Genius and Death in the City of Dreams*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York-London, 2011.

The academic interest shown by Charles King for this part of the world is obvious in his writings.[1] One of his books (based on his PhD thesis), following a previous contribution[2], focuses on Moldavians, and is a fundamental read for understanding the destiny of both the territory and the population situated between Romania and Russia[3]. In his approach to such a sensitive topic – identity – King, professor of international affairs and government at Georgetown University, showed real scientific qualities through a fine and deep analysis, accompanied by an impressive bibliography.

With his latest book about Odessa, King shows his interest, as well as his appetite for mixing, in an attractive and very well written book, urban history with numerous social, intellectual, cultural, and political elements of the past. With a remarkable novelistic talent, he tries to cover over two hundred years in the complicated and dramatic history of the city of Odessa in twelve chapters (grouped in three parts: "City of Dreams", "The Habitations of Cruelty", "Nostalgia and Remembrance"). Two lines are investigated in an original intermission, which goes through Odessa's past from the foundation of the city (1794) until its "twilight": genius and death.

King points out how, from time to time, violent death defeated life in Odessa. Whether it was the plague (1812-1813) during the reign of Russian prince Mikhail Vorontsov, the pogrom at the beginning of 20th century (1905) or the extermination of the Odessan Jews (1941-1942), the local community experienced in a century and a half the aphoristic alternation of morbid "storms" and charming life provided by its remarkable character.

Professor Chares King's book about Odessa is a modern historical epic, a fabulous journey into the past of the cosmopolitan citadel. The volume is neither a monograph, in a strict academic sense, nor a panegyric synthesis, but a popular history book, carefully written and, generally, virtuously documented. The city, founded in 1794, which went through four different rules (Russian, Soviet, Romanian and Ukrainian), developed in time the strange "tendency to tip with deadly regularity over the precipice of self-destruction" (p. 18). King has great talent and novelistic inspiration; his book reveals a capacity to rebuild social urban history starting from seductive, or maybe troubling, but

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[1] Some of his writings: *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence, and the End of Eastern Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008; *The Black Sea: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[2] Charles KING, *Post-Soviet Moldova: a Borderland in Transition*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995.

[3] *The Moldavians: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*, Hoover Institution Press, 2000.

always captivating, personal stories. "Young by European, even by American, standards" (p. 59), Odessa became a prosperous commercial centre in the 19th century, "the busiest and most vibrant port in the Russian Empire" (p. 109). This dynamic flourishing generated the emergence of an energetic community life, in which cultural, religious and economic activity blended with urban development. One of the great examples is, for instance, the time of Richelieu, when the city acquired the elegance of an Eastern port with Western influences. Urban life also shows it had bitter effects (eerie crimes, robberies and abstruse business) in spotty districts like Moldavanka (it is said that the name comes from the Moldavian community established here). The crime spree practically exploded in Odessa at the end of the 19th century, when "Russian judges would order more hangings in Odessa than in any other city" (p. 122), a good reason for the author to recompose some of those slum stories.

In the shadow of an urban semi-Oriental history, King retraced with passion the history of Jews in Odessa. He looks back to the way in which the tumultuous life of the citadel interacted with a community which found here freedoms and opportunities for a particular social development (for instance, Odessa didn't have a Jewish district, contrary to numerous urban examples of the time, this tradition ending with the creation of the ghetto during the Romanian occupation of the city). Until the start of the 20th century, which also brought its violent demise, the Jewish community represented the engine of economic life. Odessa was, as the American professor notices, "the pre-eminent port of the Yiddish-speaking world" (p. 99), but anti-Semitic feelings broke out periodically, with varied intensity, in a violent storm from the periphery of the Russian empire. The pogrom of 1905, which made a few hundred victims, was later, as the author says, "re-stylized" by Soviet cinematography as an anti-Czarist rebellion in the silent film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).

The historian Charles King has a natural predilection for biographical reconstructions. Sometimes, he does it emotionally involved, while other times he does it with cold disengagement, but always with a special tendency for spectacular and redolent details regarding the characters who linked their destinies to Odessa: Grigory Potemkin, Alexander Pushkin, Isaac Babel (the novelist assassinated by NKVD), Vladimir Jabotinsky (the Zionist leader known for his extreme ideas), Gherman Pântea (Bessarabian mayor during the Romanian occupation of Odessa) and many others. Furthermore, the link between these biographical trajectories and the destiny of the city is one of the major directions of the book.

