

**Socialist Integration and Alternative Geographies of Science:
Romania and Soviet Bloc
(1960-1965)**

Bogdan C. Iacob

1. Preliminaries

The emancipation of the Romanian communist regime within the Soviet bloc was based on a re-definition of its position within political, cultural, and historical spaces. Ultimately, the self-assertiveness of the Romanian Workers' Party and of its polity relied on and developed alternative geographies both regionally and internationally (i.e., world-scale). Science, particularly history, was positioned in areas consistent with the crystallizing indentitarian narrative of the regime itself. One can identify at least three trajectories for this phenomenon: a self-proclaimed re-integration into Europe at the level of epistemic communication and exchange; the proposal of a regional project of research – South-Eastern European studies (with its corollaries Balkan and Byzantine studies); and, last but not least, the rejection of Central Europe if identified with the historiographical re-consideration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Moreover, it all happened in the context of a Soviet-coordinated project of cultural-scientific integration that complemented the principle of a unitary socialist economy/plan within the Comecon. However, these alternative geographies of science were circumscribed as the discourse

of the Nation increasingly gained, both politically and epistemically, more unitary, transhistorical, primordialist, and parochialist tones.

The new spaces for science did allow for theoretical import, interdisciplinarity, and comparativism, but these were rather side-effects that permitted at most the preservation of niche-communities. The incursions into territories parallel or adjacent to “the socialist camp” became opportunities for the assertion of ethnic authenticity, national ‘acientness’, cultural exceptionalism, or scientific competition over international prestige. In the case of Romania, the primary effect of this process was the political assertion of regional leadership/primacy and the epistemic re-consolidation of manifestations of the Nation across time. Other by-products of the process were the entrenchment of tradition and of the study of universal history on the historical front.

The search for alternative venues for scientific cooperation reached a significant, concerted level after 1956, around the same time when the process of re-institutionalization and re-professionalization had begun. By 1958, the Balkans seemed to constitute an interesting outlet in international politics for the RWP as well. The communist regime was growing its own legs on the path of individuality (e.g., the retreat of the Soviet troops, the disbandment of the Sovroms, its crucial role in aiding the crushing of the Hungarian revolution, the clampdown on representatives of the Hungarian minority which led to policies of cultural Romanization, the Romanian involvement in the Sino-Soviet dispute). Also, the turn toward a national science, although controlled by the party, brought another issue at the table: the activity and status of Institute for Romanian-Soviet Studies (IRSS). All these phenomena combined to generate the specific trajectories of science (in our case history) in mid-1960s under the particular

circumstances of a move, encouraged by the “Moscow center”, toward a common scientific market and production within the Soviet bloc.

2. Southeastern Europe: Tradition, Universal History, and Identity

In 1959, at the fifteenth anniversary of the Romania’s “liberation from the fascist yoke”, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the RWP’s General Secretary, stated that one of the goals of the regime’s foreign diplomacy was “the improvement of relations with countries from neighboring regions. This initiative materialized in several proposals by the Romanian government regarding the creation of an extensive inter-Balkan collaboration. Most recently, [we advanced] our project of a conference of the countries in the Balkans during which we could discuss and adopt a treatise of mutual understanding and collective security guaranteed by the great powers.”¹ He went as far as to propose, with the endorsement of the USSR, the transformation of the Balkans into a nuclear-weapons free region. This initiative overlapped with the Soviet strategic interests in the area of Europe (Greece and Turkey had joined NATO in 1951), particularly as Nikita Khrushchev made several attempts to bury the hatchet with Tito’s Yugoslavia. It was no coincidence that one of the three meetings between Khrushchev and Tito in the timeframe fall 1956 and summer 1957 was secretly organized in Bucharest.² By mid-1960s, the RWP leadership already followed its own agenda in the negotiations with the League of Communists in Yugoslavia, which materialized in the Iron Gates dam in 1964 and in Tito’s indirect support during Romania’s contestation of Khrushchev’s plan for greater economic integration in the Comecon.

¹ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, „A XV-a aniversare a eliberării României de sub jugul fascist”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 4, an XII, 1959, pp. 19.

² See “Khrushchev and Tito-Summer 1958”, RFE/OSA, 72-4-127, July 6, 1958 and “Khrushchev in Yugoslavia”, RFE/OSA, 108-5-181, August, 19, 1963.

The first discussions about the creation of an institutional framework for regional cooperation, adjacent to that within the Soviet bloc, appeared among historians between 1953 and 1955 with two projects of collaboration: on Byzantine studies and academic cooperation among higher-education institutions from the so-called “Danubian countries”.³ Neither took on a prominent role in the foreign relations of Romanian science. By 1958, a new project appeared that of an institute for Southeastern studies that could include research on the Balkans, on the Ottoman and Byzantine empires. It resonated both with the regime’s priorities on the region and with the tradition of the pre-communist historical profession. On the first matter, a report presented by Emil Condurachi, the director of the Institute of Archeology and soon to become general secretary of the Association for Southeastern European Studies (ASES), at the International Conference on Balkan Civilizations in Sinaia, Romania (July 1962), revealed the direct link between the new scientific initiative and the party’s international position: “We would like to mention that the mutual understanding which characterized for the most part the papers and debates of this symposium coincided entirely with the plea launched by the Romanian government, a few years back, for a peaceful and constructive collaboration between all the Balkan states.”⁴

On the second matter, before the wholesale restructuring of the scientific field and of historical studies in 1948, there were two institutions that focused on issues of regional research and collaboration. In 1913, Romanian historians Nicolae Iorga, Vasile Pârvan, and Gheorghe Munteanu Murgoci created the Institute for South-European Studies. N. Iorga was the head of this institute until his death; from 1940 to 1947, Ghe. Brătianu and N Bănescu were its directors. In parallel, Victor Papacostea organized in 1937 the Institute for Balkan Studies and Research.

³ See for example „Referat privind organizarea periodică de conferințe danubiene a cercetătorilor din domeniul antichității, din țările care se află în această regiune a Europei”, 5 decembrie, 5/1957, ff. 142-143.

⁴ Em. Condurachi, “Le colloque international de Sinaia sur les civilisations Balkaniques (8-14 juillet 1962)”, *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, tome I, no. 1-2, 1963, pp. 170.

As many authors remarked, these projects aimed at re-conceptualizing the region on the basis of both a common heritage and on the dominant role of Romanians in this area. Historian Al. Zub acknowledged the political dimension of Iorga's initiative in the sense of "the idea to diminish national tensions by becoming conscious of belonging to a common civilization, which roots required thorough study and by emphasizing common interests able to generate solidarity."⁵

Nevertheless, as early as 1911, in his speech of acceptance in the Academy, Iorga remarked that:

We have a national civilization to strengthen, nourishing it with all that we have preserved as monuments, traditions, and memories, while keeping it close to those trends of healthy renewal in European culture. This civilization will become for us, a people that regained, by economic and political justice, an endangered solidarity, an instrument of spiritual dominion [*domnie spirituală*] in the East we are and it should be known that we are. An institute for Southeastern Europe here in Bucharest, well organized and properly managed, would constitute by any scientific standard the first declaration of our rights⁶

It should not be forgotten that the first institute appeared in the aftermath of the Bucharest peace congress in 1913 (as a consequence of the two Balkan wars) among which participants Iorga was. Moreover, this initiative corresponded to Iorga's vision of a history written by the "small people". In 1929, he stated that:

We don't have a single reason to continue to accept humanity's history as it has been written by great peoples in divergent manner and form, based on claims that no method accepts. In using our geographical existence, as well as the syntheses that had been imposed upon us, we must establish the main lines and cardinal points for the development of the world that are ignored or missed by others.⁷

Along similar lines, Victor Papacostea considered that "the ethnic basis of the Balkan peoples was relatively unitary containing, to various degrees, the same elements (Thracian-Illyric, Roman, Greek, Slav, Turkish)." This gave them the outlook of a "human family, unique in its own way" with obvious common features despite undeniable specific differences in mentality and culture.⁸ In a letter from 1959 to Anthanasie Joja, then minister of Education, Papacostea

⁵ Zub, *De la istorie critică...*, p. 236.

⁶ „Două concepții istorice”, Cuvântare de intrare in Academia Română (17 mai 1911) in Iorga, *Generalități...*, p. 94.

⁷ Hans-Christian Maner, „Noțiunea de Europa din perspectiva științei istorice românești”, in Neumann și Heinen (eds.), *Istoria României prin concept...* pp. 251-252.

⁸ Nicolae-Șerban Tanașoca, *Balkanologie și politică în România secolului XX. Victor Papacostea în documente din arhivele Securității și arhiva personală* (București: Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2010), p. 16.

characterized the activity of his institute as “a laboratory where we studied, with equal interest, all the factors of which fusion generated, after many centuries of cohabitation, one people speaking different languages.” In the same document, Papacostea did admit, regarding Iorga’s Institute of Southeastern European Studies, that, because of the theory of “substratums” (first advocated by Bogdan P Hașdeu), this initiative was perceived sometimes as a means of advancing Romanian nationalism in the region.⁹ Indeed, as we have seen with Pârvan’s reading of the role of Geto-Dacians or with Iorga’s perception of Eastern Romanity, historians during the inter-war period more often than not ended up in claiming if not supremacy but primacy in the Balkans for the Romanians. Unsurprisingly, under communism, the new-old institute will provoke similar statements on the part of the historical front. For example, C. Daicoviciu, one of the foremost actors in the historical front, quoted approvingly Iorga, in his contribution in the special issue of *Studii* commemorating twenty-five years since the latter’s assassination, who argued that “in final analysis, there is *only one* nation at the basis of the *entire* oriental Romanity: the Geto-Dacians.”¹⁰ [my emphasis]

All things considered, it should be also said that the resurgence of Southeastern European studies (‘Balkanology’, Byzantology, Ottoman studies, modern history of the Balkans) was also part and parcel of the historical front’s turn toward universal history by mid-sixties. Again, the fundamental influence was Iorga. The latter considered that “a people’s history is fixed and preserved in the normal environment of human universality [...] History is a whole. Any national history is surrounded and crossed by any other historical developments. From them start continuous influences – from the smallest to the largest.”¹¹ After his trip of documentation in the Soviet Union, M Berza, the future director of the Institute for Southeastern European Studies and

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 169-170.

¹⁰ C. Daicoviciu, „Nicolae Iorga și autohtonii”, in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, „25 de ani de la moartea lui Nicolae Iorga”, nr.5, anul XVIII, 1965, p. 1229.

