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**ROMANIA'S CALVARY:
FROM ANTONESCU'S POLITICAL REGIME
TO POPULAR DEMOCRACY (1944–1948)**

The coup d'état that took place on August 23, 1944, overthrew the pro-Nazi dictatorship of Marshal Ion Antonescu and brought Romania into the antifascist coalition. With the political support of the National Peasant Party (NPP), National Liberal Party, the Social-Democrat Party (SDP) and the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), King Michael commissioned General Constantin Sănătescu to form a new government on August 23, 1944, taking Romania from the side of the Axis to that of the Allied Powers.¹ By then, Soviet troops were at the Eastern Romanian borders and were going to reach Bucharest in a few days. Due to the Soviet presence, the Communist party – made legal again after the coup and with fewer than 1,000 members – was able to obtain political superiority within the government coalition, which they would have been unable to achieve through their own electoral forces. Communist leaders were soon installed in important ministerial positions: Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu was named justice minister and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej transportation minister.² The presence of Soviet troops on Romanian territory played a crucial role in the transformation of the communist minority into a dynamic pressure group. During 1944–1945 the general strategy of the Eastern European communist parties, as well as many of their concrete actions, were coordinated or ordered by the Kremlin.³

During this time, a few major changes occurred that would decisively influence Romania's future for the next decades. The first was the unrelenting economic pressure exerted by Soviet civilian and military officials, which led to the erosion of the economy, already weakened by three years of war. This situation caused Mircea Ionnițiu, King Michael's personal secretary, to declare: "I saw how the Soviet Union

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¹ Nicolette Franck, *Defeat in Victory: How the Kingdom of Romania Became a Popular Republic (1944–1947)*, in "Journal of the American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences", no. 6–7 (1985), p. 232–247; John Keegan, *The Second World War*, New York, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 504; Marius Cișmigiu, *Problema constituțională și lovitura de stat de la 23 August 1944*, Madrid, Destin Collection, 1952, p. 12/15.

² Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 437–439.

³ See Leonid Gibianski, *URSS și câteva aspecte ale formării blocului sovietic în Europa Orientală, în 6 martie 1945. Începuturile comunizării României*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1995, p. 254–256; Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianski, *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944–1949*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1997.

caused, by its demands, a complete economic chaos, that lead to severe food shortage and social disturbances.”⁴

The second factor was the duality shown by the Communist party, which, while an element in the cabinet, was conducting with the help of its political allies a campaign to subvert the social and political structure of the country.

The third factor was what some in the Romanian leadership called the American “policy of no policy.”⁵ They felt that the United States, which refused to make any deals while the war was going on, was indifferent to Eastern Europe or did not want to get involved. Given that the State Department remained aloof to making plans in the region, US military leaders were opposed to making any commitment. This reinforced Stalin’s assertion that “whoever occupies a territory also imposes his own social system.”⁶ Under the terms of its Armistice Agreement with the Allies, Romania became subject to an Allied Control Commission, composed of representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The Allies forces signed on September 12 in Moscow the Armistice Agreement with Romania.⁷ In the interview conducted by Burton Y Berry, the United States representative in Bucharest, with Constantin Vișoianu on September 21, 1944 one can perceive Vișoianu’s concern regarding the punitive conditions imposed by the Soviet part and the apathetic reaction of the United States and Great Britain representatives:

Though he (C-tin Vișoianu) is worried about the way the Russian are behaving in Romania, he was not as pessimistic about things in general as was I. Cristu (President of the Romanian Armistice Commission). He believes that the Anglo-Americans are much more powerful than the Russians and will use their power after the war to establish a well-balanced world. He believes that the Anglo-Americans will avoid any misunderstandings with the Russians at the present time but will try to impose their principles at the peace table. He also was very disturbed because some members of the Romanian Armistice delegation had deliberately or otherwise spread the impression that the British and American ambassadors in Moscow were completely passive during the conversation and were powerless against the Russians. The King was misinformed about the negotiations by General Dumitru Dămăceanu and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, the Communist leader. D. Dămăceanu because he is full and has no political sense, Pătrășcanu because he is playing the Communists’ game.⁸

