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The Paradoxes of European Postwar

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In 1945, at a time when the future of postwar Romania seemed yet to be decided despite the rapid advancement along the path of people's democracy, journalist Ion Biberi interviewed several cultural personalities about their present expectations and future projections. Among them, Petru Comarnescu, an eminent theater critic, one of the few Romanian intellectuals, then, with an academic degree at a North American university, and a convinced democrat, emphatically concluded his conversation with Biberi: "the beginnings of a truly new world dawn before us. We will surely not get to experience it in its full splendor. […] It will not be a monotonous and boring world as the bourgeois imagined it. But its diversity will provide us with a unity of humanness and energetic productivity that has never been witness before in history."[1] Comarnescu at the time was forty-year old. Once the communist party took over power completely, he will not be able to publish for almost a decade. By 1960s, though, he will be rehabilitated and allowed to make public his studies in cultural history.

Only three years later, in the summer of 1948, soon after the Romanian Workers' Party declared Romania a popular democracy and only months removed from the forced abdication of King Michael and the disbandment of monarchical constitutional rule, a young communist was fully immersed in what he considered the transformative great leap to socialism. He reminisced nostalgically about the 'socialist patriotism' of the time in his journal published more than fifty years later: "God! So much belief, enthusiasm! We were so convinced that we could build, rebuild, improve, elevate, and push forward our country so that it would be among the most civilized in the world."[2] He was only nineteen years old in 1948. Titu Georgescu, for this was his name, will graduate from the History Department of Bucharest University and will

[1] Interview with Petru Comarnescu in Ion Biberi, *Lumea de mâine*, ed. II cu cuvânt înainte de Adrian Cioroianu (București: Curtea Veche, 2001), p. 300.

[2] Titu GEORGESCU, *Tot un fel de istorie*, Râmnicu-Vâlcea: Editura Compania, 2001, p. 90.

be promoted later as deputy-director of the Institute of Party History and deputy provost of his alma mater. He completely internalized the values of the new socialist society, playing a central role in the regime's cultural politics. He considered himself an exemplification of the New Man whom Petru Comarnescu's new world was supposed to bring about.

These two examples represent a fitting introduction in the complexities and paradoxes of European postwar history, or the time period that followed the end of the Second World War, which scholarly literature has yet to fully circumscribe, evaluate, or comprehensively asses. Known also by the name of aftermath or reconstruction, the postwar was first and foremost a time of hope for renewal after the unprecedented traumas of the Second World War. It simultaneously fostered a highly ambiguous relationship to the pre-war past. Comarnescu and Georgescu were just two individuals among countless many who sought after a fresh start, a zero hour both at a personal and collective level. They personified what the late Tony Judt called "the devotion to a new beginning" that "separated a young postwar generation from its social roots and the national past."[3] Nevertheless, it has been increasingly difficult to pinpoint a so-called pan-European *Stunde Null* particularly because "the people of the region were not faced with a blank slate in 1944 and 1945, after all, and they were not themselves starting from scratch. Nor did they emerge from nowhere, with no previous experiences, ready to start afresh."[4] In 1944 and 1945, Europe faced terrible destruction, an utter and complete disruption of society, state, collective and individual identities, or of culture, everyday life, and economy. Entire populations had been unsettled to an unprecedented degree. Frank Biess underlined that "the war had disrupted horizontal (i.e., among members of a society) as well as vertical bonds (between individuals and governments). The mobilization (and control) of emotions was central to this process of re-forging social bonds, on the national as well as the transnational and subnational levels."[5] In other words, postwar governments had not only to re-establish the very fabric of the societies they ruled, but the bets were off on the outlook of Europe itself and of individual states within it. Last but not least, according to historian Mark Mazower, "a total of close to ninety million people were either killed or displaced in Europe between the years 1939 and 1948."[6] Such unfathomable human wreckage raises almost unassailable limits for either representation or analysis. At the same time, the postwar apparent vacuum of social, civil, and political bonds obstructed a paradoxical starting point for politics. On the one

[3] Tony JUDT, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, London: Penguin Press, 2005, p. 200.

[4] Anne APPLEBAUM, *Iron Curtain. The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-56*, London: Allen Lane, 2012, p. 5.