¹¹ „Două concepții istorice”, in Iorga, *Generalități...*, p. 162.

former assistant of Iorga, declared, following his mentor, that “any local history must situate itself in the context of a larger historical development, which, to an extensive degree conditions and explains it, without in any way decreasing the founding creative contribution of the internal factor.” Furthermore, according to him,

the study of the history of the Motherland has to universalize itself to a greater degree. This is necessary also for the purpose of increasing the prestige of our science abroad. We must not forget that we have a tradition from this point of view, which must be taken further. We ought to give it a novel sense and new vigor. N. Iorga’s name, its founder, is very often mentioned during international conferences.¹²

Another prominent figure of the historical front, A. Oțetea, agreed with his colleague, stating that “the fundamental idea of Nicolae Iorga’s historical thought, the integration of Romanian history in universal history, is a guiding principle also applied in the treatise *History of Romania*.”¹³ Such remark signaled a defining practice of mid to late sixties: on the one hand, history-production was legitimized retroactively by recourse to pre-communist epistemic founding-fathers; on the other hand, this process also indicated the level of un-referenced integration of historiographical traditions in historical writing produced from 1958 to 1964 [e.g., see my analysis of national history treatise’s treatment of Michel the Brave or of the process of ethnogenesis].

By 1965, the historical front recuperated N Iorga’s concept of “historiology”, which was, according to its creator, based on “the absolute unity of human life across space and time” that relied on revealing historical integrality by means of “analogy, parallelism intuition, reproductive fantasy, and divination.”¹⁴ According to Iorga’s preface to *Materials for a Human Historiology*, an unfinished manuscript, historiology considered that

the facts *entered alive in the structure* of creation that [one] is putting together. These characteristic elements join together then in a *dynamic construction*. It is mainly about the *tragedy of this human kin (neam)* in which, if there are *scenes that illustrate (expun)*, there are *acts that*

¹² M. Berza, „Cercetările de istorie universală în URSS”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 5, an XV, 1962, p.1250 and p.1263.

¹³ Andrei Oțetea, „N. Iorga – Istoric al Românilor”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 5, an XV, 1962, pp. 1223.

¹⁴ Iorga *apud* Al Elian, „Nicolae Iorga și istoria universală”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 5, an XV, 1962, pp. 1261-1274.

further carry on the *conflict*. Around the main actors there are others who don't speak, because there is no point in them doing so, but even those who speak....do it only when, by what they say and do, take us further."¹⁵ [original emphasis]

In the introduction of the same volume, he concluded that “the fundamental difference is between the history that tells everything that it knows, only for the purpose of telling it, and historiology which stops to comment only the characteristic, expressive fact.”¹⁶ Of the rather cryptic formulations on this concept by Iorga, what seemed to remain was the principle of grand trajectories of historical development in universal history, the principle of comparativity, and, dear to the communist regime, an underlining humanism of the scientific method¹⁷. Additionally, and maybe the most important idea, with which I will deal with later, because of its fundamental impact on the reading of the Nation in history, was the associated concept of “permanences” [*permanențe*] - geography, idea, and race. The crucial lesson that Iorga left to his colleagues was that, indeed national history was inextricably integrated into the universal one, but the latter could be understood only by means of using the former as guide and filter.¹⁸ Such vision

¹⁵ “Prefață” in Nicolae Iorga, *Materiale pentru o istoriologie umană*, fragmente inedite publicate de Liliana N. Iorga, cuvânt înainte de D. M. Pippidi (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1968), pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ „Alte deslușiri metodologice”, in Iorga, *Materiale pentru ...*, p. 16.

¹⁷ For example, Al. Elian concluded his article with the statement “man is at the center of Iorga’s meditations and preoccupations [*solicitudinii*]. This is the keystone to his conceptions of the world and of life.” Elian, “Nicolae Iorga și istoria universală”, *Ibidem*, p. 1247.

¹⁸ An account of a scientific session of the History Department of Bucharest University program (*catedra*) of universal history in March 1963 shows the rather national-centric understanding of universal history. Among the research tasks set up by those present were: “the study of neighboring countries, with a focus on relations and connections established across centuries; the study of the relations between Romania and the main imperialist countries. These studies can constitute original contributions to the research on imperialism; the research of revolutionary exchanges between Romania and neighboring countries until 1917; the study of the antifascist movement for the liberation of Southeastern European countries and the contribution of the Romanian antifascist movement and Romanian antifascists to the antifascist movements in other countries; the study of the contribution of socialist Romania to the resolution of contemporary problems (economic, political, and cultural); countering various conceptions of reactionary historiography.” See C. Bușe, „Ședința catedrei de istorie universală a Facultății de istorie din București”, in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 3, an XVI, 1963, p. 706. Among those present there were A. Oțetea, M. Berza, V. Maciu, Gh. Ștefan, even Iorga’s secretary Valeria Costăchel. However, the authors of the memorandum were N. Lupu, D. Almaș, and Radu Manolescu. All three of them were specialists on modern or contemporary history; D. Almaș will figure prominently in the later years as the main popularizer of the communist Pantheon of the great men of the Romanian Nation across history in his three volume *Historical Tales* (*povestiri istorice*) written for children and pupils. Lucian Boia situates these *Tales* in N. Ceaușescu’s cult of personality. See Boia, *History and Myth...*, p. 223. At the same time, Romanian literary critic, Angelo Mitchievici, argued that the *Tales* constructed the prototypical New Romanian fed by historical resentment for “he was always reminded [by Almaș’ *Tales*] that the Turks, Poles, Hungarians, Germans and pretty much everybody else were potential enemies, that his dignity can be gained in war-like manner and that any slaughter if it is for the Nation’s cause is justified.

therefore contained in its very code the specter of exceptionalism, to which Iorga himself fell pray many a times, as did his fellow historians under communism.

The main principle that appeared from the transposition of the tradition of Southeastern European studies into the historical front was that of synthesis. Following Iorga, Romanian historians agreed that the country and the Nation were placed *at the center* of a space of congruence between East and West, Orient and Occident. The resulting *topos* was that of “a small people situated in a place favorable to syntheses that harmonized according to its own soul’s instincts and needs all borrowed elements.”¹⁹ According to C. Daicoviciu, the cardinal ideas of Iorga’s work, those of *unity* and *synthesis*, allowed for an extension of historical inquiry to the level of a Balkan and Southeastern European history.²⁰ Furthermore, in an article introducing to the Romanian public, in 1963, the International Association for Southeastern European Studies (IASEES), Em. Condurachi and Virgil Căndea (the general secretary of the Romanian Committee for Southeastern European Studies) announced that IASEES main purpose was “to shed light on millennia of existent cultural relations between them [ancient civilizations], to revitalize a common past of exchange of material and spiritual goods between the inhabitants of a region that always served as a bridge between the West and the East.”²¹ Iorga’s idea of the “New Byzantium” was resurrected: it represented the fundamental civilizational trait of Southeastern Europe that appeared because of the West-East synthesis. According to Eugen Stănescu, the “Byzantine idea” also expressed the reality of political-cultural solidarity and interaction at the time when tremendous, common enemies attacked and subjugated the Balkan

This man of resentment was brought up with a complex of superiority doubled by and interchangeable with one of inferiority...” Almaş was also one of the co-authors of ninth grade Romanian history textbook in 1969. See Angelo Mitchievici, “Poveşti, legende, utopii. Dumitru Almaş la şcoala istoriei”, in Paul Cernat, Ion Manolescu, Angelo Mitchievici, Ioan Stanomir, *Explorări în comunismul românesc*, vol. II (Bucureşti: Polirom, 2005) p. 367.

¹⁹ A. Oţetea, „Nicolae Iorga...”, *Ibidem*, p. 1222.

²⁰ C. Daicoviciu, „Nicolae Iorga...”, *Ibidem*.

²¹ Em. Condurachi et Virgil Căndea, “Les débuts de l’AIESEE, ouvre de comprehension et d’entente mutuelle par la science”, *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, tome I, no. 3-4, 1963, pp. 573-577.

peoples. The symbolic geography presupposed by the motif of the Byzantium, via the Balkans, was the primary and foundational premise of the principle of Southeastern European interpenetration, exchange, and communality.²²

The ultimate result of the project of Southeastern European studies and its underlying idea, both before and during communism, was the creation of a new geopolitical unit. It was founded upon a political-epistemic discourse of self-determination and originality. An article from 1944 by V Papacostea excellently summarized the ethos of such an alternative space:

Born at the meeting point between two worlds, the Romanian people succeeded, despite its small numbers, to valiantly preserve its personality. Between two Europes – which ideologies and material interests have clashed for millennia – the Romanian people has shown since ancestral times great understanding of both, isolating their irreducible antinomies, while often being able to reconcile them, as it is obvious from the synthesis that defines the Romanians' artistic and spiritual creations. But it never allowed itself to be annexed as a periphery by neither Europes.²³

The cultural-epistemic construct of Southeastern Europe presupposed and nourished some of the main motifs of history-production under communism: “the respect for human personality, the love for freedom, the sense of balance as a basis for democracy, an equalitarian and tolerant spirit, or cultural comprehension.”²⁴ The historiographically constructed utopias from the inter-war period designed to counteract the image of the Balkans as the “powder keg of Europe” and to by-pass great powers' foreign policy overlapped with those that resulted from the communist regime's need to emancipate itself from the West-East divide. As early as 1962, the congresses of

²² See Eugen Stănescu's and Emil Condurachi's interventions at the International Congress of Byzantine studies in Ohrid (September 1961) in „Congresul internațional de studii bizantine de la Ohrida – Septembrie 1961”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 2, an XV, 1962, pp. 187-192.

²³ This piece was originally meant for a new review entitled *Le monde balkanique*, which never came to life. The article will be published by Cornelia Papacostea-Danielopolu (the historian's daughter) and Nicolae-Șerban Tanașoca in *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, tome XXII, no. 3, 1984, pp. 229-232. See Tanașoca, *Balkanologie și politică...*, p. 197.

²⁴ Zub, *Istorie și istorici...*, p. 207. This book was published at the end of the communist regime in Romania. As a sign of the extraordinary wave of inter-war rehabilitations at the time, it is interesting to note that Zub supports his interpretation of the Southeastern European project with a quote from Al. Randa, none other than Horia Sima's (the leader of the Iron Guard after Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's assassination) diplomatic attaché in Berlin, in the latter's government created in Vienna toward the end of the Second World War. According to Randa, as quoted by Zub, „Southeastern Europe is a unity vertebrated by the Balkans and centered on the Carpathian-Danubian space.” The encoding of geopolitical dominance is obvious.

Southeastern European studies were opportunities to boast “the Romanian people’s accomplishments during his struggle and labor in the years of popular power.” These international events were occasions to demonstrate “the international prestige enjoyed by Romania today.” This concerned “the progress of Romanian science in various and numerous fields, as well as the political and economic successes that transformed our country from a backward, agrarian one into a continuously developing country with a powerful industry that is currently an element of authority in international politics.”²⁵ The narrative of exceptional ability, accomplishment, and relevance were intrinsically linked to the project of Southeastern Europe studies.

