

main à propos de cette idée, ainsi que les solutions qui ont fini par s'imposer. Une autre question épineuse a visé le mariage des prêtres et sa dissolubilité dans l'Église gréco-catholique roumaine, question sur laquelle les Églises catholique et roumaine avaient des points de vue tout à fait différents. La seconde partie de ce chapitre s'arrête à quelques aspects majeurs circonscrits autour de la foi, telles que les dénominations du souverain pontife dans la littérature ecclésiastique transylvaine, la mention du pape lors des cérémonies des gréco-catholiques roumains etc.

Dans le dernier chapitre, Ana Victoria Sima évoque les initiatives et les mesures prises par le Saint-Siège en faveur de l'Église gréco-catholique roumaine dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle, dont nous mentionnons surtout ses efforts d'améliorer la situation matérielle du clergé roumain à travers des interventions répétées auprès des autorités autrichiennes et hongroises ou bien la création d'un réseau de séminaires et l'octroi de bourses d'études aux séminaristes roumains. Le projet le plus ambitieux destiné à consolider et étendre l'union religieuse en Transylvanie a appartenu à Joseph Fessler, qui a eu l'occasion de bien connaître les réalités roumaines lors de la visite apostolique de 1858.

Fruit d'une riche documentation et d'une investigation persévérante et professionnelle dans le passé de l'Église gréco-catholique roumaine, l'ouvrage de Ana Victoria Sima s'impose comme une référence dans le paysage de l'historiographie ecclésiastique roumaine.



LUCIAN TURCU

MANUELA MARIN

Între prezent și trecut: cultul personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu și opinia publică românească

(Between present and past: Nicolae Ceaușescu's cult of personality and the Romanian public opinion)
Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2014

MANUELA MARIN's first book, *Originea și evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu* (The origin and evolution of Nicolae Ceaușescu's cult of personality) (Alba Iulia: Altip, 2008), provides an extensive and insightful analysis of the mechanisms which made possible the construction of Nicolae Ceaușescu's cult of personality, from the perspective of the official propaganda. *Between Present and Past*, reviewed here, represents the necessary and logical next step in the study of personality cults, investigating the actual effects of such practices on the public opinion. However, the new book is more than a simple turn toward another facet of a complex phenomenon. Marin's versatility in employing new theoretical and methodological approaches, and her willingness to take risks turn out to be the ingredients of an innovative and ground-breaking book.

Theoretically, Marin places her investigation in the framework of the revisionist school regarding the history of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, pioneered by Sheila Fitzpatrick in the 1980s, which gained a new impetus with the opening of the secret Soviet archives. To be sure, the revisionists do not deny the accomplishments of the formerly dominant paradigm, the "totalitarian model." Instead, they address new areas of investigation, overlooked in the past due to a top-down methodology focused on the

role of the state and its institutions, yet ignoring the majority of the population, implicitly considered passive receivers of the policies implemented from above. By switching the focus from state to society, the revisionists gain a more nuanced *Verstehen* of everyday life in dictatorships. Their major achievement, used by Marin as the organizing principle of her book, is the recognition of the (apparently) simple fact that individual and group perceptions of society are not homogenous, but range from cheerful acceptance to the bitter rejection of the official message. Following in the footsteps of the revisionist historians of the Soviet Union, Marin identifies the categories of Romanian citizens who supported the regime, and their motivations, and, in contrast, the most common acts of passive resistance offered by the majority of the population. Lastly, it is noteworthy that Marin does not dogmatically apply the percepts of the revisionist school to her analysis; her methodology is primarily guided by data, which compels her to adapt the theory and integrate the more recent post-revisionist approach while maintaining revisionism as the dominant framework. The post-revisionist school narrows the analysis to the level of the individual, stressing the situational and interactional nature of individual opinions, the same individual expressing contradictory opinions on the same topic, in different contexts of communication. The data analyzed in this book, necessarily sparse due to its nature and diversity, make the revisionist approach the logical choice for the present inquiry. The collections of documents used here do not permit an investigation of the individual's evolution, and are best suited for observing the aggregation of individual messages into a larger, society-level, public opinion.

