

<https://doi.org/10.4467/2543733XSSB.24.007.20031>

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## **“Romanian October” Means Breakthroughs and Revaluations in Romania’s Foreign Policy in the First Half of the 60’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (From the Windows of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest)**

### Abstract

After the breakthrough of Polish October 1956, the substantive value of the information contained in the documentation of PPR diplomacy has undoubtedly increased, allowing a better understanding of international relations also between communist countries whose sovereignty was limited. This also applies to the foreign policy of Romania, whose activity in the first half of the 1960s, in the opinion of many historians, led to the country gaining considerable – compared to other Kremlin satellites – independence. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to show, on the basis of surviving sources, how PPR diplomacy perceived and assessed the transformation of Communist Romania’s foreign policy goals, directions and priorities during this period. These eventually led to Romania’s opening up to wider contacts with Western countries, but most importantly to Bucharest’s attempts to undermine the Soviet Union’s dictates in Eastern Bloc foreign policy, through such actions as vetoing Khrushchev’s plans to reform the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance and being cocksure about the Soviet-Chinese conflict. Changes also occurred on domestic grounds, mainly in the cultural sphere, in the form of a programmatic reduction of the influence of Russian and Slavic culture in general, a return to the world of Romanian culture, but also the rise of nationalist sentiment. The diplomacy observing the Romanian transformations and thus the PPR authorities generally supported the de-Stalinization of the “brotherly country” (it was even noted that Romanians referred to their own transition as the “Romanian October”), but were negative about any tendencies that challenged the Kremlin’s dominance in the Eastern Bloc’s foreign policy. The problem, however, was that at the root of the Romanian transition of the first half of the 1960s was also the desire of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s team to avoid a broader de-Stalinization campaign in order to continue in power.

**Keywords:** Polish-Romanian relations after 1956, foreign policy of Romania 1960–1965, Romania in the years 1956–1965, Romania facing the Soviet-Chinese conflict, Polish diplomacy in Romania after 1956, Polish foreign policy after 1956



On account of the political conditions of the operations of the Soviet Eastern Bloc finally formed in 1948, more balanced and deprived of the (repulsive) Stalinist newspeak, opinions of foreign services, and thus the authorities of the Kremlin satellite states, concerning political issues, as well as the glimpses of their independent diplomacy, in conditions of limited – until 1989 – sovereignty, can only be sought after the turn initiated by the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU, 14–25.02.1956), and in the case of the Polish People’s Republic (PPR) after the so-called October turn of 1956. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the de-Stalinisation of the socio-political and cultural life in the PPR was much more profound than in other “fraternal” countries, the preserved documents of the Polish foreign services allow, obviously only to some extent, to contribute to the objective reconstruction not only of the history of its foreign policy during Gomulka’s time (and afterwards during Gierek’s time), but also the development of the international situation. This also applies to the foreign policy of communist Romania, as well as to the situation in this country in general after 1956, especially in the first half of the 60’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which for many reasons was an interesting period of breakthrough and re-evaluation in the post-war history of Romanians, which underlay a certain distinctiveness in the Eastern Bloc, which has been repeatedly referred to by historians in the following years, and which is also worth looking at from the windows of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest<sup>1</sup>.

Until 1945 (also during the Second World War) Poland and Poles had rather positive experiences with Romania and Romanians, which undoubtedly contributed to such circumstances and events as the lack of border disputes between these two countries after the First World War, the neutrality of the Kingdom of Romania in the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1920, the Polish-Romanian military alliance signed a year later, finally, the aid granted by the Romanian authorities to thousands of Polish military and civilian refugees in September 1939. Nevertheless, the sovietisation of Central and Eastern Europe resulted in the estrangement of these two nations and in the process of becoming similar to the stalinist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Romania generally went further than Poland<sup>2</sup>. The relations between these two countries were typical of the whole Eastern Bloc, whose decision-making centre was based in the Kremlin – rigid and schematic ones, without much room for manoeuvring, although, on the other hand, under the façade of “decreed” friendship there was often mutual dislike and envy of their authorities, mainly in the economic field. In 1958, in the balance of the trade of the Polish People’s Republic and the Romanian People’s Republic (RPR) was far away, in the 14<sup>th</sup> place, and in the balance of the

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<sup>1</sup> The manifestations of this separateness and, at the same time, the demonstration of independence by the Romanians were to include such events as: Romania’s ambiguous attitude towards the integration plans of the CMEA and the criticism of the USSR by the PRC, maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel after 1967, establishing diplomatic relations with FRG in 1967, not participating in the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, criticism of the USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, not joining the Eastern Bloc boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Vide V. Frunză, *Istoria stalinismului în România* [History of Stalinism in Romania], București 1990; I. Chiper, F. Constantiniu, *Modelul stalinist de sovietizare a României* [The Stalinist Model of Sovietization of Romania], part 1, “Arhivele Totalitarismului” 1995, no. 2, pp. 8–28; Idem, *Modelul stalinist...*, part 2, ibidem, no. 3, pp. 28–42; M. Willaume, *Rumunia* [Romania], Warszawa 2004, pp. 189–200; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každą okazję. Polityczna historia rumuńskiego komunizmu*, [Stalinism for All Seasons. Political history of Romanian communism], Kraków 2010, pp. 120–150.

RPR Poland was in the higher, 7<sup>th</sup> place<sup>3</sup>. It must be added that Poland was distinguished from Romania (and Hungary) by another scale of negative historical reminiscences related to Germany<sup>4</sup>. Obviously, direct contacts between the societies of these two countries, apart from the representatives of the authorities and official industry delegations, were also prevented, and there was no free tourism exchange.

In Romania, after the turn of 1956, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej with his team remained in power. Yet, the leader of the Romanian Labour Party was apparently concerned about the events in Moscow, because he had been building the Stalinist system in his country with zeal, and now he was waiting. Unlike the situation in the Polish People's Republic, there was no equivalent of Gomulka in Romania at that time, because after Stalin's death, as if sensing future complications, Gheorghiu-Dej effectively eliminated his possible competition, which could be present in the party, especially communist "intellectuals", such as Lucrețiu Patrășcănu (arrested in 1948, executed in 1954), or the so-called Moscow group, namely Ana Pauker (1953–1954 under house arrest, died in 1960) or Vasile Luca (from 1952 he was in a labour camp, died in 1963) and several others, accused of links with the regime of Marshal Ion Antonescu, sabotaging the collectivisation of agriculture, industrial development, spying for the West or Titoist Yugoslavia. The pretext was also the need to "romanise" the RPR, which was another slogan for removing people of Jewish origin (e.g. Pauker) or Hungarian origin (e.g. Luca) from its leadership circles. Experienced in the backstage intrigues, Gheorghiu-Dej could thus cunningly point to the above-mentioned victims of purges also as Stalinists, Zionists, revisionists or Titoists, who were rightly judged, strengthening the line of "natives" (e.g. Gheorghiu-Dej, Gheorghe Apostol, Alexandru Drăghici, Nicolae Ceaușescu)<sup>5</sup> in the party, which could have been a good propaganda capital for the society, as in the Polish People's Republic for Władysław Gomulka's team. Nevertheless, after the initial liberalisation of social and cultural life, the Romanian authorities stopped discussions on de-Stalinisation "in the field" and the mass media. The reasons for this were, among other things, events in neighbouring Hungary (23.10–10.11.1956), which Bucharest looked at with horror, because in several Romanian cities, especially those inhabited by Hungarians, there were demonstrations of the youth, intelligentsia and labourers demanding de-Stalinisation and improvement of living conditions, which ended in clashes with the militia and the army, arrests, trials and even death sentences, as the Polish People's Republic Embassy in Bucharest also informed Warsaw. It is true that Romania agreed at that time to allow the Soviet intervention troops to pass through its territory, supported the Mátyás Rákosi's regime logistically and materially, and

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<sup>3</sup> Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie [Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw], Department I, Rumunia (AMSZ, D I, R), bundle 28/67, vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relationships in the years 1958–1961*, card 17. (Many of the documents used in this article do not have the pagination of the MFA, but – although not always – the internal one, which is given in the article for information purposes and which is not identical with the numbering of the cards). More on the economic cooperation of the two countries in this period see in A. Dubicki, *Współpraca polsko-rumuńska w ramach RWPG do roku 1962 (do XVI Sesji RWPG)*, [Polish-Romanian cooperation as part of CMEA until 1962 (to Session no. XVI CMEA)], "Studia Środkowoeuropejskie i Bałkanistyczne" 2017, vol. XXV, pp. 97–109.

<sup>4</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 1: *Foreign political relations of Romania*, cards 132–133.

