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**ROMANIA AS AN EXEMPLARY SATELLITE
OF COMMUNIST BULGARIA: INFLUENCES,
DIPLOMACY AND IDEOLOGY BETWEEN 1945 AND 1947**

The Romania–Bulgaria relations were assigned the role of satellites belonging first to the Axis, and then to the U.S.S.R., following the regulation of the territorial statute of Southern Dobruja on 7 September 1940 through the Treaty of Craiova. After the Red Army entered Bulgaria, on 8 September 1944, an unusual fact intervened between Bucharest and Sofia from the perspective of Kremlin’s influence, of course: the priority of Bulgarian political, ideological and diplomatic factors over the Romanian ones, unprecedented in the history of almost seven decades of the modern bilateral relations. The lack of human and ideological resources of the Romanian Communist Party became obvious during the competition with the Bulgarian Communists and their leader, Georgi Dimitrov, which was not even declared. Communist Bulgaria became a model that Romanian communists did not seriously take into account. At least in the year when King Mihai I abdicated (1947), they were zestfully studying and copying this model, as the case may have been.

Being a so-called People’s Republic even since September 1946, following a falsified popular referendum, Bulgaria undertook to coordinate plans of internal and external politics of Romania during the next months. In order to finalize a “Bulgarian way” in Romania, the government led by Petru Groza and the media of propaganda (mainly *Scînteia*, the press official of the Romanian Communist Party), scrupulously assumed the role of protagonists. Just like the U.S.S.R., for more than two years (1946 – February 1948), Communist Bulgaria became an extremely important and valuable topic of the Romanian public speech, of the Romanian Communists’ confirmation, of establishing the project for instituting the totalitarian regime. The similarity of actions and of the institutes’ organization was striking for this short period, and the treaty signed in January 1948 was nothing but the end of a period extremely abundant in models and suggestions for Romanian communists.

Keywords: communism; Romania; Bulgaria; 1945–1947; Georgi Dimitrov.

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not only seriously took into account, yet, at least the year King Mihai I has abdicated (1947), they zestfully were also studying and copying, as the case may have been.

Any kind of interference by the Soviet Union in the domestic affairs of Bulgaria was presented as based on the criterion of national interest. First of all, as it seemed to be a general trend in Eastern Europe, the advance of the Red Army within Bulgarian territory was not interpreted as an invasion but as a liberation campaign. The Red Army, it was claimed, had come into Bulgaria to liberate Bulgarian nation from the German yoke and fascism rather than to liberate the Bulgarian toiling masses from capitalists bonds. Afterwards, the stationing of the Red Army in Bulgaria was to preserve her national sovereignty and defend her from any international intervention (Tismăneanu 2005; Sygkelos 2011: 135; Baeva 2020: 5–20)¹. Anne Applebaum extensively explained that even nowadays is not easy to evaluate chronology in the whole Eastern Europe in the last five months of World War II because did everybody had same memories about the events form the bloody period. In line with Soviet and national propagandist Communist standard narratives, Eastern Europe was liberated from the Nazi Germany's and Fascist yoke by the glorious Red Army, in a succession of a triumph one after another, and the Fascists were destroyed. Civilians as "people", in the liberty from 1944–1945, celebrated a new era of freedoms and people's democracy (Applebaum 2015: 69; Anghel 2020: 21–36; Stan Lavinia 2013)². As Vladimir Tismăneanu explained, "Communist regimes were partocratic ideocracies and their claim to legitimacy was purely ideological" (Tismăneanu 2021: 38).

Historian Mikhail Gruev assured Red Army occupation officially lasted three years, from September 1944 to December 1947 and insisted that right in this period the maintaining of the Soviets cost Bulgaria about 133 billion leva, as it was the responsibility of the Bulgarian state under the peace agreement (Spartanova 2014)³. But, insisted Gruev, if the Red Army had not entered it, Bulgaria's situation would have been very similar to that of Greece. Probably it would have been subjected to a stronger British influence in the post war years, when the focus of the Truman Doctrine was to prevent the expansion of Communism in Europe (Spartanova 2014)⁴.

