

History is a special method of studying the present with the aid of the facts of the past.

— Boris Eikhenbaum,
Literaturnyi byt (1929)

The National Theatre and the University were established first in Romania in Iasi. Bucharest became the capital in 1859.

Vasile Pogor was an important member of the Junimea movement, which made a language reform modernising Romanian language in 1860s. Junimea gathered at Pogor's house, which was called the house of enlightened windows (it was the first to have electric lights). Vasile Pogor was also an important figure in the freemasons. He was a member in the Moldavian lodge, "Star of Romania". Due to shortage of money, he sold the house to Princess Marie in 1901. Himself he continued to live in the servant's house in the garden, and died there in 1906.

From 1924 onwards Romanian Communist Party was deemed illegal. In 1930 census Iasi had 105 000 habitants, of them approximately 30 000 were Jewish. Anti-semitic laws were implemented in 1938.

The peak of Romanian literature was in the inter-war period.

In Iasi there was a large pogrom during the Nazi-rule in 1941. It was a military order by Ion Antonescu, friend of Hitler, and not will of the people. In Romania unlike in Bulgaria the Orthodox Church did not object to extermination of the Jews.

The fascist regime had two phases in Romania: the Antonescu's and the Legionaries'. The Legionaries burned books on Piata Unirii, among them books by Sadoveanu. Also they tried to kill him, but Davidoglu managed to hide Sadoveanu. The legionaries assassinated Nicolae Iorga, I.G. Duca, Virgil Madgearu, Victor Iamandi, ... etc.

The nearest concentration camps during the Nazi occupation were in Transnistria.

Iftimie Bârleanu made a statue of Antonescu, first in 1940 and again in 1970's. Antonescu posed for him for it for 1 1/2 hours. Allegedly, it was poured in bronze in 1970.

In 1944 the antifascist Soviet Army led by General Malinovsky defeated the Nazi soldiers. Iasi was 18 km from the front line. Because of the Soviet bombardment against the fascist regime in 1944, 25% of the city was destroyed. After 1944 Romanians fought both in Romanian and Soviet uniforms.

Although in the end Romania was on the side of the Allied Forces, it lost territory in the peace agreement.

After WWII the first phase was the Proletkult-phase, during which everyone made a lot of compromises. The free-masons had to close their lodges. Political elite was destroyed.

At the time a lot of literature about anti-fascism was produced, but not so many visual art works. Sadoveanu became highly appreciated.

Soviets controlled Romania until 1958-60.

There was a meeting in April 1964, where Khrushchev wanted to make Romania an agricultural colony of USSR. At this moment Romanian socialism started to divert from the Russian one. This led to a liberation in the intellectual circles and many great writers emerged. There was no more censorship.

In 1968 Romania did not participate in invasion of Czechoslovakia. Ceaușescu's anti-Soviet attitudes regarding the invasion of Prague were locally appreciated. The concept of antifascism started to be extended to Romanians as well. But Romanian anti-fascism was mainly in Bucharest, not in Iasi.

1968-1980 was the best period of Romania.

Syndicate of Artists had been founded in 1920s, and Union of Artists in 1948. After 1945 artists made part of their work to sell and get money, the other part to show in galleries. Sculpture competitions were arranged by the City or Municipality, and the Artists' Association was invited as partner. After the competition the maquette would be returned to artists.

Artists used to be very well paid. Also the artists' union provided with health insurance and pension etc.

The facility to melt metal and make statues in Iasi is in the Polytechnic, but the oven disappeared some 15 years ago, when they received EU-funding to refurbish the University. There was a bigger oven in Kuk, where even tanks have been poured. The big statues were made there. But now Kuk belongs to the City Hall and they ended everything a couple of years ago.

In Palace of Culture there were 300 000 visitors per year.

In 1978 there was Congress of Education, where all museum directors were invited. The resolution was that 2/3 of the Palace of Culture was to be dedicated to Ceaușescu, and 1/3 to everything else. From 1980 onwards, perhaps even earlier the Communist Party adopted some nationalist views.

Brezhnev visited Romania.

At that time the local pogroms were not really discussed.

In Iasi there was a huge industry in 1980s. It was good for workers, but not good for culture.

In 1987 Gorbachev wanted to speak with Iliescu. Iliescu was promoting culture.

Minna
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After 1989 Russians could not interfere with Romanian issues anymore.

At that time a lot worse things (in regards cultural heritage) were done than by the Bolsheviks or during Stalin's time. Everything was run by the securitate-people. They persecuted museum directors. Lucian Vasiliu became director of the Literature Museum in 1990. Vasiliu was elected after the so-called 'revolution'. Jumară, an ex-securitatea blackmailed him. Jumară became director of the Literature Museum in 2007. He did a lot of damage to the National Archives.

There were anti-Soviet sentiments. As part of that all antifascist memorials were moved to the Eternitate Cemetery. The City officials were not aware that they were breaking the law with removing the statues.

Memorial house to Ilie Pintilie, syndicate leader disappeared in 1990-91. The destruction of it was idiotic, with the only motivation to erase any communist traces and to look good in the eyes of the West. Also an ancient fortress Casa Cantacuzino-Paşcanu, and the Museum of Theatre were destroyed at the time.

In 1989 the freemason lodges were reborn from an Italian lodge. The current cultural minister of Romania (George Ivaşcu) is a free-mason, and so are many other cultural and political figures.

The aim now is to have all of Eternitate Cemetery protected. And the Jewish cemetery is planned to be documented finally.

Previous archive of monuments is not available to the current Office of Monument Protection, so the new Office had to start their work from the scratch.

Russian embassy is putting pressure on local authorities in Iasi to take care of WWII monuments. The City Office is planning—and has been already since a long time—to redo the antifascist monument at Copou Hill. Whenever Romania has good relations with Russia, they request for a maquette from Constantin Crengăniş. But when the relations get worse again, they forget about the whole project. Crengăniş has already made two times a maquette for monument to the Soviet soldier.

Romania was the only Eastern Block country, which had relations with German Federal Government and with Israel. Until 1989 there had been discussions between Romania and Germany only about WWI monuments, but after 1989 they have also discussed the WWII monuments. The moving of the German WWII graves was made in 2000's funded by the German Embassy, but with local work force. In the process objects from the buried Nazi-soldiers were stolen and some got broken.

City authorities are still regarded as communist, although they are totally anticommunist.

Romania joined NATO in 2002 and EU in 2007.

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