The truth about what happened in Moscow during the signing of the Armistice can be found from Vișoianu’s answers in the interview he gave on September 21:

The reason for the long delay in signing the armistice was because the British and American ambassadors had many discussions with the Russians about the final terms. Ambassador Archibald Clark Kerr, for instance, asked Vișoianu if he was satisfied with the \$ 300,000,000 reparations and added that it took a lot of convincing to get the approval of the Russians, the thought it too small. Prince Știrbey held several private conferences with the British and American ambassadors who seemed to be in sympathy with Romanian’s position. In other words, the objections and negotiations of the American and British

⁴ Mircea Ionnitiu, *The Takeover of Romania, 6 March 1945*, in “Journal of the American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences”, no. 8–9 (1986), p. 80.

⁵ *Ibidem*; Marc Trachtenberg, *The Cold War and After: History, Theory, and the Logic of International Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2012, p. 83–85.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Alexandru Cretzianu, *Captive Rumania a Decade of Soviet Rule*, New York, Praeger, 1956, p. 17–22.

⁸ Office of Strategic Services, Constantin Vișoianu’s Interview, 21 September 1944, CV.

ambassadors had to be made before the formal conferences which included the Romanians. They could not afford to disagree with the Russian allies in the presence of the Rumanian delegation.

Once the formal conferences began the Romanians disagreed in vain. For example, they asked for a clause that would provide that the allied troops (Russian troops) would leave Romanian territory after the cessation of hostilities. Ambassadors Kerr and Averell Harriman agreed with Molotov that there was not need to put down on paper something that is understood from the beginning, pointing out that the Anglo-Americans also had troops in France, Belgium and Poland and that the governments of these countries had never asked for similar guarantee for the withdrawal of those troops after the war. After the meeting Harriman told Vișoianu that he and Kerr phrased their answer so as to have the Russians understand that Romania's position was very much the same as France's position as far as military occupation was concerned.⁹

The Communist Party's objective was to gain control over the key ministries and impose Communists leaders on the departments important to the war effort and the administrative and economic control of the country. The threatening and demonization of adversaries and the wooing of industrial workers were a few of the means the Communists used to achieve their goals. An important role in this process was played by Andrei Ianuarievici Vishinsky, the man named by Stalin to deal with Romanian affairs.¹⁰

After Vishinsky's visit to Bucharest in October 1944, the Communist Party engaged in an active campaign to disrupt economic and industrial life, and create social strife. Prime Minister Sănătescu's attempts to restrain the disturbances caused the fall of the government, due to complaints from the Allied Control Commission. A second Sănătescu-coalition government was then formed, but, unlike the first, it contained a full range of politicians: 4 National Peasants, 4 Liberals, 3 Socialists, and 1 Communist. As before, the party leaders were ministers without portfolio. However, the second Sănătescu government lasted only a month.¹¹ Communist agitators, spurred on by the Soviets, staged demonstrations throughout the country, directing their criticism especially at Interior Minister Nicolae Penescu, a National Peasant Party leader. All police authority was vested in that ministry, making that post a prime Communist target throughout Eastern Europe. A crisis developed at the end of November, when Penescu used troops to insure peace and order. The Communists vociferously attacked Penescu as a protector of Fascists. In the face of mounting pressure, Sănătescu was forced to resign.¹²

A new government under General Nicolae Rădescu (December 6, 1944 – February 28, 1945) enjoyed a brief spell of calm before the Communist party resumed its campaign. An elderly officer known for his anti-German views during the war, Rădescu had the approval of Soviet authorities. Upon his appointment, Rădescu, acting under Soviet pressure, made what was termed "an important concession to the Communists" by rejecting an interior minister from the National Peasant, Liberal or Socialist parties and appointing himself to the post. Moreover, Rădescu appointed Teohari Georgescu, a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee, as undersecretary in the Interior Ministry. According to Ghiță Ionescu, the Communists used this post to

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Radu Ciuceanu, Ioan Chiper, Florin Constantiniu, *Misiunile lui A. L. Vișinski în România. Din istoria relațiilor româno-sovietice, 1944–1946. Documente secrete*, București, Editura Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 1997.

