

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THE ROMANIAN REFUGEES (1948-1960) AND THE U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN ROMANIA

Marius Iulian PETRARU

California State University Sacramento

e-mail: mpetraru@csus.edu

Abstract: *Although after 1989 historians tackled the issues of the Romanian exile, there has been no exhaustive study done so far analyzing the main periods of the Romanian political exodus that started in 1947 and how this was organized in the fight for the liberation of the country from under the Communist Soviet Regime. Most studies dedicated to the exile preponderantly looked at aspects related to the Romanian cultural exile and the role of the Romanian intellectual diaspora in preserving and passing on the Romanian values unaltered by the Communist regime. This study will analyze the role and the activity of the Office of Strategic Services/Central Intelligence Agency of the United States in Romania between 1945 and 1947 and their involvement in helping the Romanian political class "escape" from under the Soviet authoritarian regime imposed after 1947. Special attention has been given to the different refugee's categories and to the main international organizations who were involved in supporting them. If there has been no study performed so far about the plight of the emigrants from the concentration camps from Yugoslavia and Trieste, the author makes a detailed analysis of this situation and of the involvement of the American secret services and of the International Refugees Organization in assisting the refugees. The climax of the organization of the Romanian exile was that of the Romanian National Committee being formed. RNC was the only political entity that was recognized by the main Western offices as the only political body qualified to coordinate the movement of the Romanian diaspora in their fight for the liberation of the country from under the Communist guardianship.*

Keywords: *U.S.A, Romania, refugees, Diaspora, Office of Strategic Services, CIA, Romanian National Committee*

Rezumat: *Organizațiile internaționale pentru Asistența Refugiaților Români (1948-1960) și Biroul de Operațiuni Speciale al S.U.A. în România. Deși istoricii au abordat după 1989 problemele exilului românesc, nu s-a realizat până în prezent nici un studiu exhaustiv care să analizeze principalele perioade ale exilului politic românesc – care a început în 1947 - și cum acesta a fost organizat în lupta pentru eliberarea țării de sub regimul comunist sovietic. Cele*

mai multe studii dedicate exilului s-au axat preponderent pe aspecte legate de exilul cultural românesc și rolul diasporei intelectuale românești în păstrarea și transmiterea valorilor românești, nealterate de regimul comunist. Acest studiu va analiza rolul și activitatea Biroului Serviciilor Strategice/Central Intelligence Agency din Statele Unite ale Americii în România între 1945 și 1947 și implicarea lor în "evadarea" clasei politice românești de sub regimul autoritar sovietic impus după 1947. O atenție deosebită a fost acordată diferitelor categorii de refugiați și organizațiilor internaționale care s-au implicat în susținerea acestora. În cazul în care nu s-a realizat până în prezent nici un studiu cu privire la starea emigranților din lagărele de concentrare din Iugoslavia și Trieste, autorul face o analiză detaliată a acestei situații și a implicării serviciilor secrete americane și a Organizației Internaționale a Refugiaților în ajutorarea acestora. Punctul culminant al organizării exilului românesc a fost dat de constituirea Comitetului Național Român. Comitetul Național Român a fost singura entitate politică care a fost recunoscută de către principalele birouri (cancelarii) vestice drept singurul corp politic capabil să coordoneze acțiunea diasporei române în lupta ei pentru eliberarea țării de sub tutela comunistă.

