

## ABSENCES FROM MAP. THE PROBLEM OF BESSARABIA IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL IMAGINARY OF NICOLAE CEAUSESCU'S REGIME

Gabriel MOISA\*

University of Oradea, Faculty of History, Geography and International Relations, History Department,  
Universitatii St., 410087, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: [gabimoisa@hotmail.com](mailto:gabimoisa@hotmail.com)

**Abstract:** The end of the '50 of the last century marked the beginning of returning of the national factors in the historical discourse from Romania, a comeback that continued in the years ahead at a much more obvious step and on more extensive coordinates. The first part of the decade that followed was par excellence the transition period to the most appropriate time of historical research from the communist epoch. That period, the first five-six years of the Ceausescu's regime, was even in the political field a relatively fruitful period, marking an increase ideological distance from the big brother from the east. This was possible in a context in which the Soviet political elite was deeply divided, and the entire Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe operated powerful centrifugal forces.

**Key words:** Politics, Bessarabia, Romania, historiography, communism

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The end of the '50 of the last century marked the beginning of returning of the national factors in the historical discourse from Romania, a comeback that continued in the years ahead at a much more obvious step and on more extensive coordinates. The first part of the decade that followed was par excellence the transition period to the most appropriate time of historical research from the communist epoch. That period, the first five-six years of the Ceausescu's regime, was even in the political field a relatively fruitful period, marking an increase ideological distance from the big brother from the east. This was possible in a context in which the Soviet political elite was deeply divided, and the entire Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe operated powerful centrifugal forces<sup>1</sup>.

One of the first signs of not dissembled *national communism* is even in the state of Dej, from the Third Congress of the PLP, according to which "*the historical mission of the Party is to achieve the national objectives of the Romanian people*"<sup>2</sup>, given thereby, according to some interpreters of the phenomenon, the

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\* Corresponding author

<sup>1</sup> Stelian Tănase, *Elite si societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu Dej 1948-1965*, București, Editura Humanitas, 2006, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Ghe. Ghe. Dej, *Articole și cuvântări*, București, Editura Politică, 1961, p. 101.

signal itself to disintegration of the soviet hegemony in the Eastern Europe<sup>3</sup>. At the beginning of the '60's the leaders from Bucharest oppose to the *Valey plan*, that concerned the integration of supranational economy in some east European countries, including Romania. Taking advantage even from the more and more frequent tensions from the soviet camp, Romania allowed herself to a foreign politic less dependent to Moscow, guerdon in 1964 by the famous *Declaration of independence*, of Bucharest towards Moscow<sup>4</sup>. Apparently Romania during Dej period was making a strong discordant note in the communist camp, seeming to have its own evolution on the communist path.

The evolution of the Romanian historiography in the first part of the years '60 followed too often, sometimes to identify the Romanian policy route. If in 1964 the *independence* of Romania towards USSR was given by the famous Declaration from April, from the point of view of historiography, the *independence* was claimed through a very surprising book<sup>5</sup> which few years earlier would have been impossible to be published. It was a very ingenious declaration of independence, attributed to one of Marxism classics, Karl Marx, who in his *Notes on Romanian*, raise open the issue of Bessarabia<sup>6</sup>.

The main historiography work which deeply marked the historic speech in Romanian in that period was the Treaty of *Romanian history* which, although had its origins in the Second Congress of RLP in 1955 and in the creative emulation that followed thereafter among historians saw the light in the printing form and only the first volume in 1960<sup>7</sup>. *Romanian history* makes an end, but also a beginning of a historiography period, an end but a beginning of an historic speech. This history treaty was designed in eight volumes, out of which only four were printed and the latest one stops with unfolding events in 1878. It was the first attempt to write a Romanian history during the communist regime, without appealing to a falsification of history, as it happened before<sup>8</sup>.

