

SOCIETY FOR ROMANIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER



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The Society for Romanian Studies

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Vol 41 Fall 2019 No. 2

From the President



Moldova has a new prime minister since the last SRS Newsletter, and Romania has decided to keep its president for another term. But as this issue makes clear, there is a lot more to Romanian Studies than the merry-go-round of high politics. This year's Book Prize goes to Bruce O'Neill's *The Space of Boredom: Homelessness in the Slowing Global Order* (2017), with an honorable mention to Irina Marin

for *Peasant Violence and Antisemitism in Early Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (2018). Both books are interested in marginalized and less acknowledged members of Romanian society, with O'Neill studying rough sleepers in Bucharest and Marin looking at angry peasants. The prize committee of Irina Livezeanu, Monica Heintz, and Radu Cinpoes examined a number of excellent books, highlighting how vibrant the field has become. The graduate student essay prize committee, made up of Marina Cap-Bun, Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, and Cristian Tileagă, also had a host of high quality essays to choose from. Adela Hîncu's research on intellectual life under state socialism took the honors, with an honorable mention going to Elena Radu for her work on secularism and church-state relations.

The Newsletter provides an excellent opportunity to see some of the most cutting edge work in the field without having to wade through difficult academic tomes oneself. Once again, it is the voices that one does not usually hear that dominate this issue. From Igor Cașu's work on starving Moldavians and Marius Wamsiedel's attempts to listen to Roma patients in emergency wards to Margaret Beissinger's research on Roma musicians, the inclusion of new social groups into major research projects is transforming the way that we approach the study of Romanian society and history. This is particularly apparent in the essays from participants in the Hidden Galleries project published in this issue for the first time. Here eight scholars reflect on the surprises and emotions involved in researching lesser-known religious groups such as Inochentists, Old Calendarists, the Free Christian Church, village choirs, and underground churches. As Margaret Beissinger notes in her 'Advice to Young Scholars', this sort of research is not always easy but it is certainly rewarding.

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From the President

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The SRS/Polirom Book Series has brought out two new titles in 2019 - Diana Dumitru, *Vecini în vremuri de restriște* and Maria Bucur, *Eroi și victime*. The series now has seven titles under its belt with another in preparation, but it is always looking for proposals of new books or of existing books that deserve to be published in Romanian. The *Journal of Romanian Studies* is also going from strength to strength. The editorial team of Lavinia Stan, Margaret Beissinger, and Radu Cinpoș published two issues of the journal this year with several more issues in the pipeline. They have stepped down to concentrate on other projects and have been succeeded by Peter Gross and Diane Vancea (editors), Iuliu Rațiu (book review editor), and Claudia Lonkin (editorial assistant). We are very grateful to both teams of editors for their hard work, and look forward to more dynamic scholarship from the journal in the coming months. An electronic subscription to the journal is available with SRS membership, but please also encourage your libraries to subscribe to the journal as well.

Dr. Roland Clark
SRS President

Member Announcements

Cristina Bejan (Metropolitan State University of Denver) published *Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania: The Criterion Association* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Eric M. Freedman (Hofstra University) published the second volume of his bibliography on Benjamin Fondane, entitled *Bibliographie de l'oeuvre de Benjamin Fondane, Volume 2* (Editions Non Lieu, 2019)

Peter Gross (The University of Tennessee) published *Mezaventurile mass-mediei și ale jurnalismului din Europa Centrală și de Est* (Editura Universitatii de Vest, 2019).

Zsuzsa Plainer (Institutul pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale) published *Despre vigilența ideologică. File din istoria cenzurii instituțiilor (maghiare) orădene în regimul Ceaușescu: presă, filarmonică, teatru.* (Editura ISPMN, Cluj-Napoca, 2019).

Mihaela Serban (Ramapo College of New Jersey) published *Subverting Communism in Romania: Law and Private Property, 1945-1965* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

Calls for Papers

- [12th Annual Romanian Studies Conference](#),
- Indiana University Bloomington, April 10-12 2020
- Deadline: December 31

Interview with a Scholar

An interview with Dr. Igor Cașu, Lecturer at the Faculty of History and Philosophy and Director of the Center for the Study of Totalitarianism & Cold War at the State University of Moldova

Tell us a bit about yourself, your background, and your academic career.

My background is in contemporary history. I studied for three years at the State University in Chișinău and then moved to Iași for the 4th and 5th year, graduating in 1995 and becoming a Ph.D. student at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași. I did my BA thesis on the political and diplomatic preliminaries of events of August 23, 1944 in Romania, as the relations between Ion Antonescu and King Michael were very topical at that time. For the doctoral program, I chose to focus on the Soviet nationalities policy in Moldavia from 1944 to 1989, also because of a personal curiosity. My main conclusion was that Soviet nation-building in Moldavia both failed and succeeded. It failed in the sense of creating a separate Moldavian language distinct from Romanian, but succeeded in the way present-day Moldavians perceive national identity, which is Romanian in content but its mentality, for better or worse, has been shaped by close contact with the other Soviet peoples, especially Slavic, but also non-Slavic, nations. I started my Ph.D. in 1995 almost the same time as Charles King began at Oxford and our books were published at almost the same time. With hindsight, my interpretation, for understandable reasons, was more emotional, while King embarked on a more balanced and conceptual approach and his book thus had a greater impact than mine. I am planning to get back to this topic using a new conceptual background, that of empire and borderland studies, and the new empirical data which has since become available. This will not happen very soon, however, since I have already several other project to finish.



Dr. Igor Cașu

What led you to your interests in the communist period and in political repression, nationality policy, totalitarianism, dictatorship, and violence?

I chose the topic of my Ph.D. for the reasons explained above. As for Soviet political repression and violence, the subject of my second book published in 2014 and republished in 2015, that interest came about as a result of my earlier interest in state terror and my participation as expert in the Tismăneanu Commission in Romania back in 2006. It was also a result of the disclosure of the archives of KGB and Ministry of Internal Affairs of the former Moldavian SSR. This happened in 2010 when a Presidential Commission for the study and evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime in Moldova was created. To be sure, I would like to deal with less troubled and tough issues, and I plan to do that, but before that I think it is imperative to know the violent and inhuman sides of the Soviet policies. These aspects were forbidden and the access to archival documents was denied and it is normal that I had – as did many others as well – the curiosity to look through those files. I do not have repressed persons in my family, but during my childhood in the countryside I knew that a neighbor's family was deported in 1949 in Siberia and another one fled to Romania during the famine of 1946-47. He was lucky, because others were caught and executed on the spot without any trial.

Interview with a Scholar

cont'd.

While I have found a research center at my university in Chişinău which bears the name totalitarian, I am a proponent of a softer definition of totalitarianism. By this I mean that the regime had the tendency to control the everyday lives of everyone and to a large extent it succeeded but, at the same time, there was more or less room for anyone to decide, especially after 1953 but not exclusively, to what extent they were willing to collaborate with the regime and to what degree to integrate or assimilate in the Soviet or Russian culture and linguistic milieu. Usually, the more ambitious a person was, the more one craved privileges, the more one was inclined to compromise with the regime at the expense of neighbors, relatives, and close family members, the more likely they were to collaborate. Sometimes there was no choice, either one decided to denounce or be denounced and become a victim, like during the Great Terror of 1937-38 and the Sovietization of Bessarabia and other Ribbentrop-Molotov territories in 1940-41 and 1944-1953. This is to say that agency was very important, not only for the governed, but also for the nomenklatura. I have found cases in the archives, albeit rather isolated, when state security or party and state officials risked their careers if not their lives in trying to save their friends or acquaintances from repression just because they cared about them.

What are you working on at present?

Currently, I am a fellow at New Europe College in Bucharest and I am doing research on the postwar famine in Soviet Moldavia, 1946-47. Even though there are several articles and chapters and a volume of documents from the former party archive published in the 1990s, as well as interviews with survivors and witnesses, a lot of questions have not been answered yet. It was the most lethal famine, proportionally relative to other republics: the excess deaths were at least 120,000, i.e. 5 percent of the population, and this alone should have an explanation. Meanwhile, according to Michael Ellman, in Ukraine and in Russia the death toll was 1 percent and 0.6 percent, respectively. In absolute numbers however, the order is vice versa: Russia lost at least 500,000 and Ukraine 300,000. Thus, it is important to explain the Moldavian famine in the whole Union and thus avoid the errors made in the study of Ukrainian Holodomor of 1932-33, including that made by Anne Applebaum in her recent book, *Red Famine* (2017). While I think there was a clear ethnic component in the Soviet famine of early 1930s, this is applicable not only to Ukraine, but also to Kazakhstan. As has been documented by Isabelle Ohayon, Niccolò Pianciola, Robert Kindler and Sarah Cameron, between 30 to 40 percent of Kazakhs died of famine and related illnesses which is proportionally much higher than in Ukraine. As a whole, the research on the Kazakh famine of early 1930s is of a higher quality and is more sophisticated conceptually than the one on Ukraine.

In my book I will introduce new topics that never have been part of the postwar or 1930s famines, such as food riots and the role of the women in the open and covert protest in the wake of the ecological and humanitarian crisis in the Spring and Summer 1946. More broadly, the postwar famine is intimately intertwined with the nature of the Soviet modernization project and, in Moldavia, to the nation-building after WWII. I will touch also upon the relevance of the Soviet famine of 1946-47 as a whole and in Moldavia in particular for the genocide debate.

What has been the role of organizations such as SRS in your professional development?

I have participated in several events organized by SRS. Through SRS conferences that are held in Romania, I and my Moldovan and Romanian colleagues have opportunity to meet and socialize with Western colleagues doing research in Romanian studies. I am very glad SRS has launched recently its own peer-reviewed journal which will help make research on Romania and Moldova more visible in the global market of ideas.

Interview with a Scholar

cont'd.

You were born in Moldova and have built an academic career both within the country and internationally. How would you characterize the experience of working as an academic researcher from Moldova and working in Chisinau and on the subject of Moldovan history?

I did research for my current project in Chişinău, Odessa, Kiev, Moscow, and the Hoover archives in California. I travel abroad a lot, especially in the last five years. I was a fellow at Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena in Germany in 2015, a Fulbright scholar at Stanford in 2016 and, this academic year, as I mentioned above, I am at NEC in Romania. In this way I had the possibility in the last few years to meet and talk to a bunch of historians everyone would like to meet: Norman Naimark, Stephen Kotkin, Paul Gregory, Mark Harrison, Robert Service, Michael Ellman, Mark Kramer, Stephen Wheatcroft, Veniamin Zima, Oleg Khlevniuk, Amir Weiner, Nikita Petrov, Natalie Zemon-Davies and others. I am grateful for their advice and suggestions.