Résumé: Les Organisations internationales pour l'Assistance des Réfugiés Roumains (1948-1960) et le Bureau d'Opérations Spéciales des Etats Unis de l'Amérique en Roumanie. Quoique les historiens aient abordé après 1989 les problèmes de l'exil roumain, on ne réalisa point jusqu'à présent une étude exhaustive qui analyse les périodes principales de l'exil politique roumain – qui commença en 1947 – et comment on organisa celui-ci dans la lutte pour la libération du pays du régime communiste soviétique. La majorité des études dédiées à l'exil se sont axées de manière prépondérante sur des aspects liés de l'exil culturel roumain et le rôle de la diaspora dans la préservation et la transmission des valeurs roumaines, pas altérées par le régime communiste. L'étude ci-jointe analysera, aussi, le rôle et l'activité du Bureau des Services Stratégiques/ Central Intelligence Agency des Etats Unis de l'Amérique entre 1945 et 1947 et leur implication dans «l'évasion» de la classe politique roumaine du régime autoritaire soviétique imposé après 1947. On y porta une attention tout à fait particulière aux différentes catégories de réfugiés et aux organisations internationales qui se sont impliquées dans leur soutien. Le cas où on ne réalisa point jusqu'aujourd'hui aucune étude concernant l'état des émigrants des camps de concentration de l'Yougoslavie et de Trieste, l'auteur y fit une analyse détaillée de cette situation et de l'implication des services secrets américains et de l'Organisation Internationale des Réfugiés à leur aide. La constitution du Comité National Roumain constitua le point culminant de l'organisation de l'exil roumain. Le Comité National Roumain a été l'unique entité politique que les principaux bureaux (chancelleries) d'ouest ont reconnu comme le seul corps politique capable à coordonner l'action de la diaspora roumaine dans sa lute pour la libération du pays de la tutelle communiste.

INTRODUCTION

Following the political events that took place in Romania in 1945, along with the Soviet troops occupying Romania, the Communist regime in Moscow succeeded

over a short period of time in installing their own repressive system and annihilating any form of Romanian political resistance. A considerable part of the Romanian political and intellectual class found their refuge in the great European capitals or in the United States. The deepening of the international political crisis following the division of the new zones of influence that were established by the Paris Peace, lead the United States to react “vehemently” by openly supporting the fight for the liberation of the Eastern Europe from under the Soviet Russian occupation and influence. The declaration made by General Nicolae Rădescu on October 30, 1947 before his leaving Portugal for the USA, sums up the objective of the East European emigration, namely that of continuing the liberation efforts on the American soil: “I go to America because all the countries under Russian Soviet subjection put all their hopes in the people and government of America and in U.N.”¹ On December 30, 1947, King Michael was forced to abdicate and leave the country and on the next day a “People’s Republic” was proclaimed.² According to Romanian Communist historians and political theorists, the advent of the Groza Government on March 6, 1945, signified the installation of the “popular democratic” regime in Romania, to be followed by the second phase of conquest, the dictatorship of the proletariat starting on December 31, 1947.

The issue of the Romanian political exile after the Second World War began to be analyzed by the Romanian historians only recently. Until 1989 this subject could not be investigated due to the anticommunist character of the exile and the orientation of the Romanian historiography at that time. The writings which could have been written on this subject belonged to Romanian refugees too from the West, the United States of America or other parts of the world. Most of them have a rather memorial role. Among these we mention Leontin Constantinescu³, Mircea Ciobanu⁴ or Virgil Ierunca.⁵ After 1989 their works were able to see the light of the printing

¹ *Spicuiiri din cuvântările și scrierile Generalului Rădescu* [Sayings from General Rădescu's speeches and writings], Brutus Coste (hereafter BC), box 27, folder 1, Hoover Institution Archive (hereafter HIA); General Rădescu statement on leaving Portugal for U.S.A., BC, box 26, folder 6, HIA.

² *O pagină de istorie. Generalul Rădescu despre împrejurările în care comuniștii au pus mâna pe putere în România* [A History Page. General Rădescu about the circumstances in which the Communists took power in Romania], BC, box 27, folder 1, HIA.

³ Leontin Jean Constantinescu, *Jurnal (1947-1958)* [Journal (1947-1958)], Bucharest, Jurnalul literar Publishing House, 1998.

⁴ Mircea Ciobanu, *Convorbiri cu Mihai I al României* [Conversations with Mihai I of Romania], Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1992; respectively *Nimic fără Dumnezeu. Noi convorbiri cu Mihai I al României* [Nothing without God. New conversations with Mihai I of Romania], Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1992.

