

National(ist) Ideology and Urban Planning: Building the *Victory of Socialism* in Bucharest, Romania

Key words: socialist urban policies, demolitions, national-communist propaganda, Romania.

“Nothing [is said] about the monuments destroyed, ruined or desecrated, nothing about those who tried to protect them, ... nothing about the demolition contractors and about the victims, about orders and those who obeyed these orders, about the annihilation of the Church and about the obliteration of history”.

This protest was heard on Radio Free Europe in the summer of 1981. Three (art) historians (Daniel Barbu, Radu Ciuceanu, Octavian Roske) elaborated a document concerning the different waves of demolition that had affected religious and non-religious buildings. Sent abroad clandestinely, the document (entitled *The condition of monuments under communist rule*) was attributed to a fictitious organisation called *The Group for the Monitoring of Historical Monuments* and, according to its authors, it was conceived “as an alarm signal for international public opinion”.¹ It seemed to be the only potentially effective form of protest against Ceaușescu’s megalomaniac projects for urban and rural restructuring, given that several petitions addressed to different Romanian institutions, and even to the “supreme architect” himself, remained unanswered.

The present article therefore examines both architecture as a reification of national-communist propaganda, as well as the reaction of different (art) historians and architects who tried to prevent the massive destruction of the country’s architectural heritage. I will first present a concise overview of the dif-

ferent architectural policies in communist Romania (during the regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, 1945-1965, and of his successor, Nicolae Ceaușescu, 1965-1989), and will then focus on the 1980s, the period when a “grandiose” project of urban restructuring was implemented in the Romanian capital, Bucharest.

Finally, I will try to ascertain whether this reconstruction of cities in communist Romania elicited any reaction on the part of either individuals or institutions (NGOs, professional associations, etc.). In doing so, I will focus my analysis on different *milieux de resistance*, showing that absolute control over urban and rural planning by an authoritarian leader, and total ideologisation of architecture were sometimes questioned, despite the quasi-total obedience which characterised most of the architects and public institutions. As one of my interviewees stated, “we sometimes had the illusion that our *don-quixotesque* attempts would change something... Of course, it was only an illusion...”²

THE SOCIALIST “ARCHITECTURAL NARRATIVE”: A DISCOURSE ON THE NEW, SOCIALIST CITY...

The Communist Party, a marginal political group prior to the occupation of Romania by the Red Army in 1944, came to power under Soviet guidance in 1945.³ Before the communists turned themselves into “champions of autonomy from that imperial centre”⁴, Romanian politics and policies (including architectural) were marked by an unconditional



Fig. 1. Bucharest, The Great Synagogue, screened by apartment blocks built in the 1980s. Photo by the author, 2006

loyalty to Moscow. For instance, a decision adopted in 1949 to radically change the urban structure of Moscow had an (in)direct impact on other countries in the “socialist camp” – including Romania. The new architecture was meant to ascertain “the superiority of the communist doctrine”. Large building programs were conceived on the advice of Soviet architects, and in close compliance with the new “political line”. Architecture became a part of “central planning” (a State Committee for architecture, construction and urbanism was founded in 1952), and architects, no longer allowed to work independently, were coerced, starting in 1949, to become members of state-run specialised institutions.

A speech by Khrushchev in 1956 that was slated as a manifesto against socialist realism, which had been considered the most representative expression of Stalinism, had an enormous influence in reshaping architectural discourses and related policies both in the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries.⁵ The emphasis made by Khrushchev on standardisation and prefabrication became the “official” dogma of the new State Committee for Architecture and Construction of the Council of Ministers.⁶ Four years after Khrushchev’s famous speech, in which he referred to the “dear, but too expensive architects”, the “aesthetic exaggerations” of urban planners and architects were heavily criticised at a plenary of the Romanian Working Party as ignoring the economic factors, i.e. the necessity of providing low-cost housing for the working class. As noted by

Barbara Miller Lane⁷, this impetus for cost-efficient planning was certainly based both on “ideological” rationality (prefabricated mass housing being seen as an embodiment of “the new era”), and very pragmatic economic reasons (a shortage of housing due mainly to late industrialisation).⁸

