Book Reviews

David BRANDENBERGER, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941*, Yale, University Press, 2012, 357 p.

Specializing in Stalin-era propaganda, ideology and nationalism, David Brandenberger has written in journals such as *Russian Review*, *Kritika*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* and *Voprosy istorii*. The book *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941* (Yale, 2012) is the third in the series and follows *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Harvard, 2002), focusing on the USSR's reliance on Russo-centric mobilizing propaganda and the effect that this pragmatic use of historical heroes, imagery and iconography had on national consciousness among Russian-speakers, both during the Stalin period and after, and *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Wisconsin, 2006). Currently David Brandenberger is working on a critical edition of Stalin's infamous party history textbook, *The Short Course on the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (1938) for Yale University Press.

Building on the author's previous work, *Propaganda State in Crisis* takes the reader into a well-documented historical universe that revolves around Stalin and his approach to nationalism and national identity, while questioning the effectiveness of the methods employed by the Soviet state, as a propaganda machine, to coagulate and unite the nation through socio-political education, mass culture, mobilization and patriotism. Arguing for a renewed public interest in Soviet ideology and propaganda, and offering a large volume of historical sources, the book focuses on the difficulties encountered by the USSR's regime to produce a viable and accepted history of the Communist Party in Russia during the pre-World War II Stalin era. Taking the issue of mass indoctrination one step further, Brandenberger questions the effects the Great Terror had on Soviet popular culture, political education, patriotism and Stalin's personality cult, at the expense of revolutionary values and heroes. Starting off with the phrase „The USSR under Lenin and Stalin is often referred to as the world's first propaganda state", the author goes to great lengths to detail the Soviet propaganda experiment to his readers, focusing primarily

on ideology, the party hierarchy's failure to promote a sense of Soviet identity in the 1930s and core dysfunctions of propaganda as a tool of mass indoctrination.

Propaganda State in Crisis is structured in three parts and eleven chapters, which follow the process of ossification of Stalin's regime and ideological doctrine, from 1927 until the eve of World War II, in 1941. The first chapter looks at the Soviet authorities' approach to mass mobilization during the 1920s, as Russia's society was left deeply divided in the wake of the October Revolution and needed a point of reference to start with: a common, official, usable past. The next two chapters, Chapter Two and Chapter Three, focus on the difficulties that the authorities encountered when faced with the issue of the population being barely able to understand party ideology and history, thus leading to party historians' search for explaining essential elements of Soviet history and ideology, and package it in a readily-accessible format for the man on the streets to understand. Ironically, the solution that the Soviet propagandists were able to come up with was to personify the mass identity of the Soviet experiment through Stalin's personality cult.

After giving an overview on the first decade of the propaganda state in the first three chapters (part one of the book), starting with chapters four and five the author moves away from the „broad perspective" approach, and, supported with a large array of historical sources, reveals how the first to arrive at a usable version of the Soviet past were not the party elites and/or historians, but rather the creative intelligentsia: journalists, writers and filmmakers. The change in art and literature in the 1930s USSR is explained as a search for role models, revolutionary values and a common socialist ideal, which led to the establishment of Socialist Realism as a form of the artistic expression of propaganda. Chapter six concludes the second part of the book by pointing out the positive popular reviews that the official, patriotic (populist) line received, at the expense of an ambiguous reception of the official, ideological line and party history, which were still unclear to many.

The final part is the most extensive and offers an in-depth analysis on the effects the Great Terror and Stalinist purges had on party propaganda, popular heroes, ideology and Stalin's personality cult. Chapter seven puts an end to the success stories of the Soviet Olympus, as it emphasizes the escalation of Stalin's Great Terror and the „murder of the usable past" through ruthless and random political purges that destroyed ideological continuity and created chaos among Soviet institutions and the party itself. Chapter Eight goes further in pointing out the destruction caused by the Great Terror during 1936-1938 in education (especially the party educational system), arts, literature and theatre, and argues that the Great Terror brought key aspects of Soviet mass culture to a virtual standstill.

Chapter nine focuses on the public's (negative) reception of the Great Purge and the confusion caused by the fall from grace of popular heroes and Soviet role models. The overarching theme of the chapter is loss of public

morale and the rise of doubts regarding Stalin's course of action, as a result of show trials for fallen heroes, the disgrace of high-ranking military officials and former revolutionary heroes, role-models' arrests and the system's turning against it former ideals. As more and more people sensed the instability of the official line, a general loss of faith in official propaganda became inevitable, for „it was the regime's murder of its own the usable past between 1936 and 1938 that undermined popular confidence in the Soviet society" (p. 197). Chapter Ten concludes the blossoming of Stalinist ideology through the materialization, in 1938, of the *Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* – a cumbersome and hard-to-grasp textbook on the history of the Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism that did more harm than good to Soviet society, as it destroyed all previous work on social identity and mobilization. Stalin's editing of the text signalled the end of the search for a usable past and marked the start of the ossification of party paradigm.