The term “public opinion” used throughout this book is a bit misleading, considering both the specificity of the totalitarian societies, and the evidence presented in this book. Public opinion and civil society are terms of bourgeois and liberal origin, and cannot be entirely translated to the totalitarian space due to the different nature of the relations between individuals, state, and communication channels. In totalitarian societies, individual opinions do aggregate into a general mood, but they spread through less overt channels, such as private discussions with close friends, gossip and hearsay, while the public space is monopolized by the state. Thus, two layers of communication coexist: the hidden transcript (the focus of this book) has been contrasted by political scientist James C. Scott with the public transcript, the latter encompassing the official communication, in his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); see also, for a discussion of civil society and its correspondent in totalitarianism, M. Killingsworth, *Civil Society in Communist Eastern Europe: Opposition and Dissent in Totalitarian Regimes* (Colchester: ECP Press, 2012). Moreover, the data used in this book consists mostly of private documents, some of them only partially made public by Radio Free Europe (the content, but not the authors' identities). Following these considerations, the term “popular opinion” employed in the English-language literature cited in this book is preferable, better reflecting its quasi-underground nature. Marin's defense of the term, as well as the book title, *Between Present and Past* suggest that this volume is part of a larger project, which aims to scrutinize the evolution of the public opinion of Ceaușescu's cult of personality af-

ter his demise and until the present day. In this context, the term “public opinion” has been chosen to convey the continuity between the totalitarian and the post-totalitarian periods. If this is the case, I am eagerly looking forward to the forthcoming publications.

The book is organized according to the major themes suggested by the theory and considered by the author to constitute, together, popular opinion. However, each of these themes required a different set of data, and the ingenuity in identifying the appropriate data for each of the themes constitutes the undeniable strength of this book. Moreover, the diversity of sources, found in various archives throughout Eastern Europe, convey to the reader the clear feeling of embarking on a journey, implying the same initial curiosity and fascination of discovery. A journey made safe, however, by the honest assessment of the evidence. The author painstakingly cautions about the possible shortcomings of the data, different for each source, and carefully distinguishes between what the analysis can accomplish, and the questions which require more, or different, resources for an answer.

Chapter 1 summarizes the findings of Marin’s first book on Nicolae Ceaușescu’s cult of personality, and lays the foundation for her new inquiry. The unifying element of the two books consists in the focalization on the main themes used by official propaganda to construct Ceaușescu’s image, which stood at the core of his cult: *the young revolutionary, the architect of modern Romania, the champion of world peace, and the guarantor of national independence and unity*. An impressive array of public documents has been employed in this analysis, including but not limited to newspaper articles, books by Romanian and foreign

authors celebrating Ceaușescu’s personality, movies, etc. However, by considering popular/public opinion merely as a response to the themes imposed by official propaganda, Marin admits the top-down causality, implicitly acknowledging the preeminence of the “totalitarian” approach in historiography. From this perspective, the revisionists’ and post-revisionists’ contribution is the discovery that the same macro-cause had multiple micro-effects, often contrary to those intended by the regimes.

Chapter 2, probably the most intriguing part of this book, analyzes the positive responses to the cult of personality, relying on congratulatory letters to Nicolae Ceaușescu identified in the Archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. Unlike the official letters, published in the media and representing a central part of the personality cult, in this case we are presented with personal letters, written by common citizens, and probably never read by their addressee. Thus, the most often cited reasons for participating in the cult of personality, namely, its mandatory nature and the self-interest of individuals hoping to gain certain advantages through their sycophancy, cannot explain these letters. Instead, Marin offers two more accurate explanations, based on her identification of two categories of letters. First, there are individuals, from all social groups, but predominantly retirees and school children, who internalized the propaganda, and expressed their genuine appreciation for the General Secretary, using nonetheless the same themes, and, in many cases, the same language consecrated by the media, making evident the direct effect of propaganda over certain individuals. To be sure, this is not an unexpected finding, but it remains hard to digest, due

to the still prevalent Manichean tendency of blaming the cult on the dictator alone, while exonerating everybody else of any contribution. The second category illustrates the *economy of gift* (Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and consists of letters from individuals who believed they owed their job or their new apartment to the General Secretary of the party, but also from families who owed personal gratitude to Ceaușescu's family, typically for godfathering their newborns. I wish the chapter had been completed with a longitudinal quantitative assessment of how the amount of letters of support varied, if it did, during the period under focus (1979–1989). However, such an assessment could be misleading due to possible flaws inherent in the data, and therefore we should trust Marin's decision not to venture on such thin ice.

