

SOVIET PERSONALITIES IN THE ROMANIAN PARLIAMENT DEBATES (1919-1937)

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Abstract: During the post-war period, Romanian MP's were generally informed about Soviet personalities. Some of the information about the Soviet realities, especially the predictions about the leaders of the neighbouring state, was wrong. But these wrong predictions are explicable; the public opinion in Western Europe, and even the Soviet citizens, believed them. At one moment, Lev Trotski and Grigori Zinoviev were considered the possible V. I. Lenin's successors and V. Stalin was an anonymous person. Stalin's victory against Lev Trotski was initially saluted by some Romanian MPs, who provided a new moderate Soviet regime. The „Iron Man” dictatorship was understood and revealed only in the years 1936-1937. It was also during these years that Romanian politicians warned about a possible leadership change at Kremlin, the appearance of a pro-Nazi Soviet ruler. The Soviet personalities of Romanian origins especially generated internal debates.

Keywords: Soviet, Parliament, debates, MP.

In the early years after World War I, a great part of the Romanian MPs (Members of the Parliament) had identified the Soviet neighbour state with the phrase “Lenin and Trotsky”². This phrase was commonly used in the Parliament, no matter of simple accounts, glorifications or critics concerning the Soviet Union. After V. I. Lenin's death, he continued to be considered a doctrinary symbol of the U.S.S.R.; his mummification was part of this cult of personality³. We did not find any concrete account about this in the Romanian Official Report (“Monitorul Oficial”); only in 1931, some Romanian deputies compared the Soviet

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² The ordinary Soviet citizen of that period considered the two Bolshevik leaders symbols of their country, too. “Since I was a kid I knew two names: Lenin and Troțki”. Valentin Berejkov, *În umbra lui Stalin*, București, Editura Lider, 1994, p. 92.

³ Dimitri Volkogonov, *Lenin. O nouă biografie*, București, Editurile Orizonturi și Lider, f.a, p. 473.

Union with Ancient Egypt, a possible irony at the Red Square Mausoleum⁴.

At the same time, different assumptions appeared concerning V. I. Lenin's successor. Two names were mentioned by the Romanian MPs, Lev Trotsky and Grigori Zinoviev. Both of them were considered people of culture, talent, enthusiasm and oratory. Lev Trotsky's volcanic temper, his radical ideas, were known in Bucharest and had caused different impressions. Initially, the Socialist deputies had regarded this Soviet leader with respect and optimism. In 1920, N.D. Cocea⁵ recommended him as a model for the Romanian leftist politicians⁶. One year later, deputy Gheorghe Cristescu⁷ denied "with much satisfaction" the rumours of the Bolshevik leader's death⁸. In their turn, in 1923, the Peasant Party's deputies, a center-left organisation, considered Trotsky and Lenin as the leaders of the reformist Bolshevik faction, advocates of a "peasant cooperative state of Russia"⁹. In their opinion, the conservative faction was ruled only by Felix Dzerzynski¹⁰ and Nikolai I. Buharin¹¹, regarded

⁴ Deputy Pamfil Șeicaru compared the Soviet state with Ancient Egypt. Grigore Gafencu and Nicolae Iorga added that, unlike the Soviet leaders, Egyptian pharaohs had "some artistic" and "funeral satisfactions". *Dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților (DAD)*, ședința din 24 februarie 1931, in *MO*, no. 51, din 25 februarie 1931, p. 1044.

⁵ N. D. Cocea was an independent deputy, but he considered himself an "independent Socialist". Ion Constantinescu, *Din însemnările unui fost reporter parlamentar*, București, Editura Politică, 1973, p. 30.

⁶ In that session, the Deputies Assembly overturned Socialist M. Gh. Bujor's mandate because of his pro-Bolchevick attitude during World War I. N. D. Cocea criticized that decision and warned that Lev Trotsky had been convicted in the past by the Old Russian Regime too and in that moment he was a "deputy of the people" in Soviet Russia. N. D. Cocea added that the Romanian militant could have a bright political future, alike his Soviet comrade. *DAD*, ședința din 23 august 1920, in *MO*, no. 52, din 2 septembrie 1920, p. 1251.

⁷ Extreme-left Socialist, first leader of the Communist Party in Romania in 1921.

⁸ *DAD*, ședința din 12 martie 1921, in *MO*, no. 60, din 17 martie 1921, p. 1206.

⁹ *Dezbaterile Adunării Naționale a Camerei Deputaților (DANCD)*, ședința din 28 noiembrie 1923, în *MO*, nr. 21, din 15 decembrie 1923, p. 322. Romanian Peasant Party saluted the New Economic Policy of the Soviet Union and considered it the victory of the Russian peasantry over the Bolshevik doctrine. Radu Filipescu, "Atitudini românești pro și contra U.R.S.S. în Parlamentul României (1919-1925)", in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A.D. Xenopol"*, tome XLIII-XLIV, 2006-2007, p. 497.