Romania's inclusion in the Bulgarian area of specific ideological interests the last months before the official instauration of the totalitarian regime in Bucharest, in December 1947, represents a consequence of the strong Bulgarian influences on the evolution and structure of the Communist Party in Romania in its period of illegality, during the decades between the Two World Wars and during the Second World War (Anghel 2017: 57–73; Anghel 2020: 21–35)⁵. In fact, it represents a continuation of the policies managed by the Bulgarian Communist leaders in setting the priorities and actions for this marginal and insignificant political party.

1. Bulgarian Communism as model for Romanian neighbouring?

Traicho Kostov himself, from his position inside leadership of Bulgarian Communist Party, asked newly pro-Soviet Romanian Government of Petru Groza, installed on March 6, 1945, to had a firmly three points on a *to do list*, specially wrote in Sofia for powerless Communist on Bucharest. Kostov insisted, in a large interview for „Scânteia”, on April 7, 1945, that Bulgarian Communist Party and

himself warmly „recommended” the fight against „fascism”. The four points of these *to do list*, insisted Kostov, included high priority People’s Courts and enough punishment but relentlessly for all Romania’s “gravediggers”, Hitler’s “Romanian agents”, best organizers of the Fascism, culpables for “military and national catastrophe” (Stanca 1945: 2)⁶. Kostov added also the three “recommendations” for Romanian Government: liquidation of all “Fascist” organizations (including Democratic and legal parties as National Peasant and National Liberal), a special law “against Fascism” and “Fascist” attempts to “raising head” and “restoring” failed “organizations” of the former regimes and, last but not least, Kostov insisted for “labor camps” establishment, especially for “straightening” and “re-education” of the “Fascist elements” (Stâncă 1945: 2)⁷. The *to do list* of Bulgarian Communist for Romanian authorities was firmly focused on “people’s education”, especially on youth generations but attempted to the top “destroying chauvinism of Great Romania” (Stâncă 1945: 2)⁸.

So on King Mihai I was on first pages in Autumn-Winter 1944 (together with Queen Mother Elena) on Romanian Communist Party official „Scântea”, also the three Bulgarian Regents mailed „warmy” message each other to the Romanians, directed to abolish Democratic regime (and Constitutional Monarchy) in favour to a „new” one, more „democratic” and similar to that from Bulgaria after September 1944. Regent Todor Pavlov wrote that „a centennial friendship it exist between the two peoples”, with a „common destiny” and common „fights” for liberty, democracy and progres (Călduroase mesagii 1945: 1)⁹. New Romania and new Bulgaria-added Regent Pavlov for his Bucharest owners– will should be living in „perfect friendship and neighboring”, together with „great liberating Red Army of the USSR” (Călduroase mesagii 1945: 1)¹⁰. Regent Venelin Ganev insisted on his Danube and Romanian childhood’s neighbourings and noted for Communist Romania’s main media he was just in Bucharest for first time at the opera and symphonic concerts. Ganev no mentioned USSR, Red Army or “liberating” actions, nor Communists or people’s wills for democracy and new life. He mentioned just “oldest friendship relations” between Romanians and Bulgarians which must be renewed (Călduroase mesagii 1945: 1)¹¹. The third Regent, Tzvetko Bobochevski, wished for Romanians “to fast heal” all “deep wounds” of the imposed “long and cruel” war against USSR and to recover „new economic structures” following „great agrarian reform”. Danube- assured Regent Bobochevski- will be a bridge between the two peoples, which will be develop and deepen economic and cultural relations between Romania and Bulgaria (Călduroase mesagii 1945: 1)¹².

Petre Constantinescu-Iași, Minister for Propaganda in the first Romanian pro-Communist government of Petru Groza, insisted on an article published in the most popular “Universul”, on January 1946, Romanian-Bulgarian relations must be intensified because “restricted activities”. Just visits from literates, academics, artists and journalists, insisted Minister Constantinescu-Iași, were not enough (Constantinescu-Iași 1973: 62)¹³.