Besides that, I have been one of the organizers of a three-year international summer school held in Chişinău in 2011-2014, supported by the Open Society Foundation. Together with my friends and colleagues Diana Dumitru, Andrei Cuşco and Petru Negură, we had a great opportunity to invite several important, mostly Western, leading scholars on Soviet and East European Studies, such as Lynne Viola, Jutta Scherrer, Elena Osokina, Michael David-Fox, Kate Brown, Alexei Miller, Sorin Antohi, Vintilă Mihăilescu, Viktor Karady and others. It has been a pleasure to have them all in Moldova. Lynne Viola and Jutta Scherrer became fond of Moldova and both pay visits almost every year ever since to meet our 'Westernized' group (which includes Octavian Munteanu, Virgil Pâslariuc, Anastasia Felcher, Alex Voronovici, and others).

Doing research in history in Moldova is very difficult, but not impossible. One needs to travel abroad a lot, much like historians from the former Soviet Union and some of the East European states, because the government or the universities are very parsimonious in terms of grants and research assistance. This creates issues of tensions between those who are integrated more or less in the European and world historiographical debates and those who do not read or speak international languages and stick to old and outdated interpretations.

What advice can you offer for young scholars interested in Moldovan or Romanian history, the study of Soviet-era or Cold War-era political repression, or totalitarianism more broadly? What do you identify as the greatest challenges facing young scholars in these fields?

I invite Romanian and Western young scholars to come to Moldova and use its huge archival heritage, from the Tsarist period to the interwar Romanian and Soviet periods after World War II. The former party archive is totally accessible, including Osobaia Papka and the personal files of the nomenklatura. All the fonds from the National Archive are accessible and the price for photocopying is symbolic (.50 euros for one file, no matter how many pages it contains). There are issues related to the KGB files, but the process of transferring the files of the former Soviet political police to the National Archive has begun (25,000 files transferred already) and in this way files of the victims of Communism and political police are becoming accessible for anyone interested. I especially encourage studying everyday life in Tsarist, Romanian and Soviet Bessarabia/Moldavia, rural-urban relations, center-periphery relations, the Cold War, ecological crises, the evolution of education, and health and social security systems in the 20th century and its successes and limits across three distinct political regimes. Doing research on Moldova as a borderland territory gives the unique chance to verify or apply approaches consecrated already in both Russian/Soviet and Romanian/East European studies. Chişinău is a unique city in many regards, not least because it is among the few cities in the world to hold archives of the Tsarist Ohranka, Romanian Siguranţa, and NKVD/KGB. Moldova is also the home of the largest underground wineries, intimately related to its 20th century social, cultural and political history: Cricova and Mileştii Mici, stretching more than 100 km each.

Interview with a Scholar

An interview with Dr. Marius Wamsiedel, Lecturer in the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Tell us a bit about yourself, your background, and your academic career.

I graduated in 2009 from the University of Arizona with a major in Sociology and a minor in Chinese Studies. After that I did a Master's degree in Sociological Research at the University of Bucharest (2009-2011), and a PhD in Sociology at the University of Hong Kong (2012-2016). After a brief teaching spell at the University of Bucharest, I started working at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) in January 2017.

What led you to your interests in healthcare and the sociology of health and illness, the post-socialist period, ethnicity and Roma Studies, social categorization, and symbolic interaction?

Sociology is a vast and complex science. I am mostly interested in the micro-interactionist approach, because it unravels how people do things together in the day to day life. Instead of adopting structural lenses to make sense of the social, symbolic interaction acknowledges the situated and interactional character of social action and emphasizes the agency that ordinary individuals are endowed with. To put it metaphorically, symbolic interaction regards people as social actors whose performances do not follow closely predetermined scripts. Instead, the social actors recreate and continuously adjust the preexisting scripts during the performance, based on their interpretation of the situation and the interaction with others. I find this perspective analytically meaningful for making sense of the social processes of everyday life.

My interest in Romani studies comes from three years of work with a Roma NGO in Bucharest while I was a Master's student. As the only sociologist there, I had the chance to visit Roma communities throughout the country for various research projects. That was a transformative experience. I saw the many faces of destitution, exclusion, and social injustice: undocumented people living in shanties, in complete isolation from the state and apart from others; people evicted from their homes (more often than not on cold winter days) improvising shelters on the sidewalk; children and adults scavenging at the infamous Pata Rât rubbish dump to make the ends meet. At the same time, I met successful Roma actors, entrepreneurs, entertainers, activists, academics, lawyers, and health mediators committed to social change. I visited communities of whose existence I was unaware, such as the Horahane or Muslim Roma in Dobrugea. People shared with me atrocious stories of discrimination and vilification. It didn't take long for me to realize that Roma's lives and challenges are by and large socially invisible. This gave me an impetus to use sociology to dismantle ethnic stereotypes and uncover some of the root causes of Roma's problems.



Dr. Marius Wamsiedel

Interview with a Scholar

cont'd.

The theoretical interest in micro-sociology and the desire to better understand ethnic relations shaped my scholarly coming of age. One of my first research projects was a small-scale, exploratory study of the moral evaluation of patients at the emergency departments of public hospitals in Romania. Back then, I was not that interested in hospitals themselves. I just wanted to see how public organizations handle their clients, and I found the hospital to be an excellent setting for doing that.

My PhD project was a more rigorous and encompassed ethnographic study about social categorization. I conducted six months of fieldwork in two emergency departments to see how triage nurses evaluate patients on non-clinical grounds. I uncovered the criteria used for socially categorizing users, the typification of patients, and the variegated ways in which patients and nurses negotiate the moral evaluation and the conditions of access to the service.

What are you working on at present?

I have a larger project that builds upon and extends my doctoral research. It examines the interactional accomplishment of patient credibility as a reporter of symptoms in four countries – China, Romania, Zambia, and Belize. A smaller project that I am currently involved in explores the social construction of environmental risks among expatriates in China.

As one of relatively few Romanian studies scholars working in Asia, how would you characterize the impact that working in China has had on your career?

I have to say that the university I am affiliated with is not a typical one, and my experience is probably quite different from that of a researcher working in a public university. XJTLU was established 13 years ago as a joint-venture between two established universities, one in China (Xi'an Jiaotong) and the other one in the UK (University of Liverpool). It is a transnational educational institution that works at the same time as an international campus of the University of Liverpool and as a standalone university. Thus, our students get two degrees, one from Liverpool and the other from the Chinese Ministry of Education. Practically, this means that the curriculum, the delivery of teaching, the assessment of students all have to comply with the criteria and standards in place in the British academia. It is a Western-oriented university in Asia, where about half of the academic staff are foreigners. I find the environment here intellectually stimulating.

Living in China gives me a vantage point from which to examine what is going on in Romania. China's passage to a market economy and the rapid development led to deep social changes, many of which bear similarities to those taking place in Eastern Europe. For instance, the privatization of some health care services and the adoption of new public management mechanisms in the public sector led, in both countries, to a general erosion of trust between patients and health care practitioners. In turn, this contributed to a resurrection and partial resignification of informal practices of access. Thus, some of the experiences encountered here act as a magnifying lens for things that also happen, for more or less similar reasons, in Romania. To paraphrase Herbert Blumer, they can be seen as 'sensitizing experiences'. It goes without saying that many social phenomena in the two countries are dissimilar. However, the differences are as meaningful as the commonalities.

Interview with a Scholar

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What advice can you offer for young scholars interested in Romanian studies, sociology, or public health studies? What do you identify as the greatest challenges facing young scholars in these fields?

The only advice I can give them is to keep their mind open and ignore any advice.

As for the second question, Romanian studies is part of area studies, and this comes with both opportunities and challenges. In the past, the production of social scientific knowledge about Romania was done primarily by Western academics and a few Romanian exiles whose access to what was going on in the country was inherently limited. Perhaps the most salient contributions to the understanding of everyday life socialist Romania came from a handful of American anthropologists (Katherine Verdery, David Kideckel, Steven Sampson, and Margaret Beissinger) who managed to conduct fieldwork there in the 1970s and 1980s. Now, the unrestricted scholarly access to Romania and the Republic of Moldova, and the reemergence of social science study programs in both countries have created tremendous possibilities for developing empirical sociological studies by foreign and local scholars alike. Topics that were notoriously difficult to study not long ago (subcultures, marginality and social exclusion, gender, ethnicity, religion, and social movements to name a few) are now open for scientific scrutiny. On the other hand, the international interest for Eastern Europe as a region seems to have waned over the past few decades.

What has been the role of organizations such as SRS in your professional development?

SRS is an excellent platform for bringing together people that would otherwise have few, if any, chances to know each other. The conference that SRS organizes every three years brings together hundreds of scholars from around the world whose work focuses on, or deals with, Romania and the Republic of Moldova. I benefited a lot from attending various panels, presenting my work in progress, and exchanging ideas with fellow participants. The newsletter of the SRS is another meaningful communication channel for scholars in Romanian studies. I am glad and honored to contribute to the development of the Society as a board member.

Soundbite from Romania

D.C. Brett, Teaching Fellow in Social and Political Science at University College London, reflects on the political situation in Romania

Romanian Presidential Elections: Surprisingly Unsurprising?

Perhaps the most surprising development in the Romanian presidential elections this autumn has been the lack of suspense or surprise. Unlike the elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014, where the elections were closely contested and the result was in the balance, this election was a relatively straightforward and a convincing victory for incumbent Klaus Iohannis. Iohannis' margin of victory in the second round (66.09% -33.91%) over the PSD's Viorica Dăncilă was the largest since the elections of 1990. Indeed, the biggest question going into the elections was whether the PSD, which has dominated Romanian party politics for the last thirty years, would, after a series of scandals, make it through to the second round.



Dr. D.C. Brett

There were some interesting developments. In a crowded field, the first round performance of the USR's Dan Barna, who came third, was significant as the party doubled its support in comparison to the 2016 parliamentary elections. USR performed well in Bucharest, Cluj, Timiș and among the diaspora. UDMR's support remained strong in the Hungarian areas of Romania with Hunor Kelemen winning Covasna and Harghita in the first round.

For the PSD, the collapse of their support was demonstrated by Dăncilă winning the vote in just five counties in the second round, all of which were in the southwest of the country (Giurgiu, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Teleorman). Among the diaspora, Dăncilă won just 6% of the vote. Despite the scale of inequality, dissatisfaction with the political system, corruption, and the wider salience of nationalist discourse, these elections are significant for two failures. The PSD, as they have done in 2009, 2012 and 2014, cast themselves as defending Romania against the European Union and outside influence. As before, this appeal failed to work. Thus the Euro-sceptic, nationalist discourse which has been effective throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly in Hungary and Poland, does not seem to be electorally effective in Romania. The second failure is that of the far right. The far right has made breakthroughs elsewhere in the region and, given Romania's long history of far right parties, it is significant that, so far, we did not see its re-emergence. Voter turnout in the second round of elections was 54.86%, which is the lowest turnout since the fall of Communism. There are two readings of this: on the one hand, it is perhaps a reflection that that the result was not seen as being in question and so people were less mobilized to vote. On the other, it might be seen as a lack of enthusiasm for the candidates.

Where to now? It is too early to declare this the death of the PSD. The party has moved swiftly to remove Dăncilă as leader. Where it goes from here is one of the interesting stories that will develop over the next few months and years. It is clear that at a national level the party has a certain toxicity to voters and in presidential elections this is a significant barrier. However, despite the not winning a presidential election since 2000, the party has dominated parliamentary and local politics, resulting in the emergence of regional party barons.