¹⁰ Felix Dzerzynski was indeed the radical measures' advocate. Dimitri Volkogonov, *Lenin*, p. 336.

¹¹ At least in that period, Nikolai I. Buharin had a radical attitude, too. *Ibid.* especially right Romanian MPs, as the National Liberal Vespasian V. Pella, quoted the Bolshevik leader in order to reveal his attitude. In *The ABC of Communism* (1919) Nikolai I. Buharin asked for the liquidation of the bourgeoisie, considered a "parasitic class".

as the only Soviet politicians who “were keeping the Bolshevik idea”¹². On the contrary, Romanian right-wing MPs pointed that Lev Trotsky was a radical politician, as all of his Soviet colleagues, especially concerning the regime’s opponents suppression¹³. They used the appellation “Trotsky” during the home political debates, addressing it to different political opponents: Jewish MPs¹⁴ suspected of Bolshevik sympathies and leftist politicians¹⁵.

In the year of 1924, after V.I. Lenin’s death, Romanian MPs noticed Lev Trotsky’s great influence in the Soviet state¹⁶. This influence started to decrease more and more in the following years. The Soviet leader started to equally lose his sympathisers from the Romanian Parliament. The right-wing continued to consider Lev Trotsky a malefic symbol of violence¹⁷. At the same time, the Romanian Social Democrat deputies¹⁸ denied their sympathy for this Soviet politician. In 1931, deputy G. Grigorovici saluted the “mad (!-note ours) man removal”¹⁹.

Radu Filipescu, “Atitudini românești”, p. 504, nota 93. In “The Official Magazine of the Soviet Justice”, nr. 1/1922, the same Soviet leader considered that the only right for the bourgeoisie was “to be judged and punished”. DANCD, ședința din 16 decembrie 1924, in *MO*, no. 47, din 28 ianuarie 1925, p. 1108.

¹² DANCD, ședința din 28 noiembrie 1923, in *MO*, no. 21, din 15 decembrie 1923, p. 322.

¹³ Bessarabian National-Liberal politician Ion Inculeț considered this attitude of Lev Trotsky as “rarely cynical”. Radu Filipescu, “Atitudini românești”, p. 504, nota 93.

¹⁴ The extreme nationalist A.C.Cuza interrupted the speech of his Jewish colleague, Benno Straucher, calling him “Trotsky”. Șerbănescu Ion, *Parlamentari evrei în forul legislativ al României(1919-1940). Documente*, București, Editura Hasefer, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁵ Peasant Party deputy, G. Lupașcu, complained that on the day of 8 March 1925, at the inauguration of his party club in the city of Giurgiu, a political opponent ironically chanted the name “Trotsky”. DANCD, ședința din 12 martie 1925, in *MO*, no.74, din 9 aprilie 1925, p. 1759.

¹⁶ In December 1924, National-Liberal deputy Ion Florescu called the Kremlin regime “Trotsky’s dictatorship”. Radu Filipescu, “Atitudini românești”, p. 494.

¹⁷ In 1929, strongly criticised by a National Peasant colleague, National Liberal senator Gheorghe Tătărăscu compared his language with that of the Bolshevik politician. *Dezbaterile Senatului (DS)*, ședința din 5 iulie 1929, in *MO*, no. 75, din 5 octombrie 1929, p. 2547.

¹⁸ The year 1921, split between Socialist and Communist factions, was followed by a period of tensions and divisions. The Social Democrat Party, formed in 1926 from the unification of different moderate Socialist factions, had its group of MPs after the elections in 1928.

¹⁹ He said that “Trotsky was the the evil man of Europe and of Socialism. Trotsky was the mad man who wanted permanent revolution, who had no mercy for his old people,

Grigori Zinoviev was the other politician considered to be able to lead the U.S.S.R.. Bessarabian Ion Incuțeț had met him personally in Russia before 1918 and considered him “a decent, decided, honest and open man”²⁰. Different deputies, Peasant Daniil Ciugureanu²¹, National Liberal Vespasian V. Pella²², the moderate Socialist Iacob Pistiner²³, mentioned him among the other possible successors of Lenin, Lev Trotski and Karl Radek²⁴. Grigori Zinoviev’s function of Comintern president was regarded as an advantage for his political career. Different MPs considered him to be “the great Russian leader” of the moment²⁵, who had “the greater authority in hole Russia”²⁶. However, despite his good impression for Grigori Zinoviev, Romanian politicians had no illusions of his communist convictions, considering him to be a devoted Bolshevik²⁷.