[5] Frank BIESS, "Feelings in the Aftermath. Toward a History of Postwar Emotions", in Frank BIESS and Robert G. MOELLER (eds.), *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010, p. 41.

[6] Mark MAZOWER, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, p. 222.

hand, entire populations came out totally exhausted and disenchanted with politics. On the other hand, the devotion to a new beginning on the part of governments, parties, or individuals presupposed, as indicated by Biess, a remobilization of emotions. Mazower excellently diagnosed the situation: "after 1945 politics turned into something to be endured, while intimacy and domesticity became more important than ever as stabilizing factors in people's lives."[7] The combination of radicalized populations and an overwhelming feeling of exhaustion can help us, argued the same author, to understand the background for the popular adaptation to communist rule in Eastern Europe, and, in Western Europe, "the social consensus based upon commitment to welfare, mass consumption and the recovery of the family."[8]

Taking into account the massive literature that already exists in the history of postwar in Europe and in individual countries, the editorial board of *History of Communism in Europe* envisaged a thematic issue on communism, nationalism, and state building within the aforementioned timeframe. The guidelines for our call for papers were generous, as we tried to foster a diversity of approaches rather than strict interpretative conformity. We proposed a wider temporal perspective of the postwar, which we perceived on several, overlapping areas: the history of the immediate aftermath, the story of reconstruction and state-building, the (re)construction of collective identities, the legacy of the post-1945 decades. Subsequently, postwar was a distinct period of time, a set of protracted process, and historical bequest which required coming to terms with or unearthing from the rabble of the historiographical master-narratives that haunted the second half of the twentieth century either East or West. A parallel purpose to the present issue of *History of Communism in Europe* was to publish research articles based on new documentary information, which has been available especially in the countries of the former socialist bloc as a consequence of the archival revolution[9] that took place in region in 2000s.

The selected contributions in this issue are distributed into two sections. The first, entitled "Homogenization as State-Building," deals with the manner in which, in Eastern and Central Europe, state-building relied on practices from the war and pre-war period and with how this process inextricably, but gradually morphed into the suppression, if not elimination, of political, social, or ethnic diversity within postwar polities. We believe that the articles analyze

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 227.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 228.

[9] For earlier discussions of the concept of archival revolution for the field of the study of communism, and particularly the Soviet Union, see Andreas LANGENOHL's review article "History Between Politics and Public: Historiography, Collective Memory, and the Archival Revolution' in Russia", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Volume 1, Number 3, Summer 2000 (New Series), pp. 559-569 or Oleg KHLEVNIUK, "Stalinism and the Stalin Period After the Archival Revolution", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Volume 2, Number 2, Spring 2001 (New Series), pp. 319-327.

topics which, despite a growing interest abroad in international academic, have been consistently ignored or misrepresented by local scholarship. The second section, entitled "Nationalizing Postwar Societies," relies on a fundamental premise heavily indebted to Rogers Brubaker's seminal concept of "nationalizing nation-state."[10] The authors, along with the editors, argue that after 1945 the process of reconstruction presupposed the refashioning of collective and individual identities. Such feat was accomplished by way of practices and discourses that re-emphasized national pride and loyalty as the supposedly 'true' nation-state was realized. Countries in Europe, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe, became more and more homogeneous, while their governments and societies endorsed and indulged into refurbished national mythologies.

The reader might have already noticed a glitch in our self-professed capacious reading of the postwar: an overemphasis on the former Soviet bloc. Indeed, with one exception, Huberto Cucchetti's paper on the activity of pro-communist organizations and of fellow travelers in France, the other texts are case studies from the region. First of all, we could not and did not want to cover the entire continent. Even for Eastern Europe, the articles discuss only a limited number of cases: two are on Poland, three on Romania, and one each for Albania and former Yugoslavia. Secondly, as already mentioned, our journal encourages original research based on newly opened archives from the region – so a slight bias sometimes develops. Third, our intention was to urge the authors to transpose and transplant some of the central debates about postwar in Europe to their country studies. So, even if an article is about Romania, Poland, or Albania, its topic, approach, and methodology relates to larger discussions pertaining to a revised understanding of the complexities of the Second World War's aftermath. Lastly, I should also add that we initially received a much larger number of papers, which covered a wider array of countries in Europe. But upon peer-review, we had to reject some of them though we greatly appreciated their quality.