<sup>5</sup> M. Willaume, *Rumunia*, pp. 201–205; D. Catanus, *Romanian Communists under the impact of Destalinization 1956–1961*, "Arhivele Totalitarismului" 2002, no. 1–2, pp. 174–191; D. Deletant, *Romania under communist rule*, ed. II, Bucharest 2006, pp. 123–130.

then held at home, at the request of the Kremlin, a Hungarian Prime Minister, Imre Nagy (handed over to Kadar's Hungary, he was executed in June 1958), but it refused its armed support out of fear – as it explained to the Soviets – of the reaction of a large Hungarian minority on the border. The attitude of the RPR authorities during the Hungarian crisis, which in their own way used it as a bargaining card towards the new Soviet authorities, prevailed so much in Khrushchev's eyes that Moscow agreed to support Romania with loans and to withdraw the last Soviet military contingent stationed there in the summer of 1958, what helped the RPR leaders to present this event as the result of their own effectiveness in foreign policy<sup>6</sup>. Nikita Khrushchev could have allowed himself to make such a gesture. Unlike Poland, Romania did not lie on the strategic Berlin direction of the Kremlin's interests, it did not border with Western countries, and in the relations of the USSR with Yugoslavia there was a thaw.

In this situation, Gheorghiu-Dej and his followers were confident that they had survived the first stage of the de-Stalinisation wave coming from Moscow. When the internal situation in the RRL appeared to be under control, the authorities announced the completion of the collectivisation of agriculture. Furthermore, based on the genuinely Stalinist slogans of the fight against the counter-revolution, the intensification of the class struggle with the development of socialism and the struggle against the bourgeois ideology, a new attack on the intelligentsia was launched, the penal code and methods of further collectivisation of agriculture were more stringent, repression against the Hungarian minority was intensified, non-party and “politically insecure” people were removed from leadership positions, and cultural life was controlled more carefully. In the summer of 1957, Gheorghiu-Dej performed purges at the highest level of the party, removing from the RPR authorities “revisionists”, “sectarians”, Miron Constantinescu and Iosif Chişinevschi (although in fact also the former Stalinists) demanding a deeper de-Stalinisation<sup>7</sup>.

During the period under discussion, the leaders of the RPR, as the leaders of other communist parties, also looked suspiciously at the changes of the Polish October, fearing the effects of too far-reaching liberalisation of the system, hence their relations with the new authorities of the Polish United Labour Party remained quite cold for many months.

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<sup>6</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 2: *Romanian Labour Party*, card 93, D. Deletant, *Romania under communist...*, pp. 134–143; A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat. Dyktatura Nicolae Ceauşescu 1965–1989* [The Genius of the Carpathians. Dictatorship of Nicolae Ceauşescu 1965–1989], Warszawa 2008, pp. 34–35; Catanuş D., *Tot mai departe de Moscova... Politica externa a Romaniei 1956–1965* [Beyond Moscow... Romania's Foreign Policy 1956–1965], Bucureşti 2011, pp. 121–138, 151–170, 198–203; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každą okazje...*, pp. 168–173.

<sup>7</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b. 28/67, vol. 1: *Political situation in Romania*, 12.08.1958., card 12–17; *Note concerning fights against “bourgeoisie ideology” in Romania*, 12.06.1958, card 18–24; O. Roske, *Colectivizarea agriculturii-represiunea totală 1957–1962 Collectivization of agriculture – total repression 1957–1962*, III, “Arhivele Totalitarismului” 1995, no. 3, pp. 140–150; D. Catanuş, *Destalinizarea în versiune românească: cazul Miron Constantinescu – Iosif Chisinevschi 1956–1961* [Destalinization in Romanian version: Cazul Miron Constantinescu-Iosif Chisinevschi 1956–1961], *ibidem*, 1999, no. 3–4; V. pp. 99–112; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každą okazje...*, pp. 173–179. “The years 1958 and 1959 [in Romania] were a time of great political processes, which especially intellectuals fell victims to. It was a double message addressed both to Moscow (‘We are able to maintain the communist orthodoxy with our own strength’) and to their own citizens (‘Calm down, for the dictatorship is not over!’). In 1956, the revolution in Hungary and the civil commotion in Poland were an alarming signal. This could not have happened in Romania!” – L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia jest inna?* [Why is Romania different?], Kraków 2013, p. 147.

The authorities in Bucharest tried to prove to their own society the strength of the “popular power” and the durability of socialism, whose distortions in Romania had already been removed, while at the same time isolating compatriots from outside information and tightening up the penal code. Warsaw sensed these negative moods towards the Polish People’s Republic, although in retrospect the ambassador of the Polish People’s Republic in Bucharest (from November 1957), Janusz Zambrowicz, described the attitude of Romanians towards Poland as “observational, but not hostile, without drastic situations, although they had quite the opposite patterns, and not just any ones!”<sup>8</sup>. Economic cooperation between these two countries slowed down<sup>9</sup>. After the plenum of the Central Committee of the RPR in June 1958, Gheorghiu-Dej’s position was strengthened and “any external manifestations of opposition or dissatisfaction with the RPR policy were eliminated”. In this situation – as Polish diplomats noted – there was to be “an increase in pessimism, distrust and political indifference” in society. Only after the plenum of the RPR CC in July 1959 a slightly deeper reform course returned. Polish observers pointed out that reforms such as the decentralisation of administration, wider competences for national councils, enterprises, production cooperatives, “limiting administrative pressure for inspiration and persuasion to the genuinely necessary needs” were mainly supported by younger RPR activists and intelligentsia, but for now, the fears of the “old” against the reaction of the society to changes and their economic consequences won, and thus “the course for partial, slow transformations, carried out without publicity”<sup>10</sup>.

The atmosphere in the Polish-Romanian relations improved only in the second half of 1958, although the Polish side was more initiative, trying to rebuild “fraternal” relations after October. When looking through the available documentation of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one can see that among the diplomats of the Polish People’s Republic, whose task after 1956 was to break the distrust of allies, there was a kind of megalomania in relation to those countries which in their opinion did not fully understand the meaning of Polish reforms and were still stuck in spirit in the past era. For this reason, they noted eagerly the first official analyses of the significance of the 20<sup>th</sup> CPSU meeting and the first positive opinions about the changes in the Polish People’s Republic. In the case of the RPR, the analyses of the PPR embassy pointed out that the “Romanian society is eager for news about Poland”<sup>11</sup> and for more balanced statements of the Romanian authorities on Yugoslav issues and their support for the so-called Rapacki Plan (announced at the United Nations 2.10.1957), all the more so, in September 1957, the Prime Minister, Chivu Stoica, announced

<sup>8</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 1: *A note on the issues of talks between the party-government delegations of the Polish People’s Republic (PPR) and the Romanian People’s Republic (RPR)*, 9.04.1958, card 15; M. Retegan, *Conducerea PMR și evenimentele din Polonia și Ungaria 1956* [PMR leadership and events in Poland and Hungary 1956], “Arhivele Totalitarismului” 1995, no. 1, pp. 137–162; R. Skobelski, *Polityka PRL wobec państw socjalistycznych w latach 1956–1970. Współpraca – napięcia – konflikty*. [The policy of the Polish People’s Republic towards socialist countries in the years 1956–1970. Cooperation – tensions – conflicts], Poznań 2010, pp. 82–84.

<sup>9</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, v. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations in the years 1958–1961*, card 2; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [History of Polish diplomacy], vol. VI: *1944/1945–1989*, W. Materski, W. Michowicz (eds.), Warszawa 2010, pp. 519–520.

<sup>10</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 2: *Romanian Labour Party*, cards 93–96; *Characterisation of the internal political situation*, card 141–143; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každq okazję...*, pp. 182–184.

<sup>11</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b. 28/67, vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations*, card 12.

a proposal to transform the Balkans into a zone of peace<sup>12</sup>. In the opinions coming from Bucharest about the situation in the RPR authorities, Zambrowicz pointed out that in relation to Polish affairs there are two camps: a group of such people as (Deputy Prime Minister) Emil Bondăraş, Ştefan Voitec, Dumitru Popa, Eugen Florescu and several others from the highest RPR authorities – with affection referring to the changes on the Vistula (“Good boy, Gomułka, on the right way went”) and a group of such people as Gheorghiu-Dej (although he himself was supposed to be willing to accept “more bold ideas”) and Chivu Stoica, Constantin Pirvulescu, Leonte Răutu looked at them with reserve for fear of “revisionism,” though without hostility or outright criticism. Such a split was supposed to cause the confusion of society, and it represented “outdated methods and varnishing”<sup>13</sup>.

