

**ASPECTS REGARDING THE RELATIONS
BETWEEN CHINA AND ROMANIA (1949-1965)**

Abstract:	<p><i>In the modern era and in the interwar period, Romania's relations with China were sporadic and inconsistent. The annexation of Romania into the sphere of influence of the USSR and the takeover of power in China by the Communist Party, in 1949, was followed by an acceleration of political cooperation between Romania and China. Cooperation intensified as both states campaigned for national sovereignty over the USSR, which wanted to exercise coordinating authority over all other states with a socialist state regime. The article presents the most important moments of the bilateral meetings between the party and state leaderships of China and Romania and their cooperation, especially the one related to the long conflicts between China and the USSR. The Romania-China relationship had the depth and continuity specific to some strategic partners, in its acceptance today, the parties granting mutual support and showing solidarity in difficult times. This bi-multilateral relationship, adopted by the state socialist regime in Bucharest, has gone beyond the limits of a political game designed to erode Soviet hegemony by supporting a second pole of power within the world socialist state system. During several generations of leaders, the Romanian side promoted a friendly relationship with China, which was also taken over in the collective mind.</i></p>
Keywords:	Diplomatic relations; China; Romania; Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej; Nicolae Ceaușescu; Mao Zedong; Emil Bodnăraș; the Sino-Soviet conflict
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Since the proclamation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 and its recognition by Romania on October 3, 1949, Romanian-Chinese relations

have been decisively influenced by China's relations with the USSR, in contrast to the long-running conflicts between the two most important socialist states¹. Romania's first ambassador to the People's Republic of China was Teodor Rudenko, a man close to the Soviet Union². China and the USSR were separated by a 4,300 km long border, the longest in the world. Since the 13th century, numerous border conflicts took place between the Russians and the Chinese, and the completion of the border was not possible until the first years of the third millennium, when the two states agreed and Russia gave up some territories in favor of China.

In the first years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Romania, the relations of the two countries have been marked by their still very good relationship with the Soviet Union.

Referring only to the contemporary period, we recall that during the period when Russia was ruled by czars, she fully financed the construction of over two thousand kilometers of railway in East China. After the Bolshevik coup, the world's great colonialist powers had occupied and exploited much of China and disputed control of Russia's railways. In 1924 the USSR concluded a treaty with China recognizing its right to administer the Russian-built railways. Later, President Chiang Kai-shek took control of China and did not allow the authorities of the Russian Soviet Socialist Federal Republic to administer the railway, which was particularly profitable.

In 1929, the Soviets attacked China in Manchuria, defeated the Chinese, and, surprisingly and unusually in Russian/Soviet Union politics, withdrew after recovering their rolling stock and people. On that occasion, the Soviet government declared that it would not occupy a single piece of Chinese land. This attitude has impressed a large part of Chinese public opinion, which is unusual for this pattern of behavior of some winners, which is atypical in East Asia. Instead, Chiang Kai Shek's army plundered Manchuria, creating total chaos in the province.

In the interwar period, until 1945, China had conflicts and waged war with Japan, and the USSR fought with Germany and its allies. Between 1927 and 1936, China was shaken by an ideological civil war between nationalists and communists. Weakened by this war, China was attacked and a large part of it was occupied by Japan. During 1941-1945, Romania's ambassador to Japan, Colonel, later General, Gheorghe Băgulescu was also ambassador to the state of Manciuco (Manzhouguo), created in Manchuria and eastern Mongolia by the Japanese and ambassador to the pro-Japanese Chinese government in Nanjing. In the puppet

¹ The diplomatic missions of the two countries opened in Bucharest and Beijing in 1950

² Mircea Suci, *Prima țară străină pe care am văzut-o a fost China, primul lider de talie mondială pe care l-am întâlnit a fost Mao*, "Dosarele istoriei", Year II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 40. Teodor Rudenko was Romania's ambassador to China between 1950-1952 and 1957-1959

state of Manciuco, General Băgulescu gathered an important collection of Chinese art, the most valuable in Romania and one of the most important in Europe¹.

In parallel with the war of liberation under Japanese rule, a civil war broke out between the Chinese nationalists led by Chiang Kai Shek and the communists