Considering the author's current work on a critical edition of the *Short Course*, it would seem only natural for a great deal of the emphasis in *Propaganda State* to be put on Stalin's infamous party history textbook. Chapter Eleven is the concluding chapter in the third part of the book, a chapter dedicated to the effects of the *Short Course* on mass culture on the eve of World War II. Officially just a textbook, the *Short Course* had an air of unchallenged authority, partly due to its impenetrability and its sterile, theoretical ideological approach, but mostly due to rumours that it had been written by Stalin himself. The main and most obvious effect of the book was that popular culture was endorsed or denounced based on it, severely altering the public perception of heroes – from individual heroic actions to grand, theoretical notions of heroism based on sanitized images of Soviet victories over Capitalist exploitation. As the 1930s came to a close, the discussion came, inevitably, to war. Although the USSR was clearly unprepared for any kind of military conflict, having eliminated its military leadership during the Great Purge, fuelled by the new images of easy victories against its Capitalist foes, war was declared on Finland. Not surprisingly the „myth of easy victory" emphasized in the *Short Course*, coupled with „hurrah patriotism," also emphasized in the *Short Course*, led to the failure of the Red Army to obtain a clear victory against the Finns, due to overconfidence caused by ideological propaganda.

Finally, David Brandenberger concludes, the failure of the propaganda state to win the hearts and minds of its subjects came as the result of two main factors: Stalin's Great Terror and the destruction of popular heroes and role models, and the *Short Course*, as a source of confusion that forced people to choose between „an interpretation that they could understand but not fully trust" (i.e. popular heroes who can become subjects for public disgrace) „and another they could trust but not fully understand," (i.e. the official ideological line, drawn by the *Short Course*) „most people chose the latter" (p. 251). Theory did not suffice in replacing fallen heroes and Stalin's attempt to create an

official and accepted ideological line did not contribute to popular confidence. Fading in popularity during World War II, as it contained little value for the war effort, the *Short Course* remained in circulation until 1956, when, ironically, Khrushchev denounced the book as a symbol of the personality cult. It was replaced by a series of textbooks that credited the party, as a whole, for what was attributed previously only to Stalin, practically „cutting the general secretary out of the annals of party history in much the same way that his *Short Course* had deleted all mention of the fallen heroes of the 1930s" (p. 256).

Ultimately it was the „propaganda state's [ideological] crisis of the mid-to-late 1930s [that] undermined all the gains made earlier in the decade through the inculcation of a heroic, patriotic sense of Soviet identity. [...] A product of weakness rather than strength [the turnout of events] reveals the propaganda state to have been trapped in the throes of a deep ideological crisis [...] – a crisis from which it never fully recovered" (p. 258) as uncertainty and fear dominated the Soviet society under Stalin's rule.

Teo Enache

Emanuel COPILAȘ, *Geneza leninismului romantic. O perspectivă teoretică asupra orientării internaționale a comunismului românesc, 1948-1989* [Genesis of Romantic Leninism. A Theoretical Perspective on the International Orientation of Romanian Communism, 1948-1989], Iași: Institutul European, 2012, 662 p.

The book written by Emanuel Copilaș – having eight chapters and more than six hundred pages – is a comprehensive attempt to analyse the foreign policy of communist Romania between 1948 and 1989. The analysis uses instruments of a political and international relations theorist, who tries to bring together plenty of factual information provided especially by historians. Copilaș' book is therefore not (primarily) a history book, but a political science one. This is important to keep in mind in order to evaluate the hypotheses, methods and contents of the book correctly.

The most valuable aspects of this work are in my view its ability to propose new political concepts (categories), its courage to read Romanian foreign policy through the "perceptive lenses" of a quite new theory in politics and international relations, as well as its factual "richness" that stems from an extensive documentation on the political, social and economic conditions of communist Romania.

Regarding the first aspect, the most relevant parts of the book are Chapters Two and Six. In Chapter Two, the author explains which are the differences between Leninism and Marxism and discusses the varieties of Leninism. A