Obsessed as they were by political and social “transformism”⁹, the communist leaders tried to create not only a new socialist city, but also a new socialist man. “The party-state believed architecture to have a transformative effect, and promoted communal dwellings in order to mould a new socialist way of life”¹⁰. Thus the task of the new constructions was “to build material foundations that would mould nothing less than a new society”¹¹, both “modern” and “equalitarian”. The necessary “living space” for the socialist man was prescribed by law to be a maximum of 8 m². Not surprisingly, some socialist men were “more equal” than others: exceptions could be made for socialist working heroes, members of communist organisations, high ranking army officers, and artists (their “living space” could be extended to 10-20 m²).¹²

The strict limitation of the necessary “living space” was applied not only to newly constructed buildings, but to existing ones as well. As a consequence, “the inequitable distribution of living space” was subject to various normative acts.¹³ “While the exploiting class occupies luxurious buildings with dozens of rooms, the working people who have been bloodily exploited to construct these buildings, are living in the deepest poverty” stated the legislators, explaining the need to find solutions for the inequitable distribution of housing.¹⁴ The “socialist solutions” culminated in a nationalisation decree passed in 1950, whereby more than 400,000 buildings were labelled as belonging to “class enemies” and “exploiters”, and were subsequently nationalised.

Two decades after Khrushchev’s speech, when the “equal distribution of housing” was already completed (either by nationalisation or by limitation of “living space”), Ceaușescu was still convinced that the constructed environment had to be modernised in order to express not only the economic and political, but also the social changes brought about

by his regime.¹⁵ Ceaușescu's speech¹⁶ at the twelfth congress of the Communist Party was illustrative in this sense: "We must complete the general reconstruction of the capital city, the town planning, the street system, so that in 1985 the capital will have become a modern, socialist city, worthy of the epoch of a multilaterally developed socialist society, that will be the pride of all of our people." According to Dinu Giurescu¹⁷, by the end of 1989, when the Ceaușescu regime fell, at least 29 towns had been almost completely restructured (i.e. demolished and rebuilt), and another 37 were in the process of being restructured. There was also an overall plan of "rural systematisation" that intended to demolish and rebuild between 7,000 and 8,000 villages (out of a total of 13,000) by the year 2000, with new apartment buildings replacing single-family houses.¹⁸

... AND ON NATIONHOOD - ON "ROMANIANNESS"

"Socialist architecture" was meant not only to symbolise the "victory of socialism", of what Ceaușescu called "a modern, socialist city, worthy of the epoch of a multilaterally developed socialist society...", but also to engender a political narrative of "Romanianness". Since – under Gheorghiu-Dej's regime, and even more (after 1965) under Ceaușescu's – nationalism was used as the principal legitimising political ideology, architecture as well was forced to embody this "patriotic travesty".¹⁹ In contrast to the first years after the communist take over, which were characterised by unconditional loyalty to Moscow, in the 1970s and 1980s both architectural structures and political rhetoric were dominated by the idea



Fig. 2. Bucharest, *The House of the People*, today the *Parliament's Palace*. Photo by the author, 2005

of a "national communist rule" independent of the Soviet bloc.

The most notorious architectural reification of Ceaușescu's nationalist propaganda was the new civic centre in the capital city. Starting at the end of the 1960s, historical centres and old neighbourhoods in some Romanian cities were being demolished and replaced by standardised blocks of flats and "politico-administrative" complexes conceived according to one unique pattern: official institutions surrounding a large square.²⁰ A project for the new civic centre in Bucharest was elaborated in 1977, the year when large areas of the capital city were destroyed or badly damaged by an earthquake. Three weeks after this earthquake, at a meeting of the Executive political committee, Ceaușescu stated: "If we demolish everything, Bucharest will be [a] beautiful [city]"²¹

In fact, this period (the 1970s) can be seen as a turning point in Romanian urban planning.²² The regime tended to abandon the idea of reappropriating and reinterpreting the past – including, for example, by taking over symbolic architectural landmarks, as had recurrently happened in the previous decades (e.g., Cotroceni Palace, the royal residence in Bucharest, had been given to the National Council for Pioneers, a communist youth organisation until the end of the 1970s). The "supreme architect" henceforth favoured an autonomous discourse: the "systematisation" (i.e. urbanisation) of villages²³, the demolition of large areas of the historical centres of cities, the construction of a new civic centre in Bucharest (including centralisation of the main state institutions). It appears that a visit to Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, was an important "source of inspiration" for Ceaușescu, who "re-Stalinised" his politico-architectural "agenda". His grandiose plans for the new civic centre in Bucharest represented a return to the Stalinist thesis of an imperative "socialist content and national form".