¹ Gheorghe Băgulescu was a hero of the battle of Oituz, from the First World War. After the war, animated by strong anti-communist sentiments, he became an important supporter of the Legionary Movement. He was one of the godparents of the commander of the Legionary Movement, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Known and appreciated by King Carol II since World War I, Gheorghe Băgulescu was a declared public opponent of the king's relationship with Elena Magda Wolff Lupescu, the mainstay of the Jewish interest group around the king, whom the legionaries considered the main culprit for one of the greatest strengths of the Romanian society. For this reason, the king sent Gheorghe Băgulescu ambassador to Japan, Manciuco (1935-1939) and China (led by the pro-Japanese government in Nanjing). In 1939, he was recalled from the post by the king and decorated for his work. The post's recall was due to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Romania and China (1939), and Romania's representation in Manciuco was not approved by the Chinese. During the legionary revolution of August 31-September 6, 1940, which broke out following the acceptance of the Vienna Dictate, Carol II proposed to Colonel Băgulescu to form a legionary government, to stop the popular street movements in Bucharest and to pacify the country. Colonel Băgulescu refused, the legionaries not wanting to cooperate with the king. The legionaries wanted to remove the king from the throne and judge him for the state terrorism he promoted, assassinating without trial hundreds of legionaries from all over the country. On September 14, 1940, the day of the proclamation of the national-legionary state by King Mihai I, Colonel Băgulescu was promoted to the rank of general, and in 1941, being appreciated by Ion Antonescu, despite his legionary sympathies, he resumed ambassador to Japan, Manciuco and China (led by the pro-Japanese government in Nanjing). Romania entering the war alongside Germany and Japan, China broke off diplomatic relations with Romania. After the war, General Băgulescu had no difficulties with the victors, as in 1943 the Gestapo tried to assassinate him, as known to the Romanian authorities. This assassination attempt must have been linked to the intelligence activities carried out by the Romanian ambassador. Gheorghe Băgulescu was married to Elena Dimitriu, having together a daughter named Monica. During 1941-1946, when General Băgulescu was on a mission in Tokyo, in his house in Bucharest, together with his wife and daughter, one of the most important heads of the SSI, Florin Becescu, very close to the family, lived permanently. At the same time, the mother of the author of these lines also lived in the house of the Băgulescu family, a family friend, at that time a student and memorialist of the events that took place in the Băgulescu house. In 1945, General Băgulescu returned to Bucharest and realized that the Soviet regime would remain in power. For this reason he left Romania, emigrating to the West, under the protection of the US secret services. As his wife and daughter did not want to follow him into exile, Gheorghe Băgulescu left alone. His impressive collection of Chinese and Japanese art could not be preserved in its entirety. Some remained for the wife and daughter of the general, who, without any other income, lived for years on the sale of Chinese and Japanese works of art. Most of the collection was taken by the general in exile. In 1973, through acquisitions from abroad and from the country, the Romanian state managed to recover a part of General Băgulescu's collection and to exhibit it in the National Museum of Art of Romania in Bucharest.

led by Mao Zedong. The fight against Japan reduced the intensity of the civil war, but after the defeat of Japan, the civil war resumed, ending only in 1950, with the complete victory of the communists led by Mao Zedong, supported by the USSR. The defeated Chinese nationalists, despite American support, withdrew to the island of Taiwan, forming a US-backed state, which created a stronghold for undermining the power of the People's Republic of China.

Between 1949 and 1953, while Stalin lived and ruled, China's relations with the USSR were very good. These also materialized in the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in Moscow on February 14, 1950. Over the next decade, bilateral cooperation materialized through several important agreements, including the USSR's assistance in the construction and reconstruction of 156 large industrial enterprises in China, the Treaty of withdrawal of Soviet troops from Port Arthur, and also the loan of US \$ 300 million from the USSR to China.

After Stalin's death, Sino-Soviet relations cooled. A first high-level visit was made by the Romanian side to the PRC in 1954, at the invitation of Chinese officials, on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the victory of the Communists in China. The Romanian delegation was led by Petru Groza and Gheorghe Apostol, the contacts at the highest level being Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and other Chinese officials at the time.

Around this visit, Romania was the country that took a stand against the strain of Sino-Soviet relations. In February 1954, the political leadership in Bucharest issued a statement stating that "complete equality of rights and mutual respect for national interests" must be the essential elements of Sino-Soviet relations and the entire socialist bloc¹. This statement was in favor of China and unfavorable to the USSR, as the new Kremlin leaders wanted to maintain their supremacy over all socialist states in the world.

The ideological distance between China and the USSR deepened after the USSR officially filed a NATO membership application on March 31, 1954, which was rejected but interpreted in Beijing as an act of capitulation of the USSR to the capitalist states².

On December 28, 1955, Washington issued Directive NSC-5412/2, which gave free rein to secret war operations against the socialist world in the Soviet sphere of influence. US secret structures were being asked to conduct clandestine operations on as large a scale as possible. Clarifying the purpose of these operations, the first point of the directive mentioned the need to capitalize on tensions in Sino-USSR relations. It was also stated that US special operations were

¹ Liviu Țăranu, *Retragerea trupelor sovietice din România-1958 (II)*, "Enigmele istoriei", Year II, No. 6 (18), 30 iunie-28 iulie 2021, pp. 46-47

² Corvin Lupu, *România sub presiunea Războiului rece și a dorinței de integrare euro-atlantică*, vol. I, Editura Fundației "Alma Mater", Sibiu, 2000, p. 203

to be aimed at weakening state control within the USSR and China, as well as within or subject to other US allies.¹

In February 1956, a congress of the CPSU was held in the USSR, at which the cult of Stalin's personality was condemned and his methods of leadership were severely criticized. On this occasion, the idea of "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist world was introduced. In order to de-escalate relations with the capitalist world, the Cominform was dissolved at this congress, which was to stop the promotion of proletarian internationalism, respectively of globalization² of the world in a socialist state form. This strategy of "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist world was not agreed upon by the Chinese policy of the time. Thus, an ideological rift was created between the communist parties in the two countries. After a brief silence, Beijing leaders accused the Soviet government of acting as a revisionist and distanced themselves from Marxism-Leninism. Relations between the two countries have cooled.

