

IDEOLOGY AND HISTORY DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD

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Ionuț Daniel Chiva

BOOK REVIEW

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The book's author, **Ionuț Daniel Chiva**, is a graduate of the Faculty of Humanities at Valahia University of Targoviste, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in *History* and a master's degree in the *Unity of European History* programme. Committed to his professional and personal development, the author completed, concurrently with his bachelor's and master's studies, the Levels I and II of the Psychopedagogical Training Program at the Department for Teacher Training, at the same university.

Believing that a historical approach must be multidimensional, the author argues that by exploring various levels of interpretation (political, ideological, and cultural), the book "*Ideology and History during the Communist Period*" provides readers with the necessary foundation for a deeper understanding of the subject. Drawing attention to the subjectivity that can creep into works on historical topics, the author states, right from the introduction, that "history must remain a science that bears witness to the past as faithfully as possible, because it is a teacher for the present, and it is with the help of its lessons that future actions are planned" (Chiva, 2025, p.9). In terms of structure, the book is organized, across its 128 pages, into four chapters, some of which contain several subchapters, along with an introduction that serves as an argument, conclusions, and bibliography.

The first chapter of the work, titled "*The Getae/ Dacians and the Geto-Dacians: Their Role in the Formation and Continuity of the Romanian People*" begins by defining the concept/phenomenon of protochronism as a tendency to exaggerate the role of a people in world history, and continues with examples of pseudo-historians who have highlighted the "greatness" or "glory" of certain nations. The second part of the chapter examines the concepts of *Dacianism* and *Romanity*, as viewed by various historians, in relation to political currents and ideologies that have emerged over the centuries.

In the next chapter of the book, "*King Ferdinand and King Carol II: Ideology and History in the Interwar Period*", the author offers a valuable and in-depth analysis of the two monarchs' contributions to the development of the Romanian state, while also drawing attention to the tendency of some historians to overestimate their merits. The author devotes particular attention to the issue of *Dacianism* and the idea of continuity in the 40s, as viewed by historians such as Constantin C. Giurescu, E. Pittard, and G. Ionescu Nica.

The third chapter, “*Dacianism during the Communist Period*” is dedicated to the opposed approach to *Dacianism* “during the two eras of communism in Romania”, the one governed by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and the one marked by Nicolae Ceaușescu. In this context, the author notes that during the first period, an important role in the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people was attributed to the *slavs* “who are said to have liberated the Dacians and civilized them following Roman subjugation”, while starting in the 60s, there was a shift toward a “more nationalist approach, which emphasizes Dacian-Roman continuity and the ancient roots of the Romanian people.” (Chiva, 2025, p.41) This image, the author notes, culminated in the establishment of a veritable cult of Dacian origins during the period when Nicolae Ceaușescu was at the helm of the Romanian state.

The final chapter of the volume, titled “*From the Middle Ages to World War I: The approach during the communist period*,” offers a meticulous and well-documented analysis of how this historical period was described by historians during the two phases of communism in Romania, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Thus, during Gheorghiu-Dej’s period, in accordance with the paradigm of internationalist communism, “the profoundly economic nature of the Union of 1600, achieved by Mihai Viteazul, is emphasized”, and at the same time, “emphasis is placed on the extraordinary support provided by Russia to Voivode Dimitrie Cantemir in his formation and development” (Chiva, 2025, p.73). In contrast, the author demonstrates, by presenting passages from the works of historians of that era (Vlad Georgescu, Gheorghe Cantacuzino etc.), that during the Ceaușescu’s time, voivodes such as Mihai Viteazul, Mircea the Elder, Stephen the Great, Vlad the Impaler, or Iancu de Hunedoara assumed an essential role in Romanian history, “the beloved leader being considered their successor on the throne of the country.” (Chiva, 2025, p.74). This chapter also presents the historiographical perspective on the attainment of independence during the Nicolae Ceaușescu period, as well as the perspective on Romania’s participation in World War I, during the Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu periods. Thus, the author illustrates the completely different ways in which the same historical event is viewed through the lens of historians subservient to the political regime under which they worked. While during Gheorghiu Dej’s period “Romania’s participation in World War I and the occupation of Bessarabia were regarded by historians as acts of imperialism and conquest” (Chiva, 2025, p.101), during Nicolae Ceaușescu’s period, “Romania’s participation in World War I and the events of 1918 are viewed as patriotic acts, deeply necessary for the achievement of the national objective” (Chiva, 2025, p.104). In the concluding section of the work, the author returns to the sometimes-harmful influence that the political regime can have on the promotion of historical truth, emphasizing that “politics intervenes in history to a lesser extent in a democratic regime, but in a totalitarian regime, politics exerts an overwhelming, and often brutal, influence” (Chiva, 2025, p.115). As such, the role of the historian is to present historical facts with clarity, objectivity, and truthfulness, because, the author concludes, “only through a correct presentation and analysis of the facts of the past can the actions of the present and future be improved” (Chiva, 2025, p.123).

In light of all the above, we believe that the volume under review - based on meticulous analysis, extensive research, and diligent work - is written clearly and coherently. This is an important work for the field of national history and constitutes, for all those who love history and value historical truth, a truly authentic invitation to reflection and in-depth analysis.