

Habilitation Thesis

Beyond Ideological Conformism: the Sino-Romanian and Yugoslav-Romanian political and diplomatic relations (1953-1970)

Lecturer PhD Mihai-Alexandru Croitor

Abstract

At international level, during the 1950s, the scientific literature related to the Cold War (the positivist approach) neglected the role of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the world stage, as most studies focused exclusively on the dynamics of the relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA). However, since the 1960s, enjoying huge demographic potential and consistent military capabilities, China became a state actor which could no longer be disregarded by none of the two superpowers. Hence, the scientific literature related to the Cold War (revisionist and, then, post-revisionist approaches), fostered by the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split, was subject to a change of perspective as the People's Republic of China turned from a marginal investigative topic to a central one and fundamental to the understanding of the reasons behind the ideological split within the Communist bloc. This is the reason why, since the 1960s, the Western intellectual environment was overwhelmed by studies related to the role of China on the world stage and the radicalism of the Maoist ideology, marked by the idea of permanent revolution. During the 90s, the scientific research shifted its focus towards bilateral approaches, having in mind that the relations between China and the USSR, the USA and Great Britain became fundamental to the understanding of the Cold War strategic policies. Our scientific endeavors were circumscribed to the present dominant paradigm, aiming to present as much objectively as possible the evolution of the Sino-Romanian bilateral relations during the '60s. Also, our interest focused on the key positions assumed by Romania towards the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia during the '50s and '60s.

Our research focused on an extensive investigation of the Romanian archives. In this respect, we consulted the existing documents of the Central National Historical Archives (the Central Committee Fund of the Romanian Communist Party [RCP] - Chancellery and Foreign Relations Sections) and those of the Diplomatic Archive of the Foreign Affairs Minister (China Fund, USSR Fund, Yugoslavia Fund) confined to our research topic. Then, the inedited archive documents were corroborated with those of the former Soviet and the USA archives. Our endeavor benefited greatly from the fact that, with the crash of the Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) made public an extensive number of Chinese documents discussing the relations with the „fraternal parties”, as part of the polemics on the general line concerning the communist movement. Furthermore, following the agreements signed by Beijing with Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Chinese documents discussing the dynamics of the international system during the Cold War were declassified and published in the 18 numbers of the prestigious Washington periodical Cold War International History Project Bulletin. Therefore, during our research we analyzed documents from the Romanian, former Soviet, American and Chinese archives. The data gathered from these documents was corroborated with those taken from the memorialists’ works to which contributed former members of the Romanian Worker’s Party (RWP) involved in the leadership structure (Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Alexandru Bârlădeanu, Corneliu Mănescu, Paul Niculescu-Mizil, Silviu Brucan, Paul Sfetcu etc.) and international figures (Nikita Krushev or Anatoli Dobrinin). We, also, extensively analyzed the Romanian press of those times in order to underline the main differences in the positions adopted by the decision-making factors in Bucharest towards Beijing and Belgrade. Similarly, the Western press provided us with suggestions concerning the way the „Romanian dissidence” was interpreted inside the Western bloc.

The main objectives set by our research plan were:

- 1) To present in a process-like and factual manner of the main phases of the Sino-Romanian relations (1960-1970);
- 2) To identify the key positions assumed by Romania towards the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia during the ‘50s and ‘60s;

- 3) To illustrate the main Sino-Yugoslav ideological differences, as well as the identity of the positions assumed by the Kremlin and by Bucharest;
- 4) To outline the main Sino-Soviet and Yugoslav-Soviet ideological disputes and their impact on the foreign policy of the People's Republic of Romania;
- 5) To emphasize the subtle differences in the positions assumed by Romania concerning the Sino-Soviet split, including the attempt to "mediate" it;
- 6) To indicate the relation between the Romanian-Soviet economic differences inside the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the policy of rapprochement promoted by Bucharest towards Beijing and Belgrade;
- 7) To identify the reasons behind the formulation and the publication of the Declaration of April 1964;
- 8) To identify the main international evolutions leading to the setting up of a secret Romanian channel of communication between Beijing and Washington;
- 9) To analyze the foreign policy strategies of the People's Republic of China: Yibiandao - Leaning To One Side, Liangge Quantou Daren - Fighting With Two Fists Strategy and Yitiaoxian - One United Front Strategy.