The only Soviet personality whose actions were most debated in the Parliament during 1919-1924 was Cristian Racovski, former Romanian Socialist leader²⁸. In 1917-1918, Romanian army was engaged in a desperate fight with the forces of the Central Powers. That situation would have required “all the solidarity of the Romanian political class”²⁹. On the contrary, Cristian Racovski, in spite of his Romanian citizenship, had an attitude that reflected the official Soviet point of view. He vehemently contested the existence of the democratic kingdom, which he wanted replaced by a soviet republic. He also denied the unitarian Romanian state, claiming the belonging of the new provinces to its

nor for its good economic existence”. DAD, ședința din 26 iunie 1931, in *MO*, no. 10, din 2 iulie 1931, p. 325.

²⁰ Radu Filipescu, “Atitudini românești”, p. 498, note 45.

²¹ G. Zinoviev was considered “one of the most important members of Moscow Commisariate”. DANCD, ședința din 25 noiembrie 1924, in *MO*, no. 22, din 10 decembrie 1924, p. 296.

²² DANCD, ședința din 16 decembrie 1924 în *MO*, no. 47, din 28 ianuarie 1925, p. 1108.

²³ DANCD, ședința din 12 decembrie 1924, în *MO*, no. 43, din 22 ianuarie 1925, p. 998.

²⁴ After Karl Radek fell into disgrace, the dispute for Soviet authority was considered to be between Trotsky and Zinoviev. DANCD, ședința din 12 decembrie 1924, in *MO*, no. 43, din 22 ianuarie 1925, p. 998.

²⁵ Allegation of National Liberal deputy Mircea Djuvara.

²⁶ Conclusion of Ion Incuțeț. Radu Filipescu, “Atitudini românești”, p. 498, nota 45.

²⁷ Ion Incuțeț quoted a Zinoviev speech which proved his conviction for the right cause of proletary dictatorship. *Ibid.*

²⁸ Deputy Anibal Teodorescu ironically called Racovski the “god of the Romanian Socialist Party”. DAD, ședința din 7 august 1920, in *MO*, no. 41, din 15 august 1920, p. 878.

²⁹ Statement of deputy Leonte Moldovan. DAD, ședința din 27 noiembrie 1919, in *MO*, no. 6, din 3 decembrie 1919, p. 59.

neighbours. This attitude was criticised after World War I by almost all the Romanian MPs. The Socialist leader refugee in Soviet Russia was accused to be a Bulgarian nationalist, rather than a real Communist³⁰.

Especially right-wing MPs used the name “Rakovski” for any hypothetical traitor of the country, considered to have no “Romanian feelings”³¹. Also, these MPs were suspecting the Socialist Romanian Party of keeping strong links with the refugee. The National Liberal deputy G.G. Mârzescu³² was one of the Romanian politicians who had carefully received all of Racovski’s actions. He pointed that Cristian Rakovski had participated at the first Comintern Congress as a representative of the Balcanic states, including Romania³³.

During the year of 1920, “doctor Racovski”- as he was called by the MPs, was still accused of communist propaganda in the Romanian socialist media. Deputies Gheorghe Mârzescu³⁴ and Nationalist-Democrate A. C.

³⁰ Cristian Racovski claimed that the South of Dobruđja, Romanian Cadrilater province, must be restituted to Bulgaria. Anibal Teodorescu considered that the concept of Balkanic Socialist Federation, desired by Cristian Racovski, was in fact a tool for a Bulgarian hegemony in the region. DAD, şedinţa din 7 august 1920, în *MO*, nr. 41, din 15 august 1920, p. 878. Marin C. Stănescu, *Moscova, Cominternul, filiera comunistă balcanică și România (1919-1943)*, Bucureşti, Editura Silex, 1994, *passim*. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod ironically considered that the “doctrine” of doctor Rakovski “served more to hide his Bulgarian feelings”. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, *Memorii*, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, tome II, p. 78.

³¹ In 1922, the Socialist deputy Iacob Pistiner had accused the Brătianu government of conspiracy with France against Soviet Russia. In response, a National Liberal colleague, M. G. Orleanu, called Iacob Pistiner a “shameless Racovsky”. DANCD, şedinţa din 20 iunie 1922, în *MO*, nr. 28, din 29 iunie 1922, p. 613. Another Socialist deputy, the independent N. D. Cocea, was accused by a political opponent to be “a comrade of Rakovsky in Iaşi” in the hard period of the war. DAD, şedinţa din 27 noiembrie 1919, în *MO*, no. 6, din 3 decembrie 1919, p. 59.

³² He was very active in order to combat the political extremes. In 1924, as a Minister of Justice, he conceived the law that urged the Communist Party from Romania to become outlaw.

³³ DAD, şedinţa din 11 februarie 1920, în *MO*, no. 35, din 14 februarie 1920, p. 498. This piece of information was partially true. At that Congress, C. Racovski was contested by the Serbian and Greek observers who denied him the right to represent their countries. The minutes of the Congress recorded Racovski’s mandate only for the Bulgarian and Romanian Communist movement. Marian C. Stănescu, *Moscova*, p. 13.