¹¹ Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania, 1944–1962*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 99.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 103; Mircea Ionnitiu, *The Takeover of Romania*, p. 83.

introduce into the police and security forces “as many as possible of the agents trained in the patriotic guards in the last three months by Emil Bodnăraș and the Soviet NKVD supervisors.”¹³ In commenting on this government, Prof. Stephen Fischer-Galați, wrote:

The composition of this government showed an increase in the number of Communist and pro-Communist members. Under instructions from Moscow, the Communist members of the Rădescu cabinet sabotaged its operations by promoting anti-government demonstration.¹⁴

In the attempt to impose their control on the Romanian political life and to sabotage any endeavor to revitalize and consolidate the democratic elements that stayed true to King Michael with the allied powers, Moscow resorted to political bribery regarding the “Transylvanian Matter”, which created concern among the political class in Bucharest. After his conversation with the Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister, C. Vișoianu, on January 3, 1945, B. Berry would declare in his telegram to the Department of State on January 4 that:

In my conversation yesterday evening with the Foreign Minister, he stated that Romanian Government was vitally interested in the Moscow negotiations with the Hungarian Provisional Government. He recalled that Romania was also at war with Hungary and was represented on the Budapest front with fourteen divisions. He said he thought this fact should earn for Romania a more active role in the negotiations than that of a simple observer.

Some responsible Romanians feel, said Vișoianu, that to divide Romania and Hungary, Soviets intend “to sing the same song” with Transylvania as the theme as did the Germans. The Nazis, of course, used Transylvania as bait to both countries to increase the war effort of each against Russia.

Now some Romanians fear northern Transylvania will be given to the country “most left” politically. Their fears are increased by reported recent speech at Cluj by a Count Teleki in which he suggested in accord with the Soviet authorities a Hungarian administration for northern Transylvania at Cluj with Hungarian control of police, gendarmerie and railways.¹⁵

The violence throughout the country created an intolerable situation, and the king, after consulting with the leaders of the political parties, believed that replacing general Rădescu could defuse the tension. At the same time, Andrei Vishinsky arrived in Bucharest and met with the king on February 27 to obtain his approval to dismiss Rădescu. The king stated that he was bound to follow constitutional procedures and the principles agreed upon at Yalta. Vishinsky bluntly responded: “The Yalta declaration does not mention the Rădescu government.”¹⁶ The next day, speaking of the Rădescu government, Vishinsky shouted to King Michael in the royal palace:

I state officially that we cannot tolerate such a government. You do not appreciate the gravity of the situation [...]. The government must be replaced immediately. [...] Today,

¹³ Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, p. 103.

¹⁴ Stephan A. Fischer-Galați (ed.), *Romania*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1957, p. 65.

¹⁵ Burton Berry's Telegram to Secretary of State from January 4, 1945, CV.

¹⁶ Constantin Vișoianu, *Rumania's Tragedy*, in “Evening Star”, 16 February 1965, sec 1, p. 8; Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, p. 83; Roy Melbourne, *Witness to the Start of the Cold War: The view from Romania*, in Paul D. Quinlan (ed.), *The United States and Romania. American-Romanian Relations during the Twentieth Century*, Woodland Hills, California, American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1988, p. 97–104.

by six o'clock, the resignation of the cabinet must be announced and immediately after, somebody should be charged to form a new government.¹⁷

The Petru Groza "government" was imposed by the Soviet Union on March 6, 1945, through the might of its occupation forces, contrary to the obligations it assumed at Yalta, and in gross violation of every principle of international law. The government crisis from March 1945, and the formation of the new government did not change in any way the decision of the American State Department to intervene and support a democratic government in Bucharest. In his report from July 2, 1945, to Charles Bohlen, American expert in the Soviet Union and close adviser to president Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference, Burton Berry was informing him about the crisis in Bucharest and about the intention to not interfere in the Romanian matter:

During the time that a governmental crisis in Bucharest was chronic the Mission carefully abstained from suggesting names of men for cabinet posts. We maintained the point of view that the selection of such men was the responsibility of Romanian party leaders. Our reasoning was based on a desire to avoid interfering in Romanian internal affairs and to reduce the suspicion of the local Soviet authorities who had shown a tendency to pass over men with Anglo-American connections.