Yet, the positive image effect of Poland abroad, supported by the Rapacki’s Plan, after 1956, apparently also worked beyond the Carpathians, because according to the message of Ambassador Zambrowicz in the context of the visit of the party-state authorities of the Polish People’s Republic to Romania (12–15.05. 1958), “the representatives of Western countries unanimously admired the enthusiasm for our delegation, describing it as an expression of Romanians’ longing for a more independent policy, for the willingness to follow the footsteps of Poland”, and Gheorghiu-Dej was allegedly to express the need to imitate Poland, especially in terms of more open contact between the authorities and the masses (he was very impressed by Gomułka’s “fraternisation” with crowds in the streets)<sup>14</sup>. Earlier, in the period preceding this visit, the Polish side had suggested not only increasing trade with Romania, which, due to its worse economic situation than Poland, could be beneficial for Poles, but also greater mutual rapprochement, “if not at the moment, then in the future, and a slightly different attitude” [RPR] than the rest of the so-called People’s Democracy States (PDS) was given as one of the motivations, concerning “a number of manifestations that took place after 1948 in the socialist countries”, even less aggressive attitude toward “Polish-Romanian relations after 1956, foreign policy of Romania 1960’s disloyalty”, even though the headquarters of the Cominform was located in Bucharest. Ambassador Zambrowicz proposed that Poles support Romanians in their “internal difficulties” and create conditions for a wider international approach, taking advantage of the still positive atmosphere associated with the Rapacki’s Plan for Poland. There were also proposals to inform Romanians more closely about “our October” and even to say about the negative effects of hitherto unilateral advice provided to Romania<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, in general, the visit itself did not turn out to be the beginning of some common reform path of the two countries, although – in the opinion of the Polish People’s Republic’s diplomacy – it initiated a period of the intensification of economic relations between the PPR and the RPR from the following year, all the more so, in Romania “the reforms of the methods of national economy management and steps towards the expansion of socialist democracy” continued<sup>16</sup>. In December 1958, the Polish-Romanian Government Mixed Commission for Economic Cooperation was established, and in 1960 Poland, as the first country of the Council of

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, vol. 2: *Romanian initiative of transforming Balkans into a peace zone*, cards 131–132; The foreign policy of RPR towards Yugoslavia in that period see in D. Catanus, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 138–145.

<sup>13</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b. 28/67, vol. 1, *Note concerning the topics of talks...*, cards 14–15.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, PPR Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw [about the visit], 22.05.1958, cards 25–27.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, *Note concerning the topics of talks...*, cards 15–16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, D I, b.28/67, vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations...*, card 12.

Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), signed a five-year trade agreement with Romanians, which was a breach in Bucharest’s previous practice opting more for one-year agreements<sup>17</sup>. Yet, from the very beginning, Poles underlined the differences between these two countries in the approach to agricultural policy, which (and the situation of the Church in the PPR), for understandable reasons, drew the attention also of other leaders of the PDS, also in subsequent decades.

Romania opened up to more extensive foreign contacts. From 1961, these matters accelerated. There was “a rapid development of Romanian industry”, primarily in cooperation with socialist countries, among which the USSR remained the leader. More attention from foreign observers was directed towards contacts between Bucharest and capitalist countries, which previously showed considerable reserve in this regard, due to the unresolved problem of compensation for the assets of western companies nationalised by Romania after the Second World War. Romania entered into negotiations with, among others, Italy, Austria, France, the United Kingdom, the Benelux and Scandinavian countries, as well as the United States, which quickly resulted in not only repayment arrangements, but also specific economic agreements<sup>18</sup>. In the Polish opinion, this clear activation of Romania in the international field was also accompanied by changes in the Romanian economy, recognised by Warsaw as positive, or the announcements of the need to raise wages and the standard of living of the society, as a result of the resolutions passed by the subsequent plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the RPR and the third RPR Congress in June 1960, after which the Romanian authorities began to implement the six-year plan to complete the construction of socialism (1960–1965), assuming the doubling of industrial production in comparison to 1959<sup>19</sup>.

Yet, on the occasion of the aforementioned third RPR congress, despite Gomułka-Dej’s “initial initiative on specialisation, production cooperation and increasing mutual supplies”, it was not continued. Romanians indicated the need for them to consult such plans first with the USSR<sup>20</sup>. In addition, when Romanians cancelled their participation in the sessions of the bilateral economic Commission several times in the years 1960–1961 or suddenly withdrew from the already agreed arrangements during the talks, the Poles made assumptions that they were not ready to make binding decisions yet, or were not “sufficiently” interested in increasing the trade<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, Romanians’ concerns about the quality of Polish products were also pointed out. The reason for this was the disappointment that Bucharest was supposed to experience when importing machines from Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, which did not meet the expectations of Romanians<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, these matters were more complicated, as during this period Romania also had the first irritations with other members of the CMEA on the basis of majority decision-making, not unanimity, and on the specialisation of production and its geographical location<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, cards 8–11; A. Dubicki, *Współpraca polsko-rumuńska...*, pp. 100–101.

<sup>18</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 2: *Foreign political relations of Romania*, card 134; A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, p. 38; D. Catanuş, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 145–150.

<sup>19</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 1: *The main directions of the economic development of Romania in the 6-year plan*, card 35; vol. 2: *Directives of the Third RPR Congress*, cards 123–124; *Characterisation of the internal political situation*, cards 144–146; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinizm na każdą okazję...*, p. 185.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations*, card 11.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, vol. 1: *Perspectives for further economic development of Polish-Romanian relations*, card 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, *Polish-Romanian relations*, card 12.

<sup>23</sup> A. Dubicki, *Współpraca polsko-rumuńska...*, p. 102.

According to the Polish analysts, Romania decided to look for alternative suppliers in western countries, which perceived a new market in Romania, and this resulted in the purchase of a number of licenses, machines and equipment, especially for the chemical and wood industry, while Romanian export included mainly crude oil, drilling equipment and agricultural-food products. There were also opinions from “fraternal” diplomatic posts that Romanians are convinced, “often with exaggeration and errors, of the technical superiority” of a number of western goods, and that these purchases “sometimes seem to take place without a definitive understanding” of the possibilities of importing from socialist countries. Yet, the pace of deliveries from the West was much faster, which, for example, the GDR was unable to provide<sup>24</sup>. Due to the tendencies towards the rapid industrialisation of the country, in the RPR there were also difficulties with the implementation of imported technologies, and because of this haste and expectations towards abroad Romanians deserved the opinion of a difficult partner in the Polish eyes<sup>25</sup>. In 1959–1960, Romania’s trade with the West increased by 76%, and the Federal Republic of Germany jumped into the fourth place in trade with the RPR, after the USSR, Czechoslovakia and GDR, although initially Bonn set conditions for the repatriation of ethnic Germans from Romania. From the end of 1960, economic and cultural relations with the United States were also developing<sup>26</sup>. Poles noted that Romania’s greatest interest in closer economic and cultural contacts was more often related to the Romance countries<sup>27</sup>, which, as it soon turned out, was not accidental.

We can state that from 1960 there was a kind of the discovery of Romania in European politics, whose activities in the economic and diplomatic field aroused in Poles a clear interest, sometimes also admiration, but sometimes also irritation. According to Polish diplomats, one of the reasons for the previous stagnation in Polish-Romanian relations was “our underestimation of Romania as a partner. There was an outdated belief (unfortunately, in some places still persisting to this day) that Romanians are messy, that they cannot work, that they cannot be relied on, etc. Only the last few years have shown that we were wrong”<sup>28</sup>. Although Poles may not have been isolated in a similar stereotypical perception of Romanians, such opinions expressed during this period showed a clear perception of the changes taking place in the RPR, to which Warsaw referred positively, hoping to revive mutual contacts. It should be noted, however, that, as with other members of the CMEA, the most important trading partner of the RPR was still the USSR. The Polish observers also welcomed such phenomena as tightening the criteria for admitting new candidates to the RPR, greater democracy at the lower levels of the party, the activation of the Romanian Parliament, previously a typically façade body (throughout the Eastern Bloc). In 1960, some political prisoners were amnestied, the traces of the “cult of the individual” were removed, a new administrative division of the country was introduced, restoring the old historical names of the regions. The changes in economic and political life were to raise the morale of the Romanian citizens and create a new attitude toward national property.

<sup>24</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67, vol. 2: *Foreign commercial and cultural relations of Romania*, card 137, vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations*, card 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, *Economic situation*, card 112; *Commercial relations...*, card 137.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, *Commercial relations...* cards 138–142.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 2: *Foreign political relations of Romania*, card 134.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations*, card 7.



Admittedly, according to Polish transmissions, the independence of the courts remained fictitious (but was it different in the PPR or other PDS?), but in general Romania was becoming “a country of the future”<sup>29</sup>.

The positive reactions of the Polish side were also caused by the fact that during the period under consideration there was an “immediate solidarity and support” from the RPR with all the international initiatives of the USSR. It was a bit different with German matters that were particularly interesting to Poles at the time (especially “revisionism”), although at the same time, as if with understanding, Bucharest’s reserve in this section, at that time also conditioned by economic issues, forcing Romanians to exercise restraint, was always emphasised. Also Bucharest’s attitude to the growing conflict of the USSR with China and Albania (the RPR was supposed to talk about the “irresponsibility and leftist turmoil of its leaders”) did not raise even greater objections of the leaders of the Eastern Bloc<sup>30</sup>. According to Ambassador Zambrowicz, the words uttered by Gheorghiu-Dej during his visit to Poland on 24–28 April 1961 were also promising for the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic, when the Romanian leader again pointed to the “burning” of Romania on imports from Czechoslovakia and the GDR, at the same time, emphasising the value of Poland as a partner and advisor on the path of transformations.

It was evident that the Romanian comrades were striving to get closer to the Polish People’s Republic in all the areas, that interest in Poland was increased, [...], that their desire to strengthen and expand cooperation with the Polish People’s Republic had a real economic and cultural base, the Poles gave an example that it was a mistake to isolate themselves from the society and hide the difficulties from it, that there were more candidates than seats in the elections [in the PPR], which was not in Romania.