A glorification of its dictatorship, the civic centre included the following:

- the enormous *House of the Republic* (or *House of the People*), the second largest building in the world, after the Pentagon [fig. 2];

- a 3.5 km long avenue called *Victory of Socialism over the Entire Nation*, which was designed to be slightly larger than the *Champs-Élysées* in Paris [fig. 3];
- apartment buildings for prominent Party members lining the avenue;
- monumental buildings housing ministries, a national library, and a concert hall for the *Song to Romania* (a festival celebrating Romanian communist achievements), also lining the *Victory of Socialism*.

Beyond this “exceptionalism” (and in fact interconnected with it), the architecture of the civic centre was projected to engender a narrative of “national identity”, of “Romanian-ness”.²⁴ For instance, the extremely eclectic style of the *House of the People* was intended to represent a “neo-Romanian style”. Its interior design incorporates deliberate visual references to different Romanian architectural styles and landmarks, and thus the building becomes a sort of statement or index of Romanian architectural styles.²⁵ The main architect, Anca Petrescu, proudly recalls (in interviews given after 1989) that she adorned the *House of the People* with decorations “saved” from demolished monasteries (including the Văcărești Monastery – the largest Orthodox church in the Balkans after the Athos Monastery, built in 1716-1722 by ruler Nicolae Mavrocordat; destroyed in 1986). Moreover, the *House of the People* was built as an “exclusively Romanian” concept (designed by ca. 400 architects) and construction (built by ca. 20,000 workers), and using (almost) only Romanian-made materials.

More than 40,000 people were dislocated for the construction of the civic centre. To prevent resistance, notice of relocation generally arrived only a few days before the bulldozers did.²⁶ “We knew that one day the bulldozers would invade our courtyard too,” explained A., whose house was demolished in 1986. “There were rumours about visits by Ceaușescu and Elena [his wife], about him pointing at the next victims, the next streets to be demolished. But it was only extremely late, a few days before the demolition of our house, that we received an official announcement from the authorities”.²⁷

All in all, fourteen churches and two historic monasteries, along with perhaps approximately 9,300 public buildings from the 19th century, were destroyed, or in some cases, modified beyond recognition in order to build the *Civic Centre*.²⁸ After 1985, the Dudești-Văcărești sector (an area in the historical centre of Bucharest) was almost completely demolished [fig. 4 and 5].

REACTIONS AGAINST THE “BUILDING MANIA”...

“The Romanian building program is a notable achievement. Comparatively, we can only regret the results of non-planning in the United States: the confusion of free enterprises with anarchy. ... Its most progressive aspect is its technology, ... industrialised prefabricated panel structures, far ahead of American housing methods”²⁹, stated the *New York Times* correspondent in Romania in 1964. This wasn’t a singular voice at the beginning of the 1960s. Several other foreign journalists remarked that, “improvements brighten Romania. ... The housing development is the major element in the generally improved appearance of this city [Bucharest]”.³⁰ And that, “as one gets into the city [Bucharest], row upon row of handsome buildings are seen. All have gone up within the last three years, and rank with the buildings of any European city in modernity and beauty”.³¹ The enthusiasm for the vast public housing program of the 1960s was to be replaced two decades later by an abhorrence, and vehement protests against the megalomaniac destruction of the capital city. A correspondent for the *Financial Times* wrote:



Fig. 3. Bucharest, *The Victory of Socialism Boulevard*, today the *Union's Boulevard*. Photo by the author, 2005

“Building mania is one of the worst forms of madness when it is uncontrolled”. Bucharest became “a city of darkness – a horrific vision of the future that no sane person could possibly want to endure”.³²

Both from inside and outside Romania several attempts were made to stop or to delay this demolition and “building mania”.³³ Individuals (historians, art historians, architects, clerics, journalists, etc.) and institutions (US Department of State, a Belgium-based NGO called *Opération Villages Roumains* created in 1988, etc.) tried to protest or to “negotiate” with the communist leaders regarding urban and rural restructuring projects implemented in the 1980s. For instance, different art historians and architects tried (and in a few cases even succeeded) to save several religious sites, churches that “happened to be” in the way of some “grandiose” urban project. The churches were either transmuted, or simply screened by new apartment blocks [fig. 1].