Of course, when Mr. Vishinsky informed King Michael on March 1 that the Soviet Government desired to see a Romanian Government formed with Mr. Groza as Premier and Mr. Tătăreanu as Vice Premier, a new course was set. On a Bucharest level, however, we were unable to interfere with this course except to echo the statements made in Moscow by Ambassador Harriman on the point of view of our Government. The Soviet Government was informed by Mr. Harriman that we had no recommendations to make with respect to specific individuals but desired to see the coalition form of government, representing all democratic parties, maintained. The Department has since held to that point of view.¹⁸

Once installed, the Groza government of the so-called Romanian People's Republic proceeded to suppress all liberties, dissolve and destroy all political parties, arrest all who at any time had been prominent in public life, and carry out so-called elections. The elections were subsequently described officially by the governments of the United States and Great Britain as "the most fraudulent elections known to history."¹⁹ In his

¹⁷ Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, p. 83–84.

¹⁸ Burton Berry's Telegram to Charles Bohlen from July 2, 1945, CV.

¹⁹ On November 16, at the meeting of the Political Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Soviet Foreign Affairs Minister emphasized the statement made by Warren Austin, the United States' representative, before the Committee, regarding the ultimatum presented by Vishinsky to King Michael on February 28, 1945. Using extremely aggressive words, Vishinsky had given a firm disclaimer to Austin, agreeing to bring before the Assembly a witness who would confirm his declarations. Taking note of these declarations, General Nicolae Rădescu, the president of the Romanian National Committee at the time, in a letter addressed to Carlos Romulo, the president of the General Assembly of the United Nations at the time, specified that he was ready to appear as witness to Vishinsky's act of force in Rumania on February 28, 1945. Moreover, he called a press conference on November 25, in which he gave detailed explanations regarding the circumstances in which Vishinsky's ultimatum was produced. In his declarations, general Rădescu was supported by the telegram and the letter addressed to Austin by Vișoianu about the methods used by Vishinski in his audience with King Michael on February 28, 1945. See Constantin Vișoianu's declaration to the United Nations Organization on January 7, 1952, Comitetul Național Român (Romanian National Committee, hereafter CNR), box 1, folder 1, Hoover Institution Archive (hereafter HIA); also see Darea de seamă asupra activității Comitetului Național Român din 16 noiembrie 1949, CNR, box 1, folder 1, HIA; Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash over Romania. British and American Policies Towards Romania: 1938–1947*, Los Angeles, American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1977, p. 105–131.

telegram on August 9, 1945 to the American State Department, Burton Berry, the United States representative in Bucharest, was drawing the attention upon

[...] the need for some allied supervision of coming election because violence is growing in Romania and many people think it will continue to increase for purpose of intimidating completely historic parties. Government intends fix elections and then to claim that they were free.²⁰

In the collective memory of Romanians, it was Vishinsky who transformed their country into a potential Soviet colony. In 1946–1947, Romanian Communists benefited from the false pluralism of the Groza regime. As a result of Western pressure, historical parties were represented in his government, but for a short period of time and at a minor level.²¹

Important steps towards the total destruction of the official opposition began to be taken, starting with the falsification of the parliamentary elections of November 19, 1946. The Communists obtained low results in the elections, despite the involvement of prefects that were complicit with of Teohari Georgescu (the Communist minister of internal affairs) and despite the “revolutionary” gangs that terrorized the electors. The real winner in that election was the NPP, which the Communists correctly perceived as the nucleus of the resistance to the sovietization of the country.²²