Often looking at foreign policy mainly through the prism of the West Germany, the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic also noted with satisfaction that Gheorghiu-Dej emphasised the durability of the post-war Polish-German border. According to the Polish side, the positive feelings which were brought from Poland by the leader of the RPR were also confirmed by his suggestion of coming back to spend a “working holiday” together with a group of experts<sup>31</sup>, but this did not happen because the RPR authorities already had other priorities and directions to support the reform of their own economy.

Soon there was a radical breakthrough in Romania’s foreign policy, which was noticeable and widely commented, especially in western capitals. On account of the specificity of the dependence in the Eastern Bloc, the increased interest in Romania at that time could only result from the only anti-Soviet, or at least so perceived, direction of this policy. The genesis of this phrase should be sought, among others, in economic issues, which in mutual relations between the PDS always aroused a lot of emotions. To put it briefly, the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic, dissatisfied with the hitherto effects of the CMEA’s activities and concerned about the integration processes of western economies,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, vol. 2: *Foreign commercial and cultural relations*, cards 156–167; vol. 1: *Polish-Romanian relations*, card 13.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, vol. 2: *Foreign political relations of Romania*, cards 132–133; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinizm na každa okazje...*, pp. 187–189.

<sup>31</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67: Note: *The stay of the party-government delegation of the Romanian People’s Republic in the Polish People’s Republic on 24–28 April this year*, Bucharest 4.05.1961, cards 1–5.

started, after previous consultations (but only) with the USSR, an intensive propaganda campaign for the profound reform of this institution, which was echoed earlier, also at meetings with Romanians. The aim was, among other things, to speed up the integration process of the Member States by increasing the level of cooperation, coordinating their economic plans, or the specialisation of production. Although the Poles ultimately reduced their demands, the Romanian side, aware of its poor economic condition at the time, expressed its opposition, fearing the consequences of classifying the RPR as a group of “agricultural” countries, “specialising” mainly in food production and export of raw materials. Moreover, it associated these reforms not so much with the Poles but with Khrushchev, who understood coordination and specialisation often as imposing “brotherly countries” by the USSR with the types and volumes of production and the nature of trade exchange, and who advocated transnational planning. Therefore, Gheorghiu-Dej kept a far-reaching reserve in his talks with Ambassador Zambrowski on economic issues and at the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the CMEA in Moscow on 6–7 June 1962 he criticised the new concepts of the coordination of economic plans, which was eagerly accepted by the authorities of the more industrialised Czechoslovakia and the GDR. Meanwhile, Romanians, in a way affected by these proposals, wanted to change the stereotypical image of their homeland as an agricultural and peasant country, hence the leader of the RPR concentrated on the different national economic plans of Bucharest and the need to take this aspect into account in all the Council members, who should be treated equally. Moreover, he argued that the proposed changes would not be able to meet the current needs of the RPR. Gomulka’s reform plans (also in the issue of the economic “triangle” of the PPR-GDR-CSR) were not implemented, and when Khrushchev continued to impose the concepts of transnational planning, Romania turned it into a propaganda threat to its own sovereignty. This approach of Bucharest caused a lot of confusion in the Kremlin, accustomed to the slightly different reaction of its satellites to the proposals it made. It is no wonder that Khrushchev – again unsuccessfully – tried to convince Gheorghiu-Dej to change his attitude toward new concepts, also during his stay in Romania on 18–25 June 1962. In the following months, the irritation of the Soviet leader grew, especially as it was a hot period for him – in addition to Chinese problems, he had also to face the intensifying Cuban crisis – and the Romanians probably knew well all about this. The leader of the USSR did not achieve much as a result of his subsequent visits to Bucharest on 24–25 June 1963, like other Soviet leaders (Yuri Andropov, Nikolai Podgorny) during similar interventional pilgrimages to Romania<sup>32</sup>.

When Khrushchev continued to insist on his reform plans, there was already a real offensive of the specific concept of Romanian sovereignty – as one might call the actions of Gheorghiu-Dej’s team – and whose character was indeed so unexpected that it surprised

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. D. Deletant, *Romania under communist...*, pp. 148–149; R. Skobelski, op.cit., pp. 201–202, 216–217, 223, 227–228, 238–242; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej...*, pp. 589–595; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každq okazje...*, p. 196; A. Dubicki, *Współpraca polsko-rumuńska...*, pp. 102–109; M. Anton, *O vizită cu multe semne de întrebare: N.S. Hrușciov la București 18–25 iunie 1962* [A visit with many question marks: N.S. Khrushchev in Bucharest June 18–25, 1962], “Arhivele Totalitarismului” 2007, no. 3–4, pp. 187–103; D. Catanuș, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 276–292; B. Costache, *Activitatea României în consiliul de ajutor economic reciproc 1949–1974* [Romania’s activity in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance 1949–1974], Bucuresti 2012, pp. 43–51, 62–63; E. Dragomir, *Opoziția din interior. România și politicile CAER față de CEE (1957–1989)* [Opposition from within. Romania and CAER policies towards the EEC (1957–1989)], vol. 1, Târgoviște 2019.

not only Moscow and its allies, but also western countries, to the extent that US President John F. Kennedy, during his visit to West Berlin on 26 June 1963, called Romania an “economic and political dissident” in the Eastern Bloc<sup>33</sup>. According to the Polish People’s Republic’s diplomacy, the ground for this spectacular turn, especially in terms of intensifying contacts with the West, were carefully thought through by the RPR authorities and prepared from the propaganda side. It can be said that in the latter case, it began with a sharp criticism of the Soviet economic concepts by Deputy Prime Minister Alexandru Bârlădeanu at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the CMEA on 15 February 1963, and then, at closed party meetings, reading the resolution of the plenum of the Central Committee of the RPR held on 5–8 March 1963, which concerned the relationship of Bucharest to the CMEA and the situation in the international labour movement. It implied that the party had a negative attitude towards Khrushchev’s economic plans and deemed them as depleting the sovereignty of individual members through the creation of a unified planning body. “The main argument against the concept of close cooperation and planning is the assertion” – the II secretary of the Polish Embassy, Stefania Barońska-Bednarz, informed Warsaw – “that the uneven development of our countries is too large and in the case of close cooperation Romania would have to cover the shortages of other countries”, which meant that in Bucharest’s opinion, the Romanian economy was at a higher level than some of the “fraternal” countries, and the current economic problems of Czechoslovakia and Poland were to prove it. “One by one, the debaters supported the resolution of the Central Committee, basing it on extensive arguments about the distinctiveness of historical and economic development and the possible damage that excessive economic unification would bring to this natural development”. It was argued that such a reconstruction of the CMEA would be too far-reaching interference in the internal affairs of other countries<sup>34</sup>. As if that were not enough, in the meantime, there was also another run-in between Bucharest and Moscow, one can say that this time of wider geopolitical importance – because against the Chinese background.

The Chinese (and Albanian) issue was also discussed at the aforementioned party meetings and, along with economic issues, was to create “chauvinistic moods there”. Although at the third RPR Congress in June 1960, the Romanian authorities supported the Soviet thesis of the “peaceful coexistence” of various socio-political systems, which was strongly criticised by the People’s Republic of China, and did not support Albania in this criticism. Nevertheless, it was with time that Bucharest’s attitude towards the Eastern Bloc’s condemnation of Mao Zedong in solidarity was not so clear. “Allegedly [in the meetings], without China and Albania one cannot speak of a [socialist] camp and its unity”<sup>35</sup>. Romania’s attitude towards the People’s Republic of China (PRC) can be regarded as a distinguishing element among the Eastern Bloc countries. In general, Bucharest was manoeuvring in Chinese affairs from 1962, depending on the current goals of its own policy of strengthening its position of “independence” and the related tactics of conduct within the Eastern

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted: G.S. Manea, *Un adulter în familia comunistă. România și SUA în ani ’60* [Adultery in the communist family. Romania and the USA in the 60s], Târgoviște 2016, p. 82.

<sup>34</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67: Ciphertext of the Polish People’s Republic’s Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 10.04.1963, card 1; Vide V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každq okazje...*, pp. 196–197; B. Costache, *Activitatea României...*, pp. 51–54.

<sup>35</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b. 28/67: Cyphertext..., 10.04.1963, card 2.

Bloc. When hosting the meetings of the communist parties of Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy and Czechoslovakia during 1962, the Romanian delegations criticised the conduct of Beijing and Tirana, which was harmful “to the unity of the socialist camp”<sup>36</sup>, but on 22 June 1963, the central party press in Romania was the only one in the Eastern Bloc to publish a letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the Central Committee of the CPSU (14.06.1963), in which the Chinese authorities again undermined the principle of “peaceful coexistence”<sup>37</sup>. Nonetheless, in the same year, Polish observers noted that the Romanian celebrations of the subsequent anniversary of the proclamation of the PRC were “cooler” than the previous ones<sup>38</sup>, but Romania sent its ambassador to Tirana, the capital of Albania isolated by the Eastern Bloc<sup>39</sup>. In general, as Wiesław Sobierajski, another ambassador of the Polish People’s Republic, stated after some time, “having taken a reserved attitude in the dispute and not engaging in direct support of either party, but only expressing its position convergent in principle with the position of the majority of the party [...] the Romanian side created the possibility of later acting as an intermediary”<sup>40</sup> despite the fact that the Soviets obviously did not want it.

