

new era in which mass instantaneous communication facilitated by today's technology had a direct impact and rallied masses of people over a large territory immediately, an event without precedent.

The book contains seven well balanced chapters in which the first and last deal with the causes, mechanisms, and theoretical implications of the Romanian revolution, while the other five recount the peculiar course of the revolution with theoretical and historical cross-references.

To the extent that a clear pattern of events might be accentuated and pursued in the book's dense texture, the reader senses the major role that Romanian nationalism played throughout the revolution.. The communist regime's legitimacy rested chiefly on its claim to be the sole guardian of national identity against internal and external threats. This was turned completely on its head once Ceausescu ordered the troops to open fire on demonstrators, thereby 'killing Romanians,' a phrase that spread like wildfire, as a horrified population heard in the first days of revolution from clandestine recordings broadcast on western radio stations. The author is absolutely right to point out that these gruelling incidents personified a 'Manichean battle between good and evil' (p. 79), but he fails to develop the importance of nationalism as one of the major causes of the revolution that also conditioned its course. That would have been better achieved by a more extensive recourse to Keith Hitchins' seminal writings charting the evolution of Romanian national formation or even those by the long forgotten Robert William Seton-Watson. I am also not convinced by the attempt to put the phenomenon of nationalism into perspective using mainly Katherine Verdery's anthropological considerations on Romanian identity (pp. 202-203). A more apt framework for the Romanian case is offered instead by Walker Connor's notion of ethnonationalism, which is based on myths of common descent, or Miroslav Hroch's thinking on the identity of 'small nations'.

This is a book full of information that gives the reader the impression that Peter Siani-Davies has read every source in English, Romanian, and French pertaining to the Romanian revolution and has gone through the most obscure press-communicés issued during those momentous events. He even mentions the abnormally warm weather for a country with Siberia-like winters as a crucial environmental factor that enabled a large number of revolutionaries to confront the repressive forces day and night. Occasionally, the weight of detail obscures the clarity of the narrative, but this book will remain a mine of information for all those interested in Romania in particular and revolutions in general. It is also the first serious attempt in any language to present and explain this pivotal event in recent Romanian history and politics.

*Valentin Mandache**

Sheilah Kast and Jim Rosapepe, *Dracula is Dead: How Romanians Survived Communism, Ended it, and Emerged as the New Italy Since 1989*, Bancroft Press, 400 pp, hardback, November 2009

The United States throughout the Cold War decades has been a beacon of democracy and freedom for the peoples of Eastern Europe. Americans and their

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representatives were enthusiastically received in the region as friends and liberators after the momentous 1989 revolutions. Romania emerged from one of the harshest communist dictatorships and embarked upon a bumpy transition road to democracy. The second half of the 1990s has been a crucial period in that process, when the first truly non-communist government and president were elected, the market economy reforms were first properly implemented and King Michael, the hero of the WWII who put an end to the Nazi regime in Romania, was allowed back from exile and had his citizenship restored.

Ambassador James Rosapepe was the US envoy to this country during most of that crucial period, from 1998 to 2001, and together with his wife, the distinguished journalist Sheila Kast, gathered in this timely and remarkable book their impressions and insights about Romania and Romanians. Their writing is easy to follow and fluent, giving a wholesome image of their experiences in post-communist Romania. The book is also a travelogue and an analysis of the mentalities of a people that survived one of the most oppressive communist regimes, or as the authors stated: "it is not a guidebook, but rather a look at a country and a people through American eyes" (p. 8). The volume is fittingly published as part of the celebrations of the 20 years anniversary of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

The Romanian experience opened a new world for the ambassadorial couple and they felt the need to cherish and share in their writing the memories of a unique encounter and dialogue with citizens of Romania from various parts of this country. The realities of this corner of Eastern Europe, where Romania is located, are aptly presented in connection with excellent vignettes of the history of its picturesque regions spanning from places like Transylvania in the west to Dobrogea in the east.

When I first learnt about this book and its impending publication, my first thought went to William S. Culbertson who was the plenipotentiary minister of the USA in Romania in 1925 – '28. He also wrote his travel impressions round then Romania, but his writings were never published. Those were the times after the First World War; Rosapepe and Kast wrote after another great turning point in history, the falling of communism. The authors closely followed in the footsteps of their predecessor, and brought continuity and insight over the intervening decades; writing fascinating stories and impressions following their visit to different regions of Romania, such as: "Living in 'The Paris of the East'", "Inside Transylvania", "Deep in the Heart of Romania", "In the Mountains of Maramures", "It's Moldavia, not Moldova", "The Blue Danube and the Black Sea". Romania is not only about Dracula, orphans and dictatorship. Romania is 'Latin, with Roman ruins, government corruption, world-class creativity, a zest for life and vivacious, attractive people' (p. 19), and the comparison with Italy, continued with reference to Romania's political geography "was split for centuries between Germanic culture and Mediterranean influence" (p. 20).

They saw "more of Romania and of Romanians... than most foreigners and even many Romanians have" (p. 5). The authors present in the book a multitude of interviews and conversations with people from all walks of life: from the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church (p. 36-44), King Michael of Romania (p. 115-139) to students and IT graduates. There are also vignettes of the politicians, especially those of: Radu Vasile, then Prime Minister of Romania (p. 94), Ion Diaconescu (p. 178 – leader of the National Christian Democratic Peasant Party – PNȚCD, then part of the government), the Romanian president Emil Constantinescu (p. 56-64), Mugur Isărescu, governor of the Central Bank and then PM (p. 219); Klaus Johannis, the mayor of Sibiu ("Who wouldn't want a

German to be your Mayor?" p. 169). The interview with the former King of Romania presents some unique moments from the monarch life along with a brief introduction in the history of the Romanian monarchy.

There are also presented interesting moments such as the visit of Pope John Paul II in Romania in 1999, the first visit of the head of the Catholic church in a majority Orthodox state (p. 81-85), the celebrations of 4th July Independence Day (p. 262-264) not only in Bucharest but also in other parts of Romania, such as Bacău (p. 265), the meeting with Joe Biden, then US senator, with Petre Roman, president of the Romanian Senate (p. 353-354, "Joe Biden in Byzantium").

The title of the volume 'Dracula is Dead' signifies that isolation and powerlessness are no more real for Romania than the infamous Dracula, "myths which oppressed them for centuries (not just during the Communist years) are just that – myths" (p. 400). The book thus goes out of its way to show that indeed Dracula in Romania has now long dead, even his modern incarnation in the form of Ceaușescu's dictatorship, and in my opinion Kast and Rosapepe succeed in demonstrating that copiously.

This is not only an American point of view about an exotic and far off country; it is a journal of an American diplomatic couple about Romania. If you are curious to find out more about the people of this country and its place of importance, its politics and politicians of the second decade after the fall of communism, then this book should be in the top echelon of a must read list.

*Diana Mandache**

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