⁵ Virgil Ierunca, *Trecut-au anii* [The years have passed], Bucharest, Humanitas, 2000.

in Romania too. Other sources have also made use of documents from exile organizations or articles and materials belonging to their press. Among these are the volume signed by Vasile C. Dumitrescu⁶ or those of Aurel Sergiu Marinescu.⁷ Many other studies and articles have appeared in disparate reviews and periodicals⁸. A first work attempting to synthesize the problems was signed by the historian Ion Calafeteanu.⁹ Relatively more recently began the publication of collections of documents coming from exile or from the funds of the Romanian archives. However, the history of exile is still at the "site" stage, the historiographic debate of the issue having numerous white pages. This article aims to bring to light such a page, on a subject with reference to the early years of exile in American space.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF ROMANIAN REFUGEES

The Office of Strategic Services/Central Intelligence Agency of the United States Balkans Office had knowledge about the legal and ideological punitive measures taken by the Communist Party, and they permanently informed Washington about the transformations and actions undertaken by the Special

⁶Vasile C. Dumitrescu, *O istorie a exilului românesc (1944 -1989) în eseuri, articole, scrisori, imagini etc.* [A History of Romanian Exile (1944 -1989) in essays, articles, letters, pictures, etc.], edition realized by Victor Frunză, Bucharest, 1997.

⁷Aurel Sergiu Marinescu, *O contribuție la istoria exilului românesc* [A Contribution to the History of Romanian Exile], vol. I-X, Bucharest, 2001-2011.

⁸See for instance Costăchescu, Tiberiu Dumitru, *Tineretul național-liberal între anii 1946-2000 în țară și în exil. Acțiuni, mentalități și destine* [National Liberal Youth between 1946-2000 in the country and in exile. Actions, mentalities and destinies], în Vasile Ciobanu, Sorin Radu (Coordinators), *Partide politice și minorități naționale din România în secolul XX* [National Political Parties and Minorities in Romania in the 20th Century], Sibiu, University Publishing House, 2006; Florica Dobre, *Organizații în care au activat români din exil: Comitetul Național Român și adunarea Națiunilor Europene Captive* [Organizations in which Romanians activated in exile: Romanian National Committee and European Captive Assembly], in „Revista Arhivelor”, Year LXXXIII, vol. LXX, no. 3/2006; Vasile Mălureanu, *Comitetul Național Român – un pseudogovern în exil* [Romanian National Committee - a pseudo-government in exile], în „Vitrării. Lumini și umbre”, no. 14, Bucharest, 2013 or Nicolae Videnie, *Scopurile, metodele și mijloacele exilului românesc postbelic* [Purposes, Methods and Means of the Romanian Post-War Exile], în „Dosarele Istoriei”, Year XI, no. 11 (123), 2006.

⁹Ion Calafeteanu, *Politică și exil. Din istoria exilului românesc, 1946-1950* [Politics and Exile. From the History of Romanian Exile, 1946-1950], Bucharest, Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 2000.

Intelligence Service of Romania. The events in Romania after March 6, 1945 and the impact of Frank Wisner (one of the prominent figure in the birth of the American intelligence during the Cold War) made the historian Ernest Volkman to argue that “the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States began in Romania”.¹⁰

The main coordinators of the U.S. intelligence structures in Romania after March 6, 1945 were Burton Yost Berry, Minister Plenipotentiary-U.S. political representative in Romania, General Cortland Van Rensselaer Schuyler, the chief U.S. representative in the Allied Commission control-head of the American Military Mission in Romania and Frank R. Shea, head of the U.S. information Office (Press and Information service).¹¹ The U.S. Press Office in Bucharest was hiding the Counterintelligence Department of U.S. Information Service, whose objectives were: tracking Soviet agents in Romania, monitoring the Romanian Communist Party and its leaders and monitoring activities of the Special Intelligence Service of Romania.