From the first volume a substantial change of tone can be noticed. The most detectable revision can be seen in the part describing the Romanian-Russian relations, very much exaggerated<sup>9</sup>, especially in the first years of the six decade of the XX century, by presenting them in a much more realistic way and much closer to reality. The things went relatively far, out of an absolutely justified desire to wipe out the past, entailing in this direction even the general public who listen dumbfounded how a number of officials were trying, through conferences, symposium or meetings at work to wash out as much as they could from the sins they did with exacerbation on this matter<sup>10</sup>. The Treaty<sup>11</sup> gives in a way another importance to the Romanian-Russian relations, the fallowing volumes, III<sup>12</sup> and IV<sup>13</sup>, promotes a very disrespectful tone, reducing to the maximum the importance of the Romanian-Russian relations in Romanian past.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Fejto, *Histoire des democraties populaires*, 1966, 2<sup>nd</sup> vol., Paris, Seuil, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre du Bois, *Anchetă asupra unei ascensiuni. Ceaușescu la putere*, București, Editura Info-Team, 1998, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Marx, *Notes on Romanian. Unpublished manuscripts*, ed. A. Oțetea, S. Scwann, București, Editura Academiei RPR, 1964.

<sup>6</sup> W.P.van Meurs, *Chestiunea Basarabiei în istoriografia românească*, Chișinău, Editura Arc, p. 270

<sup>7</sup> *Istoria României*, 1<sup>st</sup> vol., București, Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1960.

<sup>8</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români 1944-1977*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1991, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1997, p. 63-68

<sup>10</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> *Istoria României*, 2<sup>nd</sup> vol., București, Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1962.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, 1964.

Many other views and aspects of national history that until then had been subjected to the embargo have been reintroduced into historical discussion. For the first time since 1948 was publicly discussed the very sensitive Bessarabian issue. At the beginning this issue was tackled in a work dedicated to Cantemir<sup>14</sup>, where it was openly specified the Treaty from Lutk, 1711, in which Petru I promised retrocede the territories occupied by the Turks in Bugeacului, but also that in 1812 the territory between Prut and Nistru were incorporated by force into the Russian Empire. Although made a series of bold assertions, the authors finally sweetening the tone with an assessment, otherwise proper, to Peter I of Russia, that D. Cantemir has found true intellectual dimensions after his departure in exile in Russia, recipient of some average intellectual elevated compared with the Romanian Countries.

The entire anti-Russian campaign, reached its climax in 1964, with the *Declaration of Independence* and publication of the *Marx's notes on the Romanian*<sup>15</sup>. Still suspicious, the Romanian part leaves a classical of the communism to talk about Bessarabia. This book presents by Marx's mouth, known also for his anti-Russian attitude, the whole issue of the Romanian-Russian relations in the most unfriendly way possible. It is also reminded about the in-just annexation of Bessarabia in 1812, about the plans of the Russians to enclose the principality, as well as suppressing the Revolution from 1848 and the ancestral anti – Russian feeling of the Romanians. The book was actually the result of Marx's snippets copied from various books to which he added a few annotations. If there was an original contribution of Marx, that was the use of French in passages extracted as a mixture of French, German and English with personal abbreviations very difficult legible.

Although we talk about the beginning of the liberalization of historical writing, it must be said that it was made in terms settled by the leaders of Romania. For example, the so-called liberalization of historiography to re-dimension the Romanian-Russian relations was made especially of an impulse that came from the imperatives of achieving some political goals. In general the relaxation was made in segments that were useful to the regime. On this type of attitude has molded very well a part of the historic speech that was even more profitable for historians guild. But, always the process of writing history has been controlled by censorship and never got out of control. The proof will come later, in the years '80-70 when by changing the regime's priorities, opportunities for maneuver in the history were again restricted to most historians.

An analysis on Nicolae Ceaușescu's speech uttered on various occasions, lead to the conclusion that he closely supervised researches in this area, even if in a more discreet manner. The communist leader interference in history writing was not done, at least in the first stage using brutal methods, because, being concerned rather to consolidate power, he sought to attract the intellectuals on his side. However, he will want more than his predecessor to dominate historiography, and this thing will be seen later.

Showing RCP – continue of democratic and revolutionary struggle of the Romanian people's, of traditions of the socialist and workers movement, held by

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Scarlat, Callimachi, Vladimir Block, Elena Georgescu-Ionescu, *Dimitrie Cantemir. Viața și opera în imagini*, București, Editura Politică, 1963.

<sup>15</sup> Andrei Oțetea, R. Sscwann (sub red), *Karl Marx. Însemnări despre români. Manuscrise inedite*, București, Editura Academiei R.P.R., 1964.

Nicolae Ceaușescu on 7 May 1966 on the occasion of celebration of 45 years after the creation of the Romanian Communist Party, began in the Ceausescu era an indelicately seize of the national history. Worth linger on the drafts of Romanian history developed by Ceausescu, along with his historians, since it is the moment that seriously marked the Romanian history discourse, until the appearance of the famous “thesis” from July 1971.

