Editors' note

This special section of *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* we have the pleasure to introduce to our readers comprises a revised and expanded version of the papers presented within the panel *Empire's Legacy in the Balkans: Romania and Bulgaria in the 20th Century / L'Héritage des empires dans les Balkans: Roumanie et Bulgarie au XXe siècle*, panel organized in the framework of the 12th International Congress of the South-East European Studies: *Political, Social and Religious Dynamics in South-Eastern Europe / Dynamiques politiques, sociales et religieuses dans le Sud-Est européen*, that took place in Bucharest, in September 2019.

The panel counted as one of the activities planned in the second year of the joint-research project *Between East and East. Foreign Patterns and Local Solution in the socio-political development of Romania and Bulgaria in the 20th Century*. The project is carried out between 2018 and 2020 by the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism – the Romanian Academy and the Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, in the framework of the programme of international scientific cooperation carried out by the Romanian Academy and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Since the 18th century, the Romanian modernity was closely related to a foreign pattern. During the "Enlightenment Century", the Romanian elites vacillated between the Ottoman, Russian, and French models of development. Later on, in the second half of the 19th century, the Western pattern prevailed. The whole institutional infrastructure of the Old Kingdom followed the Western, especially French model. After 1918, the Romanian political class put her hopes in France for preserving country's territorial integrity. In interwar period, the French pattern overshadowed any other influence. Because of the Bessarabia issue, the most Eastern Romanian territory disputed with the Soviet Union, but not only because of that, politicians and public opinion strongly rejected everything coming from the East. That's why, after 1945, for the Romanian society, the Soviet pattern was something hard to digest and to come to terms with. The old Russo-phobia, whose roots are to be found in the 19th century, played a central role in the way in which the Romanian society dealt with the Soviet pattern in the first years of the communist regime.

After WWII, Moscow tried to impose a pattern of development everywhere in the Eastern Europe. On the other hand – and this is something scholars dealing with Soviet and Eastern studies concern with – the foreign pattern functioned differently, in different Eastern European countries. Common features can be identified everywhere in the East, but peculiarities also existed during the Cold War period. Secondly, despite the fact that officially the Eastern countries followed the Soviet pattern of development, in reality, a Western influence always existed within the

'communist world'. Traditions and long-lasting experiences co-existed with novelties brought by the end of the WWII.

The project *Between East and East. Foreign Patterns and Local Solution in the Socio-political Development of Romania and Bulgaria in the 20th Century* aims to investigate how the 'local factor' reacted to foreign patterns in a *longue durée* perspective, how the pattern was received, internalized and accommodated, and with what consequences. Political, economic, social, and cultural aspects are considered, domestic and foreign affairs, legislation, institutions, practices.

The panel "Empire's Legacy in the Balkans: Romania and Bulgaria in the 20th Century/ L'Héritage des empires dans les Balkans: Roumanie et Bulgarie au XXe siècle" reflects the diversity of options that the main topic of our joint-research project offers.

In his article, **Alexandre Kostov**, a corresponding member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, deals with a topic of economic history, namely with how the railroads constructed by the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires had been shared between the East European states after 1918. The disappearance of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires and territorial changes produced after the wars of 1912-1918 rose the question of their heritage in the successor states. One of the dimensions of this historical process is the legacy of the two Empires to the railway networks in this region after the Great War. The main purpose of this article is to present the process of construction and sharing of the various railway lines that, after 1918, formed the railway networks of Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (R.S.C.S.). This paper covers the initial period of settlement, as well as the subsequent development of the railways in the Balkans and the surrounding area. It focuses on the history of the railways in the Habsburg Empire (from 1867 Austria-Hungary) and, more specifically, on the networks of Austria (Cisleithanie), Hungary (Transleithanie) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (after 1878). Particular attention is paid to three of the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and takes into account provinces and regions such as the Austrian Coast (Küstenland), Batchka, Banat, Transylvania and Bukovina. The paper also deals with the "railroad legacy" of the Ottoman Empire, more specifically with the European Turkey, except the vassal provinces.