On June 10, 1946, General Hoyt Vandenberg became the second director of central intelligence. He set out to get the United States back into the intelligence business. He created a new Office of Special Operations (OSO) to conduct spying and subversion overseas. Vanderberg’s Office of Special Operations set out to create an underground resistance force in Romania. Frank Wisner had left behind a network of agents in Bucharest desperate to work with Americans but deeply infiltrated by Soviet intelligence.¹² Charles Hostler, was the first station chief in Bucharest for the OSO. Vanderberg ordered Lieutenant Ira C. Hamilton and Major Thomas Hall, based at the tiny American military mission in Bucharest, to organize Romania’s National Party into a resistance force.¹³ The secret meeting on September 18, 1946 between Grigore Buzescu, Baron Ion Stârcea and the representatives of the American Mission in Romania, Hall and Hamilton, set the foundation of a secret action of organizing the Romanian parliamentary resistance and extending the cooperation with the other organizations in Poland and Yugoslavia.¹⁴ During this meeting they also forecasted the establishing of three

¹⁰ Dinu Alimăneștianu, *Rumanian underground leader against the Nazis and Communists 1939-1947*, box 1, folder 1, HIA; Sorin Aparaschivei, *Spionajul american în România 1944-1948* [American espionage in Romania 1944-1948], Bucharest, Millenium Press, 2013, p. 111.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes. The History of the CIA*, New York, Random House, 2007, p. 18.

¹³ *Procesul conducătorilor fostului partid Național Țărănesc, Maniu, Mihalache, Penescu, Niculescu-Buzescu și alții* [The process of the leaders of the former National Peasant Party, Maniu, Mihalache, Penescu, Niculescu-Buzescu and others], BC, box 31, folder 3, HIA.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

committees for organizing the military plan for the liberation of Romania. When Hamilton asked about collecting information regarding the Russian troops stationed in Romania and the secret espionage networks, Buzești replied that: "In order to collect information we need to have three committees - a secret committee, a public committee, and a military one. Regarding the secret committee, the plan we propose has the great advantage of being very simple and adaptable during the development of the international situation.¹⁵ Lieutenant Hamilton's guide was the one important agent Wisner had recruited two years before: Theodore Manacatide, who had been a sergeant on the intelligence staff of the Romanian army and now worked at the American military mission, translator by day and spy by night.¹⁶ Manacatide took Hamilton and Hall to meet the National Peasant Party leaders. The Americans offered the clandestine support of the United States - guns, money, and intelligence. On October 5, 1946, working with the new Central Intelligence station in occupied Vienna, the Americans smuggled the former foreign minister of Romania, Constantin Vișoianu and five other members of the would-be liberation army into Austria, sedating them, stuffing them in mail sacks, and flying them to safe harbor.¹⁷ After this operation the American agents had to leave the country as soon as possible, since they had been identified by the Soviet agents. Hamilton reached the headquarters of the Office of Special Operations in Wien, where, among other activities, together with Colonel John R. Lovell from the American Military Mission in Bucharest, he would coordinate the espionage activity of supporting the Romanian agents and refugees from the headquarters in Salzburg and Wien.¹⁸ Although U.S. propaganda purposes in Romania had been different, the dramatic political and economical situation of the Romanian citizens brought serious problems to the image of the Bucharest regime. In 1946, the U.S. Consulate reported that Washington got from the Romanian citizens from all over the country, a veritable avalanche of applications for emigration to the United States - a total of 418,058! Obviously surprised by the circumstances, Helen Heyden, from the American Mission would say: "At this rate, the U.S. Consulate will leave Romania without citizens".¹⁹

The significant political changes that marked the Romanian history between 1945 and 1948 led to an unprecedented emigration of the Romanian population.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes...*, p. 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Dinu Alimăneșțianu, *Rumanian underground leader...*

¹⁹ Sorin Aparaschivei, *Spionajul american în România 1944-1948...*, p. 237.