The Bessarabian issue was re-instated in discussion. Thus, using this occasion, it was felt as profoundly wrong those cominterniste thesis who appreciate Romania a multinational<sup>16</sup> state, as well as the alliance signed between the USSR and Germany in 1939<sup>17</sup>, whose additional acts were kept secret, laid down the possibility for the Soviets to occupy territories from the Romanian state. Although the directive of the Committee was referring to Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia, it is clear that Ceausescu's speech of May 1966 refers only to Bessarabia, the two quotations with a powerful anti-Russian content served him as arguments.

With this speech Ceausescu dismissed once more a taboo in historiography, and the consequences were immediate. In June 1966 Stefan Voicu (Aurel Rottenberg), former editor in chief of *Scântea*, member of the CC and of the RCP, wrote in *Class Struggle* an article with strong anti-soviet accents where the decision of occupying Bessarabia on 28 June 1940<sup>18</sup>, was attacked. Changes of tone and attitude towards the Soviet Union were becoming more visible not only in historiography but in other areas<sup>19</sup>. By 1967-1968 the party leadership has alleviated the rankness of the anti-soviet speech<sup>20</sup>, even if for some time it continued in the same nationalist anti-Russian terms. They launched a real action regarding the publication of the memoirs of the state members, but they remained under lock until the 80s, when the rankness at the anti-soviet tone experienced a serious exaggeration as the policy of Gorbachev- glasnost and perestroika gain more ground, in parallel with Ceausescu's more pronounced isolation right behind the iron curtain. What must be stressed is that those who approach the anti-soviet topic were general the historians of the institutions controlled by the party, Academy “Ștefan Gheorghiu”, and the Institute of Party History, like Copoiu, Unc or Popescu-Puturi, as well as less recycled historians as Andrei Otetea or CC Giurescu, who continuing their professional work, even if they were saying historical truth they welcomed the regime, and so they could become from shallowness damage to falling slightly above the category. Thus there is a division of labour in this direction. Official historians, “aparaticicii” who wrote what they were ordered and others who, following the tide that write what they ordered and others who were clearly leaving a professional mark on the historical research.

The political anti-soviet speech met his moment of glory under Ceausescu in August 1968 when, not participating at the intervention of troops from the Warsaw Treaty in Czechoslovakia, the Romanian political leader attacked the

<sup>16</sup> N. Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, 1<sup>st</sup> vol , București, Editura Politică, 1966, p. 361.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 373.

<sup>18</sup> Ștefan Voicu, *Pagini de luptă a PCR împotriva fascismului pentru independență și suveranitate națională (1934-1940)*, în *Lupta de clasă*, no. 6, 1966, p. 59-80.

<sup>19</sup> W. P. van Meurs, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>20</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, 3<sup>rd</sup> vol, București , Editura Politică, p. 288-295.

action in very tough terms of criticizing and dismissing also the limited sovereignty doctrine promoted by Soviet leader Leonid Brejnev<sup>21</sup>. After this climax a gradually soften can be noticed in the anti-soviet vehemence and for the period between the early 70s and mid-'80 to be quite slow and sporadic. However until 1971-1972 Nicolae Ceaușescu will use the various occasions that will appear to attack subtly the presence of the Soviets or of the Russians in the national history<sup>22</sup>.

The reviewing has not ended here. If the '50s have known, especially in their first half, a strong inflation of Slavs in Romanian historiography, caused mainly by the official order brought by the political realities and the main coordinates of the rollerian speech<sup>23</sup>, with the shift of the Romanian communism towards the national values, a significant reflux of the Slavs in the history of Romanians is distinguishable. The tone was given by the same Nicolai Ceaușescu, since the IX-th Congress of RCP initiated a series of steps in this regard. Thus, the name of the Romanian Workers' Party was transformed into the Romanian Communist Party, and the Romanian People's Republic to the Socialist Republic of Romania. Thus, according to Katherine Verdery, Nicolae Ceaușescu would say ostentatious only a few months after taking power, equality of Romania with the Soviet Union<sup>24</sup>. It was reintroduced the Latin spelling of the name of the country, strongly saying for further more the existing of the communist nations in obvious conflict with the Soviet point of view on this issue. Many Romanian linguists and literary historians have taken quite radical Anti-Slav positions in spelling and language. Among these Al. Graur stands out, after stretching in the opposite during the first part of the years '50, refers to reducing the Slav elements from the Romanian language and spelling since 1963 for after takeover power by Ceaușescu and continuing Dej's policy further in this direction, his position is to become clearer in this respect<sup>25</sup>.