³⁴ Gheorghe Mârzescu presented a document sent to Romanian Socialists, called “The clarifying of our party’s situation” in which he asked for the adhesion to the Third Internationale, including the adoption of the political and economical program of this organization. DAD, şedinţa din 11 februarie 1920, în *MO*, no.35, din 14 februarie 1920, p. 497.

Cuza³⁵, senator Gheorghe Becescu-Sylvan³⁶ considered the refugee “(the Romanian – note ours) to be the enemy of the people”, like the Soviet Bolsheviks who shared his ideas³⁷. Being in a process of post-war reorganization, the Romanian Socialist parliamentary group preferred to adopt a neutral position. Deputy Alexandru Dunăreanu claimed that since Cristian Racovski had left Romania, he had broken all of his links with the Socialist Party³⁸. However, he considered this problem to be an internal party affair, and asked for the noninterference of the colleagues from others political parties³⁹. Some politicians accepted this request. Peasant Party member doctor Nicolae Lupu, known for his leftist sympathies, tried to minimize Cristian Rakovski’s actions of propaganda⁴⁰. However, except for the Socialists, the leftist and the right-wing MPs clearly separated themselves from Cristian Racovski⁴¹.

At the same time, Cristian Racovski’s status caused controversies in the Parliament. According to Romanian laws, he was sentenced to death *in absentia*. In the Soviet Union, the same political man had obtained leadership positions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Take Ionescu, pointed out this contradiction in 1921, close to some Romanian-Soviet

³⁵ He noticed the appearance of the Third International manifesto, signed by Cristian Racovski in “Socialistul”, nr.78, din 1920. DAD, ședința din 7 august 1920, in *MO*, no. 41, din 15 august 1920, p. 879.

³⁶ DS, ședința din 20 februarie 1920, in *MO*, no. 31, din 27 februarie 1920, p. 331.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ It was one of the few times when a Socialist deputy was applauded by the great part of the Assembly. DAD, ședința din 12 februarie 1920, în *MO* no. 35, din 14 februarie 1920, p. 504.

³⁹ DAD, ședința din 7 august 1920, in *MO*, no. 41, din 15 august 1920, p. 870.

⁴⁰ As Ministry of Interior, he ironically pointed that Cristian Racovski’s enemies made him an accidental favour. The discussions concerning him in the Parliament were published in the “Monitorul Oficial” (the Official Report), a 40.000 print publication. The advertising for the Communist leader was better than the 4000 print publication of the official Socialist gazette, “Socialismul”. DS, ședința din 20 februarie 1920, in *MO*, no. 31, din 27 februarie 1920, p. 335.

⁴¹ Nicolae Lupu declared that he had never met the Communist politician, and added that he did not desire this to happen. *Ibid.*, p. 331. In his turn, the People’s Party’s senator Gheorghe Becescu-Sylvan asked his Socialist colleagues to deny from Cristian Racovski by an official statement of the leaders. He considered that Alexandru Dunăreanu’s statement was not an official one, because that deputy was “a young man, former worker, without culture and political skill”. The senator expected a statement from the Socialist personalities, also members of the Parliament, such as Toma Dragu, Ilie Moscovici or Alexandru Dobrogeanu-Gherea.

diplomatic meetings proposal⁴². Take Ionescu announced Cristian Racovski's participation, as president of the "Ukrainian Soviet", at a projected diplomatic meeting in Warsaw, although he had "a deal" with the Romanian justice⁴³. This dilemma was presented as a specific foreign policy concession⁴⁴. However, it seems that doctor Racovsky's opinions concerning the resumption of the Romanian-Soviet diplomatic relationship had a certain importance at Kremlin⁴⁵.

However, the Romanian compromise policy had its limits. In 1924, the Communist Party from Romania was outlawed and Cristian Racovski was still convicted to death. In this year, the opposition, especially the Peasant Party, criticised the National Liberal government very roughly, trying to replace it. One of the main critics was the lack of diplomatic relationship with U.S.S.R., which was considered to be a consequence of the governmental foreign policy. Due to this situation, Cristian Racovski was presented by the Peasant Party MPs as an internationally successful man, persecuted by the ignorant authorities from Bucharest. One of the most active deputies, doctor Nicolae Lupu, compared his status of outlaw convicted to death in Romania, with his quality of Soviet ambassador in London⁴⁶. As a matter of fact, the letter correspondence between Cristian Racovski and Nicolae Titulescu was well known in the epoch⁴⁷. The MPs of the other important opposition party, the National Party, considered him to be "one of the victims and also the creations of the Brătianu family (the leaders of the National Liberal Party – note

⁴² In 1920-1924, at the discussions with the Romanian diplomates, the Soviet delegations included both Russian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics representatives.