3. The Institute for Romanian-Soviet Studies

Another chronology relevant for the genealogy of the shifting attitudes of the communist regime both domestically, regarding the politics of science, and internationally, in relation to the Moscow center, is that of the fate of the IRSS. This institute was created in 1947; by 1950 it was attached to the RPR Academy. As its name indicates, it was one of the vehicles of exporting Soviet science and of popularizing Marxism-Leninism in Romania. Its main activities were the translation of Soviet academic journals and academic books into Romanian and the organization of conferences on the Soviet Union’s progress in the scientific front. However, by 1956, the DPC reports on its activity noted that IRSS had focused mainly on responsibilities of documentation, overlooking those of research. At the same time, the DPC aimed at a synchronization between the IRSS’s products and the domestic developments in science. To make matters worse, the IRSS’ activity often overlapped with institutions of similar profile, such as the Romanian-

²⁵ Em. Condurachi și Eugen Stănescu, „Conferința Internațională de Studii Sud-Est Europene de la München (noiembrie 1962)”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 2, an XVI, 1963, pp.449.

Russian Museum, the Lenin-Stalin Museum, “Cartea Rusa” publishing house, or even the “Maxim Gorki” institute. Moreover, as shown in the previous chapters, in the second half of the fifties, both within the Academy and in party circles there was an increasing tendency toward expanding the scope of international exchange, beyond the Soviet-Romanian, core-periphery arithmetic of epistemic import.²⁶

Between 1956 and 1957, the DPC in collaboration with the Presidium of the Academy advanced a project for IRSS’ reform. A section of it, of smaller scale (15 to 20 positions), was created within the Academy and its main objective was that of researching the Romanian-Soviet scientific relations. The other part, the one focused on documentation and publication of Soviet scholarly output was supposed to be merged into a special institute for scientific information that encompassed epistemic production *across* the world.²⁷ The latter office will be created only in the mid-sixties as the Center for Scientific Documentation (CSD). It had two sections: for natural sciences and social sciences. It produced a monthly bulletin that contained summaries of articles published in academic journals. One series was in Russian, the other in English. By 1965, the first appeared up to the eleventh issues, while the second up to the sixth (because of difficulties in translation). Around the same time, the CSD had 152 employees, of which 57 were specialists on the various fields covered by the Center.²⁸

The ultimate assimilation of the IRSS’ sections either in various Academy institutes (in our case, the universal history section of the History Institute in Bucharest) or in the CSD was

²⁶ For the IRSS’ activities before 1956 see „Scurtă informare privind activitatea Academiei RPR în anul 1953 și planul pe anul 1954”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.3/1954, f.51. “Dare de seamă asupra activității științifice a Academiei RPR pe anul 1954”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.24/1955, f. 49, „Notă informativă privind unele aspecte ale activității Academiei RPR”, 28 aprilie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.64/1955, f. 10.

²⁷ „Referat cu privire la activitatea Institutului de Studii Romano-Sovietic al Academiei RPR”, 23 aprilie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.17/1956, f. 65.

²⁸ „Informare cu privire la activitatea Centrului de Documentare științifică al Academiei RPR”, 15 februarie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, ff. 57-62.

anticipated by its gradual institutional decline. For example, at the end of 1958, the Academy's publishing house was granted two locations that used to belong to the IRSS.²⁹ By 1963, the same year when the Institute for Southeastern European Studies was founded, the DPC deemed the IRSS' activity "utterly unsatisfactory considering the material basis upon which it functions." The DPC basically reached the conclusion that the IRSS was not worth the money it got and that it did not respond to the contemporary needs of the scientific front. The IRSS, in order to fulfill its publication quota, "undiscriminately printed material, regardless of its utility, and articles that are of no interest for domestic academic research." The conclusion of the DPC report was blunt and unambiguous:

taking into account the fact that the rhythm and the proportions of current scientific research in the world require the multilateral organization of scholarly documentation, we propose the creation of a Center for Scientific Documentation affiliated to the RPR Academy. This body will take over the IRSS' task for academic information. It will also give scientists the possibility to consult materials coming *both* from socialist and capitalist countries.³⁰

In 1963, all of the structures created with the purpose of exporting and publicizing in Romania the progresses and novelties of Soviet science and culture, including the IRSS, were either disbanded or merged into larger national structures. As we shall see below, this decision was part and parcel of a process of consolidating the national scientific front in the context of pressures from the Moscow center for further scientific and cultural intra-bloc integration. It was also a by-product of the shifting interest of the RWP in matters of epistemic import. Gheorghiu-Dej's speech at the Bucharest party organization in February 1964 clearly expressed this modified geographic interest in the foreign policy of expert knowledge and cultural exchange:

As experience clearly demonstrated, the shortest and most efficient path to endowing our industry with new technology is the assimilation of machines and tools on the basis of acquiring technical documentation and licenses of production for the most developed types existent in the world. It is senseless to strive for 'originality by any means' [...] We will avoid wasting time, energy, and

²⁹ „Informare cu privire la unele probleme ale Editurii Academiei RPR”, 8 decembrie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.3/1958, ff. 208-205.

³⁰ „Referat privind reprofilarea Institutului de studii româno-sovietic”, 9 septembrie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.9/1963, ff. 21-26.

money in order to invent things that have been already invented, in order to seek for solutions to problems that have been already solved. [Furthermore,] we must do everything necessary so that in the future the great works of other literatures will much wider available to our readers [...] we give the masses of readers the treasures of universal culture, thus continuously broadening their tastes and horizons.³¹

1. The International Association for the Study of Southeastern European Studies

Before pursuing the topic of socialist international integration in science, I would like to return to the Institute for Southeastern European Studies (ISEES). The chronology of its re-founding was the mirror-image of the IRSS's demise. The gestation period of the ISEES follows two directions. A more informal one that is related to Victor Papacostea's efforts to found an Institute of Balkan studies. And a more official and visible one that can be traced to the succession of international conference that Romanian historians participated in (as both speakers and organizers) and which led to the creation of the IASEES (1963). Benefiting from the backing of important members of the Academy, i.e., officials of the scientific field, such the linguists Alexandru Rosetti and Iorgu Iordan, sociologist Mihail Ralea, historians A. Oțetea and M. Berza, Papacostea began a campaign of petitions to the highest levels of higher-education and research in communist Romania, pleading for the re-founding of an Institute for Balkan Studies (IBS). Before his untimely death in 1962, he did manage to obtain promises for the re-starting of the academic review *Balcania*, a journal of which editor-in-chief he used to be before 1947. Nevertheless, Papacostea was seen with distrust, particularly by the Securitate, being identified as a potentially "destabilizing element". In one of the documents found by historian Nicolae-Șerban Tanașoca, a Securitate collaborator who was member of the Academy himself [unnamed by the author], characterized Papacostea's project as follows:

[in the past] The Institute for Balkan Studies and Research and *Balcania* approached inter-Balkan relations from a philosophical, historical, and political conception that was anti-scientific and anti-

³¹ "Cuvântarea tovarășului Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej la conferința organizației de partid a orașului București", *Scînteia*, nr. 6169, 16 februarie 1964.

Marxist. It was not focused on establishing historical truth but it promoted the idea of a Balkan federation. [...] This note wishes to point to the fact that one needs to approach with extreme ideological vigilance the materials that will be published in *Balcania* and the works that will be elaborated by the future IBS in order to avoid the resurgence of these old viewpoints. [...] The scientific tasks of studying Balkan problems cannot be dis-attached, not for a single moment, from political-ideological requirements of our country's struggle; the former must always be subordinated to the latter.

In his closing remarks, the informer advised that the party organs intervened in order to make sure that Papacostea's project, which was seen as rather unclear, confused, and slippery, would be guided into a direction that ensured that both the journal and the institute served the goals of the regime's politics of science and foreign diplomacy.³²

Indeed, Papacostea argued at the end of the Second World War that the national solution of the Versailles system failed in the Balkans and proposed a federation. Considering that around the same time Tito advocated the idea of a communist federation in the Balkans (1945-1948), the federative principle was approached with deep suspicion by the RWP in the context of its turn to self-centeredness and autochthonousness under pressure from the Soviet hegemon. The very idea of a non-national solution in the Balkans ran counter with the party line. And, unsurprisingly, the RWP and Romanian historians followed a different direction – the Southeastern European idea, which simultaneously gave regional weight to the RWP's foreign affairs and scientific policies and allowed the continuation of a nationalist line in the historical narrative. The differences of perception over the role of such a project of an alternative geography of science was also proved by the insertion of topics of modern and contemporary history on the academic agenda of the institute. One of the documents found by Nicolae-Șerban Tanașoca in Papacostea's Securitate file made the following two recommendations: a) following the model of the Soviet Academy's institutes, experts in problems of contemporary history should be added to group of

³² Tanașoca, *Balcanologie și politică...*, pp. 84-86. The Securitate documents also contain statements by V. Papacostea in which he, just like S. Dragomir, I Nestor, C. C. Giurescu, Gh. Zane, and other historians recuperated after 1955, attempted to prove that he internalized the values of the communist regime, that he is "reformed". Moreover, one of his referents, Emil Petrovici, tried to show that he had been favorable to the regime as early as 1945.

archeologists, historians, or linguists already proposed; b) there had to be a correct combination between old cadres (i.e., “have-beens”) and young specialists who were party members.³³ As the proceedings of the First Congress of Balkan Studies showed, various contemporary topics were picked up, such as the situation after the First World War, the Balkan Alliance, the antifascist movement, etc. It should not be forgotten that the personality of Nicolae Titulescu already figured prominently in most of historical and political discourse on the contemporary history of Southeastern Europe. On the long run, however, contemporary history did not hold a dominant position in the publication plans of ISEES’s journal *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*.