2. What kind of Bulgarian control on Romania in 1946–1947?

Being a so-called People's Republic even since September 1946, following a falsified popular referendum, Bulgaria has undertaken during the next months to coordinate plans of internal and external politics of Romania. In order to finalize a "Bulgarian way" in Romania, the government led by Petru Groza and the media of propaganda, and mainly the press official of the Romanian Communist Party, "Scântea", have scrupulously assumed the role of protagonists. And the Communist Bulgaria, just like U.S.S.R., has become for more than two years (1946–February 1948) an extremely important and valuable topic of the Romanian public speech, of the Romanian Communists' confirmation, of establishing the project for instituting the totalitarian regime. The similarity of actions and of institutes' organization is striking for this short period, and the treaty signed in January 1948 is nothing but the final of a stage extremely abundant in models and suggestions for the Romanian communists.

Two facts can be evidenced as arguments in the evaluation of Romanian-Bulgarian similarities in the period immediately after the occupation of both countries by U.S.S.R. and after the empowerment of governments less representative yet more open to the collaboration with the Kremlin.

Thus, first of all, these governments set as having a "large democratic focus" are first hand characters of the interwar political scene and, similarly, have exactly the same executive tasks. Kimon Georgiev, the leader of "Zveno" organization had led a government in the years of Tsar Boris III and had not hidden his ideas which were feebly related both to the course of a liberal democracy and to the constitutional monarchy. After an eloquent route as a Prime Minister, in the period between the *coup d'état* inspired by the Communists and Soviets in September 9th, 1944 and the abolishment, by referendum, of the monarchy and complete institution of the totalitarian regime (November 22nd 1946), Kimon Georgiev then accepts to become Vice-President of the Council of Ministers (by now led by Georgi Dimitrov) and Minister of Foreign Affairs of one of the most isolated European states. Exactly as in Romania, where Gheorghe Tătărescu, the favorite Prime Minister of King Carol II (which has led the government in two stages: January 4th 1934 – December 28th 1937, and November 24th 1939 – July 4th 1940) and leader of one of the most important political parties has accepted, within the government installed on March 6th 1945, to be invested Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (representing both positions until November 1947).

Secondly, the exotic circumstances, if not plainly ridiculous, in which the press of the Romanian Communist Party "Scântea" found itself, after August 23rd 1944: with no popular recognition and lacking all aptitude in attracting human or organizational resources to the new phase of state evolution, it has embraced the tactics of an extremely positive evaluation as political message, tactics of King Mihai I and Queen Mother Elena, up to the end of year 1947. The top office press of Romanian Communists includes, extremely frequently, on the first page, the photographic collages which represent King Mihai I and I. V. Stalin, and sometimes

Queen Mother Elena.¹⁴ Also, the telegrams of all Romanian Communist organizations are published *in extenso* after an extremely rigorous pattern: first to the King, then to Stalin and, sometimes, to the Queen Mother Elena. The Bulgarian Regent Todor Pavlov, notorious Communist, self-exiled in U.S.S.R. during 1937–1941, also benefits, in the same Romanian press body, from a favorable presentation, only a few weeks before the abolishment of the monarchy and expulsion of Tsar Simeon II. "A person issued from the people which has suffered for the people", as the author of the footnote presents the Bulgarian Communist Regent. The latter would have shown at least other two qualities: the fact that he had "a superior figure that he speaks about very often and which he profoundly respects: the people" and the second, maybe even more important politically, that "Regent Todor Pavlov speaks with much love about the great fighter against fascism, Georgi Dimitrov, the leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party" (Stan 1946: 1)¹⁵.

Not only political or diplomatic Bulgarian influences in Bucharest were supported by Romanian few original Communist, but also artistic for example. Irina Cărăbaș explained that the artistic exchanges between Romania and the Balkan countries were connected to the political vacillations, but not always tantamount to them; the artistic exchanges between Romania and Bulgaria, in 1945–1946, were the first step in establishing cultural relations within Communist Bloc in the early postwar era. (Cărăbaș 2017: 258)¹⁶ All visited places (Breaza, Brașov, Hunedoara and Ghelar) by Bulgarian artists, led by Alexander Jenkov (1945) and Boris Angelushev (1946) had to draw an image of a new Romania which had hard industry and the proletariat at the core of its society and economy. This intention was fully reflected at the official level of the Bulgarian side as shown by the article report on the documentary trip published in 1947 by Boris Angelushev: "If in what concerns art we were allowed to follow our inspiration, in return, we had to prove clear cut political orientation. We were present not only as artists but also as political representatives of our people" (Anguelouchev 1949: 9; Cărăbaș 2017: 262)¹⁷.