In September 1956, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Mao Zedong met at a Chinese PC congress. At the congress, Mao Zedong placed Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej next to him. On this occasion, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej pledged to Mao Zedong to support him with the US government, so that he could pay the important debts that the Americans had towards China, since the Second World War.³ In fact, a few years later, in 1962, noticing the growing friendship between Romania and China, the Soviet authorities imposed certain restrictions on the KGB and the secret services of the Moscow satellite states in their relations with the Romanian secret services.⁴ On this occasion, the two leaders agreed very well that the Soviet experience should not be applied mechanically and that it should be adapted to the specific conditions of each country, and that the USSR should be unfairly favored in bilateral relations with other socialist states. Both leaders also welcomed the abolition of the Cominform and denounced Stalin's abuses. This last fact was surprising, given Mao Zedong's good relations with Stalin and the strong support that the USSR during Stalin gave to the Chinese Communists to win the civil war with the Chiang Kai-shek-led nationalists, strongly supported by the USA. Despite the very difficult economic and financial situation of the entire sphere of influence of the USSR, after the Second World War, Stalin had granted China a loan of \$ 300 million, a very large amount at that time, representing the value of Romania's entire war debt, established by the clauses of the Paris Peace Treaty (1947). Stalin

¹ John Prados, *Războaiele secrete ale președinților*, Elit, Iași, 1998, pp. 204-206

² The term globalization was not used in the sixth decade of the last century. It was adopted by political language in the sphere of US influence in the post-Cold War period, when the same idea was promoted by the USA in the opposite direction to that initiated by Lenin and continued by Stalin, but with the same goals of world domination as wide as possible

³ Romulus Budura, (Ed.), *Politica independentă a României și relațiile româno-chineze 1954-1975. Documente*, Arhivele Naționale ale României, București, Vol. I, Document No. 2, 2008, pp. 95-96

⁴ Larry L. Watts, *Cei dintâi vor fi cei din urmă. România și sfârșitul Războiului Rece*, Rao, București, 2013, pp. 159-160

also supported Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to become the leader of Romania and to allow him to eliminate from the Romanian leadership the very influential group of Jewish cominternists led by Ana Pauker (Hanna Rabinsohn), in 1952.

In the following years, the views of the Romanian and Chinese leaders were increasingly resonated when the issue arose that the ruling parties were accountable to their own people and that relations between the communist and workers' parties, as well as among the socialist states, they are required to be based on the principles of equality and independence, of non-interference in internal affairs and mutual benefit. Against this background, especially in the conditions of the public dispute between the Chinese communists and the Soviet communists, the Romanian-Chinese relations acquire a solid substance that will favor the exchanges and the collaboration in all the fields. On this basis, the collective leadership of Romania drafted the "April Theses", namely the Declaration on the RCP's position on the issues of the international communist and workers' movement, which represented the country's declaration of independence from the USSR. The Romanian-Chinese relations were a catalyst for the elaboration of this programmatic document of Romania.

In 1957, the Soviet government proposed to China to provide scientific assistance for the production of nuclear weapons in exchange for ceding control of China's defense policy and the Chinese army to the USSR through Soviet advisers subordinating Chinese military commanders. China considered the cost of losing national sovereignty too high. The proposal was rejected by Mao Zedong, and Sino-Soviet relations cooled even further.

China's position has also greatly inspired the Romanian nationalist leaders in Bucharest, who are already engaged in a huge political and diplomatic effort to free themselves from Soviet control and Soviet economic exploitation, under the cover of Romania's need to recover war debt. The Chinese government organized its own nuclear science program without the help of the USSR¹.

Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders wanted to take a step forward in improving relations with the Soviets and repeatedly expressed the idea that the existence of normal Sino-Soviet relations involved a Soviet decision to relocate some territories to China, including some islands on the river Ussuri. These territories belonged to the USSR, but were inhabited by the Chinese. The rhetoric in the public space between the two parties took the form of addressing open requests, including territorial ones. China has demanded that the USSR transfer Mongolia and other lands under Chinese jurisdiction. In response to sharp statements from the Chinese side in Beijing, Soviet experts stationed in China were fired. Russian-Chinese diplomatic relations have deteriorated severely.

In March 1958, Prime Minister Chivu Stoica paid a visit to Beijing with Emil Bodnăraș and called on the Chinese to withdraw their troops from North Korea. Romania's argument was that it wanted to offer the Soviet Union, which

¹ In 1964 he successfully tested the first atomic bomb and in 1967 he also successfully tested the first hydrogen bomb.

had become China's rival, the model of trust between allies with a socialist state regime, which would help Moscow order the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Romania.

