

ABSTRACTS

Stefano Bottoni: Serving the People and Surviving. Imre Mikó and the Romanian Secret Police, 1948–1971

The research aims at reconstructing the biography of an East-European intellectual and politician, the Transylvanian-born Imre Mikó, who spent his whole active life from the early 1930s to the 1970s working between two different countries – Romania and Hungary – and four different political systems. To fulfill this task I am going to make use of published and unpublished, basically archival sources such as the personal file opened on him by the Romanian secret police, the Securitate. The scientific relevance of such an investigation lies in the complex analysis of the private and public reaction of a minority community, such as the Transylvanian Hungarian ones, to the challenge posed by living in a peculiar totalitarian system, the Romanian national communism. The historical analysis of relationship of Mikó with the communist Romanian state security unavoidably raises a further question: under which circumstances and for what purpose might have accepted a notably bourgeois-conservative Hungarian politician to cooperate with Securitate?

Imre Mikó's "second" life started immediately after the Romanian/Soviet joint liberation of Kolozsvár/Cluj, on 13 October 1944. On the basis of lists prepared by the Soviet security services, he was arrested along with some hundreds of prominent members of the Hungarian community and deported to a forced labour camp in the USSR. During the 4-years captivity he learned Russian and also became a political responsible for his camp. The newly learnt language proved essential to his existential survival after his coming back to Cluj, in 1948: despite being a well-known bourgeois politician he was one of the few persons in Cluj to have good command of Russian, and became a Russian teacher at his former Unitarian College. Ten years after, the Ministry of Interior ordered to dismiss all "politically unreliable" education cadres.

His political and social rehabilitation went parallel with the evolution of the Romanian communist regime. During the first and quite liberal years in power of Nicolae Ceaușescu, in the second half of the 1960s, Mikó regained part of his former status: in 1964-69 and again after 1973 he was appointed Curator-general of the Unitarian Church. In this capacity he also organized and successfully handled in August 1968 the international celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Unitarian movement, organized with great pomp in Cluj as a sign of openness of the Romanian communist state towards a minority cult. Then he became in February 1970 and until his death, in 1977, the most influential staff member of the newly established editing house in charge of minority communities' literature and poetry, *Kriterion*.

From 1948 to the day of his death, in March 1977 Mikó's professional and private life was accurately monitored by Securitate, which mobilized several dozens of

officers and secret informers to unveil the smallest nuances of the ordinary life of a “declassified” element under the communist regime. The Securitate archives in Bucharest (ACNSAS) hold an impressive ten-volume collection documenting the relationship between Mikó and the State security. Six of them contain more than 1300 pages of operative investigation carried out on Mikó (Fond Informativ), while the other four (734 pages) testify Mikó’s secret cooperation with Securitate. He was recruited three times as an informer after 1948, when the secret police registered his comeback from the USSR and started spying on him. In February 1952 he was forced by physical and psychological constraint to sign a cooperation agreement, and only gave some information about the pre-1944 activity of former colleagues and friends belonging to the liberal-conservative political side. In 1955 he suffered a short arrest, possibly motivated by his refusal to further collaboration, and after that he signed another agreement. After the 1956 Hungarian revolution, partial cooperation became no longer possible, since Mikó did not accept to speak about who had been supportive of the uprising among his colleagues and students. After losing his job, Mikó was put under general surveillance as a former leader of a “fascist party”, but he had become so prudent and suspicious that Securitate unsuccessfully tried several times to provoke political debates among Mikó and his acquaintances spying on him. What may have motivated the collaboration of Mikó with a system he ideologically never adhered to? In the 1950s, his only aim was to survive Stalinism and preserve his large family from another catastrophe after his long absence between 1944 and 1948. The case is rather different when we come to the 1970s. Then Imre Mikó had an excellent reason for accepting to collaborate with the Romanian communist security services. As a skilled lawyer and politician, he was well aware of what kind of tasks and compromises such a cooperation do imply, and also of the borderline he cannot morally cross. His first and most important goal of his travelling to the West was to strike up (or re-establish) relationships with the Hungarian diaspora and to show that a Transylvanian Hungarian community still exists, produces valuable culture and – at the end of the day – it is worth being supported morally, politically and economically. He knew or felt on the ground how suspicious the Western emigration was on everyone coming from the “iron curtain”; as one of the few trustworthy persons representing abroad the Transylvanian Hungarian community under Ceaușescu, Mikó accepted Securitate’s game rules in order to fulfill a higher ethical expectation: being at the service of his Transylvanian community, especially in troubled times.