It can be noted that in the following months, the irritation in relations between the RPR and the USSR aggravated, still arousing a lot of surprise and astonishment in the international forum, because it was the authorities of the country, which until recently were famous for pro-Kremlin servility. At that time, some actions taken by the leaders of the RPR toward the Kremlin were considered by Polish diplomats to be inappropriate, although they were assessed more sternly by the diplomatic corps of other Eastern Bloc countries. Yet, western journalists tried to find any ambiguity in the statements of Romanians, because they were mainly interested in this<sup>41</sup>.

Changes also took place in the cultural sphere, to which Gheorghiu-Dej himself was supposed to give the green light, who at one of the party meetings in Bucharest in February 1963 “presented the issue of taking over the best from the world culture”<sup>42</sup>. The real earthquake in this area occurred in the autumn of 1963, when the actions of the Romanian authorities, which had been observed a few years earlier, intensified, such as restoring

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, PPR Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 7.12.1962, card 8–9; D. Deletant, *Romania under communist...*, pp. 149–150.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, b.8/27/70: *Political report of PPR Embassy in Bucharest for the years 1963, 1964*, cards 186–187; V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinizm na każdą okazję...*, p. 198. Polish translation of the CCP letter of 14.06.1963 titled *Proposal concerning the general line of the international communist movement* vide, e.g. <https://maopd.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/propozycja-dotyczaca-linii-generalnej-miedzynarodowego-ruchu-komunistycznego-1963.pdf> [date accessed: 12.01.2024].

<sup>38</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.28/67: *Note on the celebration of the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People’s Republic of China*, 4.10.1963, cards 3–5.

<sup>39</sup> V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinizm na każdą okazję...*, p. 200.

<sup>40</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68: *Memo on the extended plenum and meeting of the RPR CC of 22.04. 1964 on the position of the Romanian Labour Party concerning the issues of the international communist and labour movement*, [4.05.1963], card 3.

<sup>41</sup> An example, of even a certain fascination, of Western circles with discussed changes in Romania’s foreign policy can be, especially, the publication of the English journalist, David Floyd, *Romania: Russia’s dissident ally* of 1965, published in the same year in London in Polish under the amended title *Romania. Intrigue or challenge?* by “Polonia Book Fund”, p. 151.

<sup>42</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68: *Note [PPR Embassy in Bucharest on changes in the cultural life in Romania]*, 13.10.1964, card 5.

historical names of towns, removing memorabilia related to the "cult of the individual" or from the USSR. In October 1963, the M. Gorki Institute of Literature and Russian Language in Bucharest ceased to exist – its operations were taken over by the Institute of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Bucharest. At the same time, a decision was made to abolish the compulsory learning of Russian in primary and secondary schools, and the organisational apparatus of the Romanian-Soviet Friendship Society was reduced. Some of these measures were considered justified by Polish Embassy, because the excessive forms of the popularisation of the USSR among the people, which were not taking into account the traditions and mentality of the Romanian people, were often overlooked. (Of course, before 1956, a similar statement of the PPR diplomacy would be impossible.) Polish Embassy also reported that "many Soviet citizens were removed from higher positions in the administration, army, and universities", which reminded us of the previous situation in the Polish People's Republic and about the cancellation, for the first time in history, of "the Month of Romanian-Soviet Friendship, except for loose events". They stopped sending students to university in the USSR, the intelligentsia returned to the French language and Romanesque culture, the Slavic one was eliminated. Polish observers also drew attention to the publications on historical issues appearing in Romania, in which – in their opinion – it was suggested that the incoming communist forces did not act in the interest of the Romanian labour movement, the USSR's importance in the liberation of Romania in 1944 and in the building of socialism was "diminished", the press also published articles about the expansionism of Tsarist Russia towards the Danube River, which indicated that the authorities were clearly creating a new historical policy. Finally, the messages to the Warsaw Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included information about harassment against the citizens of the USSR, difficulties for them in visa matters, pressure to change citizenship. Describing the changes which took place, the Polish side "diplomatically" avoided evaluating the Romanian authorities, only when it came to the question of the Russian language in schools was it stated that due to the territorial proximity with the USSR and the extensive Russian-Soviet relations developed earlier, this is a move that goes "perhaps too far"<sup>43</sup>.

Many truly revolutionary transformations also began to take place in the field of literature. This was confirmed by secretary Barońska-Bednarz, informing that the authorities corrected the publishing plans for 1964, introducing works into circulation by such writers as Franz Kafka, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and the play of the well-known Romanian emigrant playwright, Eugen Ionescu, *Rhinoceros* (from 1959) was staged. The publishing houses planned to print works of pre-war Romanian and Western literature, previously referred to as bourgeois. It also highlighted the contribution of Romanians to the world culture. In theatre life, the experimental scene developed, modern, no longer social-realistic, painting appeared, western productions appeared in cinemas, especially from the so-called new wave. Nevertheless, as Barońska-Bednarz claimed, the process taking place in Romania will be "not spontaneous but premeditated and appropriately dosed"<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Bucharest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, 27.01.1964, cards 3–4; *Note of the Polish People's Republic Embassy in Bucharest on limiting certain forms of Soviet propaganda in Romania /Abbreviation/, 25.02.1964, card 1; verse 8/27/70: Political report of the Polish People's Republic Embassy in Bucharest...*, card 185.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, *Note...*, [13.10.1964], cards 3–5.

Of course, it would be naive to think that the breakthrough steps of the RPR on the international and domestic arena described above were the result of only the reaction of its leaders to the economic dictates of Moscow. In the light of the available sources, historians indicate that this real diplomatic offensive of Romania was already prepared by Gheorghiu-Dej, and its goal was also to finally stop the widespread de-Stalinisation of Romania, i.e. the implementation of the provisions of the 22<sup>nd</sup> congress of the CPSU (17–31.10.1961), which in the first place he himself may have become a victim. Therefore, he was preparing the field to face Khrushchev: he managed to eliminate the opposition in the RPR, bought himself many compatriots with the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1958, a mock thaw and changes in cultural life, and it was also time to use foreign policy to achieve internal goals, that is, to stay in power at any cost<sup>45</sup>.

The culminating moments of breakthroughs and changes in the foreign policy of the RPR occurred in 1964. Decisive for defining a specific credo of the new Romanian policy were the plenum of the Central Committee of the RPR on 15–22 April and a special seven-point *Declaration on the main problems of the international communist and labour movement of 22 April* published in the press on 26 April, additionally translated and sent to foreign diplomatic missions. It was to define the priorities of Romania's internal and foreign policy. It emphasised earlier statements about the need for the industrialisation of the state, but was also full of remarks or allusions to the sovereignty of socialist countries, their right to choose the forms and methods of the path to socialism, not to interfere in the internal affairs of other states, the need to base cooperation on mutual benefits, the absence of consent for the existence of “parent parties” and “daughter parties”. It also proposed the extension of the CMEA to all the socialist countries<sup>46</sup>. According to Ambassador Sobierajski, there was a disagreement during the plenum (the ministers of finance and heavy industry warned against excessive one-sided orientation of the economy towards the West), therefore, the document was prepared extremely carefully, weighing every word and making some changes even after its adoption. (Because of a few words, even the first edition of the RPR CC newspaper “Scinteia” with the text of the *Declaration* was withdrawn)<sup>47</sup>. In the opinion of the Embassy of the PPR, in relation to the CMEA, the *Declaration* gave overt information about proposals to create a superauthority in this organisation and joint, transnational enterprises, and the whole matter was the unnecessary opening of a new front of polemics, which was to be contrary to the desire of Romanians to stop them. There was also “some downgrading of the role of the labour movement as a leading force in the struggle for peace and socialism, the lack of analysis of the aggressive forces of imperialism in the world, the negative role of Bonn in particular, and the attitude of avoiding an attack on capitalist countries, especially those with which Romania has economic ties [...]”. On the other hand, regarding Chinese matters, the Embassy stated that the document differed only in terms of the tactics of action from the views of the rest of the Eastern Bloc countries, while the RPR authorities still did not support either side of the dispute or clearly indi-

<sup>45</sup> V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinizm na kazdq okazje...*, pp. 189–190.

<sup>46</sup> D. Catanuş, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 326–344. A full text of the *Declaration* is available, e.g. in *Documente fundamentale ale regimului comunist din Romania (1948–1989)* [Fundamental documents of the communist regime in Romania (1848–1989)], C. Stanciu (ed.), Târgovişte 2012, pp. 122–149.