Soundbite from Romania

cont'd.

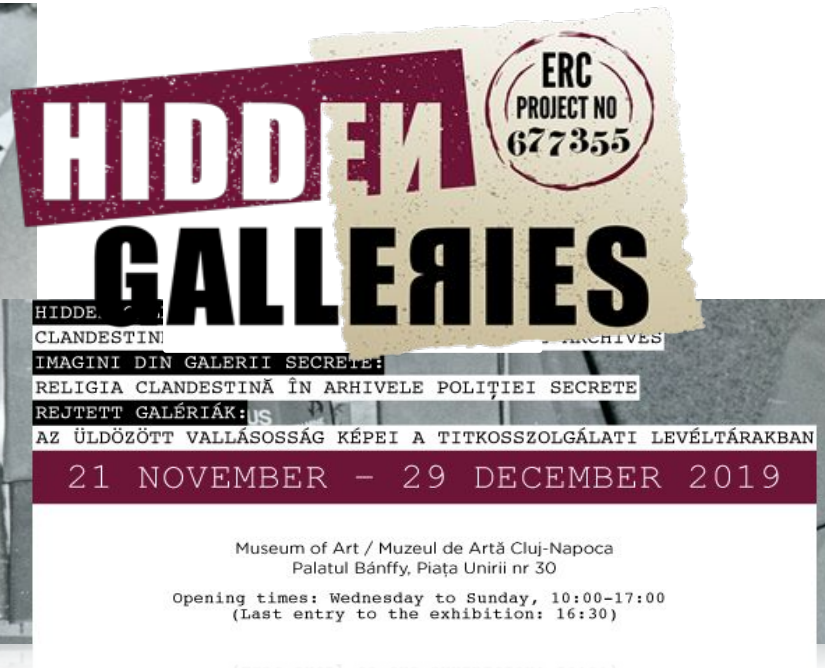
Ironically, although the presidential elections are seen as the most important in terms of power, real power over policy lies in parliament and at the local level. This represents the paradox facing the PSD: some of the reasons for its strength at a local level, such as the use of patronage networks and the ability to distribute resources through those networks, are the very things that render it toxic in presidential elections where corruption allegations turn voters off. (It should be noted that all the major parties have corruption issues; however the PSD, in part because of its local domination, has more than most.)

Although this may be seen as a victory for the centre-right, there remain significant issues. The centre-right is fractured and highly factional, with Iohannis entering his final term, there is likely to be jockeying for the position as his successor. Furthermore, the centre-right has again won on the back of hopes for reform. Unfortunately, time and time again, it has failed to deliver. It seems likely, the PNL and others will attempt to capitalize on the election results to force elections and to attempt to secure a parliamentary majority. The elections are currently due in late 2020 – early 2021. It would make sense to attempt to do this, as in previous occasions when the PSD has done badly or lost power (as in 2015 after the Colectiv fire and protests), it has quickly regrouped, taking advantage of disappointment with the centre-right.

Likewise, the PSD's strong local networks provide it with a well developed and resilient base through which it can mobilize supporters in parliamentary and local elections where people may vote for local candidates rather than with national politics in mind.

The fluid nature of Romanian politics means that party re-alignments, mergers, and splits are likely to occur and so there may be some reconfiguration of the parties between now and the elections. The PNL will look to build upon Iohannis' victory and the Orban government will look to carry this into the elections. For parties such as USR, key tests will come in the election over whether they can broaden their appeal beyond the major cities, while the PSD will no doubt regroup but is unlikely to reform. Finally, although the far right did not feature in this presidential election, many of the social, economic and political conditions that have fueled the rise of the far right elsewhere in the region are present in Romania and it is entirely possible that a political entrepreneur could easily exploit these conditions in the near future.

Hidden Galleries



Galerii secrete

Hidden Galleries

Rejtett galériák

Part of the ERC project *Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: 'Hidden Galleries' in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe* led by Dr. James Kapaló at University College Cork is the organization of several exhibitions the first of which will be launched on November 21st at the Art Museum in Cluj Napoca. The exhibition titled *Imagini din galerii secrete: religia clandestină în arhivele poliției secrete/Rejtett galériák: Az üldözött vallásosság képei a titkosszolgálati levéltárakban* presents the actions of the secret police against religion from a visual and cultural perspective. Bringing together the work of historians, anthropologists, curators and artists the exhibition places the visitors in front of a difficult cultural patrimony that includes images created and gathered by the secret police in Romania, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. At times violent or indiscrete, sometimes personal and sometimes important documents, secret police materials that are subject to so many interpretations and uses. The exhibition invites to reflect on our relation with the near pasts.



We have put together several essays, reflections of researchers that contributed to the project and the exhibition. James Kapaló, Gabriela Nicolescu, Kinga Povedák, Tatiana Vagramenko, Agnes Hesz, Iuliana Cindrea, Dumitru Lisnic and Anca Șincan are sharing their thoughts, impressions, difficult moments in researching this sensitive subject: religious minorities and their confrontation with the secret police in Romania, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.



Hidden Galleries

cont'd.

Reflections on the religious underground Dr. James Kapaló

Over the past few years working on the Hidden Galleries European Research Council project, the secret police archives have come to represent for me personally a complex meeting of metaphors and realities. Growing up in England in the 1980s the son of a Hungarian 1956 refugee, I was once asked by my school teacher to present to the school Christian Union about religion under communism, I was probably 12 or 13 at the time with very little personal experience or understanding. I began to read, or rather dip into, books like *God's Smuggler* by Brother Andrew and Richard Wurmbrand's *In God's Underground*. The image of heroic characters, priests and pastors, defying the communist authorities, dodging the secret police, maintaining their faith in prison despite torture was a powerful faith-affirming one that certainly gripped my fellow pupils at school. It was from these works that I first heard about the so-called "religious underground" and formed an image that was full of cold war imagery and rhetoric.

Fastforward to the summer of 1989, I am camping with a friend at Római Fürdő in Budapest surrounded by feverishly excited East Germans awaiting their chance to escape to the West. A few short months later, at the height of the demonstrations that swept East Germany that autumn, attention was already turning to the secret police and their archives. Erich Mielke, the Head of the Stasi, began ordering the destruction of state security files beginning with evidence of illegal phone tapping and postal interceptions and the lists of names of unofficial informers and collaborators, however, orders soon followed to destroy a much wider range of files including the destruction of sensitive "church department" documents. Protesters responded by storming the Stasi Headquarters to prevent their destruction.

In the years and decades that have followed, the fate of, access to, uses of and methods of interpretation of secret police files have been at the heart of a whole range of historical questions, political debates and controversial claims. Churches and religious leaders have very often been at the centre of these debates and deeply embroiled in the controversies. However, 30 years on, we have the opportunity to re-examine the categories and experiences of the cold war in new ways. For me personally, this began with the term "religious underground" which has served as a key category of inquiry with the secret police archives representing the means. The powerful visual and material evidence contained in the archives, much of which has remained unexplored by scholars and hidden from communities, allows us to re-examine the metaphorical and literal meaning of the "religious underground" with all its ideological, theological, experiential and emotional meanings. The Hidden Galleries project, and especially the exhibitions, aims through a visual cultural lens, to retell the multiple stories associated with this difficult cultural patrimony.

James Kapaló is Senior Lecturer in the Study of Religions at [University College Cork](#), Ireland and co-Director of the *Marginalised and Endangered Worldviews Study Centre* ([MEWSC](#)). His postgraduate studies in history and the study of religions were conducted at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), London, and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. His research work, which includes ethnographic fieldwork with communities, archives and museum collections, explores the intersection between vernacular knowledge, religious identities and local memory. He is author of two monographs, *Text, Context and Performance: Gagauz Folk Religion in Discourse and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) and *Inochentism and Orthodox Christianity: Religious Dissent in the Russian and Romanian Borderlands* (Routledge: London, 2018) as well as several journal articles and book chapters. He is the Principal Investigator of the European Research Council project *Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: Hidden Galleries in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe* (project no. 677355).



Hidden Galleries

cont'd.

Research and Impact Dr. Gabriela Nicolescu

In many museums around the world curators make exhibitions using objects from museums stores. But this practice does not allow for new topics to be put on display, nor for contemporary subjects to be exhibited. How do we exhibit modernity, poverty, migration, care for the elderly or for the children left at home? From my work experience in museums and in art galleries I have learned to make exhibitions with objects, images and films which are not part of museums' stores, or with objects which are part of these stores but which are rarely exhibited. My passion for museums is driven mostly by the desire to exhibit new (or sometimes old) ideas and by the need to make museums less static and more attractive for contemporary audiences. I believe we need museums to tell stories making use of images and objects. The museum can still function like an agora, a space where people meet, exchange ideas and debate. For the *Hidden Galleries* project I enjoyed working with historians, anthropologists, designers and artists. I used my experience in visual anthropology to organise the material in different key themes and for asking: What do you see when you look at these images today? Can images transgress the categories of the archive? Who should have control over the use of these materials? The exhibition invites you to rethink your relationship to the recent past and to see other possibilities that researchers have in creating impact. If usually researchers put their findings in articles and books that the large public rarely has access to, we invite you to come and see our findings and to ask questions.

Beyond the work for the concept and the making of four exhibitions (in Cluj-Napoca, Budapest, Cork and Chişinău) the project allows for few educational events to take place: two propaganda film projections followed by Q&A sessions, guided tours and, last but not least, two courses: one made for high-school pupils and one for students. In Cluj, high-school pupils from "Romulus Ladea" Visual Art High-School will be familiarised with some of the projects' findings starting from the idea of a visual archive, more exactly from the social media platform that many of them use – Facebook. What kind of images do they post? Did they ever think at any possible consequences for uploading family photographs or photographs of friends (and for tagging them)? Their contemporary use will be compared to how in the past secret service police confiscated personal photographs with family members or friends and even albums to incriminate or to identify "suspects." We will help pupils to explore the vast visual material the project collected (the online digital archive but also the exhibition) and to create art pieces or concepts for small displays starting from the concept of the archive. With students from Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of Babeş-Bolyai University we will conduct ethnography in the archives, in the exhibition space and on-line. Students will physically and virtually explore different kinds of archives, they will familiarise themselves with various archives and their indexation techniques, the limits archives have and will elaborate on issues related to access in these institutions. In the exhibition space students will research and analyse different ways in which visitors perceived the material exhibited, and what visitors understood from the exhibition.

Gabriela Nicolescu is an anthropologist, curator and writer who is interested in what visual and material culture perspectives can bring to development and migration studies, political economy, and the anthropology of health; museums and museum practices; and the history of social sciences, especially in Europe. She has conducted extensive ethnographic work in Romania, Italy and the UK on the shifting relations between politics and representation, the diffusion and social organization of cultural ideas, migration, remittances and notions of care work. Gabriela has curated and co-curated multiple international exhibitions in Austria, Romania, Hong Kong, Philippines and the UK. She taught at Goldsmiths, University of London and at the University of Bucharest. Gabriela completed her PhD in Visual Anthropology at Goldsmiths, University of London. For updates on publications and research work please visit gabriela.nicolescu.com/



Hidden Galleries

cont'd.