Subsequently, on April 8, 1958, Romania and China issued a joint statement of great importance stating that: “military blocs in Europe and Asia can be abolished and replaced by a system of collective security; the military bases, established on foreign territories, must be eliminated, and the armed forces, stationed on foreign territories, must be withdrawn”. In October 1958, after the withdrawal of the Red Army from Romania, Chinese troops withdrew from North Korea¹.

The cracks in the Sino-Soviet alliance, worn for a while behind closed doors, inside the socialist system in the sphere of influence of the USSR, began to manifest publicly in 1959. In that year, the USSR offered moral support to the Tibetan people during its uprising against the Chinese.

In the same year, 1959, on the tenth anniversary of the victory of the Chinese communist revolution against the Guomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek, Romania sent a delegation led by Emil Bodnăraş and Paul Niculescu-Mizil².

In 1960, at the Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, Mao Zedong and Nikita Khrushchev openly hurled insults at each other in front of party delegates from many states. The Soviet delegation came to Bucharest with the Secretary General of the CPSU and the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union and other important dignitaries. The Soviets wanted to attack China's policy based on criticism of Albania's “deviations”³, the country that did not agree to be under Moscow's control and was supported by China. On this occasion, during the days of the congress, the party leadership of Romania supported the Soviet side, without criticizing the Chinese side. This position was due to the fact that the Soviets had agreed to withdraw their occupation army from Romania⁴, and the Romanian leaders were already seeking to prepare for the withdrawal of Soviet advisers from most important state institutions, in order to achieve full independence. At the same time, however, the USSR is still providing technological assistance to numerous industrial enterprises under construction in Romania. The Romanian authorities demanded economic, technological and commercial support from the USSR, but acted to restrict the Kremlin's political, intelligence and military influence over Romania.

¹ Liviu Țăranu, *Op. cit.*, p. 47

² Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *Un mare om al secolului nostru*, ”Dosarele istoriei”, Year II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 55

³ A few years later, in 1968, Albania left the Warsaw Pact Organization.

⁴ In 1958, when it withdrew from Romania, the occupation army numbered 42,000 soldiers.

In 1960, the Soviets withdrew all their advisers from China and cut off ongoing bilateral cooperation agreements¹.

In the seventh century of the last century, during the Cultural Revolution, China recalled all its ambassadors to the Western world, intentionally isolating itself. Throughout the period until the resumption of diplomatic relations with these many states, Romania was an ambassador of China to the West and of the West to China. On the occasion of Ceaușescu's visit to Beijing, in June 1971, Chinese leaders thanked Romania for this diplomatic effort. Romania also mediated the establishment of relations between China, on the one hand, and Italy, Austria, Federal Germany and several other northern European countries, on the other hand. Through this diplomatic activity of Romania, a breach was made in the blockade established by Moscow against China².

In 1961, Chinese leader Mao Zedong accused Soviet leader Nikita Sergheevich Khrushchev of abandoning the principles of communism and of doing nothing but preparing to weaken the international communist movement and surrender to the forces of imperialist capitalism. Later, in 1962, Mao Zedong bluntly accused Nikita Khrushchev, in categorical and highly critical terms, of capitulating to the Americans during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Soviet leader replied that Mao Zedong's policies would lead to a nuclear war³. The Soviets then supported India in the Sino-Indian War from September to November 1962. This conflict was the basis for the establishment of very close relations between the USSR and India⁴, which would last in time until today. Relations between the two great communist powers had completely collapsed.

In the summer of 1963, the USSR made arrangements for Mongolia's admission to the Warsaw Pact. The USSR wanted to expand the organization's remit in the Far East, to the borders of China. This would have been a threat to China. Romania opposed this move by vetoing it⁵.

In June 1963, Romania unpleasantly surprised the USSR and its very loyal satellites in its area of influence by publishing part of the Chinese Communist Party's letter to the CPSU, which criticized the USSR's arrogant, high-powered behavior in its relations with the other socialist states.

¹ Florea Dumitrescu, *China și „insula comorilor”*, ”Dosarele istoriei”, Year V, No. 10 (50), 2000, p. 5

² Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă doamne de prieteni... Războiul clandestin al blocului sovietic împotriva României*, RAO, București, 2011, pp. 270-272

³ He was referring to the fact that during the conflict between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China in Taiwan, in 1958, US involvement and escalation of the conflict led US Secretary of State Christian Herter (1959-1961) to call this crisis “First serious nuclear crisis”. On the occasion of that armed conflict, in order not to lose control of the island of Taiwan and other islands controlled by Chinese anti-communist nationalists, if necessary, the United States was determined to use nuclear weapons.

⁴ Ovidiu Bozgan, *China și „duelul” româno-sovietic la ceputul anilor '60*, ”Dosarele istoriei”, Year II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 43

⁵ Larry L. Watts, *Op.cit.*, p. 160

Between January 20 and 23, 1964, Romanian-Chinese negotiations took place in Bucharest for the conclusion of a Romanian-Chinese cultural protocol that covered multiple areas¹.