Any discussion of the postwar is faced with several challenges. How does the legacy of genocide and ethnic cleansing play into postwar dynamics? How should we asses Sovietization from the perspective of state-building policies? What is the impact of Cold War politics upon our assessment of the nature and length of the postwar period? Moreover, to which extent our understanding of the postwar has been skewed by long preferred East-West divides? In his contribution to the 2011 supplement of *Past and Present* on "Postwar Reconstruction in Europe," Mark Mazower stated that "perhaps reconstruction was a much longer and more pervasive process than we have tended to imagine."[11] In the same vein, Tony Judt

[10] For the definition of the concept see Rogers BRUBAKER, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 63.

[11] Mark MAZOWER, "Reconstruction: The Historiographical Issues", in Mark MAZOWER, Jessica REINISCH, and David FELDMAN (eds.), *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe:International Perspectives, 1945-1949*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Past and Present Supplement No. 6, 2011, p. 28.

insisted that "'post-war', then, lasted a long time; longer, certainly, than historians have sometimes supposed, recounting the difficult post-war years in the flattering light of the prosperous decades to come."[12] One hypothesis that could be advanced, and which possibly sets up the ground for a non-discriminatory, non-ideological, comparative, interdisciplinary and, ultimately, open-ended reading of the postwar is to perceive it as a pan-European experience. Or, to use Michael Geyer by now famous dictum, the decades after 1945 should be seen in the key of a "Europenization of European history."[13] But Europenization in itself ought not to be taken for granted. Ulrike v. Hirschhausen and Kiran Klaus Patel underlined the fact that the latter "also encompasses parallel processes of delimitation and 'othering', as well as fragmentation and conflict." The postwar offers unfortunately countless experiences that represent the darker sides of European history. Because of their non-integrative nature, such phenomena that defy "variety of political, social, economic and cultural processes that promote[d] a sustainable strengthening of intra-European connections and similarities through acts of emulation, exchange and entanglement"[14] are usually ignored, considered aberrant, or exclusively employed in victimization narratives. In the end, a wholesale European reading of the postwar, beyond any political, ideological, or cultural divides or geographies raises an important challenge to history itself as discipline. It tests our ability to write from a continental point of view without either establishing taxonomies of worth based on subject of research or generating new teleologies of a purported uniform European triumph from the wreckage of the twentieth century. A preliminary conclusion is that such wider interpretative framework for European postwar is more sensitive to "the multiplicity of histories of the aftermath that defies a single periodization or thematic definition."[15] Such research premise does indeed complicate "the happy image of Europe"[16] or the bogey role of Eastern Europe (with its Balkan avatar). It nevertheless allows for nuance,

[12] JUDT, *Postwar*, p. 236.

[13] Michael Geyer's emphasis in 1989 is still valid over two decades since he first wrote his article: "The dissolution of the Cold War division is only the beginning of a reorganization of historical knowledge which has, in the past forty years, cut along an old and contested seam of domination and subordination. […] A Europenization of national histories is only achieved if dominant histories are narrated together with subordinate ones and vice versa. Europenization fails if it merely pluralizes nations or cultures." See Michael GEYER, "Historical Fiction of Anatomy and the Europeanization of National History", *Central European History*, vol. 22, issue 3-4 (September-December 1989), p. 334.

[14] Ulrike v. HIRSCHHAUSEN and Kiran Klaus PATEL, "Europeanization in History: An Introduction", in Martin CONWAY and Kiran Klaus PATEL (eds.), *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 2-3.

[15] Frank BIESS, "Introduction", in BIESS and MOELLER (eds.), *Histories of the Aftermath*, p. 4.

[16] Robert GERWARTH and Stephan MALINOWSKI, "Europeanization through Violence? War Experiences and the Making of Modern Europe", in CONWAY and PATEL (eds.), *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century*, p. 191.

comparativity, and most importantly, it opens the possibility for a historical big-picture that only recently has come into focus.