Also, *History of Romanian literature*<sup>26</sup> states, like *History of Romanian language*<sup>27</sup>, the idea of a reduced influence of Slavic language by the X th century, whereas the adoption of the Slavonic language was made only by X-XI century<sup>28</sup>, when the Romanian language was already formed.

Was emphasized, in discordance with the same years '50, on eliminating the Slavs even from the process of formation of the Romanian people and its ethnic composition. Although in May 1970 C. Daicoviciu<sup>29</sup> accepts another weak Slavic component in the , ethnic composition of the Romanian people, the period was characterized especially by putting in almost a complete shadow the role of Slavs, accepting more and more the idea that the Slavs came only after the Romanian people was formed, but still they took some Slav elements, but only

<sup>21</sup> R.A. Remington, *The Warsaw Pact. Case Studies in Communist Conflict Resolution*, in *Studies in Communism, Revisionism and Revolution*, no. 17, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass, 1971, p. 5693.

<sup>22</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, 4<sup>th</sup> vol., Bucharest, Editura Politică, 1969, p. 249-250, p. 623-624.

<sup>23</sup> Mihail Roller, *Cu privire la unele probleme din domeniul cercetării istorice*, în *Studii.Revistă de istorie și filosofie*, no. 3, 1952, p. 152-153.

<sup>24</sup> Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1993, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> Alexandru Graur, *La romanité du roumain*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1965.

<sup>26</sup> *The History of Romanian Literature*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1964.

<sup>27</sup> *The History of Romanian Language*, vol. I-II, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1965-1969.

<sup>28</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> *The Romanian History*, București, Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1970.

when that was strengthened in all aspects<sup>30</sup>. Some historians ultra-orthodox have gone even further in identifying proto- Romanians and their language<sup>31</sup>, only to demonstrate that when the Slavs arrived in this space Romanian people and language have been well outlined. Surprisingly or not we find out that the Slavs learned soon after their arrival Romanian<sup>32</sup>, and from that moment Slavic language remaining a dead language, privilege of a church evidently broken from the people<sup>33</sup>. Similarly the famous literary historian George Ivascu, succeed in a quite remarkable manner to describe in his work *The History of Romanian Literature*. the formation of Romanian people and Romanian language, without mentioning in any way about Slavs, claiming the idea that the formation of the language was finalised sometime in the IX th century.

By the same spectacular manner was rehabilitated Nicolae Titulescu, too. Rehabilitation has been strictly linked to the evolution of Romanian-Soviet relations during the period, Nicolae Ceaușescu was the one who initiated this matter with his speech<sup>34</sup> that was extremely tough the RCP regarding the nationalities between the two world wars. By reconsidering Titulescu, the question of Bessarabia is actually rised again, but in another way. This matter was a permanent source of tension in the interwar period between the two countries, Nicolae Titulescu being the one who negotiated the issue of Bessarabia, although with rather little success, at that time. His rehabilitation has started through the works of the historian I.M. Oprea dedicated to the political man Titulescu<sup>35</sup>, who in an unfavourable time to arrange such kind of steps, would make a daring start taking into consideration the inevitable political connotation of such enterprises. These attempts essentially meant rehabilitation of the Romanian interwar foreign policy, which is known, was a profoundly anti-Soviet one. R. Deutsch responds to the same imperatives, which in his turn makes a step forward in this direction by publishing the *Speeches* of Nicolae Titulescu<sup>36</sup>. All these steps were answering to a politic command. Given the scale of Titulescu, Nicolae Ceaușescu wanted to affirm once again the equality of the nations of the Soviet camp, an idea very dear to the Romanian leader.