At the beginning of 1948 the situation of the Romanian deportees constituted a delicate problem for the international political circles and for the international organizations assisting refugees. The **Victims of the Nazi Regime** were the first category of deportees. There are several categories of Romanian displaced persons: *The deportees for slave labor to Germany and Austria, Deportees for Nazi Indoctrination, Hebrews deported for slave and destruction*. A special group of displaced persons includes the *Romanian political refugees during the Nazi regime* that nearly all were members of the former "Iron Guard" of Romania and who, after the 1941 rebellion against the Antonescu government, fled Romania with the help of the German Army, thus trying to escape punishment.²⁰ To this group may be added a smaller number of Nazi sympathizers who did not actually belong to the Iron Guard but fled because of fear. They lived in Salzburg, Linz, Innsbruck, Heidelberg, Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, Augsburg, Hannover, Hamburg and other localities, the number ranging by estimation between 5,000 to 10,000 persons. A certain number of them succeeded in establishing themselves in Italy, France and Argentina.²¹

Finally there is a group of *displaced persons composed of Germans possessing Romanian citizenship*. During the war nearly all the Saxons and Swabs from Romania joined the German Armed Forces in a voluntary capacity, retaining at the same time their Romanian citizenship so as to have their personal properties safeguarded in Romania. The communist regime pronounced these people as aliens of Romania, although their families continued to enjoy Romanian citizenship. The persons belonging to this group lived in concentration camps under the control of the Occupation Forces and were helped by various religious welfare organizations.²²

Of a very different nature were the **refugees from the Communist Regime**. They may be placed in the following categories: a) Persons who fled because they did not wish to live under the Terror of Communism; b) Political refugees who were considered as enemies of the "People" by the Communist State; c) Romanian subjects in foreign countries with passports but who would not obey the orders

²⁰ *Scrisoarea lui Horațiu Comanicu către Grigore Niculescu-Buzești din 6 Mai 1949* [Horațiu Comanicu's letter to Grigore Niculescu-Buzești of 6 May 1949], Sabin Manuilă (hereafter SM), box 20, folder 1, HIA; More information on the Iron Guard members in exile can be found on the CIA archive page http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1705143/PAPANACE,%20CONSTANTINE_0020.pdf [October 1, 2017].

²¹ *The problem of Romanian Displaced Persons*, SM, box 20, folder 8, HIA; Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953, pp. 81-84.

²² *Ibid.*

of the Communist Government to return to Romania and thus lost their citizenship becoming displaced persons. The number of the refugees from the Communist Terror was around 10,000, half of them being Jews located mostly in the West.²³ The situation of many of the displaced persons belonging to this group was truly pitiful. Being hunted by the Russian trained Secret Police, they were forced to live underground, barely securing the minimum requirement of food to maintain life. When such persons succeed in escaping the Iron Curtain they, as a rule, had no personal documents whatsoever, and therefore they could not obtain coupons, nor shelter. It was only in the last part of 1948 that they became eligible for International Refugee Organization relief.²⁴

The first committees that would help the refugees were founded in Europe by the refugees themselves. Among such committees, the most important were: The Romanian Relief Committee in Salzburg, Section Roumaine du Service Social of the Occupational Forces in Innsbruck, The Romanian Welfare Committee in Heidelberg and Foyer Franco Roumaine in Paris.²⁵ In order to support these committees, new organizations were founded, that were involved in obtaining financial rights and legalizing the resident statute of the refugees. Thus, in July 12, 1948 **The American Romanian Relief Inc.** was founded, which was incorporated in the State of Ohio and was filed for Overseas Aid with the Advisory Committee on Foreign Relief of the State Department. Its constituents were the representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Churches, Romanian Greek Catholic Churches, Romanian Baptist Churches and The Union and League of all the Romanian-American Cultural and Beneficial Organizations. Besides this, the **Church World Service to Romanians**, The **Catholic Relief for Romanians** and **Comite d'Assistance aux Roumains** from Paris also had a notable contribution.²⁶ In May 1948 a legally established Romanian relief committee known as "**CAROMAN**" (**Romanian Red Cross of the Free Romanians**) was registered with the French authorities. This organization was under the leadership of Nicolae Caranfil and consisted mostly of former diplomats. It was a big step in the relief work of the Romanian displaced persons in Europe to have a legally established

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Aaron Levenstein, *Escape To Freedom. The Story of the International Rescue Committee*, New York, Freedom House, 1983, pp. 35-37.