The first section of *HCE*'s thematic issue reflects the heavy impact of the Second World War on the post-1945 period. Historian Holly Case, among many others, remarked that the difference between the aftermaths of the two world wars lies in "the restraints that the Second World War subsequently eliminated." Case goes on to argue, quoting the Czechoslovak president at the time, Edvard Benes, the immediate consequence of this phenomenon was that it subsequently "revolutionized the whole world."[17] Tony Judt, developing on some points made initially by Jan T. Gross,[18] took this idea further. He perceived the Second World War also in terms of simultaneous European civil wars that had yet to finish in 1945. Judt stressed that these civil wars "together with the unprecedented brutality of the Nazi and, later, Soviet occupations they corroded the very fabric of the European state. After them, nothing would ever be the same. In the truest sense of a much-abused term, they transformed World War Two - Hitler's war—into a social revolution."[19] In 1945, European states and societies lay shattered, thus open to radical transformation. They were to bear the deep marks of war traumas in the very essence of their postwar reconstruction.

The papers in this issue by Paul McNamara, Sławomir Łodziński, and Dallas Michelbacher reveal the direct connection between the population politics of the Second World War and the homogenization presupposed by postwar state-building in Romania and Poland. These contributions are further proof that policies such as deportation of ethnic groups considered as "enemy minorities" (e.g., Germans, Hungarians, Ukrainians), the expropriation and nationalization of their property, and the public discourse of hate against such groups were a continuation of similar policies during war time or even of the late 1930s. This observation echoes a more general characterization of the immediate aftermath of 1944/5. The politics of homogenization adopted by national front governments and later by communist governments were a continuation of the state of total war that Europe, and especially its Eastern and Central parts, had experienced since 1938.[20] Or, as two authors put it, this is the story of "Europenization by violence": "Between 1914 and 1945, and, *in some parts of Europe until much more recently* [my emphasis], ethnic conflicts, wars and civil wars, were indeed the most defining

[17] Holly CASE, "Reconstruction in East-Central Europe: Clearing the Rubble of Cold War Politics", in MAZOWER (et al.), *Post-War Reconstruction*, p. 86.

[18] Jan T. GROSS, "Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of the Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe", in *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Spring 1989), pp. 198–214 and Jan GROSS, "War as Revolution", in Norman NAIMARK and Leonid GIBIANSKII (eds.), *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe 1944–1949*, Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1997, pp. 17–40.

[19] JUDT, *Postwar*, p. 35.

[20] Pieter LAGROU, "1945-1955. The Age of Total War", in BIESS and MOELLER (eds.), *Histories of the Afermath*, pp. 287-296.

transnational experiences of border-crossing and intercultural exchange and they, too, contributed to a vast array of (intended or unintended) contacts and transfers of ideas and personnel across real or imagined borders as well as to the reordering of 'mental maps'."[21]

McNamara tells the fascinating story of the post-1945 Polonization of the Baltic "Recovered Territories", that is the three provinces of Szczecin, Gdańsk and Olsztyn. He shows how policies of population displacement, forced migration, push-pull settlement generated long-term ethnic, political, social, and economic tensions between the incoming Poles and the remaining demographic mosaic of this region. The author underlines the overlap between the interests of some internal forces within postwar Polish society, the communist party (or some factions of it, especially the group led by Władysław Gomulka), and the Catholic Church in the context of the state-building by way of re-Slavization, de-Germanization, and more generally ethnic homogenization. McNamara also points to an important side-story of the wars immediate aftermath: the infrastructure, legitimacy, and public discourse presupposed by population politics after 1945 set the ground for future drives of the communist state in terms of collectivization, anticlericalism, and socio-political repression. Anne Applebaum formulate this idea most bluntly: "in a very literal sense, the expulsions [of the Germans, n.a.] thus laid the institutional ground for the imposition of terror which would follow a year or two later."[22]

Michelbacher's contribution tells a similar story as the Polish case. He points to the fact that the deportation of Germans after 1945 from Romania was used as a pretext by the national front government to pursue human rights abuses against the Hungarian minority too. Both were perceived as enemy ethic groups and the policies adopted by Romanian state representatives (communists included) were indeed, as the author states, a continuation of the war time drive to "purify the nation."[23] One observation I would add to this article is that such agenda did not only express the desires of nationalist elites to Romanianize the population. As across the soon to become Soviet bloc, all communist parties endorsed and pushed for ethnic homogenization. Norman Naimark underlined that during early postwar, "the nationalist principle reigned supreme, especially in those countries that were dominated by Communist parties, which sought legitimacy through the forced expulsion of unwanted minorities. By the end of this process, Poland was never so Polish as after the war, Ukraine never so Ukrainian, Germany never so German, Latvia never so Latvian, Lithuania never so Lithuanian."[24] Authors such as Carol

[21] GERWARTH and MALINOWSKI, "Europeanization through Violence?", p. 190.