After the moments of glory of the Romanian-Soviet dispute in the years'60 a period of some calm followed until the mid-70s, when they met a new exacerbation. The historiography anti- Russian went growing, being stimulated mainly by the speeches of the same kind of the Romanian leader. Vlad Georgescu and W.P. van Meurs produce a synthetic picture of the evolution of this issue stressing on the bomb that produced the detonation of the dispute, a work dedicated the history of Moldova due to the historian Artiom Lazarev<sup>37</sup>. He was born in Bessarabia, graduated the Pedagogic Institute of Tiraspol in 1938, he was a party member since 1942 after words he fought at Stalingrad too. From 1947 to 1953 he was Minister of Education in R.S.S Moldova, then secretary at CC at PCUS from Moldova and Minister of Culture between 1953-1963. Since

<sup>30</sup> Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1997, p. 120.

<sup>31</sup> Andrei Oțetea (sub red.), *Istoria poporului român*, București, Editura Științifică, 1970, p. 91-95.

<sup>32</sup> *The Historu of Romanian Languare*, vol. I-II, Bucharest, Editura Academiei Române, 1968.

<sup>33</sup> George Ivașcu, *The History of Romanian literature*, 1<sup>st</sup> vol. București, Editura Științifică, 1969.

<sup>34</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, 1<sup>st</sup> vol, București, Editura Politică, p. 335.

<sup>35</sup> I.M. Oprea, *Nicolae Titulescu*, Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1966; *Idem, O etapă rodnică din istoria relațiilor diplomatice româno-sovietice, 1928-1936*, București, Editura Științifică, 1967.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Deutsch (ed), Nicolae Titulescu, *Discursuri*, București, Editura Politică, 1967.

<sup>37</sup> W.P. van Meurs, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

1964 he came back to scientific work and became a member of the Institute of the History Academy of Moldova. Since 1968 he was rector of the University of Chisinau<sup>38</sup>. In this famous work<sup>39</sup> he boosted the theory still in vogue today, referring to the existence of a nations that is called Moldavian and its language is Moldavian over the Prut River, separated from the Romanian nation since the XIV century, while Mihai Viteazul was seen in the same place as a conqueror of Moldova in 1600 and the interwar period as one of Romanian occupation and the blackest period of the Moldova's history. The work had a great impact on the Romanian – Soviet relations. Nicolae Ceaușescu and the Romanian historians reacted immediately.

Romanian reaction followed from now the typical normal course. Nicolae Ceaușescu gave the tone in his speeches, followed after words by a part of historians from the circle of power, who gave the ground bounce in the light of indications, giving the coordinates which could stir the discussion. Only after that other historians might approach the subject without fear, being convinced by now that they have the assent from the power and will not get hurt. The phenomenon has never run in the opposite way. On 28 March 1975 Nicolae Ceaușescu attack in a very tough speech the interpretations from Lazarev's *History*<sup>40</sup>, considering that it responds to certain political-historical needs of that time since it represents the arbitrary division of the peoples as natural processes of formation of certain separate nations. The speech was followed immediately by a series of reactions of some historians. Stefan Stefanescu, a historian of the innermost circle of Ceausescu, was the first who attacked Lazarev's book. While keeping the coordinates of the scientific discourse, he appreciates that the Bessarabian author deliberately ignores sources coming from the history of Romanians<sup>41</sup>. It followed then the reactions of the second circle of power, called the professionals; we called here on Florin Constantiniu or Dan Berindei. The two have reviewed the book of Lazarev extremely severe, reviewal but they remained unpublished until today because of the virulence, they exist only in manuscript stage<sup>42</sup>.

The regime reacted outside its borders too. In 1976 appears in Milan under the signature of Peter Moldoveanu, at the publishing house Nagard, property of Iosif Constantin Dragan, a booklet entitled *How to falsifying history*<sup>43</sup>, in which there were practically demolished Lazarev theories. Who was this Petre Moldoveanu? It was no other than the renowned historian Constantin C. Giurescu, who wrote the book, according to W.P. van Meurs, at the initiative of Cornel Burt, a member at that time of the CC of the RCP, the one that dealt with the publishing of the brochure in Milan<sup>44</sup>.

More and more of the Romanian historians works had that anti- Soviet idea. The place of Russia in a number of issues related to the Romanian history, as the process of national emancipation in the nineteenth century, has been permanently diminished, insisting instead on the brake role of the czarism in the XVIII-XIX century and on his intentions of permanent annexation of the

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> Artiom Lazarev, *Moldovskaia sovetskaia gosudarstvennost'i bessarabskii vopros*, Chișinău, Editura Cartea Moldovenească, 1974.