This article is intended neither as a complete history of all the protests against the “systematisation” of Romanian cities and villages, nor as an attempt to evaluate if and how these protests could have influenced the projects that Ceaușescu had embarked upon. Tracing the complete picture of all of these initiatives is an unachievable task, partly because of the difficulty of accessing the recent archives of the former regime (Romanian law permits access only to documents older than thirty years), and partly because of what Vladimir Tismăneanu calls “the distorting effect of self-serving memories of witnesses to, or of participants in, the events examined”.³⁴ Nevertheless, I have tried to recover some “pieces of the puzzle” by using documents that were unavailable to researchers until just recently, as well as other primary sources. These include documents concerning socialist urban planning and systematisation that are available at the National Romanian Archives in Bucharest³⁵ or at the Open Society Archives in Budapest³⁶; texts of research reports elaborated during the communist era and published after 1989; autobiographical sources, including memoirs published by architects and priests; interviews with architects and (art) historians who protested against the “systematisation” of cities and villages, as well as with owners of houses that were demolished in the 1980s.



Fig. 4. Bucharest, Former Jewish area, close to the Union's Boulevard, some of the few buildings which “escaped” the demolition wave of the 1980s. Photo by the author, 2006

For instance, the memoirs of an Orthodox priest who was sentenced to ten years in prison after protesting against the politicisation of sermons and the demolitions of churches, show that his was a fairly singular voice among the members of the Romanian Orthodox clergy.³⁷ Patriarch Iustin Moiescu, a former collaborator with the *Securitate* (Romanian secret police), did not even attempt to prevent Calciu's punishment, or to save the churches from being torn down.³⁸ And when historian Dinu Giurescu sought the support of the Orthodox Church to save sites of worship, he was told that he resembled “the fugitives from Radio Free Europe”.³⁹ When Teoctist took over the patriarchal helm in 1986, he, like his predecessor, gave his consent to the demolitions and to the repression of protesting priests⁴⁰, despite the escalation in the number of destroyed sites of worship. Once again, it was an ordinary priest, Ioan Dură, who reacted to the silence of the Orthodox leaders by sending a protest against the demolitions, in October 1987, to the Romanian Ecumenical Council of Churches.⁴¹

Just as not all of the priests kept silent, not all of the architects competed for the right to construct “grandiose” socialist buildings. Some reacted to these totalitarian politico-architectural plans by means of various artistic experiments, exhibitions, articles, and symposia on architectural heritage, or by introducing concepts and teaching methods opposed to the “official” discourse. For instance, an exhibition organised by the Bucharest School of Architecture,

entitled *Traditions of Building*, showed fragments and photographs of the demolished buildings.⁴²

Ceaușescu's politics and architectural policies were also the subject of more explicit critiques and protests, including ones elaborated by a small number of (art) historians. Various memorandums and letters were sent to Romanian political and administrative authorities, and to the "supreme architect" himself, by (art) historians and architects like Dinu Giurescu, Grigore Ionescu, Vasile Drăguț, Răzvan Theodorescu, Virgil Căndea, all members of the Central State Commission for National Cultural Patrimony.⁴³ Most were simply left unanswered. According to Theodorescu, one of the signatories of these documents, "the real difficulty was to get the documents to Ceaușescu personally. We used his brother, an army general who frequented the Arts Academy. But it was useless..."⁴⁴

Articles and letters of protest were sent to international organisations like UNESCO, and to radio stations as well. They were comprised of well-documented works on Romanian architectural history, including precise data on the "systematisation" plans, and on their destructive consequences. Two of the most important appeals, entitled *The condition of monuments under communist rule* and *Will Bucharest survive until 1984?*, were elaborated in 1980 by three (art) historians (Barbu, Ciuceanu, Roske), and sent abroad clandestinely for broadcasting over Radio Free Europe. The authors stated that, if "whims will continue to govern the reactions of Bucharest leaders, historical monuments will continue to be demolished, ruined, or abandoned", and added that they were highly pessimistic regarding the potential outcome of their initiative: "the abuses, the arbitrary methods, the gratuitous decisions, the errors, [characterise] a behaviour which – we have no illusions – this work will be unable to influence".⁴⁵

CONCLUSION: AN ARCHITECTURAL PALIMPSEST?