I strongly believe that the climax of the book is the Romanian occupation of the city. As the author notes, Odessa was the only big Soviet city administered by a German ally. For 907 days, the citadel was administered by Romania, and an ample plan of ethnic cleansing was put in practice. Almost a week after the occupation of the city, a massive explosion hit the Romanian military headquarters, and almost 90 soldiers died. Among the victims there were a Romanian general, officers, soldiers, and a few German officers. After

this attack against Romanian troops, marshal Ion Antonescu (1941-1944) ordered widespread and bloody reprisals against Jewish civilians (approximately 40% of the entire Jewish population in the Odessa region was exterminated, the percentage being higher in the city). The perpetrators of the attack were never identified, because they retreated together with the Soviet authorities, the action being a secret NKVD operation.[1] The Romanian Army was highly involved in the abominable mass murders, the shooting, hanging or burning of over 22,000 people starting with the evening of October 22, 1941. Illustrious Romanian officers, some of them decorated for their glorious military acts in First World War, coordinated the massacre. Nevertheless, I have to add that some German units participated in the crimes in Odessa, but the role they played in the reprisals is still unclear.[2] Today it is a well known fact that special German extermination units participated in the Odessa massacre, at least SS Sonderkommando 11b (part of *Einsatzgruppen D*).[3]

The terror did not stop after the end of October 1941. The creation of "a ghetto was an inconsistent and disorganised process – a fact that produced horrific cruelties as well as possibilities for escape or evasion" (p. 213). Slobodka village was designated as a ghetto for all Jews of the city of Odessa, but only temporarily, because early in January 1942, the Romanian authorities decided to deport all the Jews from Odessa. A Romanian commission decided the fate of the Odessa Jews: it sorted and deported them, on foot or in cattle wagons, to the North and in central Transdnestr. In Bogdanovka, Dumanovka or Acmecetca, sometimes locked in the pigsties of former Soviet farms, Odessa Jews were left to die from hunger, frostbite, typhus, as well as being assassinated. For instance, in Bogdanovka, in the winter of 1941-1942, Romanian gendarmes who coordinated the massacre, assisted by local collaborators, murdered in cold blood over 40,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews. They shot and then burned and buried the victims. The bloodshed then was put on hold so that the Romanian officers could leisurely celebrate the holidays. If you read the testimonies of the survivors, you would say it is the lowest level of mankind. It is probable that the clear minded citizens of Odessa thought that there couldn't be a more tragic moment than the city's falling into fanatic Bolshevik hands (1920). The number of people who died in the last years of Soviet occupation before the war is in fact ten times smaller than the number of Jews killed by Romanian troops in a few days of Romanian occupation. The local collaborators were also involved in holding the Jews at bay. Informing

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[1] Igor NICULCEA, "Operațiunea strict secretă în urma căreia a sărit în aer Comandamentul militar român" ["Top Secret Operation which Ended with the Explosion of the Romanian Military Headquarter"], *Historia*, year XI, No. 118 – October 2011, pp. 34-37.

[2] Dora LITANI, "The Destruction of the Jews of Odessa in the Light of Rumanian Documents", *Yad Vashem Studies*, No. 6, 1967, p. 140.

[3] Peter LONGERICH, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 229.

was not a strident novelty for the Romanian authorities. On the contrary, it was fully used in Odessa, where the neighbours of the Jewish families feverishly denounced them, a story worthy of Jan T. Gross.

Muddy pages from Odessa's recent history are brought before the reader's eyes by Charles King. An insomniac of memory, King is still searching for the ending to a woeful episode: he, a Romanian sergeant, she, a persecuted Jew, involved in a love story during the Romanian occupation. The storm of terror follows them closely and the hope that they could escape from the citadel ended dramatically on the railway platform, waiting for a train to Romania, with false papers, a train which never came. Vera Sepel was probably taken to camps in Northern Odessa and died of typhus, or was shot on the spot. Nicoale Tănase was prosecuted by a Court Martial and received a hard prison sentence. I think that this type of micro-historical reconstruction could bring the Holocaust closer to an adequate understanding and reception level for the Romanian public.