first kind of Leninism is "revolutionary Leninism", which is associated with the writings and activity of Lenin himself and *grosso modo* overlaps with what Bolshevism means in communist studies (pp. 52-3). The second type of Leninism, "post-revolutionary Leninism", refers to what in Soviet history is usually called Stalinism. Even if some prominent researchers such as Robert Tucker or Stephen Cohen consider that Stalinism marked the end of Bolshevism, Copilaş argues that there is continuity between the two: "a lineage exists between them going through Leninism" (p. 56). According to Copilaş, this statement has its proof mainly in the fact that the revolutionary stimulus had not totally disappeared before the end of Stalin era, hence the author's preference for the term of "*post-revolutionary* Leninism". Copilaş discusses next a couple of concepts, namely "Europeanized Leninism" vs. "Asianized Leninism". "Europeanized Leninism" covers the Nikita Khrushchev's leadership. It is "Europeanized" because Khrushchev made some compromise with European values of political negotiation, such as market competitiveness, "socialist rule of law" etc. (p. 57). "Asianized Leninism", that covers Mao's era, is a riposte to Europeanized Leninism and its alleged "capitulation" in the face of global capitalism. For the author, Maoism, contrary to a quite wide-spread point of view, is not a *sui-generis* ideology but has its clear lineage with Leninism (p. 58). Another species of Leninism is the so-called "systemic Leninism", during the Brezhnev time, when Leninism developed, however strange it may seem, some features generally associated with conservatism: "ideological dogmatism, excessive bureaucratization, bourgeois convenience" (p. 59) and "toleration if not encouragement of nationalist tendencies" (p. 60). A last type of Soviet Leninism is the "post-Bolshevik Leninism" of Gorbachev era, the full version of "Europeanized Leninism", which has tried to reform Leninism through non-Bolshevik means. This, in the author's reading, is equivalent to a contradiction in terms. Or, voluntarily renouncing at "war against bourgeoisie" is similar to "ideological emasculation" and recognition of Leninism' defeat on the global arena (p. 62).

The typology of Soviet Leninism provides the ground for studying postwar Romanian communism. The author considers the period of Gheorgiu-Dej leadership as being of the "post-revolutionary Leninist" kind. Even if this kind of Leninism has got autonomy in relation to the "muscovite metropolis", its Stalinist principles have practically remained unaltered (p. 282). However, the Ceauşescu's era had characteristics which did not fit in the typology presented above: "unlike post-revolutionary Leninism [...] romantic Leninism [of Ceauşescu type] represents an endemic ideological experiment that has deep roots in the nationalistic past of the country, but is oriented – as any type of Leninism – towards the future not the past" (p. 283). The hypothesis the author starts with is that the future of "socialist development" is seen rather through the lenses of Romanticism than the Enlightenment ones. Romantic Leninism gives prominent weight to the historical forces of nationalism which

are often seen in a spiritual or mystic way. It combines incompatible – from an ideological point of view – values and insights of Romanticism (as well as Fascism and Maoism) and Leninism in order to legitimize itself and mobilize masses. In my opinion however, the author does not undertake sufficiently a clear and distinct analysis of these tensions but rather describes the juxtaposition of incompatible values and insights within romantic Leninism. As the author says, "Within romantic Leninism, romanticism becomes a part through exacerbated nationalism and has a weight at least equal to the Leninist soil from which romantic Leninism has grown" (p. 288).

With regard to the second valuable element of the book, it should be emphasized Copilaș' effort to understand the foreign policy of the Romanian communist government on the basis of the four main international relation theories, namely realism, pluralism, Marxism and social-constructivism. The author's hypothesis formulated in the first chapter of the book is that social-constructivism is the most appropriate theory for explaining the foreign policy agenda of the Romanian communist leaders. More precisely, Copilaș applies the discursive-constructivist model elaborated by Nicholas Onuf to the analysis of Romanian foreign policy after the war. So, he studies the process of Romania's "socialization" within "popular democracies" between 1945 and 1955 (Chapter Three), the processes of de-Stalinization (Chapters Four and Five), the emergence, development and fall of the romantic Leninism of Ceausescu era (Chapters Six, Seven and Eight). The author's aim is "not to analyse the social formation of foreign policy during Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceausescu leadership, but its imposition 'from above' by Leninist ideology and political practices associated with it, [...] to investigate how 'from above' identity was reflected in the thought and actions of communist regime both towards the international environment and domestic politics" (p. 42). However, a terminological clarification is necessary here, one that the author should have made in order to fully respect the constructivist "rule". "Socialization" is generally considered to be the process by which agents learn (internalize) ideas, values, interests or expectation. For constructivists, this process could be coordinated "from above", but not "imposed from above". If it is "imposed from above", then we find ourselves in a different paradigm to that of constructivism (maybe realism). A central idea of constructivism is that of "endogenous" process of interests or values formation. For constructivist interests and values are not imposed from above, are not "exogenous" to a political community, but they are rather the "unintended" result of a process of "socialization", i.e. that of learning and complying with a "social" rule.