The first official, international contacts regarding the possibility of creating ISEES and IASEES, under the tutelage of UNESCO, were established at the latter’s session in 1960 in Paris. In 1961, these initial steps were taken further during the proceedings of the International Congress of Byzantine Studies at Ohrid (Yugoslavia). The group of historians who participated at this event will constitute the core of those who coordinated the Southeastern European studies project. All of them represented the top echelons of the historical front, already deeply involved in the most important historiographical endeavors under the communist regime: Em Condurachi, E. Stănescu, D. M. Pippidi. Later M. Berza and V Cârdea will join this group. The next stage on the path to founding the ISEES was the International Colloquium on Balkan Civilizations that took place in Sinaia (July 1962). The event was opened by the RPR Academy, Athanasie Joja, who was also President of the Romanian Commission for UNESCO. N. Bammate delivered a welcome address as representative of the UNESCO’s general director. The conference had two main themes: unity and diversity among Balkan civilizations; and, the contribution of the Balkan world between Orient and Occident. At the end, the participants decided to create a provisional committee that would coordinate efforts to institutionalize international cooperation on Balkan

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

studies. Its Romanian members were T. Vianu (who was general secretary of UNESCO National Commission) and Em Condurachi (who before 1947 was Papacostea's deputy at *Balcania* and at the IBSR). Vianu, a member of the Romanian Academy, was also the president of this provisional committee. Earlier that summer, the Academy's Section of Historical Sciences decided to create the RPR's Association for Byzantine Studies. Its honorary director was N Bănescu, none other than one of the former directors of Iorga's Institute for Southeastern European Studies. The Association's president was V Grecu³⁴, vice-presidents M Berza, Em. Condurachi, and Al. Elian, and general secretary was E. Stănescu.³⁵ Later that year, a Romanian delegation, led by Constantin Daicoviciu, the president of Academy's Section of Historical Sciences, participated at the International Conference of Southeastern European Studies in Munich (November 1962). An interesting side-note: the vice-president of the RPR's State Bank, economist Emeric Deutsch was also present. Again, the principle of international collaboration on this specific area studies was emphasized. In quick succession, the gathering in Munich was followed, in April 1963, by the meeting in Athens of the Committee of the International Association for Byzantine Studies. Romania was represented by Em. Condurachi and E. Stănescu.³⁶

Ultimately, the International Association for Southeastern European Studies was created in April 1963. The same year, the ISEES was founded in Romania. Its director was M. Berza. The IASEES Secretariat was located at the same address with the IASEES. The latter was funded

³⁴ Until 1938, Vasile Grecu taught Southeastern European and Byzantine studies at the Cernăuți University. He will then come to Bucharest to replace Demosthene Russo, the mentor of the New School historians. Grecu made a name for himself under communism by coordinating the publication of early modern legal codices. He was a standing member of the Romanian Academy since 1936. In 1971, Grecu was the chair of the International Congress of Byzantine Studies that was organized in Bucharest.

³⁵ „Constituirea Asociației de Studii Bizantine din RPR”, in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 5, an XV, 1962, pp. 1007-1008.

³⁶ Em. Condurachi and E. Stănescu, „Reuniunea Comitetului Asociației internaționale de studii bizantine (Atena – 16-18 aprilie 1963)”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 3, an XVI, 1963, pp. 703-706.

by UNESCO and by the International Council for human and philosophical sciences, while the Secretariat by the RPR Academy.³⁷ Under the circumstances, the Romanian side had achieved a central role in this international project, confirming the historical front's, party endorsed, orientation toward an alternative geographical space that reinforced the prestige and regional influence of the regime and of the local epistemic community. As recognition of V Papacostea's contribution to the creation of the ISEES, his name appear on the editorial board of the *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*. He will also officially remain among the institute's founding fathers, along with N Iorga and V Pârvan.³⁸ The ISEES was fundamentally build on the principle of interdisciplinarity: “[the institute] will include in its area of study alongside research on history and culture, problems of linguistics and ethnography, but also those arising from the social structures of this region's peoples, their economic development and judicial system..”³⁹

Nevertheless, at the core of the international project of Southeastern European studies lay an inherent ambiguity. Since 1947, because of obvious reasons, no such collaboration existed either regionally or at the European level. At the same time, the new initiative coincided with a surge toward better crystallization of regime national identities throughout the Balkans. Under the circumstances, discourses of similarity coexisted, and often times were subordinated, to those of particularity. Em Condurachi, at the 1962 Sinaia colloquium, noted this tension, but emphasized that the condition of communality constituted the underlying feature of the region's history:

The historical studies of the last 15 years, in our country as well as in others, have above all underlined the opposing characteristics of our common traditions and neglected, forgotten even, those which for centuries have shown our peoples' unitary struggle and heritage. Therefore, the moment has arrived to submit to novel, calm, and profound analyses the present condition of the studies on the history of Southeast European culture and the perspectives of scientific

³⁷ Em. Condurachi and E. Stănescu, „Noi manifestări ale colaborării științifice sud-est europene”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, nr.3, anul XVII, 1964, pp. 626-628.

³⁸ See his obituary Mircea Voicana, “Victor Papacostea”, *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, tome I, no. 1-2, 1963, pp. 179-181.

³⁹ Avant-Propos”, *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, tome I, no. 1-2, 1963, pp. 5-6.

collaboration that contrary to disagreements of late did not cease to remain a *sine qua non* of our common progress.⁴⁰

However, the first Congress of Balkan Studies, which took place in Sofia in August 1966, showed that countries in the region found it difficult to cope with what Maria Todorova called in her classical study, the “in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitional character.”⁴¹ For example, in the case of Romania, historians had to deal with at least three challenges raised by this alternative geography: first, the country’s position in the region in the context of the Soviet bloc dynamics; second, its role as self-perceived “transmission belt” between the West and the East; third, the historically constructed national identity in the symbolic economy of Southeastern European peoples (the role of the autochthonous element and successive imperial legacies Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman). The Southeastern European studies project was a complex of two overlapping master-narratives: an essentializing one, which focused on the national to the expense of the regional that experienced a “discursive hardening” (E. Said) when the scholarly endeavor overlapped with the political objectives. And, it was also what I. Neumann labeled an “as if” story, which “stressed that different ethnic groups had “always” lived together peacefully and that a splitting up of the community along ethnic lines would be a break with ‘tradition’.”⁴² Indeed, at the foundation of the Southeastern European studies project laid the belief (formal for some, sincere for others) in the ability of those involved (individuals or countries) to transverse national identity bounded contexts:

Above the divergences or the differences engendered by the economic, political and social evolution of each people living in this region, a building block for Oriental Europe [*placă turnantă*], there are and will always be a multitude of traditions and common objectives that are part of our common past, that make us consider with confidence this necessity, the objective in itself, to live and work together.⁴³

⁴⁰ Em. Condurachi, “Le colloque international de Sinaia...”, *Ibidem*, p. 169.

⁴¹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 17-18 and pp. 57-58.

⁴² Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 215-216.

⁴³ Em. Condurachi, “Le colloque international de Sinaia...”, *Ibidem*, p. 171.

Among Romanian historians the tensions inherited from N. Iorga's initial understanding of Southeastern Europe played into the insecurities and thematic obsessions of an epistemic community that 'emancipated' itself professionally via re-gaining the right to write in a national key about the country's history. For example, C. Daicoviciu, attempting to assess the position of the autochthonous population in the region during ancient history, reached the following conclusion: "because of its high level of material and spiritual civilization which the Dacians had reached, Decebalus [one of their kings], the epitome of 'free barbarians', is more than a 'barbarian'. His position is that of 'a middle man between true barbarians and Greek-Roman culture' [this last phrase belongs to N. Iorga, n.a.]"⁴⁴ Such statement brings together several levels of symbolic appropriation: the self-perception of being at the crossroads of civilizational contacts; the resulting exceptionality of in-betweenness; and, the incurring regional supremacy.

4. The First International Congress of Balkan Studies

The First Congress of Balkan Studies in 1966 was the stage where the contradictions of the Southeastern European studies project came to the fore. According to Bulgarian historian Ivan Elenkov, the organizational concept of the congress as set up by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party was a synthesis of scholarly and political tasks:

- a) the congress must confirm the practice of the BCP policy of peaceful understanding; b) it must present Bulgaria well as the host of the initiative; c) Bulgarian scholars must take the initiative in this new scientific field so that Bulgaria will become one of the major centers of world Balkan Studies; d) a dominant position of Marxist thought must be secured at the congress and vestiges of the past and nationalist relapses must not be allowed to be used by the imperialist agents, and e) the congress must establish contacts as a base for further cooperation.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ C. Daicoviciu, „Nicolae Iorga și autohtonii”, *Ibidem*, pp. 1231.

⁴⁵ Ivan Elenkov, "The Science of History In Bulgaria in the Age of Socialism: The Problematic Mapping of its Institutional Boundaries", *CAS Working Papers Series* (Sofia: Center for Advanced Studies, 2007). The section quoted is part of an earlier, larger version of the article that cannot be found in the published version.

Just like in the case of Romania, in Bulgaria, the project of Balkan cooperation on the realm of historical studies⁴⁶ was structured according to the regime's foreign policy, in reference to its self-understood ideological mission, and on the basis of scientific prestige. The primary political function of the project was exemplified by the Bulgarian organizers decision to mediate between the Romanian and Soviet delegations. According to Elenkov, "the negotiations between the Romanian and the Soviet historians were preceded by preliminary talks at the highest party and state level between Todor Zhivkov [the leader of the BCP] and Nicolae Ceaușescu." As consequence, "the passages in V. Maciu's report for the plenary session, which were regarded as anti-Bulgarian and anti-Soviet and were potentially very likely to prompt a series of anti-Soviet statements, would be edited out."⁴⁷ The common ground reached by the three parties did not stop the Romanian delegation at the Congress to report on its return home to the DPC that "the Soviet delegation's contribution was rather shallow, some of their historians did not present the papers or presentations they previously announced, and their participation at the discussions was below expectations. The Soviets gave us the impression of holding serious reservations."⁴⁸ Domestic,

⁴⁶ The founder of the concept of Balkan Studies in Bulgaria was N. Todorov, Maria Todorova's father. In 1964, he created the Institute of Balkan Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Science. According to Elenkov, Todorov's main principle, resembling that of his Romanian counterparts, was that "Balkan Studies make up a complex science studying the Balkan community in its socioeconomic, political and cultural relations and the mutual influence of these relations on one another; this is the first well-reasoned concept of interdisciplinary studies in Bulgarian historiography. However, the operational context for this concept closely associated Balkan Studies with topical issues in Bulgarian foreign policy." See Elenkov, "The Science of History...", p. 18. Between 1970 and 1972, N Todorov merged his political and academic responsibilities and interest, as he became director of the Institute for Foreign Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. From 1977 to 1987 he was a member of the presidium of the Fatherland Front, the umbrella organization that brought together a whole range of social organizations under the control of the Communist party. He was twice elected a candidate member of the central committee, in 1981 and in 1986. From 1979 to 1982 he was general secretary of UNESCO's International Information Centre on Balkan History, which was created in Sofia in the aftermath of the 1966 Congress. Similarly to the IASEES Secretariat in Bucharest, it was financed by both UNESCO and the Bulgarian Academy. For more details see his obituary in *The Sunday Times*, October 2, 2003 (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article1100971.ece>).

⁴⁷ *Idem*.

⁴⁸ „Notă cu privire la unele manifestări științifice internaționale din domeniul științelor sociale și umanistice la care au participat oameni de știință români”, 19 septembrie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no. 9/1966, f. 33. By mid-1960s, the DPC went to great lengths to ensure that scholars, particularly those from the social sciences, provided reports about their involvement in international academic events. Of course, they were also supposed to submit way ahead of departure outlines, if not the whole text, of their contributions at these events. Upon returning home, their reports, if they raised significant problems, could be discussed in special sessions of the respective higher-education and research institutions. See, „Referat privind manifestările științifice cu participare

regional, and international clashing agendas fundamentally obstructed and hindered the Southeastern European studies project. They functioned as permanent pressures that fixed the “as if” stories about the Balkan, hindering the potential of these stories to transgress essentializing, conflicting identitarian narratives.