For experts in the genocide of the Jews, the book *Odessa: Genius and Death in the City of Dreams* shows its limits. Being more a commercial than an academic book, the historical information regarding the massacre is in various places well known, without substantial intervention from the author, without the claim to somehow systematize diversified sources. For the large public, however, the book is, as I showed in the begging, a well built analysis of a complex chapter of the Romanian Holocaust. We owe to another American, this time by adoption, professor Alexandr Dallin, son of a Menshevik leader of the Russian revolution who fled to Germany[1], a complex piece of writing regarding Odessa during the Second World War.[2] Other experts also treated the subject: Jean Ancel showed for the first time to the entire world a documentary of the Romanian extermination campaign[3], Radu Ioanid meticulously retraced what happened to Odessa Jews in October 1941[4] and Dennis Deletant published a fascinating analysis of the Antonescu regime, in which he discussed in detail the annihilation of the Jews of Transdnestr[5]. Recently,

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[1] Paul LEWIS, "Alexander Dallin, 76, Dies; Precise Historian of Russia", *The New York Times*, July 27, 2000.

[2] Alexander DALLIN, *Odessa, 1941-1944. A Case Study of Soviet Territory under Foreign Rule*, with an introduction by Larry L. Watts, The Center for Romanian Studies, Iași-Oxford-Portland, 1998.

[3] Jean ANCEL, *Transnistria, 1941-1942. The Romanian Mass Murders Campaigns*, vol. 1-3, The Goldstein –Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, 2003 (specifically about Odessa see, vol. 1, pp. 182-291).

[4] Radu IOANID, *La Roumanie et la Shoah. Destruction et survie des Juifs et des Tsiganes sous le régime Antonescu, 1940-1944*, avant-propos par Serge Klarsfeld, préface par Paul Shapiro, version française revue par Nicolas Weill, publié en collaboration avec le United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Washington, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002, pp. 224-232.

[5] Dennis DELETANT, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally. Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940-44*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006 (especially see chapters 5-9, p. 102-229).

Romanian historian Ottmar Traşcă published relevant documents from German and Romanian archives regarding the massacre.[1]

15 years after 1944, the Jewish population was 12% smaller, according to a Soviet census. It was not only the Romanian occupation which contributed to this fact, but also the policy of the Soviet administration. Professor Charles King notes that "Soviet officials sought to limit the effects of Jewish return on the postwar city" (p. 255). However, during the communist era Odessa did not lose only its Jews, but also its status as a global port, becoming just a quaint regional city. All in all, the Ukrainian "hero city", as King notices, "stands as a reminder that the decline of the old port meant the decline of a certain way of being Russian" (p. 281).

Throughout Charles King's book, a fabulous city shows itself to the reader like a statue in an open square. The author lifts the veil of oblivion from the tragic and glorious past of a city of the East. It is a volume which proves not only the scientific skills of the author, but also how many unknown chapters from this part of the world are still waiting to be investigated.

Andrei Muraru

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[1] Ottmar TRAŞCĂ (ed.), *"Chestiunea evreiască" în documente militare române. 1941-1944* ["Jewish Question" in Romanian Military Documents], documents selection, notes, foreword and introductory study by Ottmar Traşcă, preface by Dennis Deletant, Iaşi: Institutul European Publishing House, 2010, doc. 126-132, 135, 137-139, 145, 153, 156, 164 and many others; Ottmar TRAŞCĂ, Dennis DELETANT (eds.), *Al III-lea Reich şi Holocaustul din România: 1940-1944. Documente din arhivele germane [The Third Reich and the Holocaust in Romania, 1940-1944. Documents from the German Archives]*, selection, translation from German and notes by Ottmar Traşcă, introductory study by Dennis Deletant, Publishing House of the "Elie Wiesel" National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, Bucharest, 2007, doc. 59-61, 65; Idem, „Ocuparea oraşului Odessa de către Armata Română şi măsurile adoptate faţă de populaţia evreiască, octombrie 1941 – martie 1942" ["The Occupying of Odessa by the Romanian Army and the Measures Taken on the Jewish Population", October 1941-March 1942], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "George Bariţiu" din Cluj-Napoca – Series Historica* ["George Bariţiu" History Institute form Cluj-Napoca Yearbook – Series Historica], XLVII, 2008, pp. 378-425.