⁴³ DAD, ședința din 9 iulie 1921, in *MO*, no.144, din 22 februarie 1922, p. 3666.

⁴⁴ The Romanian official ironically commented that it was contemporary with "an age when things are very complex". *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Emilian Bold, Ilie Seftiuc, *România sub lupa diplomației sovietice (1917-1938)*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1998, p. 26.

⁴⁶ The Peasant deputy presented the diplomatic succes of Racovski, who was "meeting in his palace the lords and all the tycons of England" in "tails and white shirts". DANCD, ședința din 2 decembrie 1924, în *MO*, nr. 28, din 21 decembrie 1924, p. 462. Some years earlier, the tail of Ghiorghe Cicerin, different from the typical Soviet suits, was pointed out at a diplomatic conference. Raul Bossy, *Amintiri din viața diplomatică*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1993, tome I, p. 86

⁴⁷ Even in 1925, Nicolae Titulescu, in his quality of Romanian Minister in London, was attending a meeting with Racovski in order to discuss various aspects of the Romanian-Soviet relation. *Relațiile româno-sovietice. Documente. 1917-1934*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, tome I, 1999, pp. 258-259.

ours)“⁴⁸. However, all these gestures belonged to the Romanian internal policy. Neither the Peasant Party, nor the National Party, really sympathised Cristian Racovski.

The MPs from the National Liberal majority continued to consider doctor Racovski as a traitor, “the snake that was raised and warmed up in this country’s bosom. (Romania-note ours)“⁴⁹. In their turn, they accused the Peasant Party of links with Cristian Racovski, especially since he was elected ambassadeur in Paris⁵⁰. However, historiography considered the appointment of Racovski as ambassador in 1923 to be just a “luxurious exile”, which removed him from the political struggle of Kremlin⁵¹.

During the following years, the name of this Soviet politician was rarely mentioned in the Parliament. The right-wing MPs still considered him responsible for the foreign campaign directed against Romania. In 1925, deputy D. Lascu linked Cristian Racovski, Soviet ambassadeur in Paris, with the visits of some French leftist politicians in Romania, in order to control the human rights situation⁵². One year later, in the conditions of Lev Trotsky’s disgrace, Cristian Racovski suffered the same humiliations; he was recalled at Moscow and became a second rank Bolshevik⁵³. In the Romanian Parliament, his name ceased to be considered to be a synonym of the Kremlin regime⁵⁴.

⁴⁸ The National Liberals were accused that they did not allow dr. Racovski “to develop his idea in the country” and therefore he refugeed “in Lenin’s arms” and became “his country’s enemy”. National-liberal Istrate Micescu quoted this fragment from the article “Between Racovski and Brătianu”, from the National Party newspaper, “Patria”, published in Sibiu, 24 March 1922. DANCD, ședința din 11 aprilie 1922, în *MO* nr. 28, din 29 iunie 1922, p. 621.

⁴⁹ Afirmția deputatului Ion Florescu. DANCD, ședința din 26 noiembrie 1924, în *MO* nr. 23, din 12 decembrie 1924, p.319.

⁵⁰ Peasant Party deputy, Teodor Iacobescu, indignantly quoted an article from the National Liberal official newspaper, “Viitorul” (11 December 1924). The article tried to link the visit of Nicolae Lupu in Occident with a subversive meeting of him and Cristian Racovski. DANCD, ședința din 15 decembrie 1924, in *MO* no. 45, din 24 ianuarie 1925, p.1072.

⁵¹ The appointment took place when V. I. Lenin’s illness was aggravated and the main political decisions belonged to I. V. Stalin. Stelian Tănase, *Clienții lu’ tanti Varvara*, București, Humanitas, 2005, 2008, pp. 98-99.

⁵² DANCD, ședința din 18 decembrie 1925, in *MO*, no. 39, din 9 februarie 1926, p. 1089-1090.

⁵³ Stelian Tănase, *Clienții*, p. 99.

⁵⁴ “Viitorul” announced in May 1934 an edifying title “Dr. Rakowski, former ambassador in Paris, beg Stalin for mercy”. The article remembered the dismissal from the post of Paris, the repeated exiles in Siberia. *Viitorul*, sâmbătă, 5 mai 1934, p. 1.

