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Richard Wagner

Heritage and Haunter – The Files of the Romanian Securitate

The main pillar of Romania's Ceaucescu regime was the secret police Securitate, and the fear of it. After its forceful dissolution in December 1989, former Securitate professionals feared the revenge of the Romanian people. They dispersed and hid either in business, in politics or in the new secret service SRI that was established as early as in spring 1990. The continuity between the old and the new secret services in Romania was too obvious and became even more evident since the files (or what has been left over) have been opened recently.

Ten years after the overthrow of the former dictator, a new authority, called CNSAS, was established, similar to the German "Gauck-Birthler Authority". Its tasks comprise the thorough investigation of politicians and other officials, the handing over of files to the victims and their scientific processing. From the very beginning, CNSAS could not directly dispose of the files. The new security service supposedly treated the files not only in an archivist manner and handed over the files to the CNSAS very hesitantly. Only after an intervention by President Basescu, CNSAS received its own archive outside of Bucharest. Yet, it is unclear who had and has access to the archives.

The author of the essay, a well-known German writer originating from Romanian Banat, after being granted access to his file about six months ago, noticed that his records had been "cleansed", supposedly in mutual agreement by those in charge of "enlightenment" and those "covering-up". The author asks some painful questions in this context, i.e., whether this means getting to terms with the past, a kind of reconciliation, or whether this was just the price to be paid for the opening of the files.

Klaus Roth

"... When Careless Hands Touch Our Sanctuaries" – About the Use of Political Myths in Bulgaria

Historical myths play an important and often destructive role in Southeast Europe. The paper analyses the media scandal that broke out in Bulgaria in April 2007 about a dissertation project of a Bulgarian art historian at the Free University of Berlin in which she wanted to disclose the mechanisms of the construction of the "massacre of Batak" (of May 1876) as the most powerful political myth in Bulgaria. As a consequence of the media scandal which was triggered by a TV broadcast of a

popular historian and was raised to the highest political levels, a conference and an exhibition in Sofia in May 2007 had to be called off and the initiators were threatened. The paper describes the development of the scandal and the subsequent response and attempts to elucidate the overt and the hidden causes for the public uproar a few months after Bulgaria's accession to the EU. Historical myths, the analysis shows, can indeed become destructive when they are used by members of the political or academic elites.

Wolfgang Höpken

Is There Anything Like a „Balkan Political Culture“?

The discussions on the „Balkans“ as a particular „historical unit“ often refer to a specific “Balkan political culture”, which – as a result of long historical and cultural traditions – is usually seen as a “deficit”, so far preventing the establishment of a stable democratic order and civil society.

The article describes elements of political culture in the Balkans since the 19th century and discusses their historical and cultural context. Using Detlef Pollack's categories of “thick cultures” and “thin cultures”, the paper debates the question, if these elements of political culture are the result of historical and cultural *longue durée*-factors in Balkan history or if they should rather be seen in the particular context of “transition”, going beyond any regional and cultural specifics.

Heinz-Jürgen Axt

Cyprus: Conflict Resolution through Europeanization? – Recent Experiences and Perspectives

Since 3 September 2008, negotiations in Cyprus have recommenced. The leaders of both ethnic groups are looking for a solution for the Cyprus conflict. If the negotiators reach an agreement, it is intended to hold separate referenda on the result of the negotiations in 2010. Anyone wishing to evaluate the chances of this new initiative must recall the experience of the failed unification and reconciliation plan of Kofi Annan. In contrast to all prior mediation attempts, his plan actually had a unique selling point: It connected the goal of conflict resolution with the perspective of accession to the European Union.

The article pursues the question to which extent the Europeanization promotes a solution of the Cyprus problem. The prospects of success of the current process of negotiation – according to these hypotheses – depend on two factors against the backdrop of experiences with the Annan Plan: *Firstly*, President Christofias must succeed in changing the negative attitude of his compatriots and the Greek Cypriot media against compromises and concessions into a positive attitude, by means of a massive publicity campaign. *Secondly*, in Turkey not only the government but also the military forces and the diplomats must support the results of the negotiations.

Michael Schmidt-Neke Albania's General Elections 2009
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Albania's general elections on 28 June 2009 ended in a stalemate between a right-of-center party alliance led by prime minister Sali Berisha's Democratic Party (PD) and two left-wing alliances, one dominated by the Socialist Party (PS), headed by Tirana's mayor Edi Rama, the other by the Socialist Integration Movement (LSI), a breakaway faction of the Socialists, chaired by former prime minister Ilir Meta. There were only three parliamentary seats left for minor parties; most smaller parties have vanished from parliament. The opposition alliances got about 4 % more votes than the ruling parties in the elections, but were at disadvantage by the new regionalized electoral system. The LSI has accepted Berisha's invitation to join the government, Meta returning to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rama's position within his party was at stake, but he was re-elected by general suffrage of all PS members against fierce opposition of former prime minister Fatos Nano's supporters and other critics. The Socialist Party pretends massive manipulations and fraud refusing to acknowledge defeat; they boycotted the first sessions of the new parliament. The future of Albania's party system is uncertain.

Željko Želez Bulgaria in the Autumn of 1989 – a Critical Retrospective

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the overthrow of the communist regime in Bulgaria, the author, who was the first democratically elected President of the Republic of Bulgaria (1990-1997), looks back on the events of the time before and after the resigning of Todor Zhivkov on 10 November 1989. Unlike other member states of the Soviet Bloc, in Bulgaria there had been no uprisings or anti-communist strikes after World War II. With the communists making use of the prevalent Russophile feeling in the country, before 1988 there were no organized actions in order to topple the regime. Later, the Bulgarians with their knowledge of the Russian language became witnesses of Glasnost and Perestroika in Russia as reported in the Russian media.

At the wake of the great changes at the end of 1989 in Bulgaria, there was an organized anti-communist opposition. The author presents a chronology of the establishment of the democratic opposition with its civic organizations and political parties. He determinedly opposes to the stipulation (which to his opinion has sometimes been made on purpose) that only the fall of Zhivkov was the starting point for the formation of a democratic movement in Bulgaria. He also resolutely contests the assertion that the Union of Democratic Forces was created or bred by security forces or the Bulgarian Communist Party.