At the beginning of 1964, Romania offered its good offices for mediating the Soviet-Chinese conflict. In Bucharest, this decision was a collective one. The RCP leadership considered that, for Romania, the promotion of this project does not involve security risks or diplomatic tensions. China and the USSR were after seven years of smoldering conflicts, degenerating into numerous small border military confrontations. This situation had worried the entire socialist movement in the Soviet sphere of influence, which felt its security was threatened by this conflict. The middle states, as well as Romania, as well as the small ones, were aware that they could not defend their political regime against the capitalist sphere of influence, which would absorb them and subject them to their will and stop their own economic and social development. These issues were highlighted in the internal discussions at the level of the leaderships of all socialist states.

The Romanian leaders concluded that even if the Romanian approach fails, they will not lose anything, the approach can be exploited propagandistically, proving to the socialist countries that Romania put itself at the service of the international socialist cause and tried, with all its powers, to contribute to de-escalation and normalization of relations between the two largest and most powerful socialist states².

Romania has taken a number of important steps in distancing itself from the political line promoted by the Kremlin and has begun to establish a state socialist regime with specific Romanian characteristics³. In this direction, Romania had determined the withdrawal of Soviet armies from the country and had categorically opposed Valev's plan for Romania's economic integration into a centralized common economy of the socialist states, considering this plan to be contrary to the country's national industrialization and development interests. For these reasons and others we do not insist on, the Bucharest regime was largely isolated within the community of socialist states.

The CCP had also been dissatisfied with the attitude of the Romanian leadership at the 1960 RWP congress, when Romanians were expected to support China's position. The CCP was also dissatisfied with the fact that at various congresses of some communist parties, Romanian delegates, in tune with the Soviets, criticized the CCP's policy. This was worrying for RWP and Romania. The Romanian leaders hoped that this involvement in the de-escalation of Sino-

¹ Ovidiu Bozgan, *Op. cit.*, p. 47

² Vasile Popa, *Distanțarea României față de Uniunea Sovietică văzută de la... Hong Kong!*, "Dosarele istoriei", Year IX, No. 4 (92), 2004, p. 53

³ At the PMR Congress of 1955, the issue of building socialism on its own Romanian basis and adapting Marxism-Leninism to local conditions in Romania was openly raised for the first time, a fact welcomed and encouraged by the Chinese leadership.

Soviet relations, which represented the greatest crisis of the state socialist system¹, would come out of this international isolation.

At the meeting of the Political Bureau of the RWP CC on February 28, 1964, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej stressed that the approach to get involved in resolving disputes and conflicts between the USSR and the Chinese PR is one of great international importance, involving the whole party and depending on largely due to the way the Romanian delegation that was to leave for China two days later will act. The delegation, said the RWP chief, must show skill, tact, perseverance, patience and foresight in situations that may arise during the discussions/negotiations. Gheorghiu-Dej emphasized that the Soviets agreed with the Romanian approach, but in the sense that the Romanian delegation will be convinced of how difficult it is to get along with the Chinese.

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The delegation sent to the People's Republic of China was led by Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer, a valuable and experienced politician, supporter of the Romanian national political line for building socialism. The delegation paid a long visit to Beijing on March 2-11, 1964. The Romanians had invited themselves to Beijing and the Chinese were reluctant to receive them.

In addition to the issue of mediation in Sino-Soviet relations, in the alternative, but very important for Romania, Ion Gheorghe Maurer wanted to explain to the Chinese side and Romania's desire to free itself from USSR hegemony and gain China's support in this direction³.

The members of the Romanian delegation were Ion Gheorghe Maurer (President of the Council of Ministers), Emil Bodnăraș, Nicolae Ceaușescu and Chivu Stoica, all members of the RWP Political Bureau. The plane landed in

¹ The author of these lines considers that the political regime of that period was not a communist one, communism being a utopia that never existed anywhere and is not possible to be established in the politico-economic and social practice.

² Mircea Chirițoiu, „*Hrușcirov vrea să ne mănânce cu furculița. Mao vrea să ne mănânce la frigare*”, „*Dosarele istoriei*”, Year VII, No. 2 (66), 2002, pp. 14-24. The transcript of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the CC of the PMR of February 28, 1964 is published in the article.

³ Lavinia Betea, *Maurer și lumea de ieri. Mărturiile despre stalinizarea României*, Fundația Ioan Slavici, Arad, 1995, pp. 145-146

Beijing on Monday afternoon, March 3, 1964. The guests were greeted by Liu Şao-ti, CCP CC Vice President, Deng Xiaoping, CC General Secretary, Pîn Cijen, a member of the Politburo, other party leaders, the Romanian Ambassador to China, Dumitru Gheorghiu, as well as a crowd of two thousand people to acclaim them, brought in honor of the Romanian delegation.

Mao Zedong appeared only on March 10, 1964, a day before the Romanian delegation left China. In the presence of 32 journalists, Mao made a statement stating that “the space occupied by the Soviet Union is too large”, that it has foreign territories, and, referring to Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, specified that the USSR “annexed a part of the Romanian territory”. The statement challenged Khrushchev's opinion on March 7, 1959, when he stated that “there is no border dispute between the USSR and Romania over the fact that both countries are socialist, driven by common interests and pursuing the same goals: communism”¹.