A similar situation was the case of the Communist militant Ecaterina Arbore, refugee in Soviet Russia at the end of World War I. There was a difference between her and Cristian Racovski. Ecaterina Arbore's father was a Socialist faithful to the Romanian authorities; he had a certain influence in the political circles of Bucharest. Because of this, she was able to return home⁵⁵. This return took place, but the authorities shortly decided upon her expulsion, due to her Communist propaganda⁵⁶. As in Cristian Racovski's case, the opposition pointed out that the expulsion was not the most efficient solution. Peasant Party MP Nicolae Lupu said that "this daughter of the country" will "do more harm there (in U.S.S.R., note ours)"⁵⁷. He and a group of prominent party colleagues (Ion Mihalache, Nicolae Lupu, Paul Bujor, Virgil Madgearu) criticised the forced expulsion of the Communist militant because of her Romanian citizenship⁵⁸. They considered Ecaterina Arbore harmless, unable "to cause the revolution in Romania"⁵⁹. In response, Richard Franassovici, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Interior, considered her "an undesirable foreigner, dangerous for our state's safety and public order"⁶⁰. The National Liberal official pointed that "Miss Arbore" occupied an official position in U.S.S.R. without the appointment of the government from Bucharest⁶¹. Additionally, the Secretary of State declared that the Communist activist had voluntarily renounced at her Romanian citizenship⁶².

⁵⁵ His father, Zamfir Arbore, asked the Romanian authorities for a passport in order for his daughter to come home. Elisabeta Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*, București, Editura Politică, 1973, pp. 67-68. His daughter too asked for her return. *Ibid*, p. 76. The official reason claimed by her was that Zamfir Arbore "was dying". Mihai Dim. Sturdza, "Ecaterina Arbore", in *Magazin Istoric*, nr. 11, November 2004, p. 7.

⁵⁶ She started a series of conferences about the Soviet Union, which actually proved to be a Communist propaganda. Mihai Dim. Sturdza, "Ecaterina Arbore", p. 7.

⁵⁷ DANCD, ședința din 19 iunie 1924, in *MO*, nr. 108, din 24 iulie 1924, p. 2994.

⁵⁸ DANCD, ședința din 17 iunie 1924, in *MO*, nr. 106, din 11 iulie 1924, pp. 2905-2907.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*. Romanian Socialist circles asked for the cancelling of the expulsion. Elisabeta Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*, p. 74.

⁶¹ In a brochure of the Communist Party from Romania, Ecaterina Arbore appeared as "a Soviet civil servant". DANCD, ședința din 17 iunie 1924, in *MO*, no. 106, din 11 iulie 1924, p. 2906.

⁶² Richard Franassovici reminded to the MPs that she had been judged by several Romanian courts and in front of these she had refused to answer about her renunciation at her citizenship some years earlier. *Ibid*. Her supporters claimed that, according to Romanian laws, as a Romanian citizen, Ecaterina Arbore could not be expelled. Elisabeta Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*, p. 73.

The opposition presented humanitarian and diplomatic aspects of this case. Doctor Nicolae Lupu reminded to his colleagues in the Parliament the fact that Ecaterina Arbore was still trying to return in Romania to her aged parents⁶³. This argument was based on her father's prestige, Zamfir Arbore. Nicolae Lupu also warned about a diplomatic prejudice, since "the family feeling is precious" to the world public opinion⁶⁴. Another concern, expressed by the Bessarabian Peasant Party deputy Pan Halippa, was about her safety, in the conditions of a very discreet expulsion⁶⁵. Richard Franassovici tried to reassure that "Miss Arbore lives in the most perfect safety in the Russian Soviet Republic"⁶⁶.

Later, the information concerning the communist militant was unclear. The Romanian government continued to consider her harmful for the national interest, while the opposition tried to defend her image. In december 1924, Minister G.G. Mârzescu announced that Ecaterina Arbore was taking part in the "provisional Committee of the Moldavian Soviet Republic"⁶⁷. Deputy Pan Halippa denied this and declared that the Communist activist "is simply a doctor in Seuci (Soci, note ours) city, in Caucasia"⁶⁸. At the same time, the Peasant Party MPs reminded to the government's members about Ecaterina Arbore's forced expulsion in U.S.S.R.⁶⁹. All in all, in 1928, the Romanian public opinion knew her position in the Soviet Autonomous Republic⁷⁰.

The name of Iosif V. Stalin was mentioned in the sessions of the Parliament only in the years 1928-1929. This long time omission could be explicable. Romanian MPs were not familiar with "the Man of Steel".

⁶³ DANCD, ședința din 19 iunie 1924, in *MO*, nr. 108, din 24 iulie 1924, p. 2994.

⁶⁴ DANCD, ședința din 19 iunie 1924, in *MO*, nr. 108, din 24 iulie 1924, p. 2994.

⁶⁵ DANCD, ședința din 17 iunie 1924, in *MO*, nr. 106, din 11 iulie 1924, p. 2904. She was transported to the Constanța harbour and forced to leave the country on an Italian ship bound for Odessa. Mihai Dim. Sturdza, "Ecaterina Arbore", p. 7. DANCD, ședința din 17 iunie 1924, in *MO*, no. 106, din 11 iulie 1924, p. 2904.

