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Andrei Cușco

Constantin Stere, the “Bessarabian Question” and Romanian Foreign Policy Debates in the Early 20th Century, în „Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas” (Stuttgart, Regensburg), 59, 2011, 1, 19 p. (aflat în curs de recenzie).

Summary: *The following discussion will focus on the first part of Constantin Stere’s public activity in the Romanian Kingdom, comprising the last years of the 19th century and, especially, the early 20th century up to (and including) World War I. I highlight, first, Stere’s vision of Bessarabia in the context of the mainstream Romanian “national narrative.” Second, I discuss Stere’s views on Romania’s foreign policy during the period of Romania’s neutrality in World War I (1914-1916) as an illustration of the dilemmas that a consistently anti-Russian discourse presupposed for an intellectual who insisted on the privileged position of Bessarabia in the hierarchy of Romanian irredentist claims. Third, I point out Stere’s awkward position within the Romanian establishment, not only due to his political preferences, but also due to his personal experience as an exile (in the Russian as well as the Romanian context) and to the “uncertainty of identity” that this engendered. The tension between the social and national aspects of Stere’s thought characterized his particular stance in different periods of his political activity. The social aspects clearly predominated, but the nationalizing tendency held the upper hand in moments of crisis (e.g., during the neutrality debates on foreign policy or in the later phase of the Romanian involvement into the war, when he elaborated his most coherent vision on the “Bessarabian question”). The image of a suffering body that should preserve its physical and moral integrity framed Stere’s perspective of Bessarabia’s inclusion into the “Romanian space.” Such arguments should be placed in the context of the contemporary polemics on the relative importance of “non-redeemed” territories, in which Stere tried to transcend his position as a spokesman for the Bessarabian “voice.” He proposed a model of “integral national ideal” that in fact reflected both his pro-Centralist convictions and Romania’s complicated situation in the later phase of the war. However, he remained consistent with his earlier insistence on the centrality of the Bessarabian problem.*

Liviu Brătescu

Diplomacy, Propaganda and War in 1877-1878, în „Valahian Journal of Historical Studies”, 2010, 14 (Winter), p. 85-100.

Mots clés : *diplomatie, la question orientale, les Pouvoirs Garants, rupture, crise*

Résumé: *Les tensions existantes dans la péninsule balkanique pendant les décennies sept-huit du XIX-ème siècle, générées par la crise profonde qui traversait l'Empire ottoman, mais aussi par l'intention visible de la Russie de jouer le rôle de grand protecteur des chrétiens de cette zone, ces tensions obligeaient donc l'Etat roumain à se prononcer lui aussi vis-à-vis de l'éternelle question orientale. Les réactions bien des fois nerveuses des Pouvoirs Garants vers les initiatives par lesquelles Bucarest essayait à induire au moins l'idée d'une séparation de l'Empire ottoman illustraient le degré réduit dont ils étaient disposés à accepter une rupture politique de la Roumanie de l'Etat ottoman. Ce qu'on devait faire dans ces conditions c'était une forte propagande du problème roumain dans les médias politiques et intellectuels de l'Europe occidentale et une attention tout particulière en ce qui concerne tout mouvement ou déclaration politique. Après maints essais de modifier le statut juridique international dans la période 1866-1877, la guerre devenait la dernière solution dont les milieux gouvernementaux pouvaient adopter. Expression de la décision de Charles I-er et des autres deux libéraux qui l'entourait en 1877, I.C. Bratianu et M.Kogalniceanu, l'indépendance votée par le Parlement de Bucarest soulignait la décision de ne plus accepter le maintien des relations avec la Sublime Porte dans une formule traditionnelle considérée comme désuète. Prenant la décision de participer à la guerre, les libéraux gouvernementaux s'assuraient de l'ascension sur les adversaires politiques, concrétisée par le renvoi de ces derniers de la table de décisions, pendant le déroulement du conflit militaire, mais aussi à l'époque après-guerre. La reconnaissance de l'indépendance de Roumanie survenait au bout d'un chemin ardu, qui avait été parcouru par un effort constant d'une partie importante de la classe politique roumaine.*

Paul Nistor

History and international propaganda. The case of Bessarabia and Alexandru Boldur, în „Valahian Journal of Historical Studies”, 2010, 14 (Winter), p. 101-115.

Keywords: *diplomacy, propaganda, Bessarabia, history, historians*

Abstract: *The year 1928 brought not only the celebration of 10 years since the Great Union, but also recorded a greater frequency of revisionist actions related to the system adopted after the Treaty of Versailles. Since the Bolshevik instigation in Bessarabia and the intense Hungarian activity in Transylvania and throughout Europe amplified, the Romanian state used the external propaganda in order to convince the decisional political circles of the justness of its arguments in order to maintain the borders as it was decided after the First World War. One of the propaganda tools used by Bucharest was to make good use of history and historians in order to defend the national interests of Romania. Thus, the historian Alexandru Boldur began a partnership with the Press and Information Directorate that helped him to publish books and brochures that supported the Romanian point of view regarding Bessarabia, therefore combating the Soviet standpoint. In addition, Boldur proposed a very bold international investigation in which teachers, lawyers, economists and politicians from several countries were questioned about the Bessarabian issue. This project, outlined very well in its initial form, encountered money matters and, thus, its efficiency was very low. Nevertheless, this case indicates the dilettantism of the Romanian authorities regarding the external propaganda and proved the preeminence of internal political tensions concerning the major national interests of Romania.*

Articole publicate în volumele unor conferințe

Flavius Solomon

Relațiile româno-sovietice la începutul anilor 1920: noi surse documentare și direcții de cercetare, în Partide politice și minorități naționale din România în secolul XX, Vol. V, Coordonatori Vasile Ciobanu, Sorin Radu, Sibiu, Techno Media, 2010, 59-69.

Keywords: *interwar period, Soviet-Romanian relationships, the Bessarabian question, new documentary sources*

Abstract: *The Soviet-Romanian Relationships in the Early 1920s: New Documentary Sources and Research Prospects.*

The Romanian-Soviet relationships during the interwar period have benefitted from a significant and enduring research interest, displayed in various works produced by Romanian, Soviet, Russian, Moldovan and Western historians. However, even if the overall historiographic output dealing with this topic is rather solid and growing fast, balanced approaches, unencumbered by political and ideological biases and stereotypes, are still few and far between. Research opportunities have also been thwarted and limited by restricted access to crucial archival sources. For decades, research on this topic was essentially based upon a set of official documents, well-known to historians as far back as the interwar period. The present work represents a systematic effort of rediscovery and reinterpretation of previously unpublished documentary sources. It extensively uses documents recently found in the State Archive of Social and Political History of the Russian Federation (RGASPI) and the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (contemporary history section). These sources include: the inner correspondence of the Soviet leaders of the time; transcripts of a number of meetings of the Politburo of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party; diplomatic correspondence, reports and memoirs of individual diplomats, ministry circulars and decisions. Using these sources as a starting point, I sketch three new potentially promising research avenues, namely: 1. The Komintern, Soviet diplomacy and „the Romanian question;” 2. The Archive of the Romanian Legation in Petrograd and Romania’s place within the foreign policy strategies of Soviet Russia / the early Soviet Union; 3. The (re)discovery of a topic for analysis from the point of view of the history of diplomacy in the region: Bessarabia.