Chapters 3 and 4 are grouped together in a distinct section of the book devoted to the adverse reactions of the public/popular opinion to the cult of personality. From a post-totalitarian perspective, this topic is risk-free and fashionable, since references to it alleviate some of the natural embarrassment resented after living through a personality cult. Nonetheless, Marin's handling of the subject stands out in the academic landscape, for several reasons. First, the diversity of conventional and non-conventional data surveyed for these two chapters—including archival documents of the Securitate, transcripts of Radio Free Europe broadcasts, edited collection of political jokes, and secondary sources—enables her to present a comprehensive image of everyday resistance in the 1980s. Second, the concept of passive resistance is clearly delineated through a rich theoretic-

cal discussion in the opening of Chapter 3, setting high standards, upheld throughout the rest of the section. Third, the analysis continuously returns to, and fulfils, the promises made in the first chapter, allowing the author to maintain focus on the major themes identified earlier in the book and to overcome the temptation to include all social criticism going on in the hidden transcript. And fourth, although maintaining objectivity, the researcher's enthusiasm and joy of writing are the most evident in this section. Naturally, they are transmitted to the reader, making chapters 3 and 4 the most enjoyable part of this book. The topic, to be sure, is in itself savory enough to make a good reading. People's negative reactions to the cult of personality enforced through all official media channels, ranging from subtly undermining it to outright rejection, is still captivating, beyond the merely scientific interest, demonstrating ingenuity and humor—intended or not. Such is the case of some citizens of Roșia Montană who attempted to convince the workers in charge with repairing the regional TV antenna repeater to un-fix it, so it would be tuned on the Hungarian public channel, instead of the Romanian Television, whose programs were devoted almost entirely to Nicolae Ceaușescu's cult. Sadly, without exception, the jokes (*bancurile*) selected by Marin to illustrate disbelief in the themes conveyed by the media are based on untranslatable Romanian language puns.

All in all, Marin's book lives up to its stated theoretical purpose, to identify and analyze the public/popular opinion's reaction to the cult of personality constructed by the official propaganda. Acknowledging that public opinion is never homogeneous, but comprises different, and often divergent perspectives, Marin choose to

operate with a binary distinction between genuine support for the leader and obvious discontent. The transparency and caution in handling the data guarantee the objectivity of an otherwise challenging endeavor; particularly by evidencing a certain amount of popular support for Ceaușescu and his regime, this book is susceptible to re-open wounds not entirely healed. However, I prefer to read it as a sign that the time has arrived for a normal, more detached, historiography of the recent past, and for an honest assessment of its marks on contemporary Romanian society. □

ADRIAN POPAN

MIHAI CROITOR et SANDA BORȘA
Triunghiul suspiciunii, vol. I, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Hrușciov și Tito (1954-1964); vol. II, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Hrușciov și Tito (1954-1964). Documente

(Le Triangle de la suspicion, vol. I, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Khrouchtchev et Tito, 1954-1964; vol. II, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Khrouchtchev et Tito, 1954-1964. Documents)
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LHISTOIRE DU régime communiste constitue l'un des sujets préférés aussi bien des professionnels du domaine que des passionnés d'histoire. L'intérêt est d'autant plus grand que les fonds d'archives en Roumanie et à l'étranger continuent à représenter des sources d'informations inédites extrêmement précieuses, qui n'attendent qu'à être découvertes et valorisées. C'est ce que les deux jeunes chercheurs de Cluj, auteurs de cet ouvrage en deux volumes, se sont proposés dans la présente démarche. Après

des recherches à fond dans les Archives nationales centrales, ils ont fouillé la presse, les encyclopédies et les dictionnaires, ont complété leurs informations avec des données puisées dans les documents déjà publiés, réussissant à surprendre les principales évolutions survenues dans les relations politiques et diplomatiques soviéto-yougoslaves, roumano-yougoslaves, roumano-soviéto-yougoslaves et roumano-soviétiques au fil de dix ans.

Le choix de cet intervalle chronologique n'est pas accidentel. L'an 1954 représente pour l'histoire du régime communiste le moment où Moscou, en tenant compte du contexte international, a trouvé nécessaire d'implémenter un processus de « réconciliation » avec le passé et de révision de ses rapports avec la Yougoslavie. L'an 1964 est celui où le bloc communiste a été secoué de fortes tendances centrifuges, avec des conséquences sur l'évolution ultérieure des rapports internationaux au niveau politique, diplomatique, économique et idéologique.

Le premier volume, composé de trois chapitres et de plusieurs sous-chapitres, constitue une sorte de présentation et d'analyse de quelques événements importants pour la période cible. Il commence par évoquer les modifications survenues dans les structures de direction du Parti communiste de l'Union soviétique après la mort de Staline, en insistant sur la politique de Nikita S. Khrouchtchev de condamnation des erreurs et des abus commis à l'époque stalinienne. La nouvelle politique économique visait le développement de l'industrie des biens de consommation au détriment de l'industrie lourde ainsi que des réformes en agriculture. Un événement à part dans le cadre du bloc communiste a été la « normalisation des relations soviéto-yougoslaves ». Cette nouvelle politique de Moscou envers Belgrade n'est pas passée