

MANUELA MARIN (ED.), *Romii și regimul comunist din România. Marginalizare, integrare și opoziție* [The Roma people and the communist regime in Romania. Marginalisation, integration and opposition], vol. I-II (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2017)

Manuela Marin is a researcher affiliated with the Faculty of History at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, specialized in contemporary history of Romania. The author's doctoral thesis focuses on the personality cult of Nicolae Ceaușescu, and it was published in 2008 under the title "Originea și evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu: 1965-1989."¹ A follow-up postdoctoral project dealt with the multifaceted ways in which Romanian citizens reacted to the ever-growing influence of the personality cult in their everyday life. The main result of this project was the publication in 2014 of a monograph entitled "Între prezent și trecut: cultul personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu și opinia publică românească."² Apart from this main research topic Manuela Marin also published articles in national and international peer-review journals on subjects such as youth during the communist regime, post-communist nostalgia or the history of ethnic minorities in communist Romania.

"Romii și regimul comunist din România. Marginalizare, integrare și opoziție" (vol. I and vol. II) is one of the results of the author's work in an EEA funded research project "The Untold Story. An Oral history of the Roma people in Romania". These two volumes contain edited historical documents and they fill a significant void in the available historiography on the history of the Roma in Romania. Although in the last decade, several other volumes with edited historical documents on the Roma in Romania were published by authors such as Viorel Achim³, Lucian Nastasă⁴, Venera Achim⁵ or Michele Kelso⁶, none of them focuses on the communist period. The volume's importance stems not only from its novelty, but also because of the quality of the research done by Manuela Marin, its through thematic outline as well

¹ Manuela Marin, *Originea și evoluția cultului personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu: 1965-1989* (Alba Iulia: Ed. Altip, 2008).

² Idem, *Între prezent și trecut: cultul personalității lui Nicolae Ceaușescu și opinia publică românească* (Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Mega, 2014).

³ Viorel Achim, *Documente privind deportarea țiganilor în Transnistria* (Bucharest: ed. Enciclopedică, 2004).

⁴ Nastasă Lucian Kovacs (et al.), *Minorități etnoculturale: mărturii documentare: Țigani din România: 1919-1944* (Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Resurse pentru Dezvoltare Etnoculturală, 2001).

⁵ Venera Achim (et al.), *Documente de arhivă privind robia țiganilor: epoca dezrobirii* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2010).

⁶ Kelso Michelle (et al.), *Tragedia romilor deportați în Transnistria: 1942-1945: mărturii și documente* (Iași: Ed. Polirom, 2009).

as the substantial introductory study. Thus, it is an indispensable tool both for researchers who focus primarily on Roma history as well as for those interested in the policies of the Romanian communist regime in relation to ethnic minorities.

The volumes are structured in two main parts preceded by an 80-page introductory study, followed by eight thematic sections with edited documents, from the Romanian National Archives (further RNA), and the National Council for Studying the Securitate Archives (further NCSSA). Manuela Marin did extensive research in the RNA on two main archival fonds: the Council of Ministers and the State's Undersecretary's Office for Nationalities, which mainly contain documents from the first two decades of the communist regime, and the Central Committee Fond of Romanian Communist Party – Organizational department, which contains documents created at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. In what concerns the NCSSA, the author focused her research on four main fonds "Documentar", "Informativ", "De rețea", "Serviciul de informații externe". It is worth mentioning that some of the documents in the volume are well known to both Romanian and international researchers and are the starting point for most of the research done on Roma up to present. One example of such document is the 1977 study on the social and economic situation of the Roma conducted by the Minister of Internal Affairs and the National Demographic Commission of Romania. Nevertheless, this is the first systematic publication of all the relevant documents from the abovementioned archival fonds. Furthermore, most of the documents from the NCSSA are brought for the first time into attention to the general public.

The documents selected by Manuela Marin are organized as follows: "The socio-economic and cultural aspects of the Roma communities"; "The distribution of the Roma population in Romania", "The local power structures of the Roma population"; "Discrimination, persecution, social parasitism, crime"; "Protesting against the regime: Roma nationalism, the fight for Roma rights"; "The communist regime and the Roma: collaboration", "Roma holidays and traditions"; "The Roma from Romania in an international context". They are relevant in allowing the historian to identify the general policies of the communist regime in relation to the Roma population in Romania throughout the period between 1950s and 1980. Therefore, this is a suitable starting point for further research on diverse topics such as: integration and/or assimilation policies, forced sedentarization, collaboration versus resistance, Roma nationalism, the activity of leading Roma intellectuals (Gheorghe Nicole) or Roma community leaders (Ioan Cioabă), the impact of international Roma movements in Romania, etc.

One example which deserves further attention is the forced sedentarization policies implemented starting with the 1950s. The Romanian authorities primarily classified the Roma according to their mobility in three main categories: nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary. The forms of mobility practiced by those from the last two categories was considered to be the main cause of their backwardness,

preventing them from having access to suitable housing, education, including professional training in the new industrial economy, access to healthcare, etc. Nevertheless, coercive sedentarization led to mixed results and many contradictions. To give just one example, these measures did not take into account that most often the nomadic Roma relied on their mobility in order to make a living by selling their traditionally crafted goods. Furthermore, local bureaucrats played an important role in how the central directives were implemented. The documents identified by Manuela Marin are mandatory for those who want to further pursue this topic.

Researchers interested in dissimulation/ everyday resistance of the Roma as a marginal group will also find this work to be of great value as it includes a significant number of documents which depict different ways in which the Roma tried, more or less successfully, to elude state control. For example, in spite of the state's efforts to sedentarize them, the documents show how nomadic or semi-nomadic groups began to practice different forms of spatial mobility which were more difficult to be tracked by official authorities and also refused to give up their traditional social organization and culture (particularly during the assimilation policies adopted after Nicolae Ceaușescu's coming to power).

The NCSSA documents on Nicolae Gheorghe and Ioan Cioabă are useful for a more nuanced analysis of the complex influence the Securitate as an institution of repression had on Roma communities, a topic also addressed by Manuela Marin both in the introductory study and in a published paper entitled "A devoted friend. Ioan Cioabă and the Securitate."⁷ Last but not least, the volume is also a useful resource for a transnational study of the influence the international Romani movement (International Romani Union) had in socialist Eastern Europe.

In conclusion, I highly recommend Manuela Marin's work to anyone who is interested in the history of the Roma during the communist period in Romania or the more general policies of the Romanian communist regime in relation to ethnic minorities.

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⁷ Manuela Marin, "Un prieten devotat nouă: Ion Cioabă și Securitatea comunistă", in *Anuarul Institutului de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului și Memoria Exilului Românesc*, Vol. XI (2016), 361-383.