

## Rezensionen

**Igor Cașu: Dușmanul de clasă. Represiuni politice, violență și rezistență în R(A)SS Moldovenească, 1924–1956 [Class Enemy. Political Repressions, Violence and Resistance in Moldavian (A)SSR, 1924–1956].** Chișinău: Cartier 2014. 394 p.

Violence as a mechanism of Soviet state legitimacy, imposed from the First World War and the Revolution onwards, continues to incite the interest of both researchers and readers. The Moldavian historian Igor Cașu has written a book that presents regional cases of state violence, explained within the broader context of the Soviet realm. The book *Dușmanul de clasă* reconstructs the complex picture of repressions and destruction of the Moldavian population starting in 1924, when a Moldavian Autonomous Republic was created as part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, according to the Piedmont principle, as Harvard historian Terry Martin has called it. Later on, as a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939, Bessarabia was forcibly detached from Romania in late June 1940, and together with the MASSR (Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) formed the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. Published in Romanian and targeting primarily the Romanian public, the book connects cases of political repression, mass deportations and famine that occurred in Soviet Moldavia, both in the interwar period and

after World War II. The author reflects upon how in Soviet Moldavia the practice of state violence became multidimensional and variable, how complete the control of state over society through the use of violent methods was, whether there was a social opposition to it, and if so, to what extent.

The elimination of »class enemies« through deportations, repressions and physical annihilation in order to construct a society that would advance towards the ideal communist society was one of the main characteristics of the Soviet regime. The author argues that »class enemy« was an umbrella concept that encompassed internal »enemies« of the state: any person who opposed the regime in one way or another or impeded its goals risked being suspected of betrayal, being threatened, repressed or annihilated. A series of crucial events, such as the 1940/1941, 1949 and 1951 mass deportations that affected tens of thousands of Moldavians, their families, as well as entire communities, are reconstructed in detail, the fragility of personal, family and community relations in the time when survival was at stake, being masterly revealed. Cases of persecution of individuals based on political and other reasons occurred throughout the entire period of 1924 to 1956 under review in the book: Romanian or German »collaborationists« and »spies«, mayors, priests and teachers and »gendarmerie agents« were qualified as »class enemies« or »people's enemies«.

After Stalin's death, the persecution did not ease: members of local elites, professionals, intellectuals or »religious sectarians« continued to be suspected of threatening the »communist cause«, the practice being implemented less at mass level, but rather at individual and group level.

The – although short-lived – access of Moldovan historians to the files of former Moldavian KGB archives,<sup>1</sup> as well as the access to KGB files in Ukraine (Odessa) was crucial for the author's research. A thorough analysis of repressions, presented within the larger Soviet context, reveals the role of the repression machinery both on the ground and during the show trials, when political police<sup>2</sup> decided upon cases. Local public institutions, seldom present in previous studies, were given agency: on the one side, they were responsible for putting together lists of deportees; on the other side, a personal connection, a bribery or a favour could cancel the decision for deportation, which could make a crucial difference in one's life. An interesting case study on the role of state institutions in the repressions is that on the conflict between the MGB (political police) and the MVD (civilian police) during the mass deportation of 1949. In this case, the institutional conflict was clear-cut: the former considered that the deportations were organized successfully, while the latter reported that they were a complete failure.

Among the carefully selected portraits of victims of repression, whose life trajectory went downwards under the Soviet

regime, one can find persons of various ethnicities, social origins and professions. Cașu deconstructs the assumption prevailing in Romanian historiography that minorities were predominantly more loyal to the Soviet regime than the Moldavian/Romanian majority. By revealing cases, in which Ukrainians, Russians or Gagauz were deported based on political motives, the author shows that political affiliation during the Romanian regime rather than ethnicity served as the main motive for repression. From the total of 118,094 people persecuted in one way or another during the first year of the Soviet regime (1940–1941), 1,122 were village mayors, teachers and priests – former public employees who served the Romanian regime, as well as former members of the Romanian parliament. Like many others, Constantin Ghidei, a teacher from southern Bessarabia, did not provide Soviet authorities with a satisfactory explanation of his motives for remaining in Bessarabia after June 1940, when his family fled to Romania; he was suspected of espionage for Romania and deported to Siberia (p. 179).