During the meeting, Mao Zedong reported his version of the disagreements with the Soviets. Among other things, he told Romanians that in 1957 the USSR insisted on occupying the entire coastline of China. Convinced that the Romanians would serve Khrushchev as a cordless phone, Mao told his guests: “Please tell Comrade Khrushchev how stubborn the Chinese are, they don't want to give in to any step earth, they want to fight hard sharp against sharp”. After a few tens of minutes, Mao looked theatrically at his watch and noticed that the others had barely uttered a word. During the meeting with the Romanian delegation, Mao spoke almost all the time.

Maurer would later say that Mao Zedong introduced himself as “an uncultivated man”². Mao treated the Romanian delegation with an obvious air of superiority, a superiority that was also recognized by the Romanians, given his aura of great fighter and winner for the cause of socialism. At the beginning of the meeting, Mao asked Emil Bodnăraş, the Minister of the Romanian Armed Forces, who had not been at the front, if he had fought in the war, which, at that time, for an army minister, was mandatory in the Chinese leader's view. “I went to jail”, Bodnăraş said.

This visit of the delegation led by Ion Gheorghe Maurer was particularly important because it convinced the Chinese leaders that, within the Sino-Soviet conflict, Romania is placing itself in the Chinese camp and convinced them to support the RWP's political efforts. Even the Chinese press had reported that Romanian nationalism-sovereignty was on the rise. Also, the Chinese press in

¹ George Cioranescu, *Aspects des relationssoviéto-roumaines, 1967-1971*, Minard, Paris, 1971, apud Nicolae Enciu, “Când îţi spunea Stalin să dansezi, dansai!” - 55 de ani de la debarcarea lui Nichita Hruşciiov, ”Art-Emis”, No. 74 (961) /29 Septembrie 2019, pp. 184-186

² It is possible that Ion Gheorghe Maurer's reference was to the fact that Mao Zedong said that when he was a teacher in the country he had not yet learned of the existence of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Hong Kong, still British at the time, reported that Romania's economic growth rate was almost 16%, one of the highest in the world. The Chinese noted that, despite Soviet pressure, including Khrushchev's visit to Bucharest in 1962, pressure on Romania's integration into the integrated Soviet economic system, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej did not give in and did not back down, defending his country's interests¹. This would have consequences, the Soviets organizing several attacks on the life of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej².

The Chinese reproached the Romanian guests that in the past they had also expressed themselves, at several congresses of the fraternal parties, against the Chinese Communist Party. "Are you dogmatic or revisionist, or do you adopt a middle-class attitude?" Mao asked. "We are Marxist-Leninists", Ceaușescu replied promptly, suggesting that he was not referring to the conflict between the two sides, but to the ideology of the system.³

The Sino-Soviet conflict and the visit of the Romanian delegation in March 1964 offered the leadership in Bucharest, for the first time after the world war, the possibility to raise, by ricochet, the problem of Bessarabia's belonging to Romania. The occasion was the stopover of the Romanian delegation, led by Ion Gheorghe Maurer, returning from Beijing, to Pîțunda, a town on the Black Sea, where Nichita Khrushchev and A.I. Mikoyan were spending their vacation. Relating to the Soviet leaders the meeting with the Chinese officials, the members of the Romanian delegation mentioned: "The Chinese said that you took Bessarabia from us. We had nothing to do but listen to them, although, of course, we no longer need Bessarabia"⁴.

Following Mao Zedong's assertions that the Soviets had taken over Romania, in the same year, wanting to seize the moment, the leaders of Bucharest ordered the translation, printing, and wide distribution of Karl Marx's unpublished manuscripts in which states that Bessarabia is Romanian and could not be taken by Russia from Turkey, because Bessarabia did not belong to Turkey⁵.

The public assertion of Romania's position of independence from Moscow, Mao Zedong's statements about the USSR's occupation of Romanian territories and the courage of high-ranking Romanian dignitaries to say this to the Soviet leadership, have created discontent in the Moldovan SSR leadership⁶. This had immediate repercussions on the political, economic and cultural situation in Soviet Moldova. From the same year, 1964, a new wave of disguised deportations began

¹ Vasile Popa, *Op. cit.*, pp. 54-55

² Elena Negru, *Confruntări istoriografice sovieto-române anii 1960-1980*, "Arhivele Totalitarismului", Year XXIII, No. 86-87, 1-2/2015, p. 159

³ Florin Mihai, *Ceaușescu, tupeu în fața lui Mao Tze-dun*, "Historia", din 27 martie 2012

⁴ Ioan Scurtu (Ed.), *Istoria Basarabiei de la începuturi până în 2003*, Editura Institutului Cultural Român, București, 2003, pp. 449-450

⁵ Karl Marx, *Semnări despre români (Manuscrise inedite)*, published by the academician Andrei Oțetea and S. Schwann, Editura Academiei, București, 1964, p. 106

⁶ Elena Negru, *Confruntări istoriografice sovieto-române anii 1960-1980*, "Arhivele Totalitarismului", Year XXIII, No. 86-87, 1-2/2015, p. 159

in Bessarabia, this time targeting the Moldovan intellectuals, by distributing graduates of higher education institutions throughout the USSR¹. Also, many Romanian elites in Bessarabia were moved to other parts of the USSR, with their consent, by offering higher salaries and better social conditions in the other Soviet republics where they moved.