<sup>47</sup> AMSZ, b.9/25/68: Ciphertext of the Polish People's Republic's Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 4.05.1964, card 6.

cated who was right in it, but, contrary to their previous statements, they continued to publish it. According to Sobierajski, the *Declaration* spared the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), avoided stressing the role of the CPSU in building the foundations of the strategy of the modern labour movement, and created the RPR as an intermediary in the ongoing dispute, as the only force showing genuine “concern for unity”. The Polish diplomat was also convinced that such formulated content and underestimation of the leadership role of the USSR was in fact intended to serve mainly to further strengthen the position of the Gheorghiu-Dej team in society. “Without questioning sincerity and concern for unity, it is difficult to resist the impression that the Romanian comrades are much guided by narrow-national interests, with a view to fighting in particular for the unfettered interests of the general interest of the camp and the movement – the freedom of one’s own movements”. Furthermore, as it has been noted, the Romanian concept of the CMEA could transform it into a body “non-binding for anyone”. Finally, the opinion paper stated that it stressed “too much” the principle of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. While, the condemnation of the cult of the individual was recognised as the positive accents of the *Declaration*. It can also be mentioned that a certain “taste” of the case was also added by the fact that – as the Polish Embassy informed – the plenum of the Central Committee of the RPR was planned in such a way that the Romanian delegation would not be able to reach Moscow for the celebrations of Khrushchev’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, which was additionally to prove the independence and autonomy of Romania. In the end, the Romanian authorities were to be afraid of such an unambiguous manifestation of their dissimilarity, which is why Prime Minister Ion Maurer personally handed a high Romanian decoration to the Soviet jubilate in the Kremlin. Gheorghiu-Dej did not go to Moscow, and he had clearly avoided contacts with Khrushchev from 1962 (therefore, he was not on Walter Ulbricht’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Berlin in June 1963). Yet, as the Polish institution noted, the Romanian press reported about the ceremony in Moscow rather modestly<sup>48</sup>. RPR leaders themselves were interested in foreign voices on the *Declaration*, ordering their diplomatic missions to urgently follow them and immediately inform the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest<sup>49</sup>.

The propaganda dimension was also characteristic for the discussions organised “in the field” by the RPR structures on the subject of the document under analysis, often referred to by observers as a “declaration of autonomy” or even a “declaration of independence”, and which was undoubtedly a slap in the face for Khrushchev, clearly not liked by the Romanian authorities. “The meetings are open, but the discussion is prepared in advance: from the party, only activists and, in institutions, responsible employees can speak in the discussion without prior preparation of the text and submitting it for approval”<sup>50</sup>. However, it seems that these discussions were rather easy to carry out because their content fell on fertile ground in the society. According to the Polish analysts, Romania

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<sup>48</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68: *Note concerning the extended plenum...*, cards 2–10; Ciphertext of the Polish People’s Republic’s Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 29.04.1964, cards 4–6; Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 4.05.1964, cards 33–34; verse 8/27/70: *Political report of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest...*, card 184.

<sup>49</sup> D. Catanuş, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 344–345.

<sup>50</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68: Ciphertext of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 9.05.1964, card 9.

did not uproot the traditional anti-Soviet sentiments; the aversion to the Soviet Union due to the loss of the fertile Bessarabia after the war, the grievances relating to the paid recoveries, the activities of the Romanian-Soviet mixed societies [“sovroms”], which were considered a form of the exploitation of the Romanian economy, etc., left their stigma, which during the discussion on the Declaration found a wide outlet. There were only few voices suggesting a more reasonable approach to these issues.

According to the Polish side, the actions taken by the Romanian authorities were

a novelty in the practice of the local party, which has never used such drastic forms in relation to other countries. The April events of the current year are called by Romanians unofficially “**Romanian October**” [K.N. emphasises], indicating that they mark the beginning of a new stage in their relations with the Soviet Union<sup>51</sup>.

When analysing the content and tone of the April *Declaration*, the Polish People’s Republic diplomacy polled, to the extent possible, the opinions of the representatives of various Romanian opinion-forming circles and the representatives of other countries. A former Romanian press correspondent in Warsaw (after 1956) and then one of the managers of the “Agerpres” news agency, Gheorghe Strujan, who, unlike several other interlocutors, was not to speak only in “phrases”, pointed to Jerzy Fidler, the councillor of the Embassy of the PPR, to the former discrimination of Poland by the USSR, what slowed down the pace of post-war reconstruction and the

fraternal socialist countries with developed industry have so far acted as if they thought that in the RPR all the products could be placed on which they would not find a buyer elsewhere, in exchange for raw materials that Romania can sell everywhere favourably. After all, Poland [...] has previously regulated these matters with the GDR, CSR and the USSR, and Poles understand this well.

The Romanian interlocutor added, however, that “the authorities will refrain from polemics in order not to weaken the international labour movement”. In Strujan’s opinion, it was now about the healing of relations in the Eastern Bloc and making up for the delays in development, as “Romania suffered the most from the discriminatory treatment of it by the Soviet Union, not only during the cult of the individual but also later”. Strujan’s attempt to compare the current situation in the RPR with the Polish October 1956. Fidler – in his opinion for the MFA – considered it partially wrong, because in his opinion the attitude of Poland to the USSR was different, while in Romania it is a “nationalist campaign, containing strong anti-Soviet and anti-camp accents, it is calculated, among other things, to produce an effect in the West”<sup>52</sup>. On the other hand, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RPR, Gheorghe Pele, in an interview with Marian Wielgosz from the Department IV of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underlined that Romania opposes the transnational planning also on a regional scale, “as this would deprive Romania of its influence on its economy”,

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, b.8/27/70: *Political report of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest...*, cards 184–185.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, *Note by J. Fidler, Councillor of the PPR Embassy in Bucharest with his conversation with tovarish Gh. Strujan, head of the department in Agerpres, held on 23.05.1964 concerning the party’s meetings devoted to the Declaration of the RPR, 25.05.1964*, cards 9–10.



yet it accepts the current coordination of the economic plans of its members in the CMEA, or the creation of mixed enterprises, but belonging to the country in which they are located. Otherwise, the situation will help to maintain current disparities in the development of individual countries<sup>53</sup>. When asked by Poles about the opinion, the Hungarian trade adviser in the RPR shared the opinion heard from the representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Finance, concerned about the emerging, too strong financial ties of Romania with the West, and thus the growing debt<sup>54</sup>, while an employee of the Czechoslovak Embassy considered the April *Declaration* as a manifestation of Romanian nationalism<sup>55</sup>. During the interview with the press attaché of the GDR Embassy, information was obtained about the opinions of the Romanian radio journalists on Chinese matters, suggesting the source of the Soviet-Chinese conflict on economic issues and the need for further recognition of the CCP as a "fraternal" party, although its "current line is wrong". Romanians expressed a belief that the CCP was strong enough to eventually "get off the wrong path", hence the RPR could not attack it sharply and therefore it would retain its current line of conduct for a while<sup>56</sup>. Yugoslavia's ambassador in Bucharest described the April document as a step in the right direction, which broke the fears of socialist countries about sticking the traitor's label when they expressed their criticism of the allies<sup>57</sup>. Yet, it is worth noting that despite the clear warming of Bucharest's relations with Belgrade, Josip Broz Tito, during the meeting with Gheorghiu-Dej in June 1964, urged the Romanian leader – "taking into account Khrushchev's suggestion [!] – in order not to violently put forward a whole package of claims against the soviet union, suggesting a gradual regulation of individual issues"<sup>58</sup>. The far-reaching escalation of relations between Bucharest and Moscow was clearly not in the interest of the Yugoslav communists. Whereas, western countries regarded the *Declaration* and discussions about it as an expression of anti-Soviet approach and thus positively indicating (for example, the ambassador of Greece) that Romania obtained freedom of action in relation to other socialist countries<sup>59</sup>. On the other hand, according to the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Washington, in connection with the discussions held by Romanians with the Americans concerning economic issues, the overseas press wrongly and without substantive grounds emphasised the tendencies to break away Romania from the socialist camp and move to the Western camp<sup>60</sup>.

The next *casus belli* was a study published in February 1964 by the Soviet economist Emil B. Walew in the magazine "Vestnik Moskovskovo Universitieta" (2/1964), in which

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, *Note for Tovarish Minister M. Łobodycz*, 4.07.1964, cards 1–2.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, *Note from a conversation between the councillor of the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic, J. Fidler, and the economic councillor of the Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic in the Romanian People's Republic, tovarish R. Reni*, 30.04.1964, card 2.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, *Conclusions of the ambassador CSRS in Bucharest in relation to the party's conferences in Romania*, cards 1–2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, *Note from the conversation of the press attaché of the GDR in Bucharest*, card 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, *Note from the conversation of the attaché of the PPR embassy, Klimas, with the ambassador of Yugoslavia in Bucharest, Milatovic, held on 2.05.1964 /abbreviation/, 2.05.1964*, card 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, *PPR Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw*, 13.08.1964, card 1. Cf. D. Catanuş, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, p. 351.