[22] APPLEBAUM, *Iron Curtain*, p. 135.

[23] See Vladimir SOLONARI, *Purifying the Nation. Population Exchanges and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

[24] Norman NAIMARK, "The Presistence of 'the Postwar'. Germany and Poland", in BIESS and MOELLER (eds.), *Histories of the Aftermath*. p. 17. Also see his article "The Sovietization

Lilly, Bradley Abrams, Martin Mevius, Yannis Sygkelos, Stefano Bottoni or Dirk Spilker reached the same conclusion in case-studies dealing with Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and East Germany.[25] The story of the national(ity) question during the communist period in Eastern Europe is yet to be fully researched and told. The communist project of state-building as a national project from 1944 to 1989 is a budding topic in specialized literature. The newly opened archives reveal unexpected continuities between the various phases of domestic adaptation of communist-rule, beyond the well-worn dichotomy of discontinuity between Sovietizaton[26] and nationalization/" domesticism"[27]/regime inviduality.[28]

Sławomir Łodziński's article on nationality politics of the Polish communist regime as state practices to enforce social, economic, and political integration and conformity only reinforces the above remarks and the previous two authors's findings. Łodziński shows how, from 1944 until 1989, the particular ways in which the communist regime enforced homogenization upon minorities and the manner in which their members were integrated in postwar society generated minority borderlands where individuals only preserved a hidden ethnicity. He demonstrates how, despite the varying nature of the nationality policies throughout the regime's existence, individuals from these specific population groups developed a deep sense of discrimination because of constant lack of recognition, beyond formal declarations, of non-Polish ethnicities. From this point of view, one could generalize by arguing that

of Eastern Europe, 1944-1953", in Melvyn P. LEFFLER and Odd Arne WESTAD (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I Origins*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 175-197.

[25] Carol S. LILLY, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia, 1944- 1953*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001; Bradley F. ADAMS, *"The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation": Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism*, New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., Harvard Cold War Book Series, 2004); Martin MEVIUS, *Agents of Moscow: The Hungarian Communist Party and the Origins of Socialist Patriotism, 1941-1953*, Oxford: Clarendon, 2004; Dirk SPILKER, *The East German Leadership and the German Division of Germany. Patriotism and Propaganda 1945-1953*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; Yannis SYGELOS, *Nationalism from the Left. The Bulgarian Communist Party During the Second World War and the Early Post-War Years*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011; Stefano BOTTONI, *Transilvania roşie. Comunismul român şi problema naţională 1944–1965*, Cluj: Editura Institutului pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităţilor Naţionale, 2010.

[26] For example, the concept self-Sovietization is already an established interpretative tool in present scholarship. For its definition see John CONNELLY, *Captive Universities. The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education 1945-1956*, Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000, p. 45.

[27] Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, (revised and enlarged edition) Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 52.

[28] Kenneth JOWITT, *New World Disorder. The Leninist Extinction*, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

communist parties never managed to solve the original dilemma of the Soviet system of *korenizatsiia* versus *natsionalizatsiia*.[29]

But communist regimes, despite their egalitarian and emancipatory rhetoric found it difficult to integrate not only ethnic but also gender groups. Luciana Jinga's text presents the policies adopted by the Romanian Workers' Party/Romanian Communist Party that granted equal rights to women both within the family and at the workplace. However, she emphasizes the vicious circle that was deeply entrenched in the emancipatory state-legal framework. In practice, she points to the employers' gender bias in term of jobs, as women gradually seemed to be destined for only certain types of 'productive' activities. Moreover, the type of jobs assigned to women implicitly affected their political mobility, as the position's significance at work was directly related to promotion within the part-state nomenklatura. To make matters worse, especially after 1966 when the party leadership promoted increasingly harsh anti-abortion and family planning legislation, women's role of mothers and wives either came in direct conflict with or was overriding that of worker or 'producer.' The gradual neotraditionalization and parochialization of the communist regime in Romania only made more difficult the political promotion and emancipation of women, while transforming their triple burden (mothers, wives, workers) into a basis for near disenfranchisement rather than upward mobility. Jinga rightly concludes that the communist regime in Romania gave women the right to work, but it failed to fairly ensure the right to be promoted or rule beyond parochial gender biases.