²⁵ *Organizații de asistență care se preocupă de asistența refugiaților români în Europa* [Assistance organizations dealing with the assistance of Romanian refugees in Europe], SM, box 20, folder 7, HIA.

²⁶ *Dare de seamă* [Statement]. *American Romanian Relief Inc. New York Branch*, SM, box 20, folder 8, HIA.

organization to fight for their rights. However, in view of the fact that this organization based its work on aid from European sources, which were all being supplied with help from United States, financial difficulties and insecurity soon developed. As a consequence, "CAROMAN" was forced to seek the necessary funds in the United States and, therefore, in December 1948 he obtained incorporation under the name of **Romanian Welfare Inc.** which is not to be confused with the American Romanian Relief Inc. described above.²⁷

ROAD TO FREEDOM

One of the most delicate problems that the Romanian refugees' relief organizations had to deal with was the situation of the Romanians in the transit camps or in the forced labor camps from Yugoslavia. About 800 Romanians entered Yugoslavia between July and December of 1948, being first enticed by the Cominform act (which was excommunicating the party lead by Marshal Tito from among the lines of real communists). The refugees were also influenced by the propaganda and promises made by the Yugoslavian government, according to which they were going to be welcome and would be helped to find jobs depending on everybody's skills and qualifications, thus having the assurance of being able to make a living, a better one than that which they were leaving behind. The Government press release that was broadcasted all over the world through radio and newspaper, was enforced by agents that were weekly entering Romania making the same propaganda.²⁸

The result was that Romanians were crossing the frontier in large groups belonging to all social classes and different professional categories, starting from ex-ministers, ex-generals, colonels, professors, doctors, clerks and ending with workers and farmers. After being interrogated in the locality where they would turn themselves in, the Romanians were taken to the so-called refugee camp in Kovacica, which was situated 55 km away from Belgrad. The camp regime was that of ordinary prison, the refugees were locked in cells containing 20 or 25 persons and were guarded by armed police. Until November 13, 1948, most

²⁷ *Organizații de asistență care se preocupă de asistența refugiaților români în Europa*, SM, box 20, folder 7, HIA; See the annex: The International Romanian Relief Organizations 1947-1955.

²⁸ *Memoriu asupra situației din România și a Românilor aflați pe teritoriul Republicii Iugoslaviei* [Memorandum on the situation in Romania and the Romanians that were on the territory of the Republic of Yugoslavia], BC, box 31, folder 4, HIA.

refugees were given a job in the coal mines, salt mines or asbestos mines from Banovici-Tuzla, Mladinovatz, Kraliovo, Rasca, Toplice, without anybody taking age or profession into account. The mines in Banovici-Tuzla employed around 250 Romanians, especially professors, lawyers, doctors, engineers and students; the mines from Mladinovatz, near Belgrad, received 150 Romanians that were mostly priests, clerks or from military background. Those who managed to find jobs in factories had a better life than those in the camps. One person could earn between 3,000 and 4,000 dinars per month and was free to travel around the locality where they were assigned.²⁹

Since June 1948, when Tito was branded as an enemy of the Soviets, and until December 1950, some 2000 Romanians had escaped by crossing the frontier into Yugoslavia. Following the protests of the leaders of the Romanian National Committee and National Committee for Europe, the Yugoslavian authorities, also under the pressure of the American and French Embassies in Belgrade and of the International Red Cross, agreed to free the refugees by bringing them near the Trieste or Greece border and letting them cross it "unlawfully".³⁰