Indeed, the regime change on the one hand and excessive vigilance on the other hand left public employees in a vulnerable situation. Nevertheless, one should avoid making the assumption that questioning loyalty was specific only to the Soviet regime. After entering the region of Bessarabia in June 1941, the Romanian authorities also launched loyalty checks of Bessarabian public employees, with those suspected of »betrayal« being deferred to military courts, sentenced to prison or sent to forced labour camps. Questioning loyalty was, in fact, a characteristic of borderland regions in the time of war or relative peace, regardless of the ruling regime.<sup>3</sup>

1 The access to the archives was given to the members of the Presidential Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Totalitarian Communist Regime in the Republic of Moldova, which functioned during 2010. The author of the book acted as vice-president of the commission.

2 The term »political police« here refers to bodies such as VCheKa/OGPU/NKVD/MGB/KGB. The term is used in: David R. Shearer: *Policing Stalin's Socialism. Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924–1953*. Yale: University Press 2009.

3 See, i. a., the recent study: Svetlana Suveica: *Loyalitäten im Zeitalter der Extreme: Lokale Beamte Bessarabiens während des Zweiten Weltkriegs (1939–1945)*, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (2017) H. 4, S. 560–597.

Was resistance to violence the norm in Soviet Moldavia? The author emphasizes that during the first year of Soviet rule active resistance failed. However, after 1944, due to people's war experience, the availability of left-over munitions, as well as of foreign propaganda on the imminence of a confrontation between the Allies and the Soviet Union, incidents of active resistance were registered. Among these were cases of peasants' rebellions against collectivization measures or cases of active, often violent, resistance against individuals who represented the Soviet regime. As the societal capacity for active resistance was limited, such cases were sporadic and poorly organised. Other reactions towards the regime, such as revulsion, symbolic resistance, tacit approval or even indifference, which can be usually understood in connection with adaptation and survival strategies embraced under critical circumstances, should have also been considered in this book.

The outcome of violence for Soviet society in general, and for the Moldavians in particular, was devastating: hundreds of thousands of lost lives – the number of victims was estimated at around 350.000 (p. 354) –, a dismantled social structure, eroded social cohesion, shattered values and beliefs. The period of partial de-Stalinization under Nikita Khrushchev did not bring an end to violence against civilians; neither did it solve the issue of victim rehabilitation. The personal files, analysed exhaustively in the book, show that a definite answer to the question of what was the reason, if any, for the deportation of one particular person or another, is difficult to find.

The majority of individual cases of persecution integrated in this book are presented by the author as being politically and ideologically motivated. In many cases though, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between »class enemies« and »enemies«

of the Soviet economy, for example. The author acknowledges Soviet modernization and its human costs as a result of state economic policy; nevertheless, practices of social intervention, in which violence was the result of complex interdependencies that cannot be fully controlled by the state, are overshadowed by cases of political repression. Applying the qualifier »political victims of the Soviet occupation regime« (p. 144) to persons recruited for forced labour leads to a missed opportunity for creating a refined typology of victimhood. As shown by Tanja Penter, the violence against Donbas mine workers, among whom were also Moldavians, although might have initiated as a part of »class enemy« campaign, gradually turned against »saboteurs.«<sup>4</sup> Further research on Soviet industrialization and the share of each republic in it, as well as on whether, and how, the recruitment process in the Moldavian SSR was different from that carried out in other republics, can help clarify the interconnectedness of victims of forced labour with other categories of victims of the Soviet regime.

The thorough historiographical analysis, combined with theoretical and methodological explanations in the introductory part instead of in the conclusion would help a less initiated reader make better sense of the case studies. In addition, the sometimes excessively long quotations (especially in the chapter on mass famine), although they provide rich details, make the text extremely dense and the argumentation difficult to follow at times.

Igor Cașu begins and ends his book with a plea to the new generation that did not experience violence under the Soviet regime to live, nevertheless, with greater awareness of its consequences for indi-

4 Tanja Penter: *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler. Arbeiten und Leben in Donbas 1929 bis 1953*. Essen: Klartext Verlag 2010.

viduals, family and society. *Dușmanul de clasă* proves the author's full acknowledgement of the historian's role as a researcher, educator, as well as a public historian. The aims of the book reflect important societal purposes, according to which a society should acknowledge, as well as accept its troubled past. Last, and foremost, the book contributes to the – rather gradual – integration of Moldavian studies into the larger academic debate in the field.