The visit of the delegation led by Ion Gheorghe Maurer to China was important and managed to convince the Chinese leaders that the Romanians have personality and are determined to break away from Moscow's control and to be loyal partners of China.

In August 1964, Albanian leader Enver Hodja, who had been considered Mao Zedong's closest aide in the West, after Albania's break-up with the USSR, lamented that he had been replaced as China's main partner by the Romanians. He said Romania was pushing China into the arms of US imperialists².

In November 1964, the delegations of the Chinese and Romanian leadership met in Moscow, where, in the summer of the same year, Marshal Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev had taken over the leadership. During the meeting between the two delegations, it was discussed issues that confirmed a communion of views interests and wills to act.

In 1965 and 1966, the Soviet secret services were given the priority task of monitoring the causes of China's interest in the Bessarabian issue, the level and type of influence that Chinese leaders exert on Romanian leaders, which are Romanian sympathies for China and Albania, which are possible Sino-Romanian plans to create a new communist international, to coordinate the policy and practice of the international communist movement³.

In July 1965, on the occasion of the participation of a senior Chinese delegation in the Ninth Congress of the RCP⁴, it was received by Nicolae Ceaușescu, Ion Gheorghe Maurer and Emil Bodnăraș. The Chinese delegation was led by Deng Xiaoping, the CCP's secretary general, and Kang Sheng, the CCP's vice president of the CCP, head of China's security service (Gongambu), who is in charge of China's security and intelligence issues. Kang Sheng attended GRU's "Karol Szerewicz" School of Espionage, Sabotage and Partisan Fighting in Astrakhan, where he was a classmate and friend of Emil Bodnăraș and North Korean leader Marshal Kim Ir Sen. Kang Sheng had been one of the leaders of the Chinese delegation to the Comintern and was present in Mao Zedong's permanent entourage. The special relationship and trust between these two dignitaries, Emil Bodnăraș and Kang Sheng, well as their friendship with Kim Ir Sen, were decisive for Romania's recognition as a mediator between China and the USSR, and later between China and USA.

¹ Ioan Scurtu (coordonator), *Op. cit.*, p. 450

² Larry L. Watts, *Op.cit*, p. 161

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 161-162

⁴ On this occasion, the Romanian Workers' Party was renamed the Romanian Communist Party.

Political scientist Vladimir Tismăneanu, whose parents, Leon Tismenițki and Hermina Marcusohn, Jewish communist militants during the RCP's illegality, knew Emil Bodnăraș well, claims that he was disgusted with Khrushchev and Khrushchevism and viewed Maoism as a theoretical formula meant to save the unity of the world communist movement. Emil Bodnăraș was probably the most pro-Mao of the high dignitaries in Romania¹.

Emil Bodnăraș², the main pillar of the Romanian-Chinese relationship, was in his youth an agent of the Special Intelligence Service under the Presidency of the Romanian Council of Ministers, recruited by Florin Becescu (professional name Georgescu) and sent to the USSR³, with the mission to join and to monitor the Soviet and international communist movement. Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu both knew this, but appreciated it as a fact of patriotism.

Romanian leaders told the Chinese that Romania did not accept economic integration or military subordination to the Soviets. The Chinese leaders accepted and supported, with some reservations, the Romanian position. Kang Sheng told Romanian delegates that the specialized treaties taught in military academies in the USSR state that in the event of war, the armies of the Warsaw Pact states are subordinate to the Soviet army. Ceaușescu replied that this was an academic position, but Romania would fight against it, using the principle of unanimity in decision-making under the Warsaw Pact⁴.

During this period, when the international communist movement focused on the conflict between the CPSU and the CCP and was most eroded by this conflict, Romania and Yugoslavia were pioneers in promoting sovereignty nationalism⁵.

¹ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Cine a fost Emil Bodnăraș? Spion rus, stalinist național și dinozaur leninist*, contributors.ro <https://www.contributors.ro/cine-a-fost-emil-bodnaras-spion-rus-stalinist-national-si-dinozaur-leninist/>, (15.05.2022)

² Emil Bodnăraș graduated “with distinction” from the High School in Câmpulung Moldovenesc, the Military School from Timișoara (as head of promotion) and the Military School of Artillery Officers from Bucharest (also as head of promotion). For two years he studied at the espionage school of the GRU “Karol Szerewicz” in AstrakhYear His mother was German and his father UkrainiYear All his life he was an important patriot of Romania, whom he served with devotion.

³ Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania – Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State 1948 – 1965*, C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1999. His desertion in 1932 and his “flight” to Ukraine and then to Russia were meant to make him a fugitive. It is hard to believe that Bodnăraș himself wanted, on his own initiative, to flee to Ukraine, where the great famine was in full swing and millions of people were dying of hunger.