The beginnings of the strong Bulgarian ideological control of Communism instauration in Romania could be most probably set by the visit to Sofia of a Romanian governmental delegation, starting with July 12th, 1947, led by Petru Groza, the president of the Council of Ministers which also included Gheorghe Tătărescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the leader of the Communist Party and Minister of Industry and Commerce, Ștefan Voitec, Minister of National Education and Emil Bodnăraș, Minister Under-Secretary of State at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Scântea 14.07.1947)¹⁸. Naturally, a team which reunited Communists, Liberals, Social-Democrats and agents of Moscow yet the appearances did not mislead anybody anymore, at least not after the political and institutional experiences of Romania in the previous two years. In order to strengthen the quality of the team previously sent to Bulgaria, in the beginning of the month, Gheorghiu-Dej had asked and obtained a unanimous vote to become member in the Committee of the Romanian-Bulgarian

Association led by Petre Constantinescu-Iași, Vice-President of the Parliament and leader of the National Popular Party (Scânteia 9.07.1947)¹⁹.

In Sofia, the Romanian delegation was welcomed warmly by the Bulgarian side, through Kimon Georgiev, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs²⁰ yet extremely modestly from point of view of the international representation: Romania's Minister, Achille Barcianu, had just been joined by the ministers of U.S.S.R., Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, certified in the Bulgarian capital (Scânteia 16.07.1947)²¹. The image of the almost deserted platform of the railway Central Station in Sofia is, in fact, the representation of Romania's insignificant role in the international community after signing the Treaty of Peace in February 1947 and also a representation of Bulgaria's isolation in its external relations. The sensation of discomfort was not overcome not even during the reception organized by Kimon Georgiev, in the evening of July 13th, 1947, in the halls of the "Union Club": the transition model from a democracy ravaged by the soviet occupancy to a totalitarian regime is invisible, symbolic, and represented only by the task given to Gheorghe Tătărescu himself, to have the reception speech at this official dinner party. After Georgi Dimitrov, Petru Groza and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej have invoked the future, the liberal Minister of Foreign Affairs has spoken flatly and in vague commitments. "*Nothing separates us anymore – said Gh. Tătărescu. We have no contrary interest and I see only one policy: of collaboration and understanding. To fight for the new ideals of mankind, for peace and democracy*" (Scânteia 16.07.1947)²².

What they have been talking about can be understood from an interview Petru Groza has given to the informal journal of the Fatherland Front, "*Otecestven Front*", published on July 13th 1947. A careful reading makes a pretty transparent reference to a Romanian accept concerning the Bulgarian project of communist federalization of the Balkans. "*We have to break down, through perseverant work, these Chinese walls, – was urging the head of the government in Bucharest – to know better the neighboring peoples, setting an intense system of cultural connections and goods exchange; and by this knowledge, by this intensification of economic and cultural collaboration we would reach a political closeness, up to the identification of our interests*" (Scânteia 16.07.1947)²³. "*You know well – declared Petru Groza, to the delight of the Bulgarian audience – there was a Little Entente built against somebody and which collapsed like a cardboard citadel at first assault. By this action of ours (namely by getting closer to communist Bulgaria – A/N) we do not intend to create such a Little Entente nor any other group, yet we aim at a closeness between us, in order to achieve the peace of peoples round here*" (Scânteia 16.07.1947)²⁴.