The "key arena for ideology"⁴⁶ – the architecture during Ceaușescu's sultanistic regime⁴⁷, including his "systematisation" plans, particularly as repre-

sented by the civic centre of Bucharest – embodies two different, but interconnected, "architectural narratives". The first discourse concerns "social engineering" – the simultaneous creation of a new man and a new society, and "the homogenisation of Romanian socialist society, a reduction of the main differences between villages and towns, and the accomplishment of a single society of the working people".⁴⁸ Most of the literature on the systematisation of cities and villages rightfully explains the drama for the families affected by the demolitions. One should, however, add some "grey" to this "black and white" picture: the apartment blocks were also seen as a form representing modern urban life.⁴⁹ Augustin Ioan remembers: "Enthusiastic about the idea of "progress" in the 1960s and 1970s, they [my parents] abandoned their house in order to move and live in a block of flats. ... They would finally live a "civilized" life. ... Also, they were heavily influenced by state propaganda, which, in a "modernising" drive, qualified the block as good/ progressive, and the house as bad/ retrograde".⁵⁰

Alongside this first theme of "social engineering" is the second "architectural narrative" – a discourse on "Romanian-ness". The architecture is essential to what Homi Bhabha calls "the production of the nation as a narration".⁵¹ Thus, in Ceaușescu's dictum, it had to represent "the pride of all of our people", and the image of "national communist rule" independent of Soviet dictates.

Screened by high-rise apartment blocks, or moved to a new place, some of the churches escaped the "grandiose" reconstruction plans. Whether these buildings demonstrated a quasi-successful attempt "to negotiate" with the Great Architect of the Socialist City, or whether they survived simply by a stroke of luck, is an intractable question. In this article I have tried to show some "enclaves of resistance", some "*don quixotesque* attempts" (to use my informant's expression) to stop the demolitions which started in the late 1970s, when the construction of the *Victory of Socialism* began. Nevertheless, the only moment that was indubitably decisive in stopping the "systematisation" plans was the fall of the communist regime in December 1989. Ceaușescu's systematisation plans were meant to lead, by the year 2000,



Fig. 5. Bucharest, Former Jewish area, close to the Union's Boulevard. Photo by the author, 2006

to a reduction by more than 50% of the number of villages, and to extensive urban reconstruction (by 1990, 90-95% of Bucharest inhabitants would have lived in new apartment blocks).⁵²

The symbol of Ceaușescu's politico-architectural plans, the *House of the People*, became the focus of ongoing controversy⁵³ after 1989. Opinions as to the future of the totalitarian architectural symbol oscillated between a discourse on the necessity of breaking with the past (demolition of the building); derision of the "magnificent past" (its transformation into a casino or a communist Disneyland, as proposed by Ioan in 1991); or continuity for pragmatic reasons. It is the latter solution that took precedence over the former two. Thus the *House of the People* is a paradoxical "palimpsest": a symbol of a sultanistic regime, highly centralised power, and Ceaușescu's personality cult, it was transformed after 1989 into a "symbol of democracy", and today hosts some of the most important political and administrative institutions (Romanian Parliament⁵⁴, Legislative Council, Constitutional Court). The "official story" of the

building, posted on the website of the Romanian Parliament⁵⁵, states that, "realising its enormous value ..., people began to see the building with less hostility, and named it the *House of the People*. ... It was decided that the building should serve to lodge the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate of Romania, and that its name should be changed to *Palace of the Parliament* – a symbol of democracy." The surrounding architectural complex is used mainly for its original intended purposes (to house ministries, the National Institute of Statistics, etc.).

As Ioan notes, the Republic House/House of the People/Parliament Palace "became the pet location of the new/old political elite. ... It was destined to be, and finally became, the ultimate political edifice in Romania".⁵⁶ In his analysis of post-Second World War Germany, Theodor Adorno explains the paradox of trying "to come to terms with the past" (his analysis seems pertinent to Romania as well): "One wants to get free of the past: rightly so, since one cannot live in its shadow. ... But wrongly so, since the past one wishes to evade is still so intensely alive".⁵⁷