One additional element that should be emphasized is the fact that, by 1960s, the RCP's politics of employment and elite-selection in relation to social, gender, or ethnic groups took the form of a state socialist *numerus clausus*. Women were allowed in leadership positions in the party-state apparatus within the quota of their proportion in society (though this sometimes was not achieved); the same with intellectuals or Hungarians. The Romanian case might have been an extreme one, but the same phenomenon can be identified, to varying degrees, across Eastern and Central Europe. For example, in 1966, a party document on the ethnic and social distribution within decision-making positions within the Romanian Academy provided the following statistical results: out of 493 members of the leadership, 396 were Romanians, 63 were Jews, 19 were Hungarians, 4 Germans, and 6 of other nationalities. Of the 77 directors and deputy directors of the Academy's institutes, 11 were Jews, 3 Hungarians, one German, and 2 were Russian. Of the 293 chiefs of sectors, 47 were

[29] As it was defined in 1921 and 1923, "*Korenizatsiia* consisted of two major tasks: the creation of national elites (Affirmative Action) and the promotion of the local national languages to a dominant position in the non-Russian territories (linguistic *korenizatsiia*)." However, Stalin, in contrast to Lenin, preferred the term *natsionalizatsiia* which invoked more the idea of national consolidation or building. See Terry MARTIN, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 75.

Jews, 12 Hungarians, 3 Germans, and 3 of other nationalities. Party representatives concluded that this national composition was deemed unsatisfactory, because it underrepresented Romanians.[30] However, if one takes into account only the proportion of Hungarians and Germans, it is obvious that not even their representation corresponded to the respective national distribution within Romania‘s population. Though the party document does not clearly state this, I should add that the group which was directly targeted for appropriate representation based on demographic proportion were the Jews. Indeed, one of the central, new topics of postwar history in the former Soviet bloc is the persistence and instrumentalization of what Timothy Snyder called "Stalinist anti-Semitism."[31] It was omnipresent in late forties and early fifties in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, or Romania. It constantly resurfaced throughout the evolution of communist regimes in the region.

In a sense, the above discussion exemplifies what Tony Judt called "a distinctively cynical quality to *Communist* misrule: old-fashioned abuses were now laboriously embedded in a rhetorical cant of equality and social progress."[32] Communist regimes proposed after 1945, following the Soviet model, an alternative modernity based on "a rationalist ethos of social intervention" that produced "particular constellation[s] of modern state practices that arose in conjunction with the ambitions to refashion society and mobilize populations for industrial labor and mass warfare."[33] From this point of view, the study of European postwar can provide a generous basis for trans-systemic comparison between various trajectories of state-building and societal transformation.[34] Only in such manner can researchers truly identify the *diferentia specifica* of communist modernizations in Europe after 1945.

The second section of the issue opens with Humberto Cucchetti's piece on the enclaves of militancy linked to French postwar communism. The author covers a wide array of cases from the French-Soviet friendship association, to the journal *Action*, and the various types of fellow travelers who were involved

[30] „Notă privind situația cadelor de conducere din unitățile de cercetare ale Academiei RSR", 23 mai, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no. 16/1966, ff. 55-58, „Referat privind unele probleme în legătură cu îmbunătățirea organizării Academiei RSR", 24 ianuarie, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no. 16/1966, ff. 10-15.

[31] According to Snyder, "Stalinist anti-Semitism haunted eastern Europe long after the death of Stalin. It was rarely a major tool of governance, but it was always available in moments of political stress. Anti-Semitism allowed leaders to revise the history of wartime suffering (recalled as the suffering only of Slavs) ad also the history of Stalinism itself (which was portrayed as the deformed, Jewish form of communism)." In Timothy SNYDER, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York: Basic Books, 2010, p. 371.

[32] JUDT, *Postwar*, p. 194.

[33] David L. Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses. Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914-1939*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2011, p. 2.