Svetlana Surveica

**Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Mădălina Diaconu (Hgg.): Geisteswissenschaften im Dialog: Deutsch-Rumänisch/Rumänisch-Deutsch.** (Jassyer Beiträge zur Germanistik XIX.) Iași: Editura Universității »Alexandru Ioan Cuza« und Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre Verlag 2016. 282 S.

Die *Jassyer Beiträge zur Germanistik* erscheinen seit 1983 in Jassy (rum. Iași), seit 1990 zusätzlich auch in Konstanz, im Auftrag des Germanistik-Lehrstuhls der Alexandru Ioan Cuza-Universität. Es handelt sich hierbei um eine sehr vielfältige und interessante Reihe, die sich mit literarischen, historischen und philosophischen Themen beschäftigt. Die beiden Herausgeber dieses Bandes bringen langjährige wissenschaftliche Beschäftigungen mit diesen Themen mit und sind sowohl in der rumänischen wie auch der deutschsprachigen Kultur zu Hause, was sie dazu prädestiniert, solch einen Sammelband zu editieren.

Ein Kriterium für die Beurteilung des Wertes eines wissenschaftlichen Werks ist, ob die eigene Zielsetzung auch erreicht wurde. In unserem Fall schreiben die Herausgeber: »Wir haben uns vorgenommen, das komplexe Phänomen des geisteswissenschaftlichen Kulturtransfers vom deutschen in den rumänischen Sprachraum – eine Übertragung von kulturellen Werten, die in viel kleinerem Maßstab und mit geringeren Folgen auch umgekehrt, vom rumä-

nischen Kulturraum in Richtung Deutschlands und Österreichs, zu verzeichnen ist – von drei verschiedenen Standpunkten aus zu behandeln: 1. aus kulturgeschichtlicher Perspektive (Übersetzungskulturen), 2. von der Translationswissenschaft ausgehend (Übersetzen), 3. aufgrund der individuellen Erfahrung von ÜbersetzerInnen (Übersetzer)« (S. 10).

Wirft man einen Blick auf das Inhaltsverzeichnis, sieht man, dass die Herausgeber diesem Anspruch durchaus gerecht werden, auch wenn das Thema naturgemäß nur anhand von einigen konkreten Fallbeispielen, nicht aber »überblicksartig« abgehandelt wird. Insgesamt gibt es 20 allesamt lesenswerte Beiträge in drei Sprachen (Deutsch, Englisch und Französisch). Alle Aufsätze zu besprechen, würde den Rahmen einer Rezension sprengen, sodass eine subjektive Auswahl getroffen wurde. Mădălina Diaconu und Marin Diaconu beschäftigen sich mit der Kant-Rezeption in der rumänischen Kultur. Die Autoren unterscheiden hierbei fünf verschiedene Phasen ab 1818, wobei erst ab 1990 über eine ideologiefreie Rezeption gesprochen werden kann. Bedeutendster Kantianer war Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917), einer der renommiertesten Historiker und Politiker (sowie Gründungsmitglied der Junimea<sup>1</sup>) vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg, berühmt für seine Kritik an der »kritiklosen« Übernahme westlicher Institutionen (»forme fără fond«). Hauptvertreter des Kantianismus in der nächsten Generation war der Philosoph, Psychologe sowie Soziologe Constantin Rădulescu-Motru (1868–1956),

<sup>1</sup> Die literarische Gesellschaft Junimea wurde im Jahr 1863 in Jassy gegründet. Zu ihren Gründern zählten bedeutende rumänische Intellektuelle und Politiker wie Titu Maiorescu, Petru Carp, Theodor Rosetti, Vasile Pogor, Gheorghe Racoviță sowie Iacob Negruzzi. Ihre Zeitschrift *Convorbiri literare* [Literarische Gespräche] wurde eine der wichtigsten, wenn nicht sogar die wichtigste Literaturzeitschrift des Landes, in der auch Mihai Eminescu den Großteil seiner Gedichte veröffentlichte.