Notes

- ¹ Daniel Barbu, Radu Ciuceanu, Octavian Roske, 'Condiția monumentului sub regimul comunist' ('The Condition of Monuments under the Communist Regime'), in: *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, no. 1-2, 2000, p. 219.
- ² Interview with T. (art historian, co-author of a letter of protest against the demolition of churches), Bucharest, June 2003.
- ³ See Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, Berkeley & LA, California: University of California Press, 2003, pp. 37-106.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ⁵ For an analysis of Nikita Khrushchev's December 1956 speech and its impact on Romanian architects, see Augustin Ioan and Marius Marcu-Lepadat, *Man-Made Environment in Post-Stalinist Europe*, Research Support Scheme, OSI, March 1999, pp. 9-15; and Augustin Ioan, *Power, Play and National Identity: Politics of Modernisation in Central and East European Architecture. The Romanian File*, Bucharest: The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1999, pp. 63-78.
- ⁶ Ioan and Marcu-Lepadat, 1999, pp. 9, 13.
- ⁷ Barbara Miller Lane, 'Architects in Power: Politics and Ideology in the Work of Ernst May and Albert Speer', in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, no. 17 (1), 1986, pp. 283-310.
- ⁸ This idea of cost-effective construction, of mass-produced buildings, was central to the state housing policy in several Western countries during the post-war era (e.g., Great Britain, Scandinavia). But in Romania, as in other Soviet-satellite countries, this type of building was seen not only as a solution to the post-war housing problem, but also as a "political doctrine".
- ⁹ Robert Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind: Studies in Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change*, New York: Praeger, 1963, p. 143.
- ¹⁰ Caroline Humphrey, 'Ideology in Infrastructure. Architecture and Soviet Imagination', in: *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, no. 11, 2005, p. 39.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Open Society Archives (hereafter HU-OSA), Fonds 300: Records of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Research Institute (RFE/RL RI), Subfonds 7: US Office, Series 3: Romanian Subject Files, 1950-1973, Box 1: Romania - Housing (1951-1973): 'Living space', Bulletin 130, Information and reference department, RFE, 6 May 1952.
- ¹³ E.g., Law no. 359/1948, Decision no. 29/1949 of the Council of Ministers, Decree no. 92/1950. Accordingly, the legislation elaborated in the first decade after the installation of the communist regime allowed state institutions to evaluate the necessary "living space" for each family that wanted to rent or to buy a house. At the same time, this served as the means by which representatives of state institutions could decide whether a family was "wasting" housing space. A "wasteful family" could expect to see its house nationalised, or be forced to move to a smaller apartment, or to give up "excessive" space (rooms, and sometimes part of the kitchen and bathroom) to another family.
- ¹⁴ Excerpt from a circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs dated March 1, 1949, quoted by Vladimir Tismăneanu (ed.), *Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the*