From secret police archives to ethnography of minority religions Dr. Kinga Povedák

I began researching the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security hoping to find written and visual materials on religious minorities. The research brought many interesting, unexpected cases of the religious underground to the fore. One case was interesting in particular, as I could trace it back to and connect with members of the community today. This particular secret police file contains details of pastor József Németh, who was at that time expelled from the recognized Pentecostal organization. Pastor Németh and the community had been under investigation since 1968 because of regular illegal services held in a hidden house church. In 1972, the secret police organized and documented a raid on the community. There are 27 crime scene photographs in the file, along with images of rituals that were confiscated from the community. After the house search, pastor Németh was interrogated on several occasions and received a suspended sentence of 3 months. The community dissolved and only later, in 1982 did pastor Németh succeed in planting a new community as a member of the officially registered Free Christian Church.

What made this case particularly interesting and special is that I managed to get in contact with Lilla, the daughter of pastor Németh who by having seen the photos from the secret police files became more and more emotional and open to share her experiences. She began to bring the images to life with her background stories, identifying members of the community and adding personal recollections. On one of the confiscated photos Lilla identified herself as she is being baptized by her father. The talks seemed to be very important and significant for Lilla, and also her husband, who was also present, sharing his experiences of being under surveillance and his persecution during his university studies especially when evangelizing with Roma workers in Budapest. A relationship of trust was reached and through our discussions the content of the secret police file began to be filled with new meanings. Through the personal narratives I discovered fear and misery along with joy and content reminiscence. Lilla got emotional on several occasions but also took pleasure in telling humorous stories how her father used to trick and mislead the informants. After the raid the community dissolved, pastor Németh was left alone with doubts and questioning his faith. He was working as a night watchman and continued to write poetry.

Lilla and her husband did not see our conversations a burden or a waste of time. Through time, I got to know the personal narrative of the archival sources that otherwise would have stayed undiscovered. The oral history and the personal accounts trace out a completely different story. A story that is not necessarily simple and successful just because no one was imprisoned. The mechanism of secrecy, surveillance, intimidation and threat becomes clearer as we see in this case that no physical violence was necessary to end underground religious activities. The psychic warfare included raids, visible surveillance, the presence of agents and interrogations.

This particular case study with the ethnographic research behind it was quite instructional. It illustrates well that secret police files are often distortive, and a deeper understanding comes from encountering the individuals and communities involved. The visibility religious minorities get through the Hidden Galleries project is quite relevant today as well, since many churches, similarly to Lilla's community today, can only operate as religious association under the new Hungarian Religion Law.

Kinga Povedák (1979) studied European Ethnology and American Studies at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her dissertation explores religious modernization through the phenomenon of popular Christian music among Catholics, focusing on and analyzing the peculiarities of vernacular religiosity during socialist times through the study of the origins of the movement in Hungary. Currently she is a postdoctoral researcher at the Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: Hidden Galleries in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe project (University of Cork, Ireland). She is also a research fellow at the "Convivence" Religious Pluralism Research Group (Hungarian Academy of Sciences – University of Szeged). Her recent publications explore vernacular religiosity during socialist Hungary, Christianity and popular culture, Pentecostal charismatic Christianity.



Hidden Galleries

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Agents and believers Dr. Tatiana Vagramenko

“Everyone who was an agent should be brought to court, and if they are not alive, then their children should be punished”, said a caller from the other side of the line. The archivist in the SBU (former KGB) archive in Kyiv sighing heavily turned to me: “Since the time the archives have been opened, we get such phone calls quite often. Everybody is interested in nothing but one thing – names of KGB agents and informers...”

When I first entered the KGB archive in Ukraine I too was particularly interested in agents and informers working in the religious underground in the Soviet Union. But I could not even expect the depth of the abyss these archival materials would unseal. At least for me. The archives open up the rich and colourful legacy of various forms of religious non-conformism that flourished despite the strict controls of the socialist regime. Interrogation protocols, surveillance files, agent reports, secret directives and circulars, along with confiscated religious material and personal items – a boundless amount of unique material shed light on entangled relationship between religious communities and the state.

The Soviet political police was very meticulous in surveilling and recording every sign of dissent. The religious experience of Soviet citizens was among their primary concerns. But what happened behind the doors of the secret police? How religious lives were turned into top-secret files? What were the survival strategies – as a believer and as human being – of a person who faced the repressive machine of the Soviet state?

While reading what used to be top-secret KGB files I lived through some of the most dramatic moments of people’s lives. When facing an arrest warrant, or during lengthy night-time interrogations, or even when serving their sentences in labour camps, believers had to constantly make choices: to collaborate or to resist, to comply, to compromise, or to defy. Sometimes, on the pages of one single interrogation protocol one could find these strategies all together. To add to this, in most cases, when I ordered personal files of agents recruited from a particular religious community, my archivist brought their penal files instead.

In the mid-1950s, the KGB confiscated a diary of a woman called Marinka, who was a member of a religious community outlawed by the Soviet state. Afterwards, the KGB internal circulars cited “Marinka’s diary” as one of the most important sources on the religious underground in Ukraine. The diary revealed that believers were often aware of agent infiltration and knew their names. Likewise, they were often aware of KGB secret operations carried out against them. Moreover, some believers intentionally entered the informers’ network or were chosen to become collaborators by their own faith communities. Appointed agents had to misinform the KGB or to deliver partial information and to warn their brothers in faith about KGB plans and operations.

Was this political mimicry their “weapon of the weak”? What were other creative strategies of their hidden, everyday resistance, compromise, circumvention and other non-confrontational challenges to dictatorial regimes in East Central Europe? In our exhibition we want to show the multiplicity of ways that believers followed their thorny path in the times when their faith was considered to be a crime.

Tatiana Vagramenko is a postdoctoral researcher at University College Cork, Ireland and a George F. Kennan Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. She has an MA in the Study of Religions from St. Petersburg State University and an MA in Anthropology from European University at St. Petersburg. She received her PhD in Anthropology from Maynooth University. Tatiana’s current project *Religious Minorities in Ukraine from the Soviet Underground to the Euromaidan: Pathways to Religious Freedom and Pluralism in Enlarging Europe*, funded by the Irish Research Council, dwells upon historical materials from recently opened SBU (former KGB) archives in Ukraine and the ethnography of the Maidan Revolution. Her work focuses on the politicization of religion in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine, and the legacy of Soviet religious dissent and religious minorities’ resistance to authoritarian regimes in postsocialist societies.

The stolen past – the Reformed Church Choir of Ocna Sibiului Dr. Agnes Hesz

For research looking for visual materials on and of religious minorities in secret police archives, the file on the Hungarian Reformed Church Choir from Ocna Sibiului seemed to be an exciting discovery right from the onset. As promised by the catalogue entry which contained the words ‘photo album’, the file that was created in 1973 indeed took the form of a real photo album and portrayed an ordinary, small town church choir through the lenses of the Securitate: as a dangerous group of irredentists who nurtured hostile feelings against the People’s Republic of Romania.

As one of the main goals of our project was to contact the communities featured in the files whenever possible, I set out to find out whether the choir still existed. Again, I was unusually lucky: the choir was still there, and as it soon turned out, one of my colleagues in the project happened to know someone from Ocna Sibiului, who then happened to be related to one of the most active choir members. I have never had a smoother start to a field research and I was eager to hear what the community had to say about their experience with the secret police.

There were two things that struck me the most after I contacted the community. One is that they talked about their past as “being stolen by the secret police”. It was already clear from the album that the Securitate confiscated a large part of their documentation – photos, minutes of meetings, membership lists, financial reports, inventories, ceremonial speeches, correspondence with former members, musical scores, and even their stamp – that was kept in a large green metal box. All choir members I have met with wanted to know one thing: whether their documents still existed somewhere and whether it was possible for them to get them back. The other was their genuine shock when, seeing the copy of their file, they learnt that they were accused of irredentism.

Theirs is one case among many, many thousands in which people were harassed by the secret police for “sins” they had never committed and were invested with an identity they had never shared. It also shows how the various objects confiscated and never returned by the secret police formed an important part of these communities’ cultural patrimony. I hope that the exhibition of the Hidden Galleries project can, in its own limited way, give something back from these lost legacies.

Agnes Hesz has an MA in European Ethnology and English Literature and Linguistics from the University of Pécs. She received her PhD from the *Interdisciplinary Doctorate School, European Ethnology – Cultural Anthropology Program, University of Pécs* in 2009. She has been working as a lecturer at the Department of European Ethnology – Cultural Anthropology, University of Pécs, since 2006, and was a post doctoral researcher in the ERC project “*Vernacular religion on the boundary of Eastern and Western Christianity: continuity, changes and interactions*” lead by Prof. Éva Pócs. From 2018 she has been also working in the *Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: Hidden Galleries in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe* research project as a post doctoral researcher. Her main fields of research are the various forms of vernacular religion, from death related beliefs and practices to contemporary discourses on witchcraft, with a special interest in the local production of knowledge. She is the author of *Élők, holtak és adósságok. A halottak szerepe egy erdélyi faluközösségben* (The Dead, the Living, and their Debts. The Role of the Dead in a Village Community; Budapest: L’Harmattan 2012)



Hidden Galleries

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Experiences from my ethnographic research *Iuliana Cindrea*

I remember it was a cold day of October when I entered the archives, sat down, asked for my files and began browsing the first one. It was an informative file; Name: Tudor Popescu, a former Orthodox priest, the founder of the Tudorist religious community. At some point I came across a songbook entitled “Cântări creștinești. 47”. I didn’t think much of it at first as I was used to this kind of religious material. Fast forward six months and I’m sitting in a Tudorist pastor’s house having an interesting conversation about the history of the community. Even though I was in my early stages of archival research, I thought I could show him some of the materials that I had already come across in the archives. I sent away all the thoughts that told me that what I had found was not good enough and I opened the files. He laughed, he smiled, he was dismissive of some of the materials, but then he stopped. “This is a very rare item” he said; I looked at the file and then I looked at him. It was the songbook. “Can I have it?” he asked. I smiled awkwardly trying to find the best way of explaining why he is not allowed to have it. Not from me, at least. I apologized and told him that the legislation of the archives was quite strict regarding this issue, but that I could help him find out if he had a personal file. He was happy to hear that, but I felt guilty and everything about the situation seemed unfair. It felt as if I was confiscating that songbook again. I shook my head to make the thought go away, thanked him for the lovely conversation and left.

It was a special experience. I later found out that the songbook was put together by Dumitru Cornilescu, another important member of the group. The songs were collected, translated and some of them composed by him in circa 1921. This was the first songbook produced by the Tudorist community. It had 47 songs and it remained the standard song collection for some years until. The songbook that I found in the file was confiscated by the secret police sometime in the 1920’s from two Tudorist women who were distributing brochures, calendars and other religious literature to people on the street.