Finally, the third remarkable aspect of the book is its empirical data richness and its historical reconstruction of the events, crucial in understanding the foreign policies during Gheorgiu-Dej and Ceaușescu. The book cites a number of rare and unpublished sources such as Radio Free Europe reports and analyses, documents belonging to the Central National Historical Archives in Bucharest

and its Timişoara branch and Professor Michael Shafir's private collection of documents, entitled the "1989 Archive". Yet, the abundance of factual data the author mentions in order to support his main hypotheses is not always an advantage. I would even say – paraphrasing a famous statement by Ludwig Wittgenstein – that what can be said in this book, can also be said in fewer words. My opinion is that the author uses sometimes more factual data than is necessary and sufficient to argue his position. This extra factual information creates instead a problem of organizing the content of the book and a problem for the reader to follow the central argument.

In conclusion, the book by Emanuel Copilaş is a relevant study of the contemporary Romanian foreign policy. The book is valuable in that it proposes new political concepts useful in analysing Romania communism, it makes use of a novel theoretical framework for systemic explanation of communist Romania's foreign policy and it also support its case with rich, novel and important factual information.

Ciprian Niţu

Igal HALFIN, *Red Autobiographies. Initiating the Bolshevik Self,* University of Washington Press, 2011, 224 p.

Known through his work on "Soviet subjectivity" and self-representation in soviet society, the work of Igal Halfin is an essential reading since it offers historical and methodological new perspectives on the discourse in a totalitarian society. He has the merit, alongside Jochen Helbeck[1], to make Michael Foucault a landmark for the researcher interested in soviet studies. Igal Halfin introduced some expressions like "the self", "subjectivity", "poetics", "eschatology" which are now pillars of his work. That is why, in order to study soviet subjectivity, we need to engage in Halfin's work.

The volume *Red autobiographies: initiating the Bolshevik self* is representative for the contributions of Igal Halfin on the history of Russia and communism. Analysing the admission records of the Soviet Communist Party cells in the 20s, Halfin reaches a profound understanding of the Bolshevik politics of self-representation. He observes how the ways of speaking about oneself are constructed in order to fit the Bolshevik consciousness. When speaking about themselves, the aspiring Bolsheviks look back into their past searching for the

---

[1] Jochen Helbeck, historian of Russia at Rugers University, focuses his research on Soviet subjectivity. His main works on the subject are *Revolution on my mind. Writing a diary under Stalin*, Harvard University Press, 2006 and *Autobiographical practices in Russia*, ed. with Klaus Heller, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

meaning of their lives, the special role they played and the ideas of justice and truth that guided them.

Halfin focuses on autobiographies found in the Leningrad, Smolensk and Tomsk archives in order to reveal major aspects of the Bolshevik identity. He uses as main sources the autobiographies written by people who wanted to join the Bolshevik Party during the early post-revolutionary years. In their autobiographies, the future Bolsheviks reproduced their life stories in the language of political discourse, in order to prove themselves worthy to join the Party.

The process reveals how self-discovering, self-changing, and self-improvement constitute an extremely important duty in communist political culture. Without ignoring the specificities of each region form which the material is brought, the main goal of the author is to offer a set of micro studies rather than regional studies. Instead of comparing geographical regions and social realities Halfin tries to examine the ways in which the revolutionary identities were disseminated into primary party cells. These cells were in fact imagined communities which the Bolsheviks attempted to introduce in the human ideal they were promoting.

The relation between self-writing and introspection is an ancient one and can be traced at least to stoicism. What makes the Bolshevik autobiographies modern writings is the self-reliance of its authors. The elaborated system of meanings that structured the Bolshevik self is analysed piece by piece in Igal Halfin's *Red autobiographies*. In researching the discursive construction of the self, the author finds relevant the work of Ervin Goffman which leads to the use of a different perspective when analysing self-deception and insincerity. He suggests a perspective starting from outside the individual and working to the inward instead of the moral and psychologist approaches.

The narratives on which Halfin focuses are the Bolshevik autobiographies from the early post-revolutionary years. The texts show a difficult relation with the Party's blueprint for the history seen as the road towards the light, a metaphor which describes the individual effort to follow a progressive way in personal development. Thus, the communist autobiographies can be compared with the Christian confessions. According to Halfin, they were conversion narratives in which the author tried to describe his/her development from an immature political citizen into a conscious communist.

Igal Halfin divides the process of individual formation into four chapters. The first one (*Party admission in paranoid times*) provides the views upon the procedure of Party admission in the 20's. He sees the party admission as "the most important rite of passage in the early Soviet society". In chapters two (*Workers toward the light*), three (*Peasant Enrolment*) and four (*The intelligentsia*), Halfin presents the particular autobiographical narrative of each class. Each followed a different path to narrate itself, according to the position that it had in the new communist society, and also according to the party's possible expectations from them.