<sup>59</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.8/27/70, *A note from a conversation between a councillor of the PPR embassy in Bucharest and the Greek ambassador in the RRL A. Argynopoulo concerning RPR Declaration*, 18.05.1964, cards 14–15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, *Ciphertext of the PPR Embassy in Washington to the MFA in Warsaw*, 10.06.1964.

he proposed the creation of a transnational and cross-border economic complex on the borders of the USSR, Romania and Bulgaria, the area of which (about 150 thousand km<sup>2</sup>) would cover 42% of the territory and 48% of the population of Romania, most of all these countries. Even until the present day, historians question whether it was simply a scientific work, or an analysis commissioned by the Soviet authorities, also in order to “scare” Romanians, or finally to check the opinion of Kremlin satellites regarding such projects. Although there were many voices that such an undertaking could even be profitable for Romanians, Gheorghiu-Dej’s team, underlining that the industrial plants created with the help of “fraternal” countries should remain the property of the state on whose territory they are being built, used the whole matter to propagandise everything, which, in its opinion, may have violated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Romania. In June 1964, an article in the journal “Viața economică” (Economic Life, 23/1964) rejected Walew’s ideas decisively, which observers rightly recognised as the official position of the RPR authorities<sup>61</sup>.

The April *Declaration* and Bucharest’s response to Walew’s article sealed a new stage in the Romanian-Soviet relations and in the RPR’s foreign policy in general, which had been launched two years earlier. It can be stated that owing to the diplomatic and propaganda game managed and controlled by the Gheorghiu-Dej’s team, because this is how its actions can be defined, it achieved its intended goals also in internal politics, because, which is worth emphasising again, it was also important, and it was something what the diplomacy of the Polish People’s Republic focused on. The RPR authorities strengthened their position, gained popularity in the society, which – as Polish observers reported – proved that “Romania ceased to be a subordinate country and that it won an independent position”<sup>62</sup>. The Romanian authorities also achieved a completely new quality position in the Eastern Bloc and in the international arena in general. Apparently, however, they were not interested in the further development of propaganda directed against the Kremlin. It can be stated that after a short time, the RPR authorities were even worried about its effects, which, moreover, only confirmed a certain attitude of the average Romanian to the USSR, and which in the following weeks were under the attempts of suppressing, which resembled the situation in the PPR in the years 1956–1957. Although the crisis in the Romanian-Soviet relations reached its peak from May to July 1964, the Polish diplomats observed that already in May the Romanian authorities tried to tone down the discussions on the *Declaration*, fearing the “open unleashing of nationalist and anti-Soviet sentiments”<sup>63</sup>. In the subsequent weeks, when Bucharest began to hear increasingly loud murmurs of dissatisfaction with the Kremlin, the matter became so serious that on 26 June, Gheorghiu-Dej asked the leaders of the CPSU to meet in order to alleviate the growing tension. It took place in Moscow on 7–14 July with the participation of, inter alia, Prime Minister Ion Maurer and Deputy Prime Minister Alexandru Bârlădeanu on the Romanian side, and the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Nikolai Podgorny and Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin on the Soviet side. During the discussion, the

<sup>61</sup> D. Catanuș, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 347–349; A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, p. 41; B. Costache, *Activitatea României*, pp. 55–58, 127.

<sup>62</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.8/27/70, Ciphertext of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 30.05.1964, card 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*.

Soviet leaders complained about the ways in which the USSR's activities were presented on Romanian ground, suggesting that Romania was subjugated and exploited by a stronger neighbour, as well as opinions prevailing in the RPR on the willingness to influence externally the directions of its economic development and determining its place in the economy of the countries of the CMEA, and on the anti-Soviet significance of the April *Declaration*, also in historical matters and on the response of Romanians to the article by Walew. As the hosts of the meeting pointed out, the Soviet government had nothing to do with this publication in a journal read – as they claimed – only by geographers, and prior to the visit of the Romanian delegation, Walew's views were criticised in the "Izvestia" newspaper (in issue of 3.07, i.e. four days before the meeting!), which the Romanians apparently did not notice. The Kremlin also expressed its concerns about the political consequences of the intensification of economic contacts between the RPR and the West. In response, the Romanian delegates stated that negative opinions about the USSR have their origin in the past, especially in the times of the existence of the so-called sovroms, i.e. mixed Soviet-Romanian economic companies in Romania, which according to Romanians drained their country from the financial and raw materials side and limited its sovereignty. On the other hand, without actually knowing the details of the above-mentioned article from "Izvestia", the Romanian delegation did not refer to the Soviet dementi regarding Walew. Yet, Romanians did not see an ideological threat to socialism in their dealings with the West, and, as they stated, none of the PDS can have a monopoly on such actions. The Romanian delegation also met with Khrushchev, who firmly rejected the thesis that Romania was being exploited by the USSR. In general, both sides sought to ease the tension between these two countries, although the Soviets also underlined that the economic projects controversial for Romanians were only opinions and not ready-made concepts. They tried to downplay their concerns about the sovereignty of the RPR and argued – as Kosygin stressed – for developing mutual economic relations and not undermining them with statements that do not benefit anyone. Prime Minister Maurer, on the other hand, diplomatically noted that some problems in bilateral relations arose as a result of misinterpretations<sup>64</sup>. As ambassador Sobierajski reported, citing the confidential opinion of the Soviet charge d'affaires in Romania, the delegation returning from Moscow greeted the representatives of the Soviet Embassy in Bucharest "exceptionally coldly", which could indicate that the talks in the Kremlin had to be "extremely difficult". Although among the Romanians a dominant "belief about their positive ending was supposed to be present. In general, it was expected that the approach of the Romanian tovarishes would be significantly milder"<sup>65</sup>.

Although the two sides of the conflict did not fall into arms at the end of the Moscow meeting, the tension between Bucharest and Moscow actually weakened from the spring of 1964. Jaromir Ochęduszko, a councillor of the Polish People's Republic in Paris, drew

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<sup>64</sup> V. Buga, *Lumini și umbre. Relațiile economice româno-sovietice 1965–1989* [Light and Shadows. Romanian-Soviet Economic Relations 1965–1989], București 2019, pp. 104–120. The author also published separately the recording of these conversations. Cf. idem, *O vară fierbinte în relațiile româno-sovietice. Convorbirile de la Moscova din iulie 1964* [A hot summer in Romanian-Soviet relations. The July 1964 Moscow Conference], București 2012, pp. 36–213.

<sup>65</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68, Ciphertext of the Polish People's Republic Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 18.07.1964, card 5.

attention to this when Prime Minister Maurer, who was informed during his visit to France in August 1964 by the hosts on the question of the extent of Romania's independence (supposedly in the hope that other Eastern Bloc countries would follow this path), was determined to emphasise – even to the surprise of the French – the RPR's membership in the camp of socialist countries, noting that in this case it was more about independence in the economic sphere<sup>66</sup>. Nevertheless, during a conversation with one of the employees of the Paris Embassy of the PPR, the local Romanian press attaché stated that “not only the great ones have the right and duty to contribute to the international policy of détente and agreement, but also the middle states, which Romania belongs to”, and in this context, the course and results of this visit should be assessed<sup>67</sup>. On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Romania on 23 August 1964, the Soviet delegation headed by the Supreme Council President Anastas Mikojan had to “come to terms” with the close presence of the Chinese and Albanian delegation<sup>68</sup>, of which the Romanians, while planning the whole event, were probably also well aware. Nevertheless, Polish observers clearly noticed the efforts of Romanians “to spare the delegates unpleasant neighbours”<sup>69</sup>.

On 14 October 1964, Nikita Khrushchev lost power in the USSR. In his conversation with ambassador Sobierajski, the director of the Department of Socialist Countries of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tiberiu Petrescu, declared with a sense of satisfaction and superiority that Romanians would not speak officially about the changes in the USSR, because they did not care who was governing that state, “as long as the Soviet tovarishes stick to the line of the 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> conventions, declarations and statements from the years 1957, 1960. If they fail to follow them, they will be criticised”. Although the attitude of the Gheorghiu-Dej's team to the resolutions of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the CPSU was quite problematic, Petrescu believed that they

had no less warm feelings toward the USSR than other Socialist countries. That is why he was criticised when his conduct was not appropriate. In the past, other socialist states were not taken into account. Without previous consultations and arrangements, [Romanians] had to face decisions which were extremely significant for their national interests. For instance, at the time of the Cuba crisis, Khrushchev suddenly demanded by telephone that Dej carries out the mobilisation [...].

Furthermore, Petrescu stated that Romanians “were not ready for the higher forms of integration, and there were not conditions for that yet”<sup>70</sup>. The PPR Embassy, assessing ad hoc the Romanian-Soviet relations after the period of Khrushchev's reign, noted

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<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, Ciphertext of the PPR Embassy in Paris to the MFA in Warsaw, 3.08. 1964, card 12; *After the visit of the Romanian government delegation in France*, 3.08.1964, cards 5–7, Cf. D. Catanuş, *Tot mai departe de Moscova...*, pp. 363–366.

<sup>67</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68, *A note from a conversation between Cismaru and press attaché of the embassy in Romania*, 3.08.1964, cards 10–11.

<sup>68</sup> V. Tismăneanu, *Stalinizm na každq okazje...*, p. 200.