I don’t know how many members of the community still hold a copy of the book. To be honest, I don’t know if there are any other copies. None of the members that I talked to owned one, anyway. My last experience happened just a few days ago; I mentioned the songbook while interviewing a Tudorist believer from Târgoviște. He wanted to see it and while he was browsing it I heard him mumble something about how today the songs are not in the same order. He then smiled widely and said “But today we have more than 400 songs. Can you believe it?” It was one of those times when I felt that what I was doing, what my other colleagues in the project were doing, was meaningful for these religious communities.

Iuliana Cindrea has an MA from the Department of History, Patrimony and Protestant Theology within “Lucian Blaga” University, Sibiu, Romania, with a dissertation entitled *Psychiatry and Political Repression in Communist Romania (1965-1989)*. Her main research interests include the history of religious minorities in Romania, such as Old Calendarist, Tudorist, and Neo-protestant communities, the manner in which they were perceived by the totalitarian regimes in the 20th century Romania, as well as the repressive mechanisms used towards these communities. She is currently a PhD Candidate within the European Research Council Project, *Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: Hidden Galleries in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe (Hidden Galleries)*, with a thesis entitled *Hidden Galleries, Silenced Communities: Religious Minorities and the Secret Police in 20th Century Romania*.

A travel to Rai Dr. Dumitru Lisnic

Before beginning my studies at the Department of Study of Religions of University College Cork I studied History at the University of Iași and obviously I did not have all the knowledge needed for conducting ethnographic fieldwork. The interviews are the part of my research activity which both fascinate and makes me worry because it is always more challenging to do fieldwork than to work with archival documents. Nevertheless, my first fieldwork was an unforgettable experience.

Together with James Kapaló, with Dorin Lozovanu and with a group of friends I made a four day trip in the northern part of Odessa region of Ukraine in order to visit the local communities of Inochentists. The journey began in the village of Cosăuți, where more than a hundred years ago was born the founder of the Inochentists movement, the monk Inochentie Levizor. There we crossed Dniester river leaving Moldova and entered Ukraine. We visited the holy places of the Inochentists, such as the Monastery of Balta and the underground monastery from Lepițcoe (the so-called Rai, i.e. Paradise), places which have been visited by numerous pilgrims. We passed through the cities of Balta and Podilsk (former Bârzul/Kotovsk), which despite their nowadays provincial aspect in the 1920's were consecutively the capitals of the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine. (in 1924-1927 and in 1927-1930). We also visited the tiny town of Zakhariivka, named until recently Frunzovka after the renowned Red Army commander Mikhail Frunze, and located near the Moldovan town of Grigoriopol, now under the control of the Russian Federation's occupation forces and Transnistrian separatists. Because not all members of our expedition were Moldovan citizens, the Ukrainian border officers did not allow us to enter Moldova near Frunzovka. We continued our travel south and enter the Republic of Moldova near the Dniester's estuary through the village of Palanca going around the Russian-held territory of Transnistria. It was not an easy travel because quite often the roads disappeared in the mud and the car got stuck, but it was an important expedition.

I came to a better understanding of the importance of our trip and of the interviews we conducted after I read Lesi Gomin's article "Cu călătoria la Rai" (A travel to Rai) published in 1927 in the newspaper *Plugarul Roș*, the main publication of the party organisation of Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Exactly like the members of our expedition, Lesi Gomin visited the Inochentist communities and enjoyed a warm welcoming and their hospitality, but, nevertheless, he portrayed a very negative image of them in his articles, and groundlessly accused the Inochentists of committing alleged crimes in their underground monastery. It is important that today somebody repeat the travels of Soviet propagandists in order to deconstruct propaganda myths and accusations, and for making the voices of the Inochentists heard.

Dumitru Lisnic holds an MA degree in History from "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Romania. He participated in research projects focused collectivization of agriculture under Communism, the Romanian POWs detained in NKVD camps, and conducted research on the local elites in post-war Moldavian SSR. Currently he is PhD candidate at the Department of the Study of Religions at UCC. His main research interests include the history of the Soviet Union and ethno-religious minorities in Eastern Europe. The title of his PhD research at UCC is *Policing the Margins: Repression, Propaganda and Religious Minorities in Soviet Moldavia in the 1920-1930's*.



Hidden Galleries

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To Fr. G. with respect Dr. Anca Şincan

When I spoke for the first time with James Kapaló about *Hidden Galleries* he told me one of the most important motivations he had designing the project was to introduce the history of small religious communities into the national historiography. And I remember thinking this was quixotic. The national historiographical canon, while extremely fluid, changed by political, ideological, chronological, cultural factors, nation building exercises, dictators' whims and so many other things is in fact extremely limited. It really just has to fit in two textbooks for 7th and 8th graders. And this canon is not just about what it includes (very little) but mostly about what it excludes (a lot). Minorities, under any shape and form, rarely make it into the larger story of the majority and the minorities Hidden Gallery project was taking an interest in were even unfamiliar to the researchers in the project.

And thus, we began uncovering their stories in the Securitate files where, for some of these religious minorities was the only place the state quantified their existence. Their history did not exist in any official form other than the secret police file. A year into the project we started to upload on the project's digital archive (<http://hiddengalleries.eu/digitalarchive/s/en/page/welcome>) the stories of the objects the secret police took from these underground religious communities. We also started to reach out to communities to document their own versions, sometimes antithetical with the information coming from the Securitate files. We tried to contact as many of the actors from these documents, but it was not always easy since, 30 years after the fall of the regime, the traumas were still present and the people of these communities are still afraid to talk about their recent history.

One morning I get a call from an excited James. He was contacted by Fr. G. who, James said, spoke English and he asked him about the several stories Iuliana and I uploaded on the digital archive. How come we were interested in the history of the Old Calendarist Romanian Orthodox Church? Why? Since when? James took his phone number and a few hours later I entered one of the most interesting and honest dialogue I ever had on the history of the Securitate, how is history written, the communist regime and its agents of repression. The priest told me that they would go into the archives themselves, yet they'd need a manual, a guide to read the documents there. We spent over two hours on the phone.

We've called each other a few more times. He needed some clarifications on some of the statements we made in the texts we've uploaded. In turn, I asked for confirmation on some of our suppositions.

Then he called me, a little embarrassed, to ask if I would be willing to change something in the database.

"You see", he said, "we do not call ourselves *stilists*. This is how the Securitate called us and the Romanian Orthodox Church."

In fact, this was how the church was codified in the archives already by the interwar secret police.

Thus, my first act to correct history started with a name: The Old Calendarist Romanian Orthodox Church.

Anca Şincan has a Ph.D. in history from Central European University. Her research interests revolve around recent history of East Central Europe, history of historical writing, memory and remembrance, church history, religion and politics on which she published articles and book chapters. She took part as an expert in the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. She teaches courses at the History and International Relations Department at UMFST George Emil Palade in Tîrgu-Mureş. She is a researcher at the "Gheorghe Şincai" Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities of the Romanian Academy in Tîrgu-Mureş. She is a postdoctoral researcher in the project Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: Hidden Galleries in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe (Hidden Galleries) at University College Cork. Currently, she is a fellow at Polish Institute for Advanced Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

New York Public Library Slavic and East European Collections

A note from Bogdan Horbal, Curator for Slavic and East European Collections at the New York Public Library

The **New York Public Library** (NYPL) holds a collection of books and periodicals in Romanian as well as a significant number of works about Romania and Romanians in other languages, and in English in particular.

The NYPL also engages in collaborative collection development with Columbia University and Princeton University (Harvard University is joining soon) through which readers receive access to newer monographs in Romanian. The [Shared Collection Catalog](#) gives you access to all that the NYPL holds as well as those materials from Columbia and Princeton that they share with the NYPL (including many in the field of Slavic and East European studies).

Since materials in foreign languages are generally not kept in the building but at an offsite storage facility out-of-town, one needs to plan a visit to the library ahead of time. Most of the Slavic and East Europe collections are housed at our offsite facility out-of-town. and therefore, they need to be requested ahead of time. In order to request them one needs to have a library card, issued to visitors [online](#). Upon receiving a barcode and pin number, one can request materials using the red REQUEST button to be brought into the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, where they will be placed on hold for you. Please allow two days for the delivery.

There is also scan-on-demand service for materials kept at the offsite facility. One can get a .pdf version of all materials that have a red REQUEST button next to them if they are in a good physical condition. Please provide pages to be scanned. Materials that do NOT have a red REQUEST button next to them have to be requested by filling out a paper slip in the reading room (they are in one of our buildings in Manhattan).

For access to e-journals and e-books please see [here](#). Please note the distinction between what is [available remotely](#) with your NYPL library card (a smaller collection) and what is [available at the library](#) (a larger collection).

Useful links:

[Archival collections finding aids](#)

[Research Study Rooms, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building](#) (for those based in or near New York)

[Register to Use Materials in the Brooke Russell Astor Reading Room for Rare Books & Manuscripts](#)

[Conducting Research - Rare Book Division](#)

[Digital collections](#) (mostly visual materials)

[The Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers](#)

[Fellowships at the Cullman Center](#)

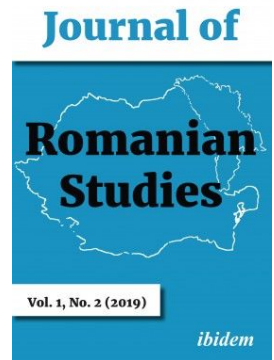
[Short-Term Research Fellowships](#)

[Fellowships & Institutes](#) (full list)

Journal of Romanian Studies

October marks the release of the second volume of the Journal of Romanian Studies. This issue focuses on the role Romania played in the Paris Peace Conference and the aftermath of World War I. Lucian Leuştean and Gábor Egrý discuss minority populations and regionalism. Gavin Bowd, Doina Anca Cretu, and guest editor Svetlana Suveica have written about international relations and the Romanian relationship with the Allied Powers. Florian Kühner-Wielach provides a 10-year political retrospective on the conference. This issue also includes book reviews by Clara Volintiru, Cătălin Constantinescu, and George Kordas. Members receive a complimentary electronic subscription to the journal.

If you are interested in taking out an individual or institutional subscription, please write to the publisher at subscription@ibidem.eu



SRS 2019 Graduate Student Essay Prize

The winner of the **11th Annual SRS Graduate Essay Prize**, in 2019, is Adela Hîncu, a doctoral candidate in Comparative History of Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe, Central European University, Department of History, Budapest, with a thesis entitled, “Accounting for the ‘social’ in State Socialist Romania, 1960s–1980s: Contexts and genealogies.” Her eponymous winning essay reconstructed the contexts and genealogies of scientific thought on the “social” in state socialist Romania in the 1960s–1980s and emphasized the dynamic between local, transnational, and global frameworks of knowledge production, and the role of Eastern bloc cooperation in the field of sociology. It proposes a “reverse genealogy” of three themes which became part of the imaginary of postsocialist intellectual thought on the social: participation, equality, and welfare, and explores how they played out in sociological research on mass culture, women’s emancipation, and the quality of life in the 1960s–80s.