When analysing these biographies, Halfin observes some common aspects. One of them refers to the primary state of the individual. It's a state of unconsciousness, ideological simplicity which brings the necessity of the individual to work in order to improve himself/herself and to achieve the complete Bolshevik consciousness. Once this consciousness becomes fully achieved the individual is expected to dedicate himself/herself to converting other people.

Another common aspect identified by Halfin is the eschatological ideas. It can be traced to the Christian confessions after the fourth Council from Lateran and it is extremely present in communist autobiographies.

In order to analyse and observe how the new identities were constructed, Igal Halfin uses several cases, illustrated with the actual texts of the autobiographies found in archives from Leningrad, Smolensk and Tomsk. He uses the original text in order to preserve the whole power of the symbols and the meaning of the self-representations. One of the most representative cases studied here is the one of Kovalev, a Bolshevik who declares himself to be among the most dedicated revolutionaries of Smolensk. The story of his life is in fact the story of transforming oneself. Kovalev has to reject his family and his village in order to be able to embrace the idea of the internationalist proletariat. The case of Kovalev gives the floor to an accurate exemplification of the way in which the official discourse leaves one space to manoeuvre one's identity. For example, Kovalev could have ignored his petit-bourgeois background attributed to him because his parents owned small proprieties and probably hired workers. Instead, he could have used his rural origins to describe himself as a peasant. He could also refer to himself as proto-proletarian, since he was a volunteer in a paramilitary Bolshevik organization. But he could not call himself a worker because no one would have believed that. Also, he could not include himself between the members of the intelligentsia since this could have been an unfortunate choice. The intelligentsia was an outsider of the revolutionary movement, because it was thought to be unreliable. The Bolsheviks used to consider that the members of the intelligentsia come from the petit-bourgeoisie of the cities. This meant that their sin was committed in the early years of life. Taking into consideration the fact that they were seen as having impure origins, the story of their life had to describe a process of self-improvement, the following of a straight road through the Universalist consciousness. Unfortunately for Kovalev, the autobiography he chooses to present was too alarming.

In 1916 he was the student of a theological seminary and he used the argument of free education in order to explain this. But this was not enough. If he wanted to reinvent himself completely, he had to break with the religious attitude of his family.

Using the example of Kovalev, this book's author presents the autobiographies as places of discourse instead of fixed selfhoods. Kovalev's case, alongside with other autobiographies of the volume, shows how identities were built.

The texts presented by Halfin point out the acceptable mistakes of one's past from the ones that could not be forgotten or forgiven. We can also observe how individuals look at their past and how they construct a distorted identity. Even if the facts of their lives are as real as they can be, the way in which they are used as instruments in the autobiographical discourse follows some patterns on which Igal Halfin has focused. Thus, he presents his characters as managers of impressions.

Being considered suspicious, the applicants for the Party admission were always interrogated. The students from the Communist University of Leningrad were interrogated by the Local Committee, the Party Bureau and the Party Organization of the University. The workers and the peasants were invited to participate at the debate and stimulated to reveal important details and opinions, and express their attitude towards the student. This is how the truth about one's self relied on an autobiographic undertaking. A false autobiography could be revoked from the beginning. For the Bolsheviks, the sincerity was the cornerstone of success, as important as class or revolutionary merits. In order to define sincerity, Igal Halfin uses the words of Lionel Trilling: "sincerity is the avoidance of being false to any man through being true to one's own self". In Bolshevik Russia, this process took a different turn: the burden of establishing the truth, previously by the Church, was transferred to the Party.

Halfin focuses on the way in which the truth of the autobiographical narratives is submitted to real challenges. Methodologically, he prefers the Foucauldian perspective on truth instead of the Aristotelian one. Seeing the truth only as correspondence between text and reality transforms the historian interested on the topic of communist autobiographies in an interrogator and investigator. Such type of historian is seen by Halfin as a denunciator of the narrator since he tries to find out the truth only by the strict comparison of the narrative with other available proofs. Favouring the truth as historical veracity leads to the failure of appreciating it as a construct. Halfin sees how the official discourse produced the truth by whetting different types of narratives against each other and offering verdicts to both authors. In such a type of scenario, the truth is a question of politics, not just a procedure of discovering the facts. Igal Halfin follows the method proposed by Foucault, who has an open perspective about the truth. He explains that every society has a general policy on truth, as one can easily observe in the case of the communist society, where a specific type of discourse is accepted and considered to be true. The discourse is consolidated by the existence of the means that sanction the attitude against it.

Finally, Igal Halfin explains that in order to understand the resorts of the Bolshevik power and the manner in which the incredible can become true, the historian should search the difference between history and literature inside the elements that compose the text and should take into consideration the conditions of its perceiving.