What Petru Groza did not directly mention in "*Otecestven Front*", will be included on the second day of the visit by Giorgi Dimitrov, at the official meeting with Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. The speech of the Communist leader in Sofia sets a reality which will follow Romania's evolution in the next period: Bulgaria organizes a part of the project of communization and ideologization of exterior politics of the city of Bucharest and the neighbor from North of Danube becomes, in lack of

resources to build something of its own, a pretty docile instrument. “*As a Danubian state, – declares Dimitrov on July 13th 1947 – we will act together with Romania, Yugoslavia and the other Danubian states, in such manner as to no longer allow foreign non-Danubian forces to dominate the area of the Danube and Danubian Basin*” (Scânteia 17.07.1947)²⁵. The Bulgarian formula of regional organization even more clearly is revealed by the message subsequently expressed by Georgi Dimitrov: more explicitly, for the international community yet also for his inhibited Romanian partners, the leader in Sofia defeats the “*rumors*” about the creation of a “*Slav block*” into the Balkans. The reasoning Dimitrov uses concerns the very characteristic of propaganda instrument that Romania was invested with by Bulgaria. “*Your visit to us – motivates the leader of the Communists in Sofia – is proof that it is not about a Slav block against some western states, yet merely about setting a collaboration between democrat Slav and non-Slav states, to their own interest and to the benefit of a durable peace between peoples*” (Scânteia 17.07.1947)²⁶.

Groza and Dimitrov, together, accepted that “*territorial concerns*”, meaning Craiova Treaty of 1940 referring South Dobruja transfer to Bulgaria, are and will be “*definitively regulated*”, as Political Bureau of Romanian Communist Party officially adopted in August 9, 1946 (Tiță 2006–2008: 256–258)²⁷.

Consequently it was as clear as possible that Georgi Dimitrov affords to lie to the Romanian delegation. It was, after all, an ideological commitment of the new Popular Republic of Bulgarian to get involved in monitoring and transforming Romania into the exemplary satellite of Kremlin and a mediocre actor in regional policies, to the detriment of the Bulgarian neighbor.

3. Upgrading ideological ingredients of Bulgarian Communist influences in Romania in the second middle of 1947

The main lines drawn for the next period were setting the development of the economic and commercial connections, of the cultural ones, the energy delivery from the part of Romania until the project – only politically assumed up to then – of building a bridge across the Danube (Scânteia 18.07.1947)²⁸. As soon as any forms of independent institutional forms of Romania were dynamited and eliminated, and as soon as the destruction of constitutional monarchy and of the political opposition became a matter of days, the informal journal of the Romanian Communist Party through its daily speech prepared the general subordination of the country ideologically to the U.S.S.R. interests and, regionally, openly, to Bulgaria.

Traicho Kostov intentionally avoided political relations between People’s Republic of Bulgaria and Kingdom of Romania according to an official statement on September 1947 related in Communist media on Bucharest. The collaboration with Romania had made important progress, added Kostov quoted by “*Scânteia*” on September 11, 1947. At the Bistritza conference (in July 1947) they were examined and adopted the fundamental points on which the treaty will be concluded in the near future. Decisions, said Kostov, have been made to resolve all outstanding issues in the past and the intensification of just economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries (Scânteia 11.09.1947)²⁹.

The fact that the Bulgarian Communists have copied the Soviet model and that they were involved in protecting the frail process of communization in Romania can be seen from the vast propagandistic action of the government in Sofia, set from the very first months of year 1946, immediately after the exile of Tsar Simeon II. It is about the gesture of donating the Romanian state 1,000 wagons of cereals (mainly wheat), to diminish the effects of drought and hunger in Moldova. In most popular newspaper “Universul”, on February 23, 1947, former Minister of Propaganda, Communist Petre Constantinescu-Iași added that 25,000 Bulgarian “activists” they were tasked with collecting aid for Romanian orphans and regions. Former Minister of Bulgaria in Romania Sava Ganovski involvement was exemplary insisted Constantinescu-Iași (Constantinescu-Iași 1973: 77)³⁰.

More precisely, this decision, a political one in itself, to send cereals from a country who also suffered from hunger, namely Bulgaria, to one who was experiencing the most severe food crisis of the century, namely Romania, was intensely mediatized by the responsible persons in Sofia and by the communist bodies in Bucharest. Naturally, the propaganda does not exclude at all the emotional ability of many Bulgarian inhabitants to work effectively, under circumstances close to slavery imposed by the authorities, in order to help, as much as possible, the neighbors in the immediate vicinity, the Romanians they were resembling a lot. The humanitarian expedition took place while Bulgaria had started, at the end of 1946, a vast campaign of crop confiscation (crop that was poor anyway) and reductions were announced for the bread rations (Scânteia 16.01.1946)³¹.