- Communist Dictatorship in Romania, Final Report*, 2006, p. 616.
- ¹⁵ Marie de Betânia Uchôa Cavalcanti, 'Urban Reconstruction and Autocratic Regimes: Ceausescu's Bucharest in its Historic Context', in: *Planning Perspectives*, no. 12, 1997, p. 84.
- ¹⁶ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Rapoarte, cuvântări, interviuri, articole (Reports, Speeches, Interviews, Articles)*, vol. 14, Bucharest: Meridiane, 1977.
- ¹⁷ Dinu Giurescu, *The Razing of Romania's Past*, New York: World Monuments Fund; London: Architecture Design and Technology Press, 1990, pp. vi-vii.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Tismăneanu, 2003, p. 28.
- ²⁰ Tismăneanu, 2006, p. 611.
- ²¹ Minutes of a meeting of the Executive political committee, 30 March 1977, National Historical Central Archives, Fonds Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Chancellery, file no. 42/1977, f. 1.
- ²² For a diachronic overview of architectural policies in Romania after the communist takeover, see Giurescu, *The Razing of Romania's Past*. He refers to 3 main phases of these policies: 1955-1970, characterised by an extensive public housing programme; 1970-1977, an epoch of debate over the necessity of "systematising" villages and cities; and the period after the 1977 earthquake, marked by major demolitions. See also Adam Drazin, 'Architecture without Architects: Building Home and State in Romania', in: *Home Cultures*, no. 2 (2), 2005, pp. 198-203.
- ²³ The law for the systematisation of territory and localities was adopted by the Great National Assembly in October 1974.
- ²⁴ For the national(ist) politico-architectural rhetoric before WWII, see Augustin Ioan, 'Arhitectura interbelică și chestiunea identității colective' ('Architecture between the 2 WW and the Issue of Collective Identity'), in: *Caietele Echinox*, vol. 3, 2002, pp. 80-91.
- ²⁵ Roann Barris, 'Contested Mythologies: The Architectural Deconstruction of a Totalitarian Culture', in: *Journal of Architectural Education*, no. 54 (4), 2001, p. 231.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229.
- ²⁷ Interview with A. (engineer, former inhabitant of Dudești - Văcărești), Bucharest, October 2006.
- ²⁸ Barris, 2001, p. 229.
- ²⁹ Ada Louise Huxtable, 'Architecture: Romania's Ambitious Building Plan', in: *NY Times*, 21 July 1964, in HU-OSA, 300-7-3: Romania Subject Files; Western Press Archives: Romania; Romania: Buildings and Monuments (1952-1968).
- ³⁰ Eric Bourne, 'Making the Best out of Things: Improvements Brighten Romania', in: *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 July 1962, in HU-OSA, 300-7-3: Western Press Archives: Romania; Romania: General (1955-1973).
- ³¹ Harold Schonberg, 'Modernity in Bucharest: City Shuns Soviet Architectural Style To Put Up Attractive, Colourful Buildings', in: *NY Times*, 23 September 1961, in HU-OSA, 300-7-3: Western Press Archives: Romania; Romania: General (1955-1973).
- ³² Colin Amery, 'Megalomania in the Spoilt City', in: *Financial Times*, 11 June 1988, quoted by Raoul Granqvist, *Revolution's Urban Landscape: Bucharest Culture and Postcommunist Change*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999, p. 86.
- ³³ For a review of protests against the "systematisation" of

Romanian cities and villages, see Giurescu, 1990, pp. 42-66.

³⁴ Tismăneanu, 2003, p. 7.

³⁵ Romanian National Historical Central Archives, Bucharest, especially the Fonds Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Chancellery.

³⁶ The Open Society Archives in Budapest provide the researcher with an overall picture of the politico-architectural programmes implemented in socialist Romania, and with important insights on remonstrations voiced against these programmes. The most important in this respect is HU-OSA, Fonds 300: Records of RFE/RL RI, Subfonds 60: Romanian Unit, Series 1, especially files: 3.101 Administration: National committees: Village destruction, 1990; 5.101 Administration: People's Councils: Systematisation, 1987; 5.101 Administration: People's Councils: Towns, 1989; 5.101 Administration: People's Councils: Villages, 1988; 5.101 Administration: People's Councils: Village destruction, 1988; 546. 3202 Standard of living: Housing, 1966/ 1968/1972/1988.

³⁷ Gheorghe Calciu – Dumitreasa, *Războiul întru Cuvânt. Cuvintele către tineri și alte mărturi (War and Words. Words Addressed to Young People and Other Testimonies)*, Bucharest: Nemira, 2001.

³⁸ Tismăneanu, 1996, p. 466.

³⁹ Ibid. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) is funded by the United States Congress, and was founded in 1950 by the National Committee for a Free Europe, to combat Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. RFE/RL was a radio station where well-known émigrés (e.g., Ioan Ioanid, Virgil Ierunca, Monica Lovinescu) contributed to Romanian language broadcasts on the political, social, and cultural situation in Romania.

⁴⁰ Ibid. See also Lavinia Stan, Lucian Turcescu, 'Politics, National Symbols and the Romanian Orthodox Cathedral', in: *Europe – Asia Studies*, no. 58(7), 2006, p. 1126.

⁴¹ Tismăneanu, 1996, p. 466.

⁴² Helen Stratford, 'Enclaves of Expression: Resistance by Young Architects to the Physical and Psychological Control of Expression in Romania during the 1980s', in: *Journal of Architectural Education*, no. 54 (4), 2001, pp. 221. See also Giurescu, 1990, pp. 42-46.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 51-66.

⁴⁴ Interview with Răzvan Theodorescu ('Bucharest, quando l'UNESCO fece finta di nulla', 3 December 2006), www.lettera22.it/showart.php?id=6204&rubrica=130

⁴⁵ Barbu, Ciuceanu, Roske, 2000, pp. 222-223.

⁴⁶ Humphrey, 2005, p. 39.