Over time, the opposition was effectively destroyed by the measures described above. On the background of the political crisis after the parliamentary election on November 19, 1946 and following the accounts of the British and American journalists about the fraud in the elections in Romania, the American Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes put journalist Mark F. Ethridge in charge with gathering information about the political situation in Romania and Bulgaria. After summarizing briefly the events which occurred during Vishinsky’s visit to Romania in February, C-tin Vișoianu reminded M. Ethridge that the United States Government still had to learn how to deal with the Russians: “They had no conception of the Western ideas of honor, and used terms like democracy and liberty only when it was necessary to achieve their goals.”²³

With regard to the freedom of the press, C-tin Vișoianu explained in some detail the servility of the system applied by the Groza government not only where the paper is not permitted to write as it pleases, but where it is forced to publish material prepared by the Ministry of Propaganda: “[...] the Russians were particularly sensitive to any public criticism of them in the press and used ridiculous excuses to close down newspapers which they regard as hostile.”²⁴

²⁰ Burton Berry’s Telegram to the State Department on August 9th, 1945, C.V.

²¹ Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, p. 105. Regarding the events that took place in 1945, the “king’s strike” of King Michael and the Anglo-American and Soviet reactions that led to Groza’s “false pluralism”, see the introductory study in Dinu C. Giurescu (coord.), *Imposibila încercare. Greva regală, 1945*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1999, p. 7–91.

²² Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash over Romania*, 153–155; Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866–1947*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1944, p. 530–534. Regarding the events of 1946 also see Romulus Rusan (ed.), *Anul 1946. Începutul sfârșitului*, București, Editura Fundația Academia Civică, 1996; Constantin Sănătescu, *Jurnal*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1993, p. 238–240.

²³ Memorandum of Conversation Mr. Ethridge and Mr. C. Vișoianu, Independent Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, November 25, 1945, C.V.; Oral History Interview with Mark F. Ethridge, Moncure, North Carolina, June 4, 1974, by Richard D. McKinzie, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/ethridge.htm> (November 12, 2016).

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

C. Vișoianu also gave some details regarding the systematic communization of the country. He pointed out that: “[...] the army was being converted into a tool of Soviet policy through the wide-spread use of political commissars. These commissars were headed by General Victor Precup, and the commissars who worked under him were selected from the Tudor Vladimirescu division.”²⁵ A prominent subordinate of General Precup was Lieutenant Colonel Gh. Stoica, a former exile who had never been either an officer or a prisoner of war, but was a member of of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In his conversation with M. Ethridge, C. Vișoianu stressed this point by recalling that Ana Pauker “had since told them that Romania would be communized in two years, but as a result of the methods of peaceful penetration they used would be very little bloodshed.”²⁶

On December 30, 1947, King Michael was forced to abdicate and leave the country. The next day a “People’s Republic” was proclaimed. According to Romanian Communist historians and political theorists, the advent of the Groza Government on March 6, 1945, signified the installation of the “popular democratic” regime in Romania, to be followed by the second phase of conquest, the dictatorship of the proletariat, starting on December 31, 1947.²⁷

Summarizing Romania’s seven months of coalition governments in which Communists participated, Ionescu declared: “From the day on which King Michael dismissed Antonescu to that on which Soviet Russia imposed the Groza government on him, there were three Romanian governments. All tried to solve the problem of genuine collaboration between an independent Rumania and Soviet Russia. The first two were under the presidency of General Sănătescu; the third under that of General Rădescu. All three failed because of the direct and indirect refusals of Soviet Russia to deal with any but a communist-controlled government.”²⁸

World War II had already driven many people into exile. Later, according to Astrid Suhrke,

[...] the singular effect of the Cold War was not to politicize the refugee phenomenon, but to globalize this process and connect it to the dominant rivalry between the superpowers. Refugees became instruments of and parties of the Cold War, representing increments of power that were counted in the balance between East and West. In an age of mass politics and under the terms of ideological rivalry during the Cold War, refugees who crossed over to the West represented a political asset.²⁹

Therefore, one cannot speak about exile and its strategies without considering the specifics of the ideological warfare between East and West and the crucial importance of cultural aspects, which were perceived as an effective weapon to be utilized by both sides through propaganda.