⁶⁶ He ironically added that Ecaterina Arbore "probably works there in Romania's interest". DANCD, ședința din 17 iunie 1924, în *MO*, nr. 106, din 11 iulie 1924, p. 2904.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* At least during 1925-1929, she was Minister of Health of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Mihai Dim. Sturdza, "Ecaterina Arbore", p. 7.

⁶⁸ DANCD, ședința din 29 noiembrie 1924, in *MO*, nr. 26, din 18 decembrie 1924, p. 399. At least during 1925-1929, she was Minister of Health of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Mihai Dim. Sturdza, "Ecaterina Arbore", p. 7.

⁶⁹ DANCD, ședința din 29 noiembrie 1924, in *MO*, no. 26, din 18 decembrie 1924, p. 399.

⁷⁰ Some rumours were predicting her imminent dismissal. Panait Istrati, *Spovedanie pentru învinși*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1991, p. 82.

In November 1924, National Liberal deputy Ion Florescu presented a list of 50 Soviet political personalities, which did not include Iosif Stalin⁷¹. Even the Soviet citizens started to know him only at the end of the twenties⁷². The Georgian tried in those early years of the Bolshevik regime to quietly increase his power, waiting for the moment of glory⁷³. A great advantage for his arising was the contradiction with Lev Trotsky. Trotsky's radical spirit gave his opponent an image of a moderate politician. Some MPs, especially the Social Democrats, saluted Lev Trotsky's failure as one of the Bolshevik extreme left-wing. Deputy G. Grigorovici provided "a new life of good living for peasant and industrial workers"⁷⁴. Another MP, professor Eugen Mironescu, considered Stalin to be "a very skilled man" who "wrote many works in the political and economic field"⁷⁵.

The cult of "the Man of Steel's" personality started discreetly only in the years 1933-1934⁷⁶. In this situation, although right-wing MPs continued to make harsh indictments to the Bolshevik regime, U.S.S.R. was not perceived as a one-person dictatorship. In December 1934, National Liberal senator Mihail Gh. Orleanu observed that the supreme political institution in the Soviet Union was both teoretically and practically the Politbureau of the Communist Party⁷⁷, consisting of nine

⁷¹ The source was a volume appeared in the Western Europe, called "The cause of World's troubles". It contained a list of fifty Soviet political personalities, who were leading Soviet Russia in 1920-the year of the volume- or, at least, "were responsible for the establishment of the Bolchevik regime". The list included almost all the prominent leaders, except for I. V. Stalin and A. Rykov. Radu Filipescu, "Atitudini românești", p. 498, nota 47.

⁷² Until that moment, nobody had heard about Stalin. Valentin Berejkov, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁷³ Dimitri Volkogonov, *Lenin*, p. 286 sq. If Lev Troțki has an impulsive character, Iosif Stalin was patient in order to carry out his plans. "His idea easily appeared and increased [...] in order to become real". Lacques de Launay, *Istoria secretă a Cominternului, 1919-1943*, București, Editura Venus, 1993, pp. 33-34.

⁷⁴ DAD, ședința din 26 iunie 1931, în M Of, nr. 10, din 2 iulie 1931, p. 325.

⁷⁵ He considered this characterisation as a reason for Stalin's ideas to be listened to in the Deputies Assembly. DAD, ședința din 21 martie 1931, în MO, nr. 69, din 24 martie 1931, p.1795.

⁷⁶ Christopher Andrew, Oleg Gordievski, *KGB, istoria secretă a operațiunilor sale externe de la Lenin la Gorbaciov*, București, Editura All, p. 94.

⁷⁷ The Politbureau was initially created to take the urgent political decisions of the Central Committee. Richard Pipes, *Scurtă istorie a Revoluției Ruse*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1998, p. 146. Later, it became the supreme Soviet institution. *Ibid.*, p. 330.

persons⁷⁸. The presence of I. V. Stalin on the top of the piramide of power was not highlighted⁷⁹.

This image of the Soviet leader may have sounded distorted, as long as the memories of Soviet dissident refugees in the Western Europe were known in the Romanian Parliament. M. G. Orleanu urged his colleagues to read the memoirs of the Stalin's former personal secretaries, Boris Bajanov⁸⁰ and Grigori Besedovski⁸¹. Another National-Liberal, Em. Slătineanu, quoted Boris Souvarine⁸². However, the cult of personality was suggested by the National Christian deputy, Octavian Goga. In 1936 he remembered that, at that year's Comintern Congress, the loyalty of the participants for the Soviet lead, and especially for Iosif Stalin, had been reaffirmed⁸³. The Romanian deputy quoted the president of the Comintern, Wilhelm Pieck, who included the actual Soviet leader on the list of great Communist personalities⁸⁴.