⁴⁷ I use the term "sultanistic" as defined by Juan Linz, referring to political regimes where the leadership is one of great unpredictability and has undefined limits; Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

⁴⁸ Giurescu, 1990, p. 42.

⁴⁹ Vinitilă Mihăilescu et al, 'Le bloc 311: Résidence et sociabilité dans un immeuble d'appartements sociaux à Bucarest', in: *Ethnologie française*, vol. XXV (3), 1995, p. 485.

⁵⁰ Augustin Ioan, 'Monumental Slums', in: *Martor*, 2002, <http://memoria.ro>

⁵¹ Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, New York, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 297.

⁵² Giurescu, 1990, p. 2.

⁵³ For an analysis of the *Bucharest 2000* international urban competition in 1995-1996, and the projects within it that tried to "reframe" the totalitarian architectural discourse of the Civic Centre, see Barris, 2001, pp. 229-237.

⁵⁴ In 1995, the Chamber of Deputies moved from the former Palace of the Parliament into Ceaușescu's Palace, as did the Senate, in 2005. The same chief architect (Anca Petrescu) was put in charge in the 1980s to construct the *House of the People*, and at the end of the 2000s to adapt part of the building for the present Senate.

⁵⁵ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=servicii1-palat>

⁵⁶ Augustin Ioan, 'The History of Nothing: Contemporary Architecture and Public Space in Romania', in: *Art Margins, Contemporary Central and East European Visual Culture*, 2006. www.artmargins.com/content/feature/ioan5.html

⁵⁷ Theodor Adorno, 'What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?', in: Geoffrey Hartman (ed.), *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 115.

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Nacional(ist)inė ideologija ir miesto planavimas: *Socializmo pergalės* statyba Bukarešte (Rumunija)

Reikšminiai žodžiai: socialistinė miesto politika, griovimai, nacionalinė-komunistinė propaganda, Rumunija.

Santrauka

Socialistinės architektūros strategija įkūnija du skirtingus, bet tarpusavyje susijusius „architektūrinius naratyvus“. Pirmasis diskursas susijęs su „socialine inžinerija“ – naujo žmogaus ir naujos visuomenės kūrimu vienu metu. Šį požiūrį atskleidė „svarbiausiojo architekto“ – Ceaușescu – kalba dvyliktajame Komunistų Partijos kongrese. Kalboje sakoma, kad esą privaloma pabaigti generalinę sostinės rekonstrukciją, idant 1985 m. sostinė taptų moderniu socialistiniu miestu. Sostinė būsimi visos tautos pasididžiavimas, vertas būsimos daugiašalės socialistinės visuomenės epochos.

„Socialistinė architektūra“ turėjo būti ne tik „socializmo pergalės“ simbolis, bet ir įkūnyti „rumuniškumo“ politinį naratyvą. Kadangi nacionalizmu, kaip pagrindine įteisinamąja politine ideologija, pasinaudojo Gheorghie Gheorghiu Dejaus (1945-1965) ir Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965-1989) režimai, architektūra buvo priversta įkūnyti šį „patriotinį farsą“.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama architektūra kaip nacionalinės-komunistinės propagandos sudaiktinimas, įvairių (meno) istorikų ir architektų, mėginusių sustabdyti masinį architektūrinio paveldo griovimą, reakcijos. Iš pradžių trumpai apžvelgiamos įvairios architektūrinės strategijos komunistinėje Rumunijoje (abiejų režimų – Gheorghiu Dejaus ir jo pasekėjo Nicolae Ceaușescu – metu). Analizuojamas XX a. 9-ajame dešimtmetyje Bukarešte, Rumunijos sostinėje, įgyvendintas „didingas“ urbanistinio perstruktūravimo projektas.

Galiausiai mėginama sužinoti, ar ši miestų rekonstrukcija komunistinėje Rumunijoje sukėlė pavienių asmenų ir institucijų veikėjų (nevalstybinių organizacijų, profesinių sąjungų, etc.) reakciją. Analizuojant skirtingą „rezistencijos aplinką“ įrodoma, kad autoritarinio lyderio nuolat kontroliuojamas miesto ir kaimo planavimas, visapusiškas architektūros ideologizavimas kai kada buvo kvestionuojamas, nepaisant tariamai visuotinio architektų ir visuomeninių institucijų paklusnumo.

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