There is no doubt that the Romanian political emigration played an important role during World War I. After Romania was defeated and forced to sign the peace treaty, the National Committee of Romanian Unity was formed in Paris at the initiative of

²⁵ *Ibidem.*

²⁶ *Ibidem.*

²⁷ Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania*, p. 107.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

²⁹ Astrid Suhrke, *Uncertain Globalization: Refugee Movement in the Second half of the Twentieth Century*, in Wang Gungwu (ed.), *Global History and Migrations*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1997, p. 217–239.

Take Ionescu. The Committee was immediately recognized by England, France and Italy, creating a favorable situation at the Paris peace conference and keeping the Allies' sympathy for Romania alive.³⁰

The installation in fall 1940 of the Antonescu regime and a new government dominated by the Iron Guard, as well as Romania's involvement on the Axis side in World War II, led to a new wave of Romanian political emigration. In September 1940, after the abdication of King Carol II, the Free Romanian Democratic Committee/Romanian National Committee (RNC) started taking shape in London. Its aim was to coordinate all Romanian international activities, initially for the liberation of the country from the control of Nazi Germany, later from that of Soviet Russia. A secret report from Witold Mieczysławski, Poland's foreign affairs minister before World War II, to Professor Stanisław Kot (vice president in Sikorski's government) informed Kot that the sender had met with Viorel Tilea on November 8, 1940. During this meeting, Tilea, a former Romanian ambassador to the United Kingdom, informed Mieczysławski of his intentions to form the Romanian Front and the Romanian Free Movement (the Free Democratic Committee), to be composed of people from among the fairly large numbers of Romanian émigrés in Canada and the United States.³¹ It is clear from the same report that Tilea had close relations with the former military attaché of the Republic of Poland in Bucharest, Jan Kowalewski, who, starting in 1940, was the head of the center of Polish intelligence in Lisbon.³² Through his mediation, Tilea had close relations with the Polish minister in Istanbul, Tomasz Arcziszewski, who was constantly in touch with some of the Romanian political leaders. In order to implement his plans, Tilea managed to obtain the support of Jean Pangal, the former Romanian ambassador in Lisbon,³³ and Grigore Gafencu, Romania's plenipotentiary minister in Moscow at that time. He also gained the support of a great number of Romanian politicians who were already in exile, such as Plenipotentiary Minister Dimitri Dimăncescu,³⁴ former foreign affairs counselor Alexandru Gurănescu, former plenipotentiary minister to Yugoslavia and Austria Richard Franasovici, who was established in Bern, and the plenipotentiary minister to the Vatican (and former ambassador to Warsaw and Paris and then plenipotentiary minister in Bern), Nicolae Petrescu Comnen.³⁵

³⁰ Take Ionescu, CNR, box 1, folder 1, HIA.

³¹ Notatka opracowana dla Prof. Kota na podstawie telegramów MSZ., informacji ppłk. Kowalewskiego z Lizbony oraz moich rozmów z p. Tilea, Register of the Poland Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Records, 1919–1947, series 3, box 2, folder 11, HIA (hereafter, RPMSZR).

³² Jan Kowalewski was of invaluable service to the former Romanian King Carol II, enabling him to escape from Romania and leave Spain for Lisbon; See Tomasz Szarota, *Mjr Zdzisław Żórawski Dziennik obrońcy Warszawy wrzesień 1939 r.*, Warszawa, Rytm, 2011, p. 22–29.

³³ Jean Pangal was a Romanian centrist politician and former Romanian envoy to Lisbon. Pangal was dismissed at the end of 1941 by Romanian leader Ion Antonescu because of his pro-Allied stance. Pangal remained in Lisbon and became a collaborator with Polish intelligence in Allied attempts to win over the Third Reich's allies – Hungary, Romania, Finland and Italy.

