



Habilitation Thesis

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MEMORIA COMUNISMULUI ÎN ROMÂNIA:

Directii de cercetare, metode, studii de caz

THE MEMORY OF COMMUNISM IN ROMANIA:

Research Trends, Methods, Case Studies

Abstract

The study of any historical era can be completed by analysing its memory. Whether it is oral memory transmitted through legends, stories, songs, through everything related to folklore, or more recently through interviews, art, happenings, performances, or written, canonized through chronicles, “res gestae”, memoirs, diaries, etc. left by those who experienced historical events and phenomena or just were informed about them, this way of dealing with the past contributes to a better understanding of it.

This contribution is all the more obvious with regard to the communist regime characterized in its very existence by a social and cultural schizophrenia that is difficult to grasp without corroborating the documentary sources issued by the communist authorities with those created through all kinds of recollections: memoirs, literature, art (in all its forms), happenings, active or passive participation, intentional or accidental, in various remembrance projects, performances, etc.

I have studied oral testimonies, memoirs, interviews, diaries, as well as photographs, objects, but also monuments, art, the landscape not only for the understanding of Romanian communism, but also in the analysis of the representations about this regime after its collapse in December 1989. The rapport of a society with its past (especially the recent one) is often equivocal, subversive and complicated to manage. Romania is no exception from this point of view.

The analysis of representations of the recent past was one of my main concerns before and after the writing and defense of my doctoral thesis. In my works, published after 2007, I have analyzed public and private representations of communism from the perspective of direct witnesses of the repression. The female perspective on these representations particularly interested me in trying to find out if there is a gendered perspective on political persecutions during the communist era. The influence of public policies and memorial discourse on the memory of former political prisoners and former deportees in Bărăgan concerned me equally, as well as the transformations undergone by the post-December 1989 monumental public space. Monuments, memorials, museums are important vectors for the transmission of memory and therefore important topics of relevant analysis of it (especially in the case of museums that also allow a measurement of the reception of this memory).

These are also the main topics I aim at investigating in the future. I have already initiated several research projects dealing with Soviet monuments, with Bărăgan deportation and everyday life of the repression. All these projects will provide an image about state policies during Communism, about everyday life and repression in that period of time, but also about the communist legacy and about the today perceptions on this regime.