Keywords: Imre Mikó, Romanian Communist regime, Securitate, cooperating with Securitate

Sándor Kovács: “Symposium 1979”. The Cult of Ferenc Dávid: the Message of the Church and Political Control

The study examines how did narratives on the founder of the Unitarian Church, Ferenc Dávid change throughout the 19th and 20th century, and how were

these narratives used for propagandistic purposes by the Unitarian Church on one hand and by the state on other hand.

The analysis of the commemorative celebrations held on the quatercentenary of the death of Ferenc Dávid confirms the presumption that both communist power and the Church tried to make use of the events organized for that occasion. Although in 1979 the leadership of the Unitarian Church yielded to the communist government, it managed to transmit its multivocal message. The study uses the documents referring to the Ferenc Dávid symposium held in 1979 found in the archives of the Securitate (the Romanian secret police), respectively in the archives of the Unitarian Church. The finding of the examination is that the participants of the event coming from Western countries and Hungary and its organizers formulated their hidden critique regarding Romanian society concealed behind the figure of Ferenc Dávid.

Keywords: the cult of Ferenc Dávid, Unitarian Church, Securitate, Deva.

Mátyás Lajtai: Csongor Könczei: On the Social and Cultural Network of the Gypsy Musicians of Kalotaszeg

The review presents the PHD thesis of Csongor Könczei published in 2011. The author examined the social, cultural and economic networks of the Gypsy musicians from the Kalotaszeg region during the twentieth century. The volume represents the culture creator and transmitter function of this ceasing profession in an ethnically diverse environment. The review is a primarily sociological approach of the volume, praising its importance and highlighting a few, mainly structural problems.

Keywords: Csongor Könczei, Gypsy Musicians of Kalotaszeg, social network, cultural network, economic network

János Pál: Unitarian Churchleading between 1945 and 1965. A Metamorphosis of a Target Group?

Since 1945 the Communist party in Romania found its way to a power takeover in 1948. After this year of consolidation they set into motion a strong attack against the previously existing political, economic and social structures in order to achieve the classless society. Of course the church could not escape this attack either, because according to the Marxism-Leninism, the biggest obstacle of the socialist development is none other than the Church. The religious beliefs were contradictory in many ways with the new ideology, the institute of the Church had a control over the society and this controlling power held an obstacle against the new totalitarian idea of structuring society. Hungarian Churches were even more suspicious, because they had a strong and old network of relationships with Churches abroad and because they belonged to the Hungarian ethnicity.

In Romania the attack planned against the Churches did not follow the Stalinist model – albeit the whole political system copied the Soviet model – instead of a complete liquidation the tactic was to enter the Churches' system, to corrupt them, to control them.

In the case of the Unitarian Church this so called integration had several steps that led to the complete supplying of the leadership and infiltration with informers.

The process and steps of infiltration with informers of the Unitarian Church evolved parallel with the steps of consolidation and institutionalization of the socialist regime. The most common method of finding and recruiting the informers was intimidation and digging out compromising materials.

The takein with informers of the church turned out to be an extremely useful strategy: in the sixties the church, its leading was restructured into a servile executor. Information coming from the undercover men helped the regime to identify those persons who did not sympathize with the new power. The unwanted then were elbowed to the corner, omitted from the decision making mechanisms of the Church by means of incarceration, isolation, turning them into informers.

The “deviances” (mostly verbal affirmations) perceived by the socialist regime in the Unitarian Church Direction were omitted, resolved in the fifties, mainly with the occasion of the Hungarian revolution in 1956: the manifested sympathies were strong enough evidences in the eyes of the alarmed regime.

Keywords: Romania, socialist regime, Unitarian Church, Securitate, infiltration, recruiting methods

[Attila Szabó T.:] Memento on the Hungarian Scholarly Achievements in Transylvania

The writing of Attila Szabó T. from 1983 and found between his manuscripts presents the scientific life of the Hungarian minority from Transylvania following 1944, with a special highlight on Hungarian linguistics and literary studies, history and ethnography. The manuscript focuses on a few outstanding issues: issues related to scientific formation, possibilities of publishing scientific works, the impediment to the use of scientific achievements for the sake of the community, namely the lack of professional communities and forums. The author also presents the scientific achievements of the Hungarian community, points to further tasks grouped according to different fields, and stipulates a few considerations and suggestions related to the politics of science.

Keywords: scientific life of Hungarians in Transylvania, communist era, linguistics, literary studies, history, ethnography, scientific formation