Cristina Diac's paper deals with language(s) and politics, and discusses the way in which the ability to speak more than one language influenced the political activity of the communist activists in interwar Romania. The linguistic question within the Communist Party of Romania and, in a broader sense, within the communist movement, could be addressed from two perspectives: how the individuals dealt with the language issue and, on the other hand, how the institutions that, altogether, formed the so-called "communist movement" – the local parties, the Communist International with its central and regional bodies, other structures created and driven by Comintern in different parts of the world –

managed the linguistic diversity. This article concentrates on the first angle and analyses the methods, decisions, and strategies used by individuals to deal with the linguistic issue. The paper is organized in two main parts. The first part explains what languages the first communists spoke and then it discusses the attitude toward the Romanian language of those communists who didn't speak it natively. In line with some recent achievements, this paper argues that the usage of a language might be understood rather as a communication instrument than as a proof of the existence of a different culture

In her article, **Aneta Mihaylova** discusses the works of one of the most acclaimed British travel writers of the twentieth century. In the winter of 1933, eighteen-years-old Patrick Leigh Fermor set out on an adventurous walk across Europe, starting in Holland and ending in Constantinople. Decades later he would tell the story of that journey in his books "A Time of Gifts" and "Between the Woods and the Water" that would immediately grasp the public attention and ultimately make him the most acclaimed British travel writer of the twentieth century. The final volume of his conceived trilogy "The Broken Road: From the Iron Gates to Mount Athos" appeared posthumously in 2013, two years after his death. Fermor's works are distinguished by the vivid descriptions of places and personalities he encountered on the road and also, by his exquisite style. In the course of that journey, Fermor not only crossed the borders of several countries, but also the borders of two former empires - the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian one, the presence of which could still be felt decades after they had ceased their existence. An intelligent and curious observer, Fermor offers interesting examples of this ineffaceable presence. This is most evident in his description of Transylvania, which he considers a part of central Europe and something quite different from the rest of Romania, and also in his description of Bulgaria, where he finds clear traces of the Ottoman legacy, the crossing of the Danube seen as entering into the Orient. The paper presents and analyses those examples of imperial legacies in the Balkans in the 1930s.

Carmen Stratone, a PhD student in studies of cultural diplomacy, starts her analyse from the case of the National Institute for Promoting Romanian Culture Abroad (I.R.R.C.S.). The paper underlines in the beginning I.R.R.C.S.'s lack of real power and influence within the institutional system of communist Romania, situation which was due to the fact that it had never had a real control over the cultural and the propaganda fields. Starting from 1948, I.R.R.C.S., an institute created after V.O.K.S. model (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with the Foreign Countries), centralized the cultural propaganda actions in Bucharest according to the policies elaborated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but especially taking into account the trends set by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, institution to which it was formally and informally subordinated. Beyond the projects it promoted, most of them oversized and that existed just on paper, in its

initial years I.R.R.C.S. was the voice through which the communist regime carried out an abrupt break with the inter-war traditions, that were Western (mostly French) orientated. During the 50s, I.R.R.C.S. offered the necessary infrastructure for disseminating the pro-soviet propaganda material.

Alexandru Murad Mironov's article discusses the evolution of the pension system in Romania after WWII, in the context of the social security model present in the rest of the socialist countries. Focusing on the Romanian Pension Law of 1966 that was inspired by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the new communist leader who had been imposed only one year earlier as the general secretary of the Communist Party, the article concludes that the social regulation was indeed very modern. It introduced in the history of the Eastern European social security systems an idea which, to these days, continues to rule the debate: what the fair ratio between the principle of solidarity and the principle of contribution should be? However, this reform opened the gate for a revision of the principle of solidarity, that will further deepen the tendency to privilege the financial efficiency, a trend which had a negative impact on the retirees' standard of living, and totally discriminated the peasantry.

Vasile Buga, a specialist in international relations, deals with a topic concerning the foreign affairs within the Soviet Block. His paper analysed the reactions of the Soviet leaders to Romania's proposals for extending the Balkan cooperation made at the beginning of the eight decade of the XXth century. Traditionally considered a strategic zone for both the Tsarist Empire and its successor – the Soviet Union, the Soviet leadership received coldly Nicolae Ceaușescu's ideas regarding the Balkan cooperation and labelled them as contradicting the interests of the other communist states. This paper also discusses the Soviet leadership reactions and their attempts to deter Romania's endeavours for strengthening the Balkan cooperation.

It's the authors' ambition that the articles of this special section of the *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* either introduce topics studied less by the scholarship or put a fresh, contemporary and very necessary eye on classic subjects. We can't but hope that these contributions will push the historical scholarship at least one step forward.

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