The year of 1937, the last year of the Romanian democratic Parliament, was open to any international political change. The impressions concerning the Soviet Union's future were unclear. Deputy Pamfil Șeicaru did not exclude the establishment of a pro-Nazi dictator at Kremlin, in the conditions of a possible Soviet-German alliance⁸⁵. Kliment Voroshilov "or other militarys" were considered possible successors of I.V. Stalin⁸⁶. The groundless rumour of a Soviet generals' conspiracy persisted a long time in the U.S.S.R..⁸⁷. Kliment Voroshilov

⁷⁸ DS, ședința din 14 decembrie 1934, in *MO*, nr. 14, din 24 decembrie 1934, p. 149; 151.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* I.V. Stalin controlled the Politbureau, therefore he was practically the leader of the U.S.S.R.. Richard Pipes, *Scurtă istorie*, p. 330.

⁸⁰ Mihail Gh. Orleanu named him "Stalin's secretary general". DS, ședința din 23 noiembrie 1936, in *MO*, nr. 4, din 4 decembrie 1936, p. 28. Boris Bajanov, *Avec Staline dans le Kremlin*, Paris, Editions de France, 1930.

⁸¹ DS, ședința din 23 noiembrie 1936, in *MO*, nr. 4, din 4 decembrie 1936, p. 28. Grigorii Besedovskii, *Staline.L'homme d'acier*, Paris, A. Redier, 1932.

⁸² DS, ședința din 23 noiembrie 1936, in *MO*, nr. 4, din 4 decembrie 1936, p. 28. Boris Souvarine, *Stalin*, Paris, Les Petits-Fils de Plon et Nourit, 1935.

⁸³ DAD, ședința din 13 martie 1936, in *MO*, nr. 43, din 5 iunie 1936, p. 1711.

⁸⁴ Wilhelm Pieck named the Communist flag "the flag of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin". *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Radu Filipescu, "Problema alianței româno-sovietice în Parlamentul de la București (1934-1937)", in Ioan Ciupercă, Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor, Dan Constantin Măță (eds.), *România și sistemele de securitate în Europa (1919-1975)*, Iași, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași, 2009, p. 186.

⁸⁶ DAD, ședința din 6 februarie 1937, în *M Of*, nr. 24, din 26 februarie 1937, p. 877.

⁸⁷ Robert Conquest, *Marea Teroare, o reevaluare*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1998, pp. 228-230.

really enjoyed an immense popularity in the Soviet Union⁸⁸ but had a modest intellectual capacity⁸⁹; he was harmless for the political power and therefore tolerated by it. After the Parliament dissolution in 1937, former MPs presented practical issues of Stalin's dictatorship in particular writings⁹⁰.

We could thus conclude that, during the post-war period, Romanian MPs were generally informed about Soviet personalities. Some information about the neighbouring state, especially the predictions about its leaders, proved to be wrong. But these false predictions are explicable; the public opinion in Western Europe, and even the Soviet citizens, believed them. At one moment, Lev Trotsky and Grigori Zinoviev were considered -in Romania, but also in the U.S.S.R.- to be the possible successors of V. I. Lenin. Also, I.V. Stalin's discretion and subtility in his attempt to conquer the political power apparently positioned him in the second echelon of the Soviet leadership. The Georgian's victory against Lev Trotsky had been initially saluted by Romanian MPs, especially by the Social Democrats. They provided a new moderat Soviet regime. The "Iron Man's" dictatorship was only understood in the years of 1936-1937.

The Soviet personalities of Romanian origins especially generated internal disputes. Both Cristian Racovski and Ecaterina Arbore were considered by the right-wing MPs who were dangerous for the national security. The Peasant Party politicians criticised the National Liberal Party, which was considered to be responsible for the two Communist activists' refuge. But this attitude was only a desire to combat the National Liberal Party, not a proof of Soviet sympathies. Only the Peasant MPs from Bessarabia seemed to have a real sympathy for Ecaterina Arbore, whose family had its origins in the same province.

"The Soviet generals' conspiracy" against I. V. Stalin, expected in the Soviet Union during 1936-1937, had also been perceived in the Romanian Parliament. Right-wing MPs warned that a German-Soviet alliance could be possible, favoured by a presumptive new leader at Kremlin, a pro-Nazi and also antisemitic one. After the dissolution of the Parliament in 1937, former MPs continued to observe the Soviet leaders and to comment on their actions, in private works.

⁸⁸ Roy Medvedev, *Stalin și oamenii săi*, București, Editura Meridiane, p. 21.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹⁰ Nicolae Iorga considered "citizen Stalin [...] as the most powerful heir of Ghenghis-Khan". He ironically specified that, unlike the khan, the communist leader was atheist and with no national ideal. Nicolae Iorga, *Hotare și spații naționale în Hotare și spații naționale*, 1938, p. 94.