The Romanian delegation at the 1966 Congress of Balkan studies had forty-eight members and presented sixty-six reports, 11 percent of the total of reports at the event.⁴⁹ A sign of the Romanians’ central role in this project of international collaboration, four historians were members of the presidium of the Congress (C Daicoviciu, E Condurachi, M Berza, V Cârdea). At the opening session, Daicoviciu was the third speaker, after Bulgarian communist leader Teodor Jivkov and Rene Maheu, UNESCO’s general director. Nevertheless, the report to the DCP of the delegation maintained that its main contribution at the event was “obtaining new adhesions to the points of view of Romanian historiography. Significant in this case is the fact that some authors, confronted with the scientific arguments of the Romanians, renounced their opinions regarding our country which were in contradiction with historical truth.”⁵⁰ The militantly national tone characterized all accounts made by Romanian historians, both internally and publicly, about various international academic events they took part in from early sixties onwards. On the one hand, this approach was expressive of the resurgence of national history on the historical front. On the other hand, it was the result of the epistemic community’s adjustment to the party lingo and priorities in the realm of both foreign policy and planned science. The scholarly proselytism for the national cause, complemented by the constant boasting of the

internațională organizate de Academia RPR și participarea oamenilor de știință români la diferite manifestări științifice internaționale”, 3 august, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.34/1965, ff. 1-11.

⁴⁹ The balance sheet of the Romanian delegation at the Congress was of one report, seven co-reports, fifty-eight presentations, and over one hundred interventions during the discussion. Another interesting development, resonating with internal changes taking place in the domestic system of planned science, was the inclusion in the delegation of a significant number of young researchers that accompanied the doyens of the historical front.

⁵⁰ „Notă cu privire la unele manifestări științifice internaționale...”, *ibidem*, ff. 16-18.

accomplishments of the communist regime, was a means of extolling *the utility* of history as science. It was happening at a time when the RWP/RCP emphasized more and more the connection between fundamental research and its practical applications.

The main topics analyzed by the members of the Romanian delegation were:

The role of the Dacians and of the other peoples in the Southeastern European history, the problem of the area of the formation the Romanian language and people, the movements of national liberation in the Balkans and on Romania's territory; the working-class and social-democratic movement in Romania and its relations with the working-class movement in the Balkans; the development of Romanian culture and the cultural relations with other peoples; the common traits of the popular culture of Southeastern European peoples; regional political alliances (the Small Entente and the Balkan Alliance); the political and diplomatic relations at the beginning and during the Second World War: the antifascist resistance: and, some of the problems posed by present economic development in Southeastern European countries⁵¹

With very few exceptions the listed topics represented pretexts for talking about national history, rather than pursuing genuine comparative approaches about common experiences in the Balkans. This was an expression of the parochialism that was re-developing in Romanian historiography at the beginning of the sixties, as both its prestige and administrative standing was based on the rekindling of the “national idea” under Stalinism. In analyzing the constants of historical writing in Southeastern Europe, particularly the gradual moving away from the Ottoman legacy, Maria Todorova made a judicious observation:

In this effort the mutual enmity of Balkan historiographies, which developed into a passionate polemical tradition, very often overshadowed even the hostility against the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. At the same time, for all the stereotypes about virulent Balkan nationalism, most Balkan nationalisms are essentially defensive, and their intensity is the direct result of problems of unconsolidated nation-states and social identities in crisis. This nervousness about identity accounts, among others, for the unique preoccupation with ethnogenesis in the Balkans.⁵²

A brief analysis of some of the contending issues at Congress signaled out by the Romanian historians' report to the DPC confirms Todorova's thesis. For example, linguist Emil Petrovici argued that it was incorrect to consider that the “Balkan” features of the Romanian language came from the Thracian substratum. According to him (and in continuation to the point

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, ff. 27-28.

⁵² Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans...*, p. 183.

made in the first volume of *Tratatul Istoria Romîniei*), these were characteristics originating in “popular Latin”. Of course, such a point came to reinforce the image of Romania as a Latin island in the Orient. Another topic valiantly countered by Romanian historians was the immigrationist thesis, as they seemingly convinced of the contrary a Bulgarian historian, who claimed that Romanian shepherders had existed North of Danube, in the Carpathians, since ancient times, rather than simply moving there under pressure from Turks. But, instances of defending the national cause appeared also in relation to more recent history. N. Fotino, criticizing a Bulgarian colleague, defended the historical rights of Romanian over Dobruja in 1918. Also, E. Campus and D. Țuțu stood their ground in defending the activity of the Small Entente and the Balkan Alliance despite negative evaluations from other delegations.

Most likely to the satisfaction of the Romanian delegation (one must not forget that the RWP was already gathering a significant file on this subject, even raising it during its behind the scenes clashes with the CPSU), Stephen Fischer-Galați and John Campbell brought up the topic of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 and its secret clause that allowed the Soviet Union to invade half of Poland, the Baltic countries, Northern Bucovina, and Bessarabia. The report to the DPC made the following remark: “the Romanian delegation did not intervene in this controversy between American and Soviet historians.”⁵³ But the lesson had been already internalized. For example, in 1965, an article about “anti-Hitlerism” and Iorga’s role at the end of the 1930s listed, though arguably in an Aesopian manner, among the factors that led to Marshall Antonescu’s military dictatorship “Romania’s allocation to the German sphere of interest as prescribed by Great Powers agreements and the beginning of the gradual dismemberment of the country on the basis of various treaties.” According to the author this situation inevitably led in September

⁵³ „Notă cu privire la unele manifestări științifice internaționale...”, *Ibidem*, ff. 29-31

1940 to establishment of a “military fascist dictatorship.”⁵⁴ In more direct fashion, but for internal use only, a report about the Budapest conference “Danubian Europe from Munich to the end of the Second World War” (October 1966) contradicted the Soviet position at the event, according to which the government in Moscow “tried to warn the Germans dangers that came about the latter country’s policy of aggression”. The Romanian position was that “these statements are not confirmed by the secret clause of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression pact in August 23, 1939.”⁵⁵

At the end of the First International Congress of Balkan Studies, N. Todorov argued that the political goals of the event had been fulfilled “not by means of demonstrations or bare propaganda, but by means of the constructive power of science.”⁵⁶ This statement excellently summarized the ambiguities and inherent contradictions at the core of the project of Southeastern European studies: it was part and parcel of the policy of scientific, ideological, and political export of communist regimes, while it did pursue, based on an established tradition, comparative and interdisciplinary research. The epistemic premises of this project, themselves bearing the burden of parochialism, were secondary to the foreign offensive of the Romanian communist regime toward amassing prestige and confirming authenticity. Ultimately, Southeastern Europe proved to be more of an alternative geography for confirming an insecure systemic and national identity, rather than a space for alternative approaches to historical studies.⁵⁷ In the mid-sixties,

⁵⁴ Titu Georgescu, „Nicolae Iorga împotriva hitlerismului”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, „25 de ani de la moartea lui Nicolae Iorga”, nr.5, anul XVIII, 1965, pp. 1433.

⁵⁵ „Informare cu privire la Colocviul de istorie de la Budapesta”, 21 septembrie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, 15/1966, ff. 116.

⁵⁶ Elenkov, “The Science of History In Bulgaria...”

⁵⁷ This last aspect of the project of Southeastern European studies should not be dismissed though. As some authors have already shown for the Romanian case, the ISEES was a place of methodological and theoretical innovation. Among tohers, it was the venue through which the literature of Annals school (re-)entered in Romania. For example, a turning point for the dissemination of the Annales school agenda was the colloquium organized by Berza at Bucharest in 1969 when some of the most important members of the Annalesâ’ the third generation participated: Alphonse Dupront, George Duby, Pierre Chaunu, François Furet. See Silviu Hariton, “Beyond National History: The Reception of *Annales* in Romania”, conference paper presented at *Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in 19h and 20th-Century Europe*, NHIST Summer School, Kőszeg, Hungary, 30 June- 6 July

the most important initiative of international collaboration within this project was on the subject “Southeastern Europe and the Enlightenment”. It was coordinated by a special commission chaired by the M. Berza within the IASEE.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Romania, along with Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania did successfully appropriate the ‘Balkans’ as a symbolic area of formal (and sometimes substantial academically) cooperation for “the development of friendly relations and the improvement of the political climate in the region of Europe”, regardless of the type of social order.⁵⁹ By acquiring the ‘Balkans’ for self-characterization and mutual discovery, none of these countries was ‘balkanized’ (in Maria Todorova’s sense) during communism. In fact, throughout this period, as Todorova herself remarked, “the Balkans as a geopolitical notion and “Balkan” as a derogation were conspicuously absent from the vocabulary of Western journalists and politicians.”⁶⁰

5. Rejecting Central Europe

One alternative cultural-historical space that was rejected by the historical front in Romania was that of the former Habsburg Empire, more precisely its Austrian-Hungarian avatar. In mid-sixties, in the context of the attempts of strengthening Comecon (some of them initiatives came from the quarter of the communist parties of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary), a series of international conference advocated the viability of a federal solution for the former

2008. On the relationship between the Annals school and Romanian schools of history and sociology before and during communism see Henri H. Stahl, *Istoria și sociologia. Nicolae Iorga și Dimitrie Gusti* (Paris/Bucarest: Sociétés Européennes, 2000).

⁵⁸ In contrast, projects such as “Romanian-Russian literary relations” or “Literary and cultural relations between Romanians and Hungarians” fell apart as both ‘partner peoples’ increasingly became Others in both the political and historical discourse. „Informare asupra unor probleme privind colaborarea științifică a Academiei RPR cu instituții similare din țările socialiste (1959-1965)”, 31 mai, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, ff. 128-135.

⁵⁹ „Expunerea tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR la adunarea festivă cu prilejul aniversării a 45 de ani de la crearea Partidului Comunist Român”, 7 mai, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, 29/1966, f. 87.

⁶⁰ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans...*, p. 136.

dualist state, as contrasted with the Versailles receipt of unitary, self-proclaimed homogeneous nation-states. Considering that since the second half of the 1950s, the RWP decreed, in agreement with historians, that Transylvanian history was necessarily Romanian history and that the most important events happened pretty much in the same way and in a unified manner in all Romanian territories, the federative alternative of the Hapsburg Empire was deemed unacceptable. To make matters worse, one of the theses for the explanation of the unification of the Romanian Kingdom with Transylvania was the favorable impetus created by the revolutionary movement in Austria-Hungary (along of course with the Bolshevik October 1917 revolution).