⁴ Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă doamne de prieteni...Războiul clandestin al blocului sovietic împotriva României*, RAO, București, 2011, pp. 283-284

⁵ Although during the Cold War, Western powers supported sovereignties nationalism in Romania and Yugoslavia, after the conclusion of the verbal agreement in Malta, the regimes in Romania and Yugoslavia became targets of Western globalists. This would have serious consequences. Western states will punish the two sovereignties, anti-globalization countries, Yugoslavia by dismembering the country and destroying war, and Romania by direct Western involvement in the December 1989 coup, seizing Romania, liquidating the

In mid-1965, leaders in Bucharest urged Yugoslav leaders to reconsider their position on China and to strengthen relations with the country, while advising the Chinese to enter into talks with the Belgrade regime in order to improve relations between the two communist parties and states.

In October 1965, Ion Gheorghe Maurer sent to the US Ambassador to Bucharest, William Avery Crawford¹, at the end of his mission in Bucharest, that the US government should no longer ignore China, claiming that this country is less aggressive and more trustworthy than the USSR².

The Chinese side noted the “enthusiasm” with which Romania has supported, mediated and catalyzed diplomatic relations between China and the United States.

The configuration of China-Romania relations from 1962-1965 lasted until the coup in December 1989, when Romania lost its sovereignty and independence, later being left to the Western sphere of influence that always forced it to limit itself at least the relations with the People's Republic of China³.

In October 1965, at a meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Council in Moscow, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev declared that the Chinese government was tightening relations with the United States to counterbalance the USSR and that a China-US agreement would be the biggest threat for the international communist movement. As a result, the KGB launched a program of operations to counter China's actions. These duties were conferred on the KGB's Disinformation Operations Department, headed by General Ivan Agayants. Among the KGB's concerns on this line was the issue of monitoring and preventing close Romanian-Chinese relations.

The leaders of Bucharest did not agree with this Soviet project of undermining China. Romania tried to mediate disputes, which turned into conflicts, including armed ones, between China and the USSR, but the USSR used attempts to mediate relations with China as a screen for KGB actions to undermine

Romanian national economy, replacing it with a foreign economy, seizing resources they are natural, and millions of valuable people have been absorbed into the West.

¹ William Avery Crawford was the first US ambassador to Romania after World War II (1962-1965). He was promoted to embassy in 1964. He and his wife, Barbara, founded the American International School in Bucharest, in 1962.

² Larry L. Watts, *Op.cit.*, p. 161.

³ One of the most suggestive examples of how the Euro-Atlantic authorities did not allow Romania to develop investment in China is in November 2013, when Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang was in his first year in office, visited Bucharest and offered large investments for the construction of a high-speed railway to cross Romania from West to Constanța, the re-commissioning at full capacity of the largest chemical plant in Romania (one of the largest in Europe) , Oltchim Vâlcea and the purchase of its production, the financing of many large pig breeding complexes and the purchase of their entire production etc. The Prime Minister of Romania, Victor Ponta, was not allowed by the EU Commission to implement the cooperation program proposed by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China.

China and to mass increased military forces on the border with China. American historian Larry L. Watts highlighted Romania's efforts to counter Soviet actions to isolate China, as well as Soviet efforts to involve the entire Warsaw Pact in this operation against China.

The KGB drew up false reports from Chinese leaders regarding the meeting between Zhou Enlai and Ceaușescu, in which Zhou Enlai allegedly criticized Ceaușescu, in which Maurer was considered the true leader of Romania, and Emil Bodnăraș would to hate Ceaușescu. This serious misinformation was aimed at destabilizing the Romanian leadership. At the same time, the KGB acted in Washington, Bonn, London and Paris, inducing the idea that Romania does not have the capacity, diplomatic scope and prestige necessary for mediation between China and the USA. Romania's discretion was also questioned and the lack of motivation of the leaders in Bucharest was invoked. In order to counter China-US rapprochement efforts, the Kremlin authorities have placed in their embassies in the Central and Eastern European states sinologists to monitor all of the host country's relations with China¹. Romania's political activity in mediating the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States will intensify during President Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Abbreviations

CAER = Community of Mutual Economic Aid of the socialist states
CC = Central Committee
CCP = Chinese Communist Party
CIA = US Central Investigation Agency
CPEx = RCP CC Executive Political Committee
CPSU = Communist Party of the Soviet Union
GRU = Glavnoe Razvetivatelnoe Upravlenie-Main Directorate of Military Espionage
KGB = USSR State Security Committee
LCI = Communists League of Yugoslavia
NATO = Organization of the North Atlantic Treaty
NSC = US National Security Council
OTV = Warsaw Pact Organization
PRC = People's Republic of China
RCP = Romanian Communist Party
RWP = Romanian Workers' Party
SSI = Special Intelligence Service
SSR = Soviet Socialist Republic
US = United States

¹ Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă...*, pp. 269-270, 279 și 324-325. The author cites special CIA reports. See also Larry L. Watts, *Cei dintâi...*, p. 72

USA = United States of America
USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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