The book *Red autobiographies* manages to point out how the relations of power always leave linguistic traces, as the author concludes. Leaving behind the custom of relying exclusively on the sources, Igal Halfin has directed his attention to the texts and to the ideas which the authors wanted to emphasize. He finally explains in detail the process through which future Bolsheviks learned to construct a narrative of their lives, using the language of the new political regime. Halfin manages to accurately describe the self and its articulation in the Soviet society, which makes him one of the must-read authors when it comes to understand the idea of subjectivity in Bolshevik Russia.

Georgiana Leşu

Gabriel ANDREESCU, *Cărturari, opozanţi şi documente. Manipularea Arhivei Securităţii* [Scholars, Opponents and Documents. Handling Securitate's Archives], Iaşi: Polirom, 2013. 304 p.

Released in the begining of 2013, Gabriel Andreescu's volume *Cărturari, opozanţi şi documente. Manipularea Arhivei Securităţii* [Scholars, Opponents and Documents. Handling the Securitate's Archives] triggered many debates. Comments were divided between pertinent observations from other researchers from the National Counsel of Studying Securitate's Archives (CNSAS), praises of the author's efforts and malicious criticism against his approaches. All these contribute to place the book on a referential position among those which deal with the theme of studying Securitate's archives and documents. First of all, because Gabriel Andreescu is not confining just to reveal information from the already studied prosecution or collaboration files of some personalities, consisting in details overlooked or deliberately bypassed by their readers, or to make the necessary additions to establish their collaborator or non-collaborator status. In fact he succeeds in making complex portraits of the respective cultural figures. Thereby Andreescu takes steps in rehabilitating names like Adrian Marino or Mihnea Berindei and in judging with less sympathy names like Constantin Noica and Alexandru Paleologu. Thus, his work appears to be a true handbook in using and handling Securitate's Archives and, even more, a correct and *bona fide* interpretation of it.

Gabriel Andreescu's book begins with a verdict, although presumptive, on those „Responsible" for the half of the century communist tragedy in Romania. The author provides the deciphering key of a historical equation with an answer intuitively known by the entire society. This generic „Responsible" is so deeply spread in the depths of the society that the Romanian transition has buried it completely. The description made by Andreescu is edifying in

this respect: „starting with the Securitate and continuing with the Militia, the Prosecution, the Press, sectors of the Army, Justice and Economy". These are the main areas in which one must look for those responsible for the communist tragedy, mostly part untouched, until now.

This direct approach concerning a problem which has been overly debated in the past twenty four years in the Romanian society is not a sign of arrogance of the author, it is just the signal that digging for the truth was done in the wrong direction, mostly on purpose. Even though the places where the guilty ones can be found are widely known, they somehow escape the search. But Andreescu is not trying to make transitional justice all by himself, an impossible initiative in a state in which both „transition" and „justice" have become peripheral as a consequence of the carelessness for the truth and the inclinations for personal revenge. Therefore the author is trying to morally restore those who, in the search for professional vendeta, had become victims of public odium through fabrication of collaboration files out of opaque puzzle pieces. Figures like Adrian Marino, Nicolae Balotă, Mihai Botez, Mihnea Berindei or Nicolae Breban are among those who have become such victims. This phenomenon has caused disadvantages not only to those victims, but especially to the whole deconspiration process.

We may consider that Gabriel Andreescu's efforts would have been significantly less important if he had not put in the spotlight on the professional depreciators, intoxicators of the public opinion, those who were actually making a living by fabricating and posting slanderous materials in mass-media. This aspect shifts the focus from personalities to methods and means of interpreting their records, for either economic or image leverage. In other words, the work can be read in two ways – one of personal histories, the other according to the methods of study and interpretation of the archives.

Regarding the figures around which Andreescu's study is constructed, the first case tackled Adrian Marino. „Pro-American, pro-European and pro-democratic" through all the messages that can be received from his works, as he is described by Ioan Bogdan Lefter in his work, *Adrian Marino. Un proiect pentru cultura română* [A Project for the Romanian Culture], quoted by Andreescu. The scholar cannot be suspected of any kind of collaborationism during the communist regime, as the author of *Scholars, opponents…* repeatedly argues. His standpoint is hardly questionable, given the evidences: Marino's activities before and after the Revolution in December 1989, and especially the tree volumes of his tracking-file from the Securitate's Archive. It was the genuine campaign of disparagement, triggered by some researchers, like Iulia Vladimirov, and some noteworthy figures of the intellectual community, such as Andrei Pleşu, Gabriel Liiceanu, Horia-Roman Patapievici, Nicolae Manolescu or Dan C. Mihăilescu – declared opponents of Marino, that aroused suspicion concerning his collaboration with the Securitate. In fact, this is the most striking example of how a personality who has not served

the regime in any respect, who has taken a marginal position on the cultural background, who has drawn the hostility of many after the revolution of 1989 because of his sincere analysis on the Romanian society in the transition period, has been accused of collaboration on no real basis. The reason consists precisely in his sincerity and his rough critical spirit, qualities rarely to be noticed among the witnesses of the Romanian transition.