Two additional factors were associated to this debate: the coordinator of the counter-campaign on the Romanian side was Miron Constantinescu, who, as already discussed, was directly connected to the communist party national line in history-production. The timeframe of this debate (1963-1968) corresponded with his political resurrection. It is safe to assume that his contribution to ‘defending the national cause’ helped him in re-gaining the trust of the party leaders. The second factor was that this debate, at least at a scholarly level, most likely contributed significantly to fact that the Romanian side lost out on the resurgence of Central Europe as a symbolic, cultural space opposed to the Soviet-controlled, undemocratic Eastern Europe. It was no coincidence, in my opinion, that on the Hungarian side, the historians involved in the debate of the mid-sixties (J. Szucs, G Ranki, and P. Hanak) went on to publish, in the 1980s, fundamental essays/articles on the features and specificities of Central Europe as a space of sublimation of the true European values.⁶¹

⁶¹ For example, Jenő Szűcs, “The Three Historic Regions of Europe: An outline,” *Acta Historica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 29 (2–4), 1983, 131–184 or Péter Hának, “Central Europe: A Historical Region in Modern Times: A Contribution to the Debate about the Regions of Europe,” George Schöpflin and Nancy Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1989, 57–69. In 1981, Gyorgy Ranki received the Hungarian Chair at the University of Indiana in Bloomington (program financed since 1980 by the Hungarian Academy). In April 1985, he organized at Indiana University a conference entitled “Hungary in European Civilization”.

Toward the middle of the seventh decade, as the Transylvania question appeared more often than not in inter-party interactions (see the transcript of November-December 1961 Plenum), the historical front and the DPC (along with the RWP/RCP leadership) increasingly got on the same page on the topic of the 1918 unification and the built-up to it (i.e., the Romanians' movement for political rights in the Austrian-Hungarian state⁶²). Internally, the bone of contention on this topic was the nature of the Romanian involvement in the First World War. From 1964 until 1968, the historical front was faced with the paradox of praising the 1918 unification while not being able to celebrate the national participation in the war along with the main political actors involved in the events. An example of how thorny this issue was: a volume about the Alba Iulia gathering in 1918 was in the editorial plan of the Political Publishing House since 1957.⁶³ It will finally be published in 1968 at the Centennial of the event.⁶⁴

The first significant moment of the debate took place in May 1964 at an international conference in Budapest on the demise of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. The Romanian delegation was made up of representatives of the highest echelons of the historical front: C. Daicoviciu, A. Oțetea, Șt. Pascu, M. Constantinescu, V. Cheresteșiu, L. Banyai, or N. Fotino (accompanied by other younger researchers). The Romanians were the only ones who sent their papers two weeks ahead to the organizers. Miron Constantinescu, by then head of modern history section of the Academy's History Institute in Bucharest and soon to become deputy minister of Education, presented the report "National Problems in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy". A. Oțetea presented a report on the international situation of the monarchy. There were Romanian interventions during the other sections of the conference: on the agrarian question, on the

⁶² For example see Miron Constantinescu și Georgeta Penelea, „Însemnările din închisoarea de la Seghedin ale doctorului Ioan Rațiu”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, nr.2, anul XVIII, 1965, pp. 353-362.

⁶³ „Stenograma ședinței de analiză a activității Editurii Politice din 22 februarie 1965”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.15/1965, f. 88.

⁶⁴ Ion Gheorghiu și Constantin Nuțu, *Adunarea națională de la Alba Iulia: 1 decembrie 1918* (București: Editura Politică, 1968).

development of financial capital, and on the issue of social-democracy and the working-class movement in the monarchy.

The general theses of the Romanian historians were: the double exploitation - national and economic; the political and cultural discrimination of Romanians; the fundamental and irreducible class antagonisms in the empire; the imperialist foreign policy of the empire which accelerated its unraveling; and, the rejection of the separation between historical and non-historical nations. The main conflict appeared when the director of the History Institute of the Hungarian Academy, Erik Molnar, gave an interview a day before the discussion on the national question, in which he declared that the participants agreed on the fact that the demise of the monarchy had not been a historical necessity and that it could have morphed into a federation. An official complaint was issued by the head of the Romanian delegation, C. Daicoviciu.

In the end, the Romanian historians claimed victory. The account of the conference in *Studii* formulated what would then become an axiom of domestic history-production: the dualist state was confronted by grievous political, economic, social, and national antagonisms that generated the historical process which led to the inevitable dissolution of the monarchy. Lenin was called upon as aide, for the author of the report, Șt. Pascu, invoked his formula “prison of peoples”. Of course, the Romanian presentations and interventions “were acclaimed by the majority of the participants, who acknowledge the correctness of their theses and conclusions.” To drive the Romanian point home, M. Constantinescu had a supplementary intervention in which, in order to prove the historical character of the Nation, he provided a crash course on the history of the Romanians, from ethnogenesis to 1918. At the same time, the Alba Iulia gathering in 1918, which proclaimed the unification of Romanian with Transylvania, was declared a

national constituency with institutional character.⁶⁵ This statement basically de-legitimized the 1918 activity of the National Hungarian Council from Cluj⁶⁶, endowing the Romanians with a constitutional moment in the process of unification. By all means, the federative solution for the former Austro-Hungarian territories was outright rejected.

M. Constantinescu's report was exported to the Twelfth International Congress of Historical Science which took place in Vienna in 1965 (August 29 – September 2 1965). It was even endorsed by the party general secretary, Nicolae Ceaușescu. It was presented at the first section of the congress during the session “Nationalism and Internationalism in the 19th and 20th Centuries”.⁶⁷ This particular part of the Congress was opened by Hans Kohn and the ensuing discussions were the longest of the proceedings. The Romanian report on the topic seems to have had some impact, because its main thesis (inspired by Lenin's principle of self-determination) – “the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate national, that of the dominated and that of the dominant peoples” – is mentioned in Erdmann's history of the International Historical Congresses. Ironically though, the theme of the Hapsburg space as the never realized potential of a united Europe figured prominently at the Congress, according to individual historians' interventions and to the memoirs of the Congress' president, Friedrich Engel-Jones. Indeed, in contrast to Romanian perceptions, Jonas stated that “thanks to its history and geographical location the reconstituted Republic of Austria was called upon to perform a task of *European* proportions.” [my emphasis] In 1965, in Vienna, it was difficult to escape the specter of

⁶⁵ Șt. Pascu, „Istoricii români la Conferința internațională privind destrămarea monarhiei austro-ungare”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, nr.3, anul XVII, 1964, pp. 621-626. Also see Muller, *Politică și istoriografie...*, pp. 313-314. For details about the positions adopted by the members of the Romanian delegation see C. Daicoviciu și Miron Constantinescu (redactori), *Destrămarea monarhiei austro-ungare 1900-1918. Comunicări prezentate la Conferința istoricilor din 4-9 mai 1964 de la Budapesta* (București: Editura Academiei RPR, 1964).

⁶⁶ For this thesis see L. Banyai, „Din istoricul evenimentelor de după Unirea Transilvaniei cu România”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, nr.3, anul XVII, 1964, pp. 459-478.

⁶⁷ „De la Comitetul Național al istoricilor din RPR”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, nr.1, anul XVII, 1964, pp. 159-160 and „Al XII-lea Congres Internațional de Științe Istorice (Viena, 29 august-2 septembrie 1965)”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, nr.1, anul XVIII, 1965, pp. 179-181. Also see Constantiniu, *De la Roller și Răutu...*, pp. 309-311.

Mittleuropa. Especially that, for the first time, at this Congress a significant dose of polycentrism countered the previously pervading dichotomy of Marxist vs. bourgeois historians.⁶⁸

Much more polarized were the proceedings at the Conference on “The National Question in the Hapsburg Monarchy” (April 1966) at University of Indiana in Bloomington, where, since 1958, there existed an influential Russian and East European Institute. The Romanian delegation encompassed again prominent names of the historical front: A Oțetea, V. Maciu, Șt Pascu, and Cornelia Bodea. The last one had become a sort of specialist on the national liberation movement in the second half of the 19th century. Her main thesis was that since the time of 1848 revolution, the Romanians efforts toward political, cultural, and social emancipation had been unitary on the basis of a common national ideology.⁶⁹ So, Bodea’s thesis was practically taking the DPC directives a step further (her approach was anticipated by similar theses in the fourth volume of *Tratatul de Istorie a Romîniei*), responding to what I will later describe as the surge, both political and epistemic, to a unitary vision of the Nation across history.

In Bloomington, the main topic was again the possibility of a multinational, federative state as successor to the dualist monarchy. The centrality of subject in the economy of the regime’s politics of history is demonstrated by the fact that the report for the DPC was approved by its head Manea Mănescu (chief of the Sector for Science and Art in 1965) and brought to the attention of the RCP leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu. The document identified a number of historians who “had held unjust opinions regarding our people’s struggle for national unity”: among the Americans there were St. Fischer-Galați (who would later find a common ground with Romanian historians often visiting the country), J Campbell, V Mamatey along with G Barany and St Deak (identified “of Hungarian origin”) and from, the Popular Republic of Hungary, G. Ranki and P

⁶⁸ Erdmann, *Toward a Global Community...*, pp. 249-251.

⁶⁹ Stan, *Istorie și politică...*, p. 163 and Boia, *History and Myth...*, p. 141.

Hanak. This group's contended that, first, "Romanians in Transylvania never manifested the will to unite with Romania. On the contrary they wanted to continue their existence within the borders of the Hapsburg empire". There was a set of reasons supporting this argument:

the relations between the three Romanian states were generally weak and there was no economic unity (St. Deak and G. Ranki); the economic situation of the masses in Romania was more difficult than that of those in Transylvania, the 1907 peasant rebellion being given as example (Ranki and J. Campbell); Transylvania was more developed than Muntenia and Moldova (Ranki and Fischer-Galați); the tendencies toward unity with Romania existed only within a small circle of intellectuals and not among the larger population (Fischer-Galați, J. Campbell, St Deak); the intentions for national unification on the part of the Romanians in Transylvania cannot be noticed on the basis of the claims they made in their programs of emancipation (St Deak)

The second thesis of the 'contrarians' to the Romanian position was that "the peace treaties from 1919 and 1921 did not establish in the rightful frontiers of the successor states of the former Hapsburg empire." The arguments supporting this theory were: "the peace treaties that led to the dissolution of the Hapsburg empire had an imperialist character (Rudnytski); the Entente did not pay enough attention to border question, drawing them incorrectly, thus providing motives for later developments of Hungarian revisionism (Mamatey)."⁷⁰ However, it should be noted that the members of the Romanian delegation had been informed ahead of time about the contents of the materials that were to be presented at the conference. Therefore, its members "had prepared thoroughly."