Besides the refugee reception center from Paris, founded in May 1948, refugees assisting centers were founded in Salzburg, which was the main spot for crossing the frontier for refugees who were fleeing the country. This center's report of its three month activity for the months of June-October 1948 shows that more than 400 persons were helped by CAROMAN.³¹ Another center functioned from 1948 till April 1949 in Istanbul. This one also had a dormitory, which was later closed because all refugees had been helped and they left Turkey going westward. In July 1949 another center was founded in Trieste to receive and help refugees who escaped Yugoslavia.³²

Trieste represented, for most refugees from South-Eastern Europe, the gate towards liberty and the hope of the fulfillment of their dreams that had been crushed by the Soviets and the Communist Party. Starting in the fall of 1947, when the Free Territory of Trieste was found, there was also another organization functioning in Trieste: the 17th Detachment of the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) under Burt Lifshultz's command, who worked under cover. The Detachment was providing basic counterintelligence support for the US military mission, doing some work against the Yugoslav military

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Memo Romanian Refugees Center in Belgrade*, BC, box 12, folder 4, HIA.

³¹ *Comite d'Assistance aux Roumaine (CAROMAN)*, SM, box 20, folder 7, HIA.

³² *Ibid.*

mission in Zone B, debriefing East European refugees in the camps and vetting prospective “war brides”.³³

From 1947 and until later 1960’s in OSO, there was a Southeast Europe Division (SE), the follow-on to Foreign Division “P”, a West Europe Division (WE) and an East Europe Division (EE). SE had responsibility for Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey and the FTT. The tasks of the SE was: a) Intelligence collection on Yugoslavia, b) Cross border operations to collect intelligence from the other countries of Eastern Europe, c) Refugee debriefing for intelligence gathering, d) Penetrations of communist and fascist parties.³⁴

The Office of Special Operations also had relations with the directors of the refugees assistance Romanian centers from Wien, Salzburg or Trieste. For example CAROMAN kept information consisting of brief personal files of all the refugees who passed through Austria, France or Italy and there were times when the American Department of State asked for its cooperation in order to open cases amongst Romanian refugees investigating the facts they had knowledge about regarding human rights not being respected in the Soviet Romania, as well as information about personal data.³⁵

Another delicate matter the RNC brought to the attention of the State Department was the situation of refugees who could not be registered on the lists of the International Refugees’ Organization (IRO), which was going to be liquidated on June 1, 1950. According to its provisions, refugees who applied after October 15, 1949, could not be registered. This would impact Romanian refugees who had left Romania from July through October 1948 and had been detained by the Yugoslavian authorities. Those who reached Trieste - the free zone, after October 15 - would not be accepted by the IRO authorities in Italy. The Committee proposed two solutions to the US government. One was that the IRO in Italy be authorized to handle these cases directly, and another was to make an agreement with the International Red Cross to take these refugees under its protection.³⁶

³³ Richard Stolz, *Assignment Trieste. A case officer’s first tour*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol37no1/pdf/v37i1a04p.pdf> [October 1, 2017].

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Comite d’Assistance aux Roumaine (CAROMAN)*, SM, box 20, folder 7, HIA.

³⁶ *The Displaced Person’s Act of 1948 and the Romanian Refugees*, BC, box 12, folder 4, HIA; *Dare de seamă asupra activității Comitetului Național Român în cursul lunii Octombrie 1949* [Statement on the activity of the Romanian National Committee during the month of October 1949], CNR, box 1, folder 1, HIA; *Proces-Verbal al ședințelor Comitetului Național Român din 12 și 13 octombrie 1949* [Minutes of the meetings of the Romanian

In addition to assisting refugees in the United States, the RNC also had relations with the Romanian refugee organizations in Western Europe. When he visited Italy in 1956, Augustin Popa, one of the prominent figures of the Romanian exile, wrote in his report presented to the National Committee at the November 14 meeting that he had met with representatives of the Romanian refugees in Rome. Monseigneur C. Capros, the head of the Vatican department that dealt with assistance for Romanians, told him that 312 refugees located in 8 cities were listed in his registers. In addition, in Italy there were about 22 000 “Italians” repatriated from Romania, most of whom were Romanized and were Romanian citizens who were organized into the “Association of Italian Refugees from Romania”, whose president was Antonio Dozzi.³⁷ Popa also learned that over 300 copies of the Committee’s newspaper, *Romania*, were distributed among the members of that association.