[34] On the possibilities of trans-systemic comparison by way of contrasting modernizations see György PÉTERI, "The Occident Within—or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, 4 (Fall 2008): 929–37.

in the violent ideological debates of late 1940s and early 1950s in France. Cucchetti stresses the fact that these pro-Soviet/communist milieus paradoxically advocated a form of French 'patriotism' that relied on *resistentialisme* (the myth of the *Résistance* that was appropriated by the communist party)[35], anti-Germanism, and anti-Europeanism (the opposition to emergent projects of European economic, political, and military cooperation). This type of identitarian discourse was inextricably related to the Soviet foreign policy and interests in postwar Europe. Historian Silvio Pons underlined that after 1948, so in the aftermath of the creation of the Cominform, Western European communist parties maintained their line of national unity. Their fate contrasted with that of Eastern European communist parties, which, especially after the Stalin-Tito break, were forced to give up and recant (by way of extensive purges and terror) the doctrine of 'national ways to socialism.' Nevertheless, the policies and discourses advanced by western communists, the specific form their revolutionary impetus took, were ultimately contained within "the confines of Soviet state interests."[36] Such situation was confirmed by one *case célèbre*, analyzed by Cucchetti, the *Kravchenko affaire*, when the prestige and international image of the Soviet Union became the ultimate criteria for truth and 'democratic' commitment in postwar France.

The myth of resistance and the topos of communism as besieged fortress are discussed by Enis Sulstarova's article as well. He does this using the example of Ismail Kadare's writings. The author identifies in the novelist's work a layered identitarian narrative of resistance and difference based upon the assertion of authenticity from three different directions. The communist party/regime personified centuries of national struggle against foreign invasion, particularly the Ottoman Empire. The regime was the heir of the tradition of Albania as the first line of defense for Europe, which in this country also morphed into a narrative of Europeanness against contemporary 'Asiatic' presence (at different times, the Soviet Union or/and China). And last, the party was the incarnation of the *only* true socialism or Marxist-Leninism, that is, the true incumbent of the most advanced form of modernity. Sulstarova describes in detail the various forms that these internal and external "nesting orientalisms"[37] took in Kadare's work and their connection to the official practices of the communist regime in Albania.

Continuing the discussion of nationalism under communism from the point of view of shifting geographies, Aurelia Vasile's contribution analyzes

[35] For the role of *resistentialisme* in postwar France see the seminal volume by Tony JUDT, *Past Imperfect. French Intellectuals, 1944-1945*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

[36] Silvio PONS, "Stalin and the European Communists after World War Two (1943–1948)", in MAZOWER (et al.), *Post-War Reconstruction,* pp. 132-137. Also see Vladimir O. PECHATNOV, "The Soviet Union and the World, 1944–1953", in LEFFLER and WESTAD (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I*, pp. 90-111.

[37] Milica Bakić-HAYDEN, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 917-931.

the shifts in Romanian film production from 1960s to early 1980s. She uses the example of three movies dealing with ancient peoples who lived in the territory that we now call Romania – those populations identified in national myths and historical tradition as the ancestors of Romanians as nation. She exemplary shows how the regime's politics of culture, as reflected in the movies on this topic produced in 1960s, depended on a surprising combination of factors: ideological objectives, artistic preferences and fashion, and marketing imperatives. By analyzing the phenomenon of co-productions – cinematographic collaborations between Romanian and French or Italian production houses – Vasile touches on what historian Michael Geyer called the "transnational horizon of the nation."[38] This methodological tool is crucial in order to understand the fact that nationalist policies under communism were shaped not only by internal or genealogical experiences, but also by the international self-representation of the regimes themselves and by the trans-border and trans-ideological contacts and exchanges pursued by state representatives, specific institutions, or individual artists.[39] One merit of Vasile's contribution is that, through the example of two movies, she successfully tells the *full* story of a specific context in the process of the construction of a cinematographic national master-narrative ("epopeea națională"). Another is that by contrasting the situation in the 1960s with the production of another movie of similar topic in late 1970s and 1980s, she manages to reveal a fundamental transformation within artistic-national representation under communism. She points out how the fragile equilibrium between ideology, aesthetics, and marketing had fallen apart in Ceaușescu's Romania by the beginning of the last decade of the regime. This took place at a time of symbolic overdetermination by way of national-Stalinist synthesis[40] under circumstances of profound economic and systemic crisis. Vasile demonstrates how, despite a constant preoccupation with ideological injection into cinematic production, the fundamental difference from the 1960s lay in the inability of the communist regime to create a film-product in 1980s which could not only mobilize and inspire, but also be marketable internally and internationally.