³⁴ While serving as a diplomat in London, he chose in 1941 to resign from the service when the Antonescu dictatorship was established in collaboration with the Nazi government. He soon co-founded the Romanian Free Movement led by Ambassador Tilea. At the same time, he was invited by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to serve in political intelligence against the Germans in Romania. At war's end he re-entered diplomatic service during the period of post-war treaty negotiations at the Paris and New York conferences. In 1947 he went into exile after the communist coup and lived in Marrakech, Morocco, for eight years before emigrating with his family to the United States in 1956.

³⁵ Notatka opracowana dla Prof. Kota na podstawie telegramów MSZ., informacji ppłk. Kowalewskiego z Lizbony oraz moich rozmów z p. Tilea, RPMSZR, series 3, box 2, folder 11, HIA.

Mieczysławski also specified in his report that the committee, once formed, would represent the interests of all Romanians, and that its aim was to fight for the restoration of Romanian territories occupied by force in the summer of 1940, for the liberation of King Michael I from the hostile situation in which he found himself and for restoring his rights as the monarch. The committee also predicted that in the future, only the creation of a confederation of Eastern and South-Eastern European countries having the same interests toward Germany and the Soviet Russia could result in peaceful coexistence.³⁶

Tilea admitted that, taking into account the internal political and military situation, it was imperative that cooperation with the democratic forces be accomplished only with the help of Iuliu Maniu, the former prime minister of Romania and the leader of the National Peasants' Party, who represented "the only moral and political authority in Romania" at that time. In order to inform Maniu of the committee's intentions without arousing suspicion, Tilea proposed that Constantin Angelescu, executive president of Urbana Bank of Bucharest, be the only contact person between Maniu and the committee.³⁷ This group of Romanian political emigrants would constitute the first nucleus of the future RNC.

In conclusion the author considers that owing especially to the fact that the country was under Soviet military occupation, and owing, too, to the unfortunate circumstance that the United States and Great Britain failed to make any move that might have effectively forced Soviet Russia to respect the pledges it had given at Yalta, the King of Romania was left with no choice but to give in to the Soviet Russian's demands. He had to accept a communist-dominated government. The communist government gradually eliminated all its non-communist members; it liquidated from office the few naïve people who had believed they could collaborate with it; and the communist party took over exclusively the entire life of the country for the next forty-two years.

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(Summary)

Keywords: Antonescu's political regime, popular democracy, American historiography, Soviet military occupation.

The 70th anniversary of the establishment of the communist regime in Romania may be a great opportunity to recall some of the most widely known issues, but which still carry on discussions to overcome some prevalent appreciations in the political-historical literature.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Communist regime in Romania, most Romanian historians paid special attention to the History of Communism and the Ceausescu regime, but American and British historiography rarely referred to the unfortunate situation in Romania between 1944-1947. In the United States only a few articles have appeared on the topic of the journals published by the Romanian-American Academy. Through this article the author aims to analyze the most important aspects related to the occupation of Romania by the Soviet military forces and the establishment of the Soviet communist regime. Another aspect less approached by American historiography is that of not honoring US-British military-economic guarantees offered

³⁶ *Ibidem.*

³⁷ *Ibidem.*

to Romania by the Yalta treaty and the signing of the Moscow peace truce. That is why in our article we sought to deepen the policy of the American State Department's appeasement and the interference of the Roman-Soviet communist political circles in the establishment of the totalitarian regime. As a result of the political changes during the years 1946–1947, we considered the first efforts of the Romanian political class in exile to reinstate the democratic rule of law and the annihilation of the pro-Soviet communist circles in Bucharest.

In conclusion the author considers that owing especially to the fact that the country was under Soviet military occupation, and owing, too, to the unfortunate circumstance that the United States and Great Britain failed to make any move that might have effectively forced Soviet Russia to respect the pledges it had given at Yalta, the King of Romania was left with no choice but to give in to the Soviet Russian's demands. He had to accept a communist-dominated government. The communist government gradually eliminated all its non-communist members; it liquidated from office the few naïve people who had believed they could collaborate with it; and the communist party took over exclusively the entire life of the country for the next forty-two years.