It was an excellent essay that marshalled ideas relevant to Romanian studies assuredly and outstandingly. It showed original intellectual added-value on a topic central to Romanian studies, with a clear awareness of context and importance, and without overstating the case. Her B.A. in World and Comparative Literature (major) and German Language and Literature (minor), at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters, gives her a wide interdisciplinary perspective and thoroughly explains the fine stylistic quality of her essay and the inclusion of a poem to project her discoveries at a symbolic level. At the same time, she managed to strike the right academic tone, as well as being accessible to a more generally educated audience. The reader is immediately confronted with the Romanian recent past and taken further back in the debates and development of concepts during the 60s and 70s. Hîncu develops her findings very well with sources from the time, innovatively and beyond clichés and offers new insights, even embedded in western discourse of the time, illustrating the transnational flow of concepts and ideas.



Adela Hîncu

The committee also awarded an **Honorable Mention** to Elena Radu for her essay “Understanding secularism within Eastern Orthodox world. The relationship between state and church in Romania.”

Committee: Marina Cap-Bun (chair), Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, and Cristian Tileaga

SRS 2019 Book Prize

The committee reviewed thirteen books in the field of Romanian Studies in history, women's studies, political science, anthropology, folklore, education, and film studies—although a number of these straddled two or more disciplines. We chose among a strong group of books published in English in the United States, Britain and Romania in 2017 and 2018.

We agreed unanimously to award the **5th Society for Romanian Studies Book Prize** to Bruce O'Neill, *The Space of Boredom: Homelessness in the Slowing Global Order* (Duke, 2017).

O'Neill did his research among the homeless population in Bucharest after 2008. He contextualizes the emergence of homelessness in Romania in the new capitalist economy after the end of socialism, specifically during the post-2008 global downturn when many around the world were rendered economically "redundant" and hopelessly impoverished. He theorizes downward mobility showing how working people can lose income and the ability to participate in the economy, which in turn affects relationships with family and friends, but also with their city, with Europe, and with globalism itself.

Plictis (boredom) is the often articulated emotion of O'Neill's homeless subjects whose unbearably slow daily routines are determined by their lack of money, food, a home, work, and by the inability to join in the accelerated cycle of consumerism that defines pleasure and success under contemporary capitalism. The author analyzes his destitute, discarded, marginal subjects with empathy—be they pensioners, or young men engaging in "survival sex" in train station toilets. The long lines and shortages of late socialism, are imagined nostalgically by some of the newly homeless as a time when their lives had a certain tidiness and lack of stress. *The Space of Boredom* explores the pressing social, economic, and moral problem of homelessness, of "lives disorganized by capitalism" in Romania, and by implication around the world.



Dr. Bruce O'Neill

The committee awards Irina Marin, *Peasant Violence and Antisemitism in Early Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) an **Honorable Mention**. This book based on a vast amount of archival and published sources in German, Romanian, Hungarian, and Russian, elucidates the causes of profound peasant discontent at the turn of the century, erupting in the 1907 revolt that spread like wildfire. Romanian elites' antisemitism and xenophobia clouded their understanding of rural social problems that they themselves created. The role of rumors and the press—domestic and foreign—in publicizing the troubles is also analyzed by Marin to explain the reach and the geographic limits of peasant insurgency to Romania's borders but not beyond them. This research renews a longstanding and valuable tradition of social history that may inspire more such studies.

Committee: Irina Livezeanu (chair), Monica Heintz, and Radu Cinpoes

Advice for Young Scholars

SRS mentor and scholar of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Princeton University, Dr. Margaret Beissinger, offers advice to junior scholars interested in Romanian Studies

Please describe your educational, research, and professional background with regard to the field of Romanian studies.

I was an undergraduate at Harvard University, at which time I began to study Romanian. I majored in Folklore and Mythology and wrote my senior thesis on cântece bătrânești (epic/narrative songs), gathering material on them when I spent the fall semester of my senior year in Bucharest. I continued on at Harvard as a graduate student, also in Folklore and Mythology, and broadened my studies to include South Slavic languages, cultures, and oral traditions. For my dissertation, I spent 15 months in Bucharest and worked with many of the same scholars whom I knew from before (at the Institute for Research in Ethnology and Dialectology and the University of Bucharest), plus conducted fieldwork, continuing to explore epic songs in southern Romania, where the tradition was still alive. Epic and other repertoires sung at weddings and other celebratory events are performed by lăutari, traditional professional musicians who are Roma, an ethnic group that is persecuted in Romania. After earning my Ph.D. and completing more fieldwork in southern Romania, I revised and published my dissertation (*The Art of the Lăutar*). In the 1990s, I expanded my research on lăutari, including how their lives, performances, and repertoire have changed since the Revolution. I have published many articles and chapters based on these findings, plus an edited book (*Manele in Romania*) on manele, a song genre that Romani musicians dominate. I have also written on comparative Balkan oral traditions, culture, and Roma, frequently including Romania in my research. I taught Romanian at Harvard as a graduate student and continued to do so after I received my Ph.D. A few years later, I moved to Madison, Wisconsin and began teaching in the Slavic Department at the University of Wisconsin, offering courses on South Slavic and Romanian languages, folklore, epic, folktale, and Romani culture. Presently I am on the faculty of the Slavic Department at Princeton University, where I teach Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Romanian, and courses on Slavic and Balkan literature, oral traditions, and Romani culture.



Dr. Margaret Beissinger

Are there particular resources, whether institutional, financial, personal, or otherwise that were particularly useful to you in the early stages of your research? How have the resources most beneficial to you changed over time?

In the early stages of my research, I benefited from a Josephine Murray Traveling Fellowship from Radcliffe College to study in Romania as an undergraduate. As a graduate student, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and Fulbright funded me for fifteen months in Romania for my dissertation. After I returned from Romania and wrote up my findings, I received aid for several years from the National Resource Fellowships. Later, after I earned my Ph.D., I continued to receive grants from IREX and was funded by the American Council of Learned Societies (to revise my dissertation for publication) and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research. As an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I received two years of funding from the UW Vilas Associates Research Program. Ever since teaching at Princeton, university funds have frequently covered costs for my research and fieldwork, and thus I haven't sought as many resources as I did in prior years of my career.

Advice for Young Scholars

cont'd.

What do you see as the most innovative or promising areas of research, methodological innovations, or other recent trends in scholarship to which young scholars in Romanian studies should pay attention?

Referring mainly to Romani studies, which I am involved with at present, I would say that post-communist research projects are a fruitful area for research, but there are also many historical topics that are promising, e.g., the historical study of Roma in Romania, an area that is a challenge to (but very worthy of) research due to the dearth of work on Roma during the communist period and earlier as well as the lack of Romani sources per se (this would include especially the centuries of slavery and the Holocaust, among other important areas). Comparative studies, particularly in the context of Eastern Europe, are also promising areas, not only in the context of the post-1989 period but also with regard to how EU membership has informed Romanian and other East European societies.

What advice can you offer to young scholars hoping to conduct fieldwork in Romania or Moldova? What, in your experience, have been the most challenging or unexpected aspects of the research or fieldwork process?

I have only conducted fieldwork in southern Romania, and primarily among Roma, so I am mainly referencing my own experiences which may be quite different from those of other students and scholars conducting fieldwork in Romania and/or Moldova. I believe that one's fieldwork methods are, to some extent, a personal matter, so for me, being able to speak Romanian virtually fluently has been crucial. I also try to be very attentive to how I interact with those among whom I do fieldwork. Being considerate, empathetic, appreciative, patient, and generous with the people I have spent time with in the field are among the most important considerations. I gained the trust of Romani musicians and their families early on and continued to respect and recognize them as I returned to conduct fieldwork among them over the years. The advice that I would offer to young scholars who expect or hope to conduct fieldwork would be to own it and "let it happen," being, above all, sensitive, understanding, and really observant. But they should also be open-minded and creative in what and how they envision fieldwork. When I am in the field, everything I see, hear, and experience is fieldwork.

During the communist period, my experiences were extremely frustrating since I needed to get explicit permission to go into the field and then was watched closely and monitored at all times. Any contacts I had with people in Romania were regulated and recorded. In fact, at the time of my dissertation research, Roma were a taboo topic, which made my fieldwork difficult to pursue. The obstacles that were put in my way were so incommensurate with my research aims that it was almost comical! It goes without saying that I wasn't permitted to study Romani musicians, music, and culture freely and independently until after 1989. Once the Revolution took place and the numerous restrictions that I had encountered earlier faded away, my fieldwork became notably easier and fulfilling. I'm not saying that I haven't had disappointments or that I haven't made mistakes in my fieldwork—it's not quite that simple since problems are inevitable. I like to think, however, that I have by and large learned from my frustrations and blunders and can say that I have had overall rich field experiences especially in the several decades since 1989 when most official roadblocks disappeared.

Advice for Young Scholars

cont'd.

How would you advise young scholars to best prepare themselves for the job market(s)? What do you see as the most important areas of strength in a candidate pursuing a career in Romanian studies?

My best advice would be to not pigeonhole themselves in terms of what they can specialize in in terms of research and teaching. There was no way, for example, that I was going to get an academic job doing only “Romanian studies” (nor did I want to). That would have been way too narrow a focus. I exploited my comparative skills and knowledge especially in the study of oral traditions, ethnomusicology, literature, culture, and languages of southeast Europe, including the area of Romani studies, and thus have been able to teach in rewarding positions where my expertise has been called upon and where I have been able to pursue research that is exciting.

Is there any other point of advice you would like to offer to young scholars in Romanian studies? What do you wish you had known as a graduate student or early career scholar?

I suppose my main advice would be that young scholars need to be open, creative, and resourceful in their research and how that will affect how successful they can be as they seek and find academic jobs as well as carry out research that is important and valued.

When I was a student, I probably should have learned Russian well enough that it could have fit more fully into what I could offer in a teaching position. I wanted to study Russian at Harvard but didn't, mainly on the advice that my advisors there gave me, which I ended up regretting. Back then, as a graduate student not knowing what I do now, I didn't really resist that advice. In short, students and young scholars involved in the study of Romania should consider seriously how they can embellish their expertise in order to cover more than just Romania.



The Society for Romanian Studies Mentorship Program continues to welcome expressions of interest from mentors and mentees. Some of our current mentors include Florin Abraham, Ana Bazac, Margaret Beissinger, Stefano Bottoni, Roxana Bratu, Maria Bucur, Monica Ciobanu, Roland Clark, Aleksandra Djurić-Milanović, Peter Gross, Bob Ives, James Kapaló, Irina Livezeanu, Paul Michelson, Petru Negură, Sergiu Musteață, Valentin Săndelscu, Lavinia Stan, Cristian Tileagă, Narcis Tulbure, F. Peter Wager, and Rodica Milena Zaharia.

If you are interested in working with a mentor, please visit the SRS [website](#).