As for the cases of other two scholars, Nicolae Balotă and Alexandru Paleologu, the author recognizes their significant role in the Romanian culture. The reason behind their analysis in the mirror is connected to the way in which public opinion has condemned their collaboration with the Securitate. Hence the paradox: if Nicolae Balotă's malignant tone from his notes is judged by the society with a harshness that significantly surpasses the proportion of his collaborationism, in Alexandru Paleologu's case there is a general exoneration of his activities of collaboration due to the public acknowledgement of this sin. It must be said that in contrast to Nicolae Balotă's collaborationism, that of Alexandru Paleologu had brought him several benefits.

Mihnea Berindei's case reveals new means of compromising a personality, based on hardly reliable online sources, simulating a fictitious collaboration with the Securitate. The sites used in this case, those of Alter Media and Civic Media abound in garbled information from Berindei's file. Following the same mechanisms, the author signals the abuse committed against Mihai Botez, one of the most poignant representatives of Romanian resistance. Moreover, the disparagement campaign against Botez was founded, as Gabriel Andreescu points out, on incomplete or false information, based on rumours rather than documented facts. As a matter of fact, the documents form CN-SAS archives concerning Mihai Botez, called by the authors of the frame-up "informative notes" bear as signature the scholar's real name, which reflects precisely his refusal to collaborate with the Communist Party's repressive instrument. One considers that the informers are known to have signed their notes, ever since the moment of their recruitment, with conspirative names.

From the succinct display of the cases analysed by Gabriel Andreescu in *Scholars, opponents…* one can identify a peculiar characteristic of the Romanian transition. The implications of the manipulation of the Securitate Archives, or, in other words, of the historical truth that can be verified through written sources, has both serious causes and consequences. Moral decay, professional envy and personal frustrations, on the one hand, and the misleading of professional media – and even of the uninvolved but interested citizens – the forgery of the past, the defamation and limitation of certain personalities to imposed actions or involuntary ones, on the other hand, compromise disclosure and memory in post-communism.

Gabriel Zamfir

Coleen MURPHY, *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 214 p.

When addressing issues concerning transitional justice, I believe that the dominant approach must be that of moderation. Whether we develop a perspective on a memoire volume, on some political police files from the whole Eastern Europe during the communist regimes or we regard testimonies of those who suffered in the totalitarian political prisons, our actions should be justified and well weighted.

In this respect, Colleen Murphy's volume -that builds her entire approach on the idea of political reconciliation- is a very useful tool not only for students or scholars and researchers interested in the study of transitional justice, but also for the readers who are less familiar with political science, and more interested in recent history. Moreover, the book can be very useful for those who want to be part of the mission of building a society based on justice, morality and harmony. Meanwhile, I think that the volume, beyond its academic value, could be an excellent handbook for those who work for restoring human communities affected by the totalitarian past. To all intents and purposes, the theory developed and proposed by Colleen Murphy represents a plan for achieving a good political community. What is worth mentioning is that until Colleen Murphy's try, we didn't have a systematized theory on political reconciliation process. In this respect, political reconciliation is seen as a process of rebuilding political relationships within societies and communities. The values that stand behind the phenomenon are: forgiveness, creation and stabilization of normative expectations and trust.

The essential questions which find their answers in this volume are: is it necessary that all citizens should adopt a unitary vision of the past? Should the interests of the totalitarian regimes' victims be subordinate to the interests of the community? Can it be said that political reconciliation is really necessary in order to develop effective democratization and to prevent future conflicts and repression? The first part of this study examines the nature and the extent of deterioration of the political relations during the repressive regimes' rule but also in times of civil conflict. The conceptual framework contains three chapters. The first part is about the rule of law, the second one deals with political trust and the last one talks about individual capabilities. This section is devoted to the analysis of how certain political communities reach an evolutionary stage that requests political reconciliation. The second part is that in which the author builds a handbook for the reconstruction of political relationships between different political generations from the societies affected by the darkness of dictatorships.

Before entering effectively in the process of summarizing the three dimensions of the analysis mentioned above, the reader needs to know, first of all,

what Colleen Murphy meant by reconciliation. Earlier, I have mentioned the four constituents of the definition for political reconciliation. Forgiveness must be understood as the effective overcoming of negative emotions. It should be said that this component works only in interpersonal relations. Creating normative expectations and building political trust represent another key element. The moment when these normative expectations are violated, political trust is suspended. The third element, political value, manifests itself within society the moment when its members, strangers to each other, treat themselves mutually as equal citizens after times of conflict, violence and injustice. The fourth precondition for reconciliation as a factor in the political community should be considered not merely in terms of rebuilding the political, but rather as a process of substantiation of a political community.