The main text of the Romanian side was the report "Romanians and the National Question in the Hapsburg Monarchy," which "countered with arguments the subjective (*tendențioase*) theses" of these historians. The bulk of the response was what by now had become a mantra of the 'national cause' on the historical front:

the Romanian people, within its ethnic borders on either side of the Carpathians, maintained its essential features that created across history an uninterrupted cultural community: common origin, language, habits, traditions, and faith. These common elements were supplemented by the economic unity existent since ancestral times. All these generated a state of mind that determined

⁷⁰ „Informare privind conferința Problema națională în monarhia habsburgică organizată în SUA (Bloomington) la începutul lunii aprilie a.c.”, 22 aprilie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no. 9/1966, f. 10-11.

one emissary of the Polish exile to remark in 1838 that ‘the idea of the unifications of all populations (Romanian) under one scepter preoccupies everybody.’ [...] It was shown that the cultural unity of the Romanians was accomplished completely by the end of the 19th century and thus preceded their political unity. [...] The great impact of the Principalities’ Unity in 1859 among Transylvanian Romanians was also mentioned [...] References to the Romanians’ solidarity during the war of independence, in 1877-1878, were made [...] The great assembly in Alba-Iulia in 1918 was presented in great detail. The large number of participants present there... gave to the decision of unification with Romania a plebiscitary character. It was demonstrated that the peace treaties that followed only officialized internationally a state of facts that came about from the will of the Romanian masses.⁷¹

These tenets were the result of a gradual process of historiographical-political synthesis that began in 1956. I quoted them at length because with several additions, they will gain axiomatic status in history-production under communism. They officially entered the political discourse of the RCP leadership during the 1918 unification Centennial.

The defensive nature of the Romanians’ national interpretation of the historical period in question can be noticed from the first conclusion of the report: “polemical exchanges appeared only in reference to the situation of the Romanians in the Hapsburg empire. We wish to note that the American historians, who presented papers on the position of the empire’s other nationalities, did not find themselves in disagreement with the papers presented by historians coming from successor states, today socialist.”⁷² This observation could be interpreted as a sign that the national key of the Romanian delegation was most strident of all country-standpoints. This could also be an explanation for the absence of Romanian historians from the special issue of the *Austrian History Yearbook* that published the proceedings of the conference in 1967.⁷³ Ultimately, the report, just like in Budapest, claimed a Romanian victory: misconstruing a quote by Hans Kohn, the author noted that the participants agreed that the collapse of the dualist

⁷¹ „Informare privind conferința...”, *Ibidem*, ff. 11-12

⁷² *Idem*, f. 14. One interesting note: Manea Mănescu underlined in red a passage from the report that drew attention at the fact that “historians from the People’s Republic of Hungary sided with some historians from the United States, including those of Hungarian origin, in the attempts to contest the will of the Romanians from the Hapsburg monarchy to unite with those on the other side of the Carpathians.”

⁷³ Unfortunately I did not have the possibility to consult the articles in this special issue in order to verify the account of the Romanian reports and to see if there is any explanation for the absence of Romanian historians among the contributors. But I did have access to its table of contents. See *Austrian History Yearbook*, Volume 3, Issue 01, January 1967, pp. 1-308.

monarchy was a historical necessity. However, it was also remarked that “though the discussion on the Hapsburg monarchy were considered closed, the history of *Central Europe*, that is approximately the geographical of the former empire, continues to raise great interest on the part of the historians in the US.” [my emphasis]

The 1966 Bloomington Conference ended with the proposal for the creation of an International Association of Central European Studies, on the model of the IASEES. Romanian historians did promise to present this project to RSR Academy. No further action was taken. In contrast to the flurry of Romanian international involvement in the creation and development of the IASEES, the project of Central Europe seems to have generated the opposite reaction. The report recommended that more monographs ought to be produced in order to counter “Hungarian revisionism” and that the RSR Academy had to devise a clear plan of activities for the 1918 Centennial.⁷⁴ Rather than pursuing further integration in Europe by means of an additional project of international cooperation, the Romanian historical front, with the backing of the communist regime, preferred to deepen its self-centeredness. In other words, Central Europe was sacrificed on the altar of the nation-state.

6. Fighting against Socialist International Integration

The third project of alternative geography of science, and maybe the most important one in the arithmetic of the identity games pursued by the communist regime and the scientific front in Romania, was that of the socialist integration of Comecon Academies. The principles, lingo, and countries involved in the campaign for coordinated planning, unified production efforts, and international division of labor found a counterpart on the realm of culture and science. This phenomenon that received surprisingly little attention from scholarly literature reinforced and

⁷⁴„Informare privind conferința...”, *Ibidem*, ff. 14-15.

favoured in Romania the epistemic communities' adherence to communist party line, providing a supplementary source of regime legitimacy. Science not only became national, but it could also claim to have struggled for emancipation, so to speak, in concert with party-state leadership's stand against political hegemony. To put it differently, the RWP's scuffle in the Comecon for economic-political autonomy was directly tied to a similar intra-bloc scramble for cultural-scientific self-centeredness. On May 8th 1964, scientists met to discuss and express their support for the April Declaration. In his conclusions, the president of the Council of Ministers, I. G. Maurer, put together the two phenomena, raising the specter of a total loss of sovereignty, which then functioned as rallying call for many years to come:

I don't want to jump to conclusions: on the one hand, economic integration; on the other hand cultural integration. Of course, there are other fields, besides economy and culture, where leadership is presupposed, but they are very limited. [...] It is not about only economic integration as a reflex to some conditions that manifest themselves in capitalism and which should be developed in socialism. Cultural integration is more than that...what necessity imposes this [cultural] integration? I am not jumping to conclusions. I do not dare. I know what it means to make unfounded accusations, to bring a groundless charge against someone. But there are facts. These facts united with the others cannot be disassociated. They compel you to look at them ever more carefully...⁷⁵

Under the circumstances, nobody can be surprised by the whole-hearted association of the scientific front to the Party's offensive for so-called independence. To exemplify, at a meeting of the Bucharest University's party organization (departments of philology, history, law and foreign languages) summoned, in May 1964, in order to vote a resolution of support for the April Declaration, it was reported that archeologist I Nestor, an individual that had been many a times on lists of academicians to be purged or reprimanded for their 'reactionary' views, declared: "Only the walls could not endorse such a document."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ „Stenograma adunării cu oamenii de știință care au dezbătut Declarația CC al PMR adoptată la Plenara lărgită a CC al PMR din 15-22 aprilie 1964 (8 mai 1964)”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.31/1964, f. 164.

⁷⁶ Elvira Cincă, „Informație privind adunarea organizației de partid de la Universitatea din București (facultățile: filologie, istorie, științe juridice și institutul de limbi străine)”, 23 mai, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.29/1964, f. 14.

In the famous article “The Current Problems of the World Socialist System’s Development” published in *Problems of Peace and Socialism* (September 1962), programmatic for the new Soviet vision of socialist integration, the CPSU General Secretary, Nikita Khrushchev argued that “furthering a multilateral cultural collaboration is one of the most imperative tasks of our present days.”⁷⁷ A year earlier, in 1961, there was a meeting in Moscow with the representatives of the Academies in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Poland, and Romania. For the first time, the Soviet representatives put forth the topic of the coordination of socialist countries’ participation at international scientific events. This initiative was complemented by the proposal of the Polish Academy’s representative to inquire into ways of coordinating scientific activity across the socialist camp.⁷⁸

As a consequence, in 1962, the First Convention of Socialist Academies was organized in Warsaw. It brought together representatives from the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Mongolia, Vietnam, Romania, and, of course, Poland. The main issues debated were the creation of permanent bodies – a Secretariat and a Bureau – that would deal with the coordination of multilateral scientific cooperation and the founding of international research institutes. These ideas materialized in a document drafted by the Polish and Czechoslovak Academies bearing the title “The Fundamental Principles and Forms of Scientific Collaboration among the Countries of the Socialist Camp.” It was also decided that yearly conventions of socialist academies would be convened. They were to be prepared by special meetings of these academies’ offices of foreign relations.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *Apud* „Notă cu privire la tendințele de integrare culturală și științifică”, 7 mai, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.31/1964, f. 28.

⁷⁸ Ion Diclescu, „Informare cu privire la colaborarea multilaterală dintre Academii de știință din unele țări socialiste”, 16 septembrie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.34/1965, f. 22.

⁷⁹ *Idem*, f. 23

In 1963, the second convention took place in Berlin. Another programmatic document was advanced here: “The Methodology of Designing Long Term Plans Concerning Scientific Research.” Its main tenets were: “the creation of a single body for planning and co-coordinating scientific activity; ...the close co-ordination of the individual academies; long term plans synchronized with the planning of the commissions of scientific collaboration in the Comecon”⁸⁰

The response of the Romanian side will be first formulated at the third such convention. The latter took place in Sofia (April 12-19, 1964), approximately a week before the publication of the RWP April Declaration. The programmatic document here was “The Principles, Forms, and Methods of Multilateral Scientific Collaboration among the Academies of the Socialist States”. The authors were again the academies from Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Vietnam representatives did not make it to the meeting. The Chinese and North Koreans did not honor the invitation, while the Academies of Cuba and Yugoslavia were not invited. The most important theses put forth by this convention were:

the common usage of the scientific and technical potential of socialist countries; the common use of laboratories and installations belonging to various Academies; the creation of intra-bloc scientific collectives and institutes on the basis of existent national institutes that reached on their respective field of science a high methodological and theoretical level and have experienced workers and the necessary technology; the specialization of certain countries in the field of science and technology; the specialization of academic journals on specific fields along with the creation of international editorial boards and the publication of these reviews by the Academy that has the best conditions available in the respective branch and from an economic point of view; the unitary coordination of the specialization of scientific cadres in research subjects; the multilateral coordination of the international scientific events organized by the Academies of the socialist states.⁸¹

The Romanian reaction was unambiguous and in accordance with the RWP line regarding Khrushchev’s plans for the Comecon. The RPR Academy’s representatives rejected all proposals and requested that “The Principle, Forms, and Methods of Multilateral Scientific Collaboration among the Academies of the Socialist States” to be removed from the agenda of the proceedings

⁸⁰ „Notă cu privire la tendințele de integrare culturală și științifică”, *Ibidem*, f. 26.

⁸¹ *Idem*, ff. 26-27.

in Sofia. As a consequence, Ilie Diclescu, head of the DPC's Science and Art Section, noted in a report that, in 1964, "the multilateral collaboration was not extended, being limited only to thematic collaboration on a small number of issue that had been chosen at the previous, periodical meetings of the specialists in those respective fields."⁸²

The Romanian point of view was driven home during the July 1965 meeting of the Academies' foreign affairs offices in Bucharest, in preparation for the fourth Convention of the Representatives of the Academies of the Socialist Countries (December 1965). The document that was to be discussed both in Bucharest and Moscow, "The Principle, Forms, and Methods of Multilateral Scientific Collaboration among the Academies of the Socialist States," was a new, though not significantly different, version of the text the Romanians rejected in Sofia. Therefore, according to a report prepared for Ilie Dinulescu, the representatives of the RPR Academy's office of foreign relations were instructed both in Bucharest and Moscow "to have no initiative regarding the new proposals for multilateral collaboration." All other materials concerning further international scientific integration within the socialist camp were deemed "unacceptable and the RPR Academy proposed their exclusion from the agenda of the Moscow Convention." The Romanian representatives "will disagree with any proposal for supra-state forms of organization in the field of relations among socialist states' Academies. [...] They will accept no decision that would lead to our country being represented by other countries in international scientific organizations. The Romanian Academy will reject the project of creating international academic journals."⁸³

The only alternative accepted by the RPR Academy was that of sectorial collaboration between specific institutes on the basis of bilateral accords and other multilateral agreements

⁸² Diclescu, „Informare cu privire la colaborarea multilaterală...”, *Ibidem*, f. 24.