<sup>40</sup> Robert R. King, *The Escalation of Romanian Soviet Historical Polemics over Bessarabia*, in *Radio Free Europe Research. Background Report Romania*, no. 28, 1976, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> W.P. van Meurs, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> Petre Moldoveanu, *Cum se falsifică istoria*, Milan, Editura Nagard, 1976.

<sup>44</sup> W.P. van Meurs, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

Romanian Principalities. Bessarabia and Bukovina appeared frequently in the pages of different printed matters with the most critical accents of the moments from 1775, 1812 or 1878, while 1856 and 1918 were considered normal moments of national history<sup>45</sup>.

Things seemed out of control, but in August 1976 Nicolae Ceaușescu was called to order by Leonid Brejnev. Shortly before the visit in the Soviet Union, to the Socialist Congress of Culture and Education which has conducted its work in June of the same year, Ceaușescu, almost repented, was announcing publicly that Romania and the USSR have not had or have no regional problems rendering homage for the first time in a long time the Soviet contribution to the issue of Romania that took place during the year 1944. In the autumn of the same year, Leonid Brejnev visits Romania contributing decisively to taming the disobedient Nicolae Ceaușescu. He re-dimensioned his speech so that it makes references to his great brother from the east and to what he had done to the Romanian history<sup>46</sup>. From inertia, the years 1977-1978 have reported a series of contributions, mainly due to the late appearance of some magazine materials that were collected the previous years, articles in which the Soviet Union is attacked on the question of Bessarabia, especially at the anniversary of 100 years of the conquest of independence by the Romanian Principalities in 1977, or 60 years from the Grand Union. Since an open historiography dispute between Romania and Soviet Union was no longer possible, this issue was subtly oriented towards the land of rehabilitation. In this approach, unlike others, were involved a lot of prestigious historians. Using the opportunity, they re-discussed and re-dimensioned personalities of both history and historiography that couldn't be actualised until then in the entire post-war period. The finality of these so-called rehabilitations was different from that of the end of '60 years. If then their first goal was to delimitate the present regime from the past regime, Dej's regime, along with eliminating the last of its faithful ones, now in this period it was directed subtle, since it was becoming less likely to do in directly into the Soviet Union. we talk here about Marshal Antonescu, whose name was not mentioned until the years '70 only in negative aspects of the Romanian history.

Since the historians were seriously controlled by the censorship on issues related to the east neighbour, early rehabilitation of Ion Antonescu was made by literati. Marin Preda in *Delirul*<sup>47</sup>, astounds several moments of the Second World War in which the Marshal Antonescu appears not in situations not that negative. The approach was clearly anti-Soviet, since part of the action from the novel is taking place on the east front, where Romania's Antonescu fights to release Bessarabia from the Soviet conquer. The first edition of the novel, had 35,000 copies and it was very bold towards the leader of Romania, so the official media has not reported the release of the novel awaiting response from the Soviets<sup>48</sup>. Since the reaction was an extremely negative one, in the autumn of the same year a second revised edition, to be read censored in 100,000 copies was published, diminishing very much Ion Antonescu's personality in the book.

Once opened, the road to rehabilitation of Antonescu continued being promoted by the historians from the circle near to the power, accepted as representatives of official historiography. In 1979, Simion Aurica presented in a

<sup>45</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>46</sup> *Scântea*, 25<sup>th</sup> of November, 1976, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Marin Preda, *Delirul*, București, 1975.

<sup>48</sup> W. P. van Meurs, *op. cit.*, p. 292.



remarkable book<sup>49</sup>, the entire period of the Antonescu regime's in extremely favourable colours stating it in the end even a patriot who has fight for the return of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina to Romania, thus finally filling the line of favourite personalities of the president of Romania, a line that includes names like Burebista, Mircea cel Batran, who as the president grew old Mircea cel Mare, Stefan cel Mare, Mihai Viteazul or Nicolae Titulescu.

Antonescu's rehabilitation continued in the 80s, with an even wider range of interpretation when through the nature of the political context, the phenomenon has moved outside Romania, to the Romanian exile, where most of them belonged to the trends of the right interwar, which continued to publish books dedicated to the Marshal<sup>50</sup>. Nicolae Ceaușescu himself has accepted that some Romanian historians to go to West to visit these right exiled, which shows the fact that he knew their work, and Iosif Constantin Dragan was the favourite one<sup>51</sup>.