Popa arrived in Germany on October 9, 1956, where he had contacts with the leaders of the Free Europe Committee and the Romanian department of Radio Free Europe and later with German authorities and the leaders of the organizations of German refugees from Romania, as well as with the leaders of the Romanian organizations in Germany. Among the German public figures Popa met in Munich were Dr. Wagner, a member of the Bavarian parliament (born in Bucovina), Prof. Hans Koch, principal of the East-European Institute, Hans Hartl, a famous journalist (born in Transylvania), and the leaders of the organizations of Germans born in Romania, namely Blass and Hans Prelitsch, brothers from the *Landsmannschaft der Bukovinaer Deutschen*, and a Mr. Plesch, the spokesperson of the Saxons from Transylvania.³⁸

In Bonn, Popa met with Minister Teodor Oberlaender of the Ministry of Refugees, with whom he discussed the problems that Romanian refugees in Germany were facing. He also had meetings with the leaders of different organizations of Romanian refugees from Germany, among them George Racoveanu, the president of the Free Romanians Association from Germany, founded in 1955 and comprised of more than 2500 Romanian refugees, and Colonel Alexandrescu, Virgil Popa, and Aureliu Lepădatu.³⁹

National Committee on 12 and 13 October 1949], CNR, box 3, folder 2, HIA; *Scrisoarea Generalului Nicolae Rădescu către John Davis Lodge din februarie 12, 1949* [Letter of General Nicolae Rădescu to John Davis Lodge from the 12th of February 1949], BC, box 27, folder 2, HIA.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁹*Ibid.*

CONCLUSIONS

The beginnings of the Romanian exile created and fortified the steps for the formation and for the activity of the Romanian National Committee, based on the hope of liberating Romania from under the communist terror and of returning to the homes and families left in mourning behind the Iron Curtain. The creed and message of the Romanian exiles towards the Western world at the beginning of the Cold War can be easily deciphered in the confession of the famous politician Grigore Gafencu, who in 1949 stated that: "We did not come abroad looking for a better living... we are driven by the belief that we will be given the power to spread everywhere the news about the offense and terrible injustice that the Romanian people have to suffer, to constantly bring reminders about its suffering, about the torture of its best sons, about the mourning and humiliation that burdens a country which is traditionally and especially kind. We came to say unceasingly, again and again, that a country who has fought for centuries for liberty, and which, with its sincere hopes and thoughts was an asset for the European world, is lying with all its hopes crushed, in the most horrible slavery..."

The history of the post-war Romanian political exile is a dramatic one. After 1945, a large number of people chose the way of exile to escape the communist totalitarian regime. Most of them had been integrated, sometimes with great efforts in the adoptive countries. In the new estate they contributed to the economic, scientific or cultural development of the new countries. At the same time, they kept in a conscious form the memory of the country of origin. Through the various actions they have prepared, organized and led, the people who formed the Romanian emigration tried to do everything they could to discredit the communist regime in Romania. Under these circumstances, they had set up their own organizations and sought to maintain contact with the authorities of the countries in which they lived. The United States of America was one of the main centers where Romanian exiles could carry out their activities. The Romanian Diaspora was, however, the depositor of a great suffering: that of being incapable of returning to its native country in order to be of its service. But they chose to live in a liberal space where they could use their intellectual and physical capabilities with maximum efficiency.

Annex

The International Romanian Relief Organizations 1947-1955