SRS-Polirom Book Series

SRS-POLIROM BOOK SERIES

Studii Românești - Romanian Studies - Études Roumaines - Rumänische Studien

Series Editors: Irina Livezeanu (irinal@pitt.edu) and Lavinia Stan (lstan@stfx.ca)
Assistant Editor: Narcis Tulbure (narcis.tulbure@gmail.com)

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Editors welcome proposals for new titles in our series! You can nominate the work of a colleague or former student, or present us your own book already published abroad. We also welcome and hope to publish in the series book manuscripts written in Romanian directly. You can find details about what needs to be included in a book proposal [here](#).

The series publishes scholarly books in Romanian authored or edited by SRS members. The Editors will consider three types of manuscripts: 1) Romanian translations of scholarly monographs already published in a foreign language; 2) original scholarly monographs written in Romanian; and 3) edited collections of essays dealing with a Romanian Studies theme.

Books in the SRS Romanian Studies series are about Romania and/or Moldova and the populations living on these territories, or with the Romanian and Moldovan diasporas and cultures. Manuscripts should have primarily an academic profile, and a disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary focus, drawing on history, political science, sociology, anthropology, law, economics, linguistics, literature, art history, or other fields. They should be based on sound and rigorous scholarly analysis, and include references and bibliography. We prefer contributions that are free of jargon and thus more likely to appeal to a wide audience. All proposals, manuscripts, and books offered for translation will be carefully reviewed for publication in the series.

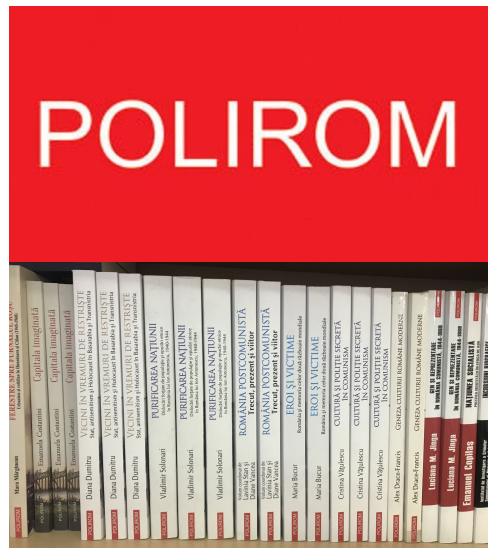
Titles published in the series to date in reverse chronological order are:

- Maria Bucur, *Eroi și victime. România și memoria celor două războaie mondiale* (2019)
 - Diana Dumitru, *Vecini în vremuri de restriște. Stat, antisemitism și Holocaust în Basarabia și Transnistria* (2019)
 - Cristina Vățulescu, *Cultură și poliție secretă în comunism* (2018)
 - Lavinia Stan și Diane Vancea, coord., *România postcomunistă: trecut, prezent, viitor* (2017)
 - Alex Drace-Francis, *Geneza culturii române moderne. Instituțiile scrisului și dezvoltarea identității naționale, 1700-1900* (2016)
 - Vladimir Solonari, *Purificarea națiunii: dislocări forțate de populație și epurări etnice în România lui Ion Antonescu, 1940-1944* (2015)
 - Roland Clark, *Sfântă tinerețe legionară. Activismul fascist în România interbelică* (2015)
- WINNER OF THE 2017 SRS BOOK AWARD



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The Society for Romanian Studies



SRS-Polirom Book Series

cont'd.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The most recent book in our series is Maria Bucur's compellingly written, elegant and superbly researched *Eroi și victime. România și memoria celor două războaie mondiale* (2019), translated by Roxana Cazan, Ioan Bucur and Dan Bălănescu, 360 pp.

The English language edition received enthusiastic reviews from historians, scholars of memory studies and researchers of Eastern Europe:

"In this superbly researched book, Bucur juxtaposes state-sponsored commemorative activities with localized, private memories. [...] The book's source-base, its theoretical sophistication and its wide-ranging scope make it an invaluable study in the way that communities and states work together—and independently—in remembering the past."

(Roland Clark, Cultural and Social History)

"Heroes and Victims demonstrates not only how individual, local, and national discourses of remembrance have operated in the complex geopolitical and ethnic world of 20th-century Romania but also how and why post-communist Romanians and others in the 21st century have moved to a post-memory discourse."

(Melissa Bokovoy, University of New Mexico)

"[A] historical tour de force, compellingly written and powerfully demonstrated. ... Bucur's truly illuminating study explores the Romanians' tortuously dramatic efforts to accomplish a long-delayed coming to terms with their past."

(Slavic Review)

"[T]his is an ambitious book that effectively straddles disciplines, historical eras, and analytical levels. The data are remarkably comprehensive for such a difficult theme. Bucur's narrative tells a complex story that few historians of Eastern and Central Europe could handle in such a sophisticated manner."

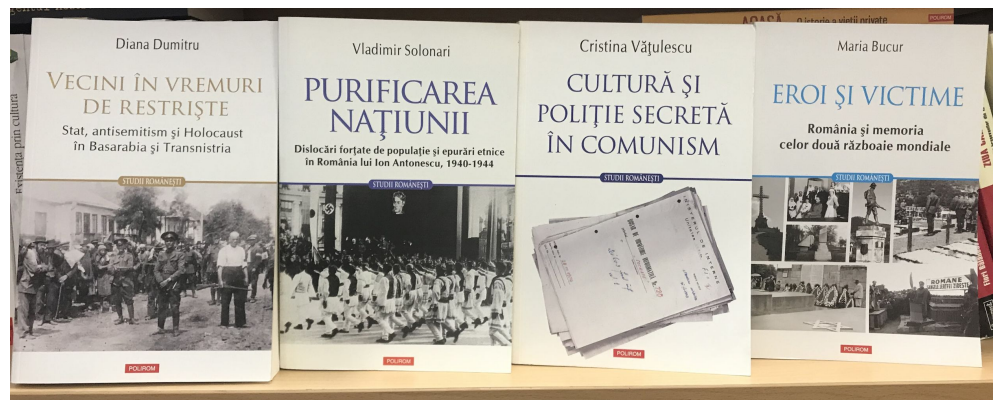
(Canadian American Slavic Studies)

FORTHCOMING

Cristian Cercel's *Romania and the Quest for European Identity: Philo-Germanism without Germans* (Routledge, 2019).

PROSPECTIVE AUTHORS

If you plan to submit a manuscript for the SRS-Polirom book series or if you have a general interest in the series we encourage you to contact the editors.



Featured Books

Stalin's Legacy in Romania: The Hungarian Autonomous Region, 1952–1960

by Stefano Bottoni (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)

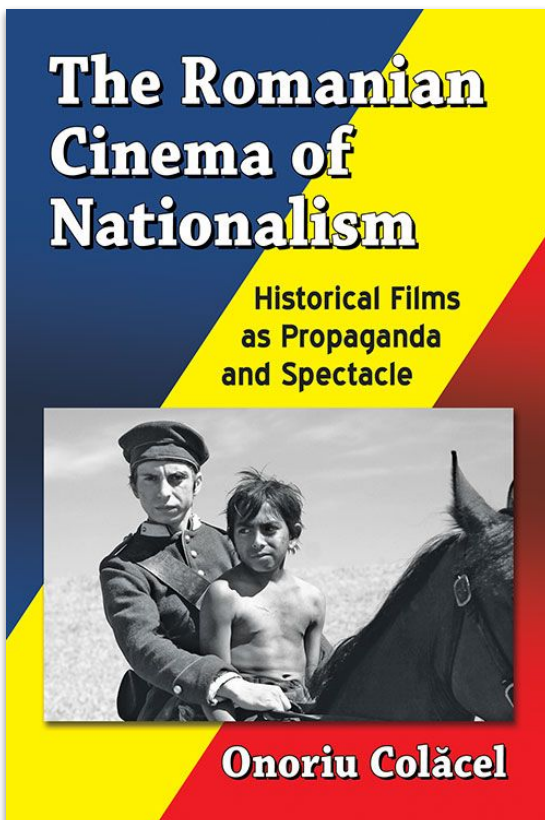
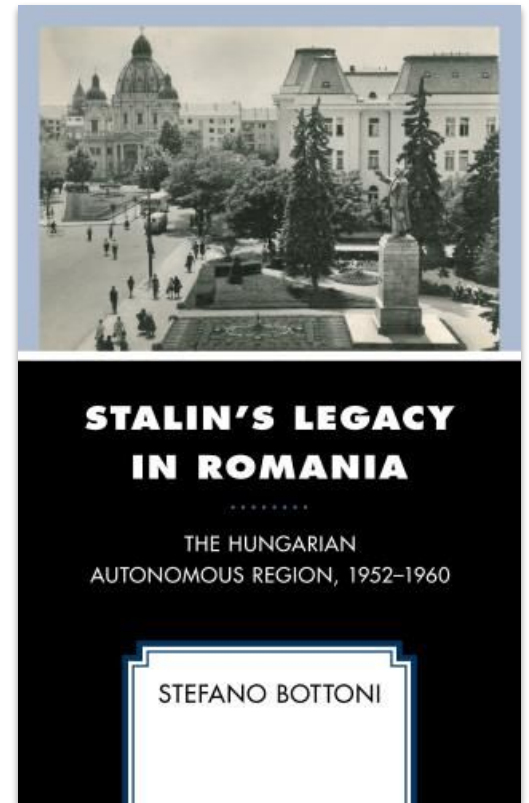
This study explores the little-known history of the Hungarian Autonomous Region (HAR), a Soviet-style territorial autonomy that was granted in Romania on Stalin's personal advice to the Hungarian Székely community in the summer of 1952. Since 1945, a complex mechanism of ethnic balance and power-sharing helped the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) to strengthen—with Soviet assistance—its political legitimacy among different national and social groups. The communist national policy followed an integrative approach toward most minority communities, with the relevant exception of Germans, who were declared collectively responsible for the German occupation and were denied political and even civil rights until 1948. The Hungarians of Transylvania were provided with full civil, political, cultural, and linguistic rights to encourage political integration. The ideological premises of the Hungarian Autonomous Region followed the Bolshevik pattern of territorial autonomy elaborated by Lenin and Stalin in the early 1920s. The Hungarians of Székely Land would become a “titular nationality” provided with extensive cultural rights. Yet, on the other hand, the Romanian central power used the region as an instrument of political and social integration for the Hungarian minority into the communist state. The management of ethnic conflicts increased the ability of the PCR to control the territory and, at the same time, provided the ruling party with a useful precedent for the far larger “nationalization” of the Romanian communist regime which, starting from the late 1950s, resulted in “ethnicized” communism, an aim achieved without making use of pre-war nationalist discourse. After the Hungarian revolution of 1956,

repression affected a great number of Hungarian individuals accused of nationalism and irredentism. In 1960 the HAR also suffered territorial reshaping, its Hungarian-born political leadership being replaced by ethnic Romanian cadres. The decisive shift from a class dictatorship toward an ethnicized totalitarian regime was the product of the Gheorghiu-Dej era and, as such, it represented the logical outcome of a long-standing ideological fouling of Romanian communism and more traditional state-building ideologies.