[38] Michael GEYER, "Review Symposium 'Transnationale Geschichte': The New Consensus," http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=812&type=revsymp (last accessed September 27, 2012).

[39] For the importance of the transnational approach in the study of communism see Michael David-Fox, "The Implications of Transnationalism", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, 4 (Fall 2011), pp. 885-904, Gyorgy PETERI, "Nylon Curtain — Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe", *Slavonica*, Vol. 10. No. 2, November 2004, pp. 113-123, or Bogdan C. IACOB, „Is It Transnational? A New Perspective in the Study of Communism", *East Central Europe*, forthcoming 2013.

[40] See Vladimir TISMĂNEANU, "What Was National Stalinism?", in Dan STONE (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 462-479.

The last contribution in the second section of the issue is an analysis by Marco Abram of the changing meanings of October 20th, a national celebration in Tito's Yugoslavia, and their impact upon the symbolic role assigned to Belgrade as capital of the communist state. This date marked the city's liberation by Tito's partisans and it presupposed a celebration of the founding of the new Yugoslavia and of the zero hour of building socialism. The profile of the festivities depended on the avatars of two fundamental discourses in the Yugoslav polity: patriotism and unity. Abrams shows how before 1961, Belgrade, via October 30th, was transformed in order to symbolize the center of socialist construction and of the struggle for liberation. Belgrade acquired metonymic meanings. It was supposed to be transformed in order to become, to use Anne Apllebaum's terminology, "the ideal city"[41] of Tito's state, the citadel of Yugoslav socialist brotherhood. The author stresses the fact that once the myth of brotherhood gradually became de-centralized, Belgrade and implicitly October 30th lost its unifying and metonymic qualities. In a sense, Abram tells a story almost opposite to Vasile's contribution, that is, the national imagery in Yugoslavia, by 1970s, became much of flexible than the increasingly rigid identitarian representations in communist Romania.

The history of postwar that emerges from the contributions in the current issue of *History of Communism in Europe* reveals a thematic range that encompasses topics such as politics of communist state building and systemic centralization, minority policies, national artistic representations, internationalism versus patriotism, politics of culture, transnational exchanges, social integration, and continuities beyond the 1945 threshold. In no way do we pretend to have comprehensively covered the myriad complexities and paradoxes of the European postwar. But those topics discussed by the authors in this issue reinforce the conclusion that our current knowledge and information on the decades that passed since the end of the Second World War compels the research to "strike out in new directions which no longer can be contained by the dichotomies of the Cold War."[42] A continued historiographical emphasis on a continent divided along an East-West alignment does indeed tell an important story of Europe. It fails though to fully account for the entanglements and delimitations, isolation and integration, regional and imperial experiences which lay at the very core of Europe's postwar history. Such broader, dialogical, and more inclusive view of the last forty-fifty years of the twentieth century on our continent could also possibility facilitate a common memory of five decades which for so long has been interpreted along mostly divergent or opposite directions: democracy versus totalitarianism, (anti) fascism versus (anti) communism, or ultimately, as radical evil, Holocaust versus Gulag.

[41] See APPLEBAUM, *The Iron Curtain*, pp. 384-409.

[42] David FELDMAN, "Preface", in MAZOWER (et al.), *Post-War Reconstruction*, p. 10.

In his contribution to the first volume of the *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, David Engermann remarked that the history of the Cold War was one of boundaries.[43] However, this argument can be taken further. One could state that the postwar is a tale of how frontiers shifted and transformed to such an extent that the resulting momentous, but evolving, arrangements of society and individual, nation and state, local and regional, in-bloc and trans-bloc, bipolar or continental, ideology and post-ideology produced unexpected communalities, lags, and expectations which define the Europe of today.

[43] David C. Engerman, "Ideology and the origins of the Cold War, 1917–1962", in LEFFLER and WESTAD (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I*, p. 33.