What was interesting is that the entire Bulgarian donation of wheat came from the fertile plains of South Dobruja, the Romanian Cadrilater conceded to Bulgaria in September 1940, and the 1,000 wagons were sent on the railway which connected Medgidia to Negru Vodă and Bazargic (Dobrich). Uploading of the crop took place in stations of Kardam and General Toshevo, found right near the frontier (Scânteia 4.12. 1946)³².

In turn, the Bulgarian Minister in Bucharest, Sava Ganovski, was announcing, at his last press conference in this capacity (before undertaking the mission in Belgrade), on February 13th 1947, that 1,000 Romanian children from Moldova were about to arrive in his country to dwell in “collective homes” where they would be granted “*good care, medical assistance, education in their native language*”. Coincidentally or not, the children in Moldova were to be accommodated, in general, in cities that up to September 1940 belonged to Romania (Silistra, Bazargic/Dobrich, Turtucaia/Tutrakan) or which were right near the frontier, with unbreakable connections with the space from the North of Danube (Ruse, Vidin, Veliko Turnovo, Pleven) (Scanteia 15.02.1947)³³. The Bulgarian gestures were politically welcomed: The Assembly of the Deputies in Bucharest, chosen in November 1946, has publically thanked, by its president, Mihail Sadoveanu, in February 1947, both to the government leaded by Georgi Dimitrov, and to *Sobranie* for the “*helping actions organized by the Bulgarian people in our regions which were struck by drought*” (Scânteia 21.02.1947)³⁴.

The release jointly signed by the two government heads on July 16th was precisely depicting the line of the bilateral relations for the next period and the contents of the text reveals as clearly as possible both the Bulgarian autocrat and, especially, the interest of the communist regime in Sofia to give an explicit touch of superiority to the relation with the neighbor from the north of Danube. As categorically as possible, seven years from signing the Treaty in Craiova and from South Dobruja's concession to Bulgaria, the official document states that "*all territorial issues between Romania and Bulgaria are definitively settled*" (Scanteia 18.07.1947)³⁵. This fact had been officially and publicly reiterated a few times before, amongst other by the very Prime-Minister Kimon Georgiev, in the Autumn of 1945, in a long interview given to "*New York Times*" journal: "*The agreement signed at Craiova – explained Georgiev – has reset the old Romanian-Bulgarian frontier from 1878. As to Dobruja, between the two neighbor countries there is no frontier litigation*" (Scânteia 30.11.1945)³⁶.

Conclusions

The ideological differences between the already Communist Bulgaria, in 1947, and Romania, with a profoundly amputated democratic regime, start to diminish as the three main objectives, decided by Stalin, become more and more clear: the ideological Balkan unification, according to the model of the designed federation between Yugoslavia and Albania, should be also solved in case of Romania and Bulgaria.

This objective is, otherwise, the basis of the Romanian-Bulgarian bilateral treaty from January 1948 and especially of the Georgi Dimitrov's expectations concerning the future of Romania as a simple ideological annex of the regime in Sofia, and, thirdly, the communist Bulgaria offers expertise to its neighbor in the North of Danube in terms of the steps to follow in instituting the totalitarian regime in the second half of year 1947. It will be came so-called "Europe's Third World" (Kaplan 1989)³⁷ in the Balkans, as Robert D. Kaplan named, on a totally influence from USSR and, primary, from Stalin.

Having a particular and personal relation with Stalin, the Bulgarian communist leader Georgi Dimitrov faced, in Bucharest, a rarely seen admiration, and the major decisions of external politics of the government in Bucharest seemed perfectly in line with some commitments elaborated by the Kremlin and sent through Moscow. A formula we can extremely visibly distinguish in the period between the autumn of 1947 and the first two or three months of year 1948, culminating with the signature of the bilateral treaty. And, especially, a period which ended the way it has started: with the unexpected decision of the Kremlin to cancel the plans of Balkan federalization and of integrating Romania into Bulgaria.

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