⁸³ „Referat privind întâlnirea șefilor Oficiilor de relații externe ale Academiiilor de științe din țările socialiste, ce va avea loc la București în luna iunie a.c.”, 22 iunie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, ff. 147-149.

focusing on specific research issues signed by this body or by the country within the Comecon. Despite the rather ambitious outlook of the arrangement, in reality, the international collaboration plans of the Academy presupposed mainly scholarly exchanges and specialization residencies. There were only few projects of common research and/or publication. Romanian historians were involved in the following international endeavors (1959-1966): “Studies about Romanian-Bulgarian relations”; “Romanian-Russian relations between the 16th and 17th centuries” (based on Soviet archives); “Oriental sources about the history of Eastern Europe”; “The history of the Great October Socialist Revolution”; the IAEEES commission, chaired by M Berza, on the study of Enlightenment. Most of the foreign relations of the RPR/RSR Academy were centered on exporting *domestic* production and on *advertising* the “great accomplishments of Romanian science and culture along with those of the building socialism in the country.”⁸⁴ In the end, the vital priority for the Romanian side in the project of “multilateral international collaboration within the socialist camp” remained that of continuously increasing and advocating the “prestige of national science and of its glorious traditions.”⁸⁵ By 1965, science was irreversibly tied to the principle of Romanian sovereignty. Similarly to the macro-systemic evolution toward increased unity, self-centeredness, autochthonous-*ness* generated by the RWP’s reaction to the project of greater Comecon unity, the scientific field too moved toward heightened centralization and planning. This phenomenon was epitomized by the creation in December 1965 of the National Council for Scientific Research, a project that had been discussed and prepared since 1960.

7. Looking to the West and International of Academic Exchange

⁸⁴ „Informare asupra unor probleme privind colaborarea științifică a Academiei RPR...”, *Ibidem*, f. 128 and f. 131.

⁸⁵ „Cuvîntarea tovarășului Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretar general al CC al PCR, la lucrările primei ședințe plenare a Consiliului Național al Cercetării Științifice, 14 iulie 1966”, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, 29/1966, ff. 90-96.

One last topic I will discuss in reference to the shifting geography of Romanian science is the Academy's growing interest in establishing ties with and learning from the West. Three issues are relevant here: the emphasis placed on academic exchanges and residencies in the non-communist countries; the reform of the institutional structure presupposed by the process of approval for travelling abroad for scholarly purposes; and, the decision to raise the number of foreign members of the Academy. The change of focus within the scientific field concerning international collaboration can be noticed also from a brief survey of the destinations for academic events of researchers affiliated to the Academy. In fact, according to the reports of the DPC's Science and Arts section, the Academy failed to fulfill its plan regarding the organization of international scientific events and to make use of the funding available for scholarships, residences, and exchanges abroad. Between 1961 and 1964, out of fifty seven international conventions that were supposed to be organized by the RPR Academy, only thirty one were convened. During the same period, Romanian scholars participated at 195 events in socialist countries as compared to 168 in capitalist ones (with 304 presentations in the East versus 250 in the West). One hundred and forty-one members of the Academy along with two hundred and twenty-five researchers took part in the various academic meetings in socialist countries. As a counterpart, one hundred and seventy-six members of the Academy and only eighty-nine researchers participated in similar events in the West.⁸⁶ Until 1965, the policy of the communist regime was to send into 'the capitalist world' established scientists, trusted and tried by the party, rather than young experts.

Another field of the RPR Academy's international cooperation was that of academic specialization and research abroad. These residencies were granted on the basis of the following

⁸⁶„Referat privind manifestările științifice cu participare internațională organizate de Academia RPR și participarea oamenilor de știință români la diferite manifestări științifice internaționale”, 3 august, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.34/1965, ff. 1-11.

sources of institutional support: bilateral cultural and scientific agreements; conventions between institutes from various countries; the Academy's hard currency budget allocated for trips abroad; scholarships offered by various international organizations or by scientific personalities.⁸⁷ Between 1960 and 1964, approximately 350 cadres of the Romanian scientific field travelled outside Romania for this purpose (here the Ministry of Education and the various Universities are included). The Academy contributed with 40 researchers for a total of 230 months. However, none of those who went to socialist countries were sent on the basis of existing bilateral cultural agreements. These grants were used exclusively by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, during the mentioned timeframe, the Academy lost an estimated half of the grants for specialization abroad that it could have accessed. For example, in 1964, only 9 scientists took advantage of these opportunities, out of which 6 were holdovers since 1963. For 1965, out of the available 28 researchers who were to be sent abroad for various types of residencies, only 17 were approved.⁸⁸

This survey points to a rather contradictory situation concerning the possibilities of travelling and researching abroad (both in the East and the West) of Romanian scientists: they existed and were surprisingly numerous, but the scientific field was unable to fully take advantage of them. Of course, one explanation was the unpreparedness of the Academy's management on such matters. Another explanation, however, is related to the system of approving trips abroad. As several DPC reports show, the system was extremely cumbersome, making the procurement of the validating stamps almost a miracle. No less than *nine* commissions or offices had to authorize these proposals for travel abroad; those residencies longer than 3 months went as high as the Central Committee Secretariat. The itinerary was as

⁸⁷ „Informare privind elaburarea și realizarea planurilor de trimeri la specializare în străinătate”, 8 iulie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, f. 150

⁸⁸ Manea Mănescu, „Referat privind specializarea în străinătate a cercetătorilor din Academia RPR”, 8 martie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, ff. 36-40.

follows: the proposal came from the institution to which the scientist was affiliated; then it was sent to the Inter-Departmental Commission (created in 1960), which gathered, analyzed, and put forward a preliminary list of approved names to the Government Commission for the Coordination of Travels Abroad. From this governmental commission, the list moved to the Council of Ministers' Commission for Validation, then to the Central Committee Department of Administration (*Direcția Treburi*) and the CC's specialized sections for approval. Afterwards, the names of those hoping to travel abroad reached the CC Secretariat. In parallel with this process, the list was also sent to Commission of Visas of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. After the endorsement of the Secretariat, the names were forwarded to the Governmental Commission for Visas and Passports and to the State Bank. At the same time, upon receiving the validation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the list went to the Consulate Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Leaving aside the Orwellian itinerary of these proposals, what needs to be noted is that according to this system, it was possible that a decision of the Central Committee's Secretariat could be overturned by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁸⁹

The above described system was changed in 1965. The entire activity of obtaining the necessary approvals and visas was taken over by the Governmental Commission for the Coordination of Travel Abroad. This body was enlarged with the addition of the Academy's president and of the minister of Education. All the other commissions were disbanded. According to the new regulations, the itinerary for approval was the following: the scientist's institute sent the proposal to the Governmental Commission that centralized and analyzed all the cases; the Commission also obtained the approval from the Central Committee's sections. In parallel, the institutes sent the proposals the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which then had to inform the Commission on its decision. After the Commission got the list of proposal approved by the

⁸⁹ „Informare privind elaborarea și realizarea planurilor...”, *Ibidem*, f. 152.

Central Committee Secretariat, then it was delivered to the Governmental Commission for Visas and Passport and the State Bank.⁹⁰

The immediate result of this reform was that between 1965 and 1966 there were 42 scientists which benefited from specialization trips, of which 27 were sent to capitalist countries and only 15 to socialist ones. Moreover, the social structure of the group was rather interesting: 13 of them were sons/daughters of workers and peasants, 15 were sons/daughters of intellectuals, while 14 had parents who were administrative employees of the state. Also, of the total of those travelling to the West, only 48 percent were party members, while 52 percent were not.⁹¹ A preliminary conclusion to this data is that by 1965, the criterion of 'social origin' was not anymore the most important one. Even party membership was not a compulsory element for having a research trip approved. However, what was crucial was the scientist's loyalty to the regime and his/her ability to contribute to the either the latter's prestige or to the betterment of scientific production. By 1965, science had become not only national but also pragmatic with an eye to learning from the West.

The principle of scientific validation from both camps also explained the new elections and nominations in at the RPR Academy. In 1965, there were only twenty foreign honorary or standing academicians – 14 from socialist countries out of which 9 from the Soviet Union. The Presidium decided to reconfirm 16 scientists as honorary members and to elect 47 new academicians. The number of foreign academicians would reach 83, from 22 countries (12 from the USSR, 13 from France, 8 from Italy, 5 from USA, 5 from GDR, etc.).⁹² The RWP wished to reach a balance between East and West in what concerned the Academy's membership. It also

⁹⁰ *Idem*, f. 154.

⁹¹ „Referat asupra propunerilor Academiei RPR de trimitere la specializare în străinătate în anul 1965-1966”, 10 martie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, ff. 68-69.

⁹² „Referat cu privire la convocarea Sesiunii generale anuale a Academiei RPR”, 26 ianuarie, ANIC, fond CC al PCR – Secția de Propagandă și Agitație, no.7/1965, ff. 34-35.

seems to have aimed at re-establishing the tradition of large French and Italian contingents of academicians. It was the expression of the cultural and scientific tradition of collaboration between these two countries and Romania. However, one side effect of this decision was the enlargement of the RPR Academy to previously unknown dimensions. In 1966, there were 100 full members and 139 standing members distributed across 12 sections. Between 1963 and 1965, 42 new full academicians and 98 standing ones were elected. The sheer numbers of members and employees made the Romanian Academy the largest one in the socialist camp after that of the USSR.⁹³ A DPC report went as far as remarking that unlike other prestigious Academies and unlike the pre-1945 regulations of the Romanian Academy, there was no law limiting the number of academicians in Romania.

The significant and rapid expansion of the Academy was a direct result of processes dealt with in previous chapters: first, the unprecedented state involvement (i.e., funding) into planned science; second, as science became national the communist regime transformed the Academy, not only into “a factory”, but also into a site of symbolic capital both domestically and internationally. The Academy produced not only knowledge, but prestige as well, which in its turn generated systemic legitimacy. At the same time, the combination between a discourse of independence in the international politics of science, the switch of focus to the West, the rekindling of traditions of regional cooperation, the opportunities of travelling abroad, and, last but not least, re-establishing the Academy’s role of pinnacle of national epistemic consecration strengthened the relationship between scientists and the regime. In other words, the academicians became the bearers of the good news of national progress and the valiant defenders of Romania’s prestige and honor in an inimical and competitive world. The academicians were the dignitaries

⁹³ „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.

of the RWP/RCP's politics science abroad. The analysis of the shifting geography of Romania's science (with a focus on the historical front) during the first half of the 1960s, reveals that the Academy was fully integrated and doing its part in the communist regime's campaign for autonomy and re-invention of systemic identity.