Broadly, the purpose of the reconciliation process should be rather that of growing and promoting civic friendship among the members of the society and of developing a sense of political community. This phase, institutionally speaking, is reached by adopting a new set of rules and norms that everyone respects. The major risk in this stage is to create the conditions for new repressive practices. Political sociology has explained the existence of the tendency of any authority, especially executive to create a legal framework that allows power expansion. In what follows I will do a briefly description of the items constituting the conceptual analysis of the political reconciliation theory developed by Colleen Murphy.

The rule of law represents, at least from the point of view of the institutional interaction between the state and its citizens, one of the main preconditions for achieving political reconciliation. The author claims in the chapter dedicated to the institutional dimension that only by adopting a specific rule of law, a favourable institutional environment for political reconciliation can be created.

In the discussion about the rule of law, the author emphasizes the fact that this concept refers to a set of normative rules which must be designed in a way that doesn't allow the arbitrary use of power or, even worse, the abuse of power. To clarify how the rule of law must be understood and what is its moral value, Colleen Murphy appeals to Lon Fuller's conception of the eight principles of legality. He argues that laws should be: general, well-known to those to whom they apply or may apply (in the sense of being released), statements regarding future (preventive), clear, non-contradictory, geared to social policy, constant, and last but not least, they should present a convergence between the text of the law and how it is applied by the executive power. The importance of the rule of law can be deduced also by studying the historical stages in which it was absent in certain policy areas. It is widely known that in such times, individuals accumulate frustration, resentment, and the degree of trust in the other members of the community, in the state and its institutions decreases dramatically. Therefore the fast establishment of the rule of law in

the societies deeply marked by repressive regimes is a preliminary condition in order to generate an optimal framework for taking all the steps designed to produce reconciliation between different political generations.

The conditions for the successful implementation of the rule of law lie in the four elements that Colleen Murphy borrows from the same Lon Fuller. Here, we are talking about the interaction based on the cooperation between citizens and officials; the convergence between laws and informal social practices, or maybe, to put it better, the unwritten rules; decency; justice based on good will.

Political trust is our second essential element of the foundations for political reconciliation. Mutual political trust, alongside responsiveness can be obtained, and obviously can become a condition for reaching reconciliation, when citizens and representatives of state authorities prove mutual confidence and optimism related to good will, competence and decency. Colleen Murphy emphasizes the idea that mere citizen's trust in authority or vice versa is by no means enough for successful completion of reconciliation. We need to gain confidence and optimism in the other precisely because the other has this confidence in us. It is a causal relationship that the author considers essential in consolidating political trust. It should be recalled here that one of the main causes of losing trust is denouncing the rule of law.

Speaking about citizens, they prove political trust if they fulfil duties that arise from their quality of being members of the community. It is about respecting the laws regulating the interaction between political, economic and social spheres. On the other side, officials prove political trust when they are competent, prove good will and keep to be incorruptible. Basically, for this category, the priority is to establish the national interest before personal or group interest. Once this stage of political development is reached, mutual political trust between citizens and officials leads to the stabilization of another criterion which is absolutely necessary in political reconciliation process.

Capabilities. Both the rule of law and political trust are key elements in the development of the process of political reconciliation. However, they are related to the macro categories or groups of our society. In this respect Colleen Murphy starts the discussion about capabilities. They are actually opportunities to learn new values necessary to achieve political reconciliation. More clearly put, these social rules that relate directly to the individual sphere are connecting elements between citizens, the state and individuals, after the establishment of rule of law and after increasing the political trust at an acceptable level. In the author's vision these are: the respect that others show you; the participation to the economic, political and social life of the community; recognition as a member of that community and fulfilling the minimum conditions for overcoming poverty status.

Besides political trust and capabilities, another condition for stability is to eliminate any form of injustice. Serious violations of human rights and

laws inevitably lead to the deterioration of political trust. In addition, these capabilities that are built and have settled in for a long time can disappear very quickly. Thus, any kind of violence, economic pressure, discrimination, exclusion of certain categories of individuals from social, economic and political life of the community inherently leads to shifting away from the political reconciliation purposes.

A very important idea for those who are interested in transitional justice may be inspired by what the author claims in the second part of the volume about truth commissions. Political reconciliation does not end when establishing such a commission and when the trials are held. That moment is the first step towards what moral social reconstruction means. True change starts right then, when justice punishes the guilty and exposes them to the whole society. The reconciliation process begins only when the old enemies can sit at the round table and can look into each other's eyes. This is what we should do so that future generations do not repeat past mistakes.

Andrei Galiță