The Romanian Cinema of Nationalism

by Onoriu Colăcel (McFarland, 2018)

Prior to the collapse of communism, Romanian historical movies were political, encouraging nationalistic feelings and devotion to the state. Vlad the Impaler and other such iconic figures emerged as heroes rather than loathsome bloodsuckers, celebrating a shared sense of belonging. The past decade has, however, presented Romanian films in which ordinary people are the stars—heroes, go-getters, swindlers and sore losers. The author explores a wide selection, old and new, of films set in the Romanian past.

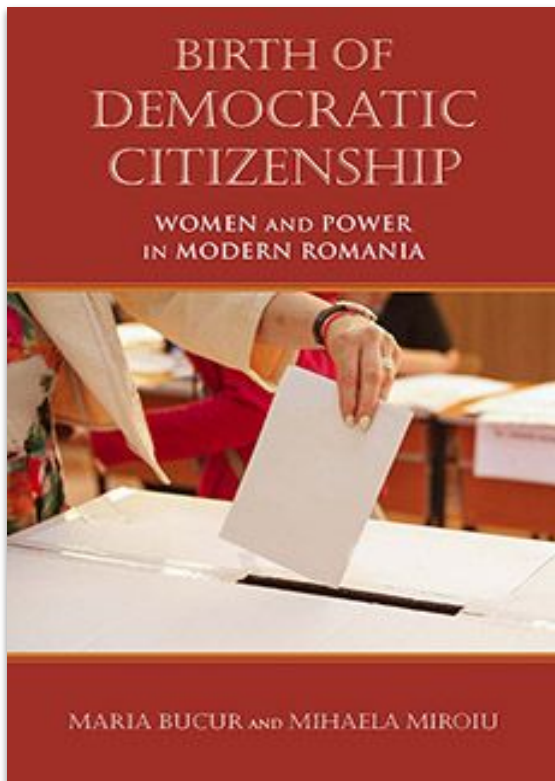


Featured Books

cont'd.

The Birth of Democratic Citizenship: Women and Power in Modern Romania

by Maria Bucur and Mihaela Miroiu (Indiana University Press, 2018)



What is it like to be a woman living through the transition from communism to democracy? What effect does this have on a woman's daily life, on her concept of herself, her family, and her community? Birth of Democratic Citizenship presents the stories of women in Romania as they describe their experiences on the journey to democratic citizenship. In candid and revealing conversations, women between the ages of 24 and 83 explain how they negotiated their way through radical political transitions that had a direct impact on their everyday lives. Women who grew up under communism explore how these ideologies influenced their ideas of marriage, career, and a woman's role in society. Younger generations explore how they interpret civic rights and whether they incorporate these rights into their relationships with their family and community.

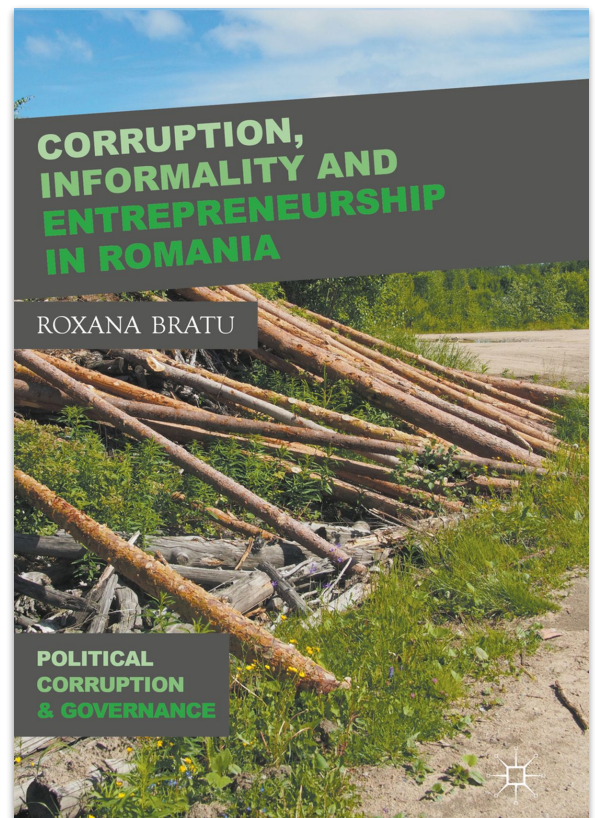
Beginning with an overview of the role women have played in Romania from the late 18th century to today, Birth of Democratic Citizenship explores how the contemporary experience of women in postsocialist countries developed. The women speak about their reliance on and negotiations with communities, ranging from family and neighbors to local and national political parties. Birth of Democratic Citizenship argues that the success of democracy

will largely rely on the equal incorporation of women in the political and civic development of Romania. In doing so, it encourages frank consideration of what modern democracy is and what it will need to be to succeed in the future.

Corruption, Informality and Entrepreneurship in Romania

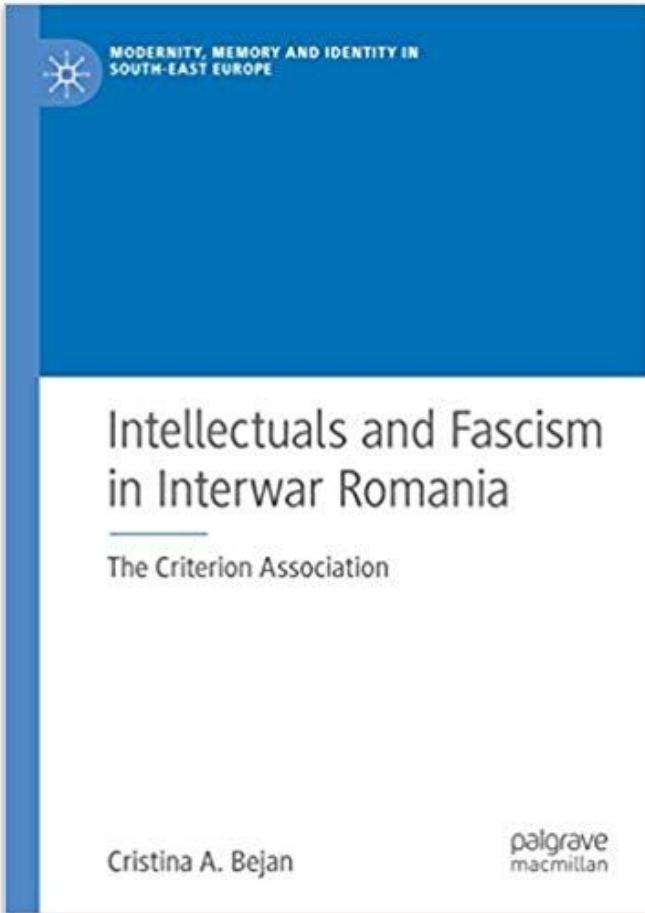
by Roxana Bratu (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

This book examines the meaning, structure, practices and symbolism of corruption in relationship to European Union structural funding in Romania. It offers a unique account of the complex transformations faced by post-communist societies. Despite the new legislation that effectively re-branded typical economic practices in Romanian society as 'corruption', entrepreneurs continue to use them in everyday interactions. The entrepreneurial culture described in the chapters is an ordinary trait of the local work routines. Rather than pursuing the singular logic of corruption, the author explores the concept of informality by focusing on the socio-historical context and the meanings embedded in the society that provides solutions to the problems. The book will appeal to students, scholars and practitioners in the areas of corruption, public policy and EU policy and politics.



Featured Books

cont'd.



Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania: The Criterion Association

by Cristina Bejan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

In 1930s Bucharest, some of the country's most brilliant young intellectuals converged to form the Criterion Association. Bound by friendship and the dream of a new, modern Romania, their members included historian Mircea Eliade, critic Petru Comarnescu, Jewish playwright Mihail Sebastian and a host of other philosophers and artists. Together, they built a vibrant cultural scene that flourished for a few short years, before fascism and scandal splintered their ranks. Cristina A. Bejan asks how the far-right Iron Guard came to eclipse the appeal of liberalism for so many of Romania's intellectual elite, drawing on diaries, memoirs and other writings to examine the collision of culture and extremism in the interwar years. The first English-language study of Criterion and the most thorough to date in any language, this book grapples with the complexities of Romanian intellectual life in the moments before collapse.



H-Romania is now in its sixth year of operation, with over 300 subscribers to the network. We publish book reviews in all social science and humanities fields related to Romanian Studies, operate a discussion forum, host links to research and teaching resources, and disseminate a variety

of announcements and calls for papers/applications. While we are happy with our progress thus far, we still have room to grow and improve. We want to encourage SRS members to join H-Romania and publicize the network across the broad field of Romanian Studies. Please feel free to contribute postings and announcements, notify us of any recently published books and calls for papers/applications in your field, and volunteer to review books and report on conferences. And please follow us @HNet_Romania on Twitter.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to invite new network and book-review editors. Please contact Chris Davis at R.Chris.Davis@LoneStar.edu if you are interested in joining the H-Romania editorial team.

Featured Affiliate Organization

Romanian Studies Association of America

The Romanian Studies Association of America (RSAA), established forty five years ago, is an international, interdisciplinary academic organization dedicated to promoting scholarship and creative work pertinent to Romanian Studies on the American continent, particularly in the United States and Canada.



In the new global era, the association's mission is to advance scholarship and intellectual exchanges in order to create multiple venues of academic studies on East-Central Europe and the West, to promote academic research and collaboration on all aspects of Romanian culture and civilization as well as to invite new and culturally exciting research and creative work in international contexts.

Aside from having a standing session at the MLA conference every year, members of the Romanian Studies Association of America advance the academic conversation on Romanian Studies through their attendance and contribution in conferences on an international scale, participation in social media, and publications in books and peer reviewed journals. The association also has its own peer reviewed online journal that highlights scholarship concerned with Romanian studies, either through original publication, or in the form of book reviews.

The Romanian Studies Association of America website can be found [here](#).



SRS Membership

SRS uses member dues to help with monetary prizes for outstanding publications and to budget and pay for the cost of future conferences. In addition, members play a vital role in the Society by supporting our membership program, submitting manuscripts for the new scholarly Journal of Romanian Studies, proposing nominations for the prizes, and voting for officers and Board members.



Contributions from lifetime members are most welcome. In addition, organizational sponsors and patrons may be approved by the Board on a case by case basis. Member organizations do not have a vote but their support will be acknowledged by SRS, including linking to organizational web sites.

You may renew your membership or join SRS via Paypal or credit card on our [website](#).

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About SRS

The Society for Romanian Studies (SRS) is an international interdisciplinary academic organization founded in 1973 to promote professional study, criticism, and research on all aspects of Romanian culture and society, particularly concerning the countries of Romania and Moldova. The SRS is generally recognized as the major professional organization for North American scholars concerned with Romania and Moldova. It is affiliated with the South East European Studies Association (SEESA); the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES); the American Political Science Association (APSA); the American Historical Association (AHA); the Balkan History Association (BHA); and the Romanian Studies Association of America (RSAA). More information about the SRS, including current officers, the national board, and membership information, can be found on the SRS website. If you have any recent activities to report (publications, conferences organized, etc.) please email such information to the Newsletter Editor, Leah Valtin-Erwin (lvaltin@iu.edu).