<sup>69</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.9/25/68: *Note on the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Romania*, 5.09.1964, card 8.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, Ciphertext of the PPR Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 12.11.1964, cards 2–3. The declaration of the Council of the Representatives of the Communist Parties and of the Socialist Labour Countries signed during the meeting in Moscow on 16.11.1957 assumed, among others, that the signatories in their mutual relations should follow the principles of “total equality, respect for territorial integrity, independence and

some inept tactics of the Soviet Union, or of Khrushchev, in relation to Romania. Romanians were in particular offended by Khrushchev's letter to Dej of February 1963 concerning the internationalisation of the designed power plant and gate at the Iron Gates [being erected by RPR and Yugoslavia on the Danube river], as well as gauche statements of Khrushchev in the meetings with Dej as regards the development of Romania [...]<sup>71</sup>.

The actions aimed at suppressing anti-Soviet emotions in Romanian society by the RPR authorities were apparently not consistent, as in December 1964 the mood from spring returned with greater intensity. This was due to the publication in Romania of *Notes on Romanians (Însemnări despre Români)* by Karl Marx, the originals of which were found in the collections of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. According to Counsellor Fidler, who received information about the book from the USSR Embassy, it was the first edition of Marx's notes in the world from the 50's of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, concerning mainly Russian-Turkish rivalry in the Balkans, in particular, the negative opinions of the "father of communism" concerning the destructive role of tsarist Russia in the history of the Romanian principalities and the Balkans, as well as on Bukovina and Bessarabia, drawn after reading a book by the French historian Élias Regnault in 1855: *History politique et sociale principautés danubiennes* (Political and social history of the Danubian principalities). The Romanian publication, published in a circulation of 20.5 thousand copies, was distributed within a few days. In January 1965, the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic stated that according to the diplomats of the USSR, the publication is a "logical extension of the anti-Soviet campaign from the summer of the previous year, in connection with the April declaration [...] and Romanian publications in response to the article by Professor Walew". The issue of the new historical policy of Romanians also returned, which already played an important role in the discussions on the April *Declaration*, especially with regard to the problem of Bessarabia. According to the councillor of the PPR Embassy,

last summer, Soviet tovarishes drew the attention of the RPR delegation spending time in Moscow to anti-Soviet moments in the campaign to popularise the April declaration. During this campaign, there were often voices showing the grievances as regards the territories forming a part of the Soviet Union. The Romanian delegation explained at the time that those were isolated voices, for which the leadership could not take responsibility or openly combat, as this would create an undesirable problem for both the Soviet and Romanian sides. The Romanian delegation stated that the RPR did not and would not aspire to get Bessarabia in the future. The value of this statement, according to my interlocutor, is undermined by the facts of similar significance as the publication of Marx's notes and the renewed action against the Soviet Union on these days among party assets. The Soviet Embassy found out that the Bessarabia Commission was recently established. It consists of lawyers, historians, ethnologists, linguists, etc.<sup>72</sup>

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sovereignty, and non-interference in their internal affairs". Zbiór Dokumentów [Collection of documents] 1957, no. 11, p. 436. While, the Statement of the Council of the Communist and Labour Parties in November 1960 confirmed the "complete equality and independence of each country" of the socialist camp. Ibidem 1960, no. 11–12, item 192, p. 1819.

<sup>71</sup> AMSZ, D I, R, b.8/27/70: *Political report of the Polish People's Republic Embassy in Bucharest...*, card 184.

<sup>72</sup> AMSZ, DI, b.8/27/70: *Note from the conversation of J. Fidler and W.S. Sylkin 7.01.1965, 8.01.1965*, cards 14–15.

The Soviets even stated that they “did not exclude the preparation of the public [in Romania] for some official statement on these lands”<sup>73</sup>. As Ambassador Sobierajski added, the diplomatic corps in Bucharest considers the matter of Marx’s notes “generally as an anti-Soviet pull. The passage that states that Turkey did not have the right to provide Russia with Bessarabia in 1812 is of particular interest”<sup>74</sup>. What was also intriguing, was a fragment from the *Notes* indicating that the balance of Russia’s presence in the Balkans was generally negative, contrary to the stereotypical image of Russia as a liberator of Nations from Ottoman rule. According to the Soviet and Polish diplomats, such an uncritical approach to the manuscripts of Karl Marx was unacceptable. Nevertheless, this case, undoubtedly controlled by the Romanian authorities, fell to fertile ground in the Romanian society, fulfilled the goals set by the authorities, also fitting in the new narrative of the history of Romania and Romanians, being probably the “biggest anti-Soviet propaganda attack at that time from within, perhaps of the whole, Eastern Bloc and one of the most skilful political actions towards Moscow in the Gheorghiu-Dej’s era”<sup>75</sup>, because it was difficult for the Soviets to argue with Marx. And this was an intentional action, because originally the publication was to be published half a year earlier, that is, during the period of increasing tensions between Bucharest and Moscow. Yet, due to its extremely anti-Russian attitude and the warm atmosphere prevailing at the time, the “mountain” of the RPR apparently did not want to “add oil to the fire”, therefore one can get the impression that it treated the previously unused weapons as an element of a kind of Romanians’ farewell to Khrushchev<sup>76</sup>.

Georghe Gheorghiu-Dej passed away on the day of 19 March 1965. He took power and ruled as a typical Stalinist torturer “from behind the desk” but died as a national hero to many Romanians. Although his version of de-Stalinisation was intended primarily to defend and strengthen his own position, at the time of his death communist Romania was already a different country. This undoubtedly interesting evolution of the RPR, its genesis, course and effects on the state, which in fact managed to win, in the first half of the 60’s, a significant sphere of independence from the Kremlin, as compared to other PDS, and which also fits into the political history of the Eastern Bloc after 1956, can be traced quite well on the basis of observations “from the windows of the Polish People’s Republic Embassy” in Bucharest. We can also penetrate some less known elements or nuances, which, however, contribute to a better understanding of the diplomatic chessboard of the PDS and the

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem, *Note from the conversation of S. Barońska-Bednarz and Hytrowy 8.01.1965, 9.01.1965*, card 1.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, PPR Embassy in Bucharest to the MFA in Warsaw, 1.02.1965, card 21.

<sup>75</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, p. 40.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. e.g. D. Catanuş, *Reparația problemei Basarabiei în relațiile româno-sovietice la începutul anilor 1960* [The re-emergence of the Bessarabia problem in Romano-Soviet relations in the early 1960s], in: *Problema Basarabiei în relațiile Romano-sovietice 1918–2018* [The Bessarabia problem in Romano-Soviet relations 1918–2018], coord. F.-R. Mihai, V. Buga, București 2020, pp. 207–208; K. Nowak, *Rumuńska afera z Karolem Marksem z 1964 r. (w świetle źródeł dyplomacji PRL)* [Romanian affair with Karl Marx of 1964 (in the light of the sources of the PPR diplomacy)], in: *Środkowa i wschodnia Europa w zwierciadle historii wielkiej oraz codziennej. Księga pamiątkowa dedykowana Profesorowi Sylwestrowi Fertaczowi* [Central and Eastern Europe in the mirror of great and daily history. A memorial book dedicated to Professor Sylwester Fertacz], M. Gruszczycy, J. Januszewska-Jurkiewicz, L. Krzyżanowski, M. Skrzypek (eds.), Bielsko-Biała 2021, pp. 213–223. It is worth mentioning that Marx’s manuscript was discovered by Professor Stanisław Schwann from Szczecin University of Technology, who comes from Chernivtsi in Bukovina. Recent edition of the publication under discussion vide K. Marx, *Însemnări despre Români*, Bacău 2014, pp. 166.

rest of Europe at the beginning of the first post-war relaxation. While observing the Romanian transformations and revaluations, i.e. a kind of “Romanian October” through the prism of the opinion of the diplomacy, and thus of the central authorities of the Polish People’s Republic, one can notice that the Polish side clearly sympathised with the departure of Romanians from Stalinism, although it recognised that in many areas changes in this direction must be improved. On the other hand, Władysław Gomułka, who viewed the European politics through the Western German prism, could not tolerate the anti-Soviet narrative proposed by Romanians, rapprochement with the PRC, or the Romanians’ avoidance of attacking Germany, which, in the opinion of the Polish People’s Republic, weakened the compactness of the Eastern Bloc and threatened its security. One may also state that the Poles were somewhat disappointed with the Romanians in their attempts to reform the CMEA, of course according to their own concepts and the subsequent actions of Bucharest, and its proper political manoeuvring between East and West only irritated Warsaw, as did other Kremlin satellites. Finally, it can be noted that Poles to some extent recognised well the intentions and goals of the Romanian authorities in their opposition to Khrushchev, although such reasons for their formulation, such as Gheorghiu-Dej’s willingness to retain power, were not discussed by Polish diplomats. The period of the “Romanian October” also prepared the ground for the long reign of Nicolae Ceaușescu, who developed earlier changes in domestic and foreign policy into a Romanian version of the so-called national communism, referred to by his communist propaganda as the “golden age” (*epoca d’aur*), and the first years of which are still fondly recalled by the older generation of Romanians as relatively good and peaceful times. In turn, in the Polish People’s Republic in the second half of the 60’s, the hopes and reforms of October 1956 were only a distant memory.

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