On the same way we can interpret the emphasis put on reinterpreting Titulescu, using for this purpose new explanatory coordinates, becoming this way, after a new break of silence, in his turn, a true national hero. In 1982, during the Titulescu centenary, he was officially celebrated as a great champion of world peace and regional cooperation, titles to which even Nicolae Ceaușescu himself aspire to.

Gheorghe I. Brătianu in his turn benefited himself of the same treatment, both as a politician and as a historian, knowing the fact that the liberal policy which he had promoted, come in total contradiction with the Soviet politics, which has generated ultimately his death in the prison from Sighet. After 40 years of silence on him, the historian Bratianu is first mentioned in a positive context in the *Romanian Historiography Encyclopaedia*, being counted on as a rightful founder of a historical school<sup>52</sup>. In early'80 a number of valuable and courageous contributions of the famous professor Theodore Pompiliu from Cluj have contributed substantially to the rehabilitation of the historian Bratianu, giving him back to the younger generations, who had less information about the Romanian historical<sup>53</sup>, while the researcher from Iasi Al Zub, during the last year of the Communist regime, recalls the writings of Bratianu which refer to Bessarabia<sup>54</sup>.

In the political realm, the reassessment of Gheorghe I. Brătianu was much more timid than the historical realm. By 1980 Valeriu Râpeanu has made some vague appreciations regarding this politician, sweetened somewhat the perception of him. From the man obsessed with power, as considered in 1966<sup>55</sup> by Stefan Voicu, I. Gh Bratianu had become not necessarily the person who

<sup>49</sup> Aurică Simion, *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice ale insurecției române din August 1944*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1979.

<sup>50</sup> George Ciorănescu, *The Problem of Bessarabia and Bucovina during World War II, -II- The Diplomatic negotiations on the future of Bessarabia (1941-1942)*, in *Radio Free Europe Research, Background Report Romania*, no. 136, 1981, p. 1-14; D. Ghermani, *Marschall Antonescu, historisch rehabilitiert*, in *Wissenschaftlicher Dienst Südosteuropa*, 28, no. 10, 1979, p. 222-227.

<sup>51</sup> Iosif Constantin Drăgan, *Antonescu-Mareșalul României și războiul reunificării*, Milan, Nagard, 1968.

<sup>52</sup> *Romanian Historiography Encyclopaedia*, Bucharesi, Editura Enciclopedică, 1978, p. 72-73.

<sup>53</sup> Pompiliu Teodor, *Gh.I. Brătianu-istoricul.I.Dimensiunile operei*, in *The Yearbook of the Institute of History and Archeology* 1983, p. 233-247; Idem, *Gh.I. Brătianu-istoricul.II.Concepție și metodă istorică*, in *The Yearbook of the Institute of History and Archeology*, 1988, p. 233-245; Idem, *Gh. I. Brătianu și spiritul "Analelor". Analogii, sincronisme și convergențe*, in *Confluente istoriografice românești și europene*, Iasi, Editura Junimea, 1988, p. 25-47.

<sup>54</sup> Alexandru Zub, *Istorie și istorici in România interbelică*, Iasi, Editura Junimea, 1989.

<sup>55</sup> Ștefan Voicu, *op. cit.*, p. 59-80.

pursued political positions, and when they were not in accordance with his conceptions, even to deny them, but he was not willing to compromise<sup>56</sup>. We have to admit that there is a consistent difference in the approaches, due to the changes that took place because of the movement of the system to other historiography areas of interest.

After a break of a five-year, the historiography dispute has moved on a more subtle ground, on the second half of the '80, with the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and the tightening of the ideological contradictions between Bucharest and Moscow, a new escalation of differences took place. The number of the provocative statements of Romanian historians grew. Were multiplied in increasingly, while becoming increasingly bellicose<sup>57</sup>, predicting the end of a world more and more out-dated. Whether it was the historians of the house of the regime, Mircea Mușat and Ion Ardeleanu with their *Dacia From Ancient to Modern Romania*, published in Bucharest in 1985 or genuine historians, such as Florin Valeriu Dobrinescu, with *România și organizarea postbelică a lumii, 1945-1947*, the book saw the light of printing in 1988, historical discourse meanings were clear.

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<sup>56</sup> W.P. van Meurs, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

<sup>57</sup> Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *From Ancient Dacia to Modern Romania*, Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1985, p. 379-455; Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *România și organizarea postbelică a lumii, 1945-1947*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1988.