

**“GEORGE EMIL PALADE” UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE,
PHARMACY, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY OF TÂRGU MUREŞ**

**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LETTERS, HUMANITIES AND APPLIED SCIENCES
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**DOCTORAL THESIS
SUMMARY**

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PHARMACY, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY OF TÂRGU MUREȘ**

**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LITERATURE, HUMANITIES AND APPLIED SCIENCES
FIELD: HISTORY**

**UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS OF IDEOLOGY: 23
AUGUST 1944 IN HISTORIOGRAPHY, LITERATURE
AND FILM**

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The act of 23 August 1944 was one of the most distorted events in the history of Romanians! Between 1944 and 1989, the communists gave him legitimizing virtues. It was, practically, the only important event in which they participated and which could be instrumented in this sense. Otherwise, the history of the Communist Party was punctuated only by minor events, such as the so-called (after 1948) strike of workers at the CFR Grivița Workshops in Bucharest in February 1933 or some protests against fascism and the anti-Soviet war, such as the memorandum intellectuals to Marshal Ion Antonescu on April 1, 1944, by which 66 Romanian intellectuals demanded Romania's exit from the war against the United Nations. Thus, out of a limited series of achievements, 23 August 1944 remained the only historical option of the Communist (Workers') Party to legitimize its political power taken over in the shadow of Soviet armor, fully established on December 30, 1947, with the forced abdication of the young man. King Michael I.

However, the communists had an important problem to solve: their contribution to the realization of the act of 23 August 1944 had been minor! They had been accepted into the Democratic National Bloc (created in June 1944) only because they represented, in the opinion of the representatives of the "historic" parties, a guarantee to the Soviet Union of possible peace negotiations. They had not even been present at the famous audience at the Royal Palace in Bucharest. Solution: 23 August 1944 became the most important self-legitimizing fiction of the communist regime in Romania. The day of 23 August was propelled to the supreme rank of national day of our country, for half a century. In fact, the "turn of arms" against Nazi Germany was probably the most forged event in Romania's contemporary history. Propaganda imposed the members of the Communist Party of Romania as the main organizers and perpetrators of the act of 23 August 1944. The falsification of the event is part of the general tendency of communist historians to make a history made, "tailored" according to current ideological needs. Thus was born a true historical mythology with a legitimizing role, whose nodal point became the act of 23 August 1944, an event presented as the opener of a new historical era. At the same time, the reinterpretation of the event was achieved not only by enhancing the role of the communists, but also by denying the defining contributions of King Michael I and the leaders of "historic" parties to the realization of what was called at the time, first "insurrection" and towards the end. communist regime - "revolution". In fact, the King, Maniu, Brătianu and others were simply ignored by the house historians of the communist regime, as if only the communists had really thought about removing Marshal Ion Antonescu from power and the need to get out. Romania in the anti-Soviet war. The act of 23 August 1944, "opener of a new historical era", had to be conceived, coordinated and fully implemented by the communists, because only in this way did it fulfill its legitimizing role!

In December 1989, the communist regime succumbed to its own economic, social and ideological chimeras. 23 August 1944 loses much of its previous prestige, especially since in the 1990s there was a tendency to annihilate everything that had been promoted by the former dictatorial regime. The former national holiday is downgraded to the usual summer day in the Gregorian calendar.

To the extent that Romania was shifting, with timid steps, to an open, democratic society, some historians tried to recover, to reconstruct the true essence of the titled historical event. Unfortunately, the falsifications, detractions, partisan interpretations did not disappear with the former Ceausescu regime. Quickly, the event was repoliticized. The new political parties, which have appeared since 1990, did not want to get rid of this subject too easily and used it in the interest of political propaganda. The battle for the new form of government of the democratic Romanian state - republic or monarchy - complicated things. Republican supporters and former communists converted to nationalists used "23 August 1944" to condemn the monarchy, pointing out that the coup by the King was a betrayal of national interests, given that Marshal Ion Antonescu, they said, he would have obtained better conditions of armistice if he were allowed to complete his historical mission. In this context, Ion Antonescu was propelled to the status of national hero, of patriot dedicated to the supreme sacrifice to the interests of the homeland. At the same time, the historians who glorified Marshal Antonescu blamed the communization of Romania on the authors of the act of 23 August, led by King Mihai and the peasant leader Iuliu Maniu.

On the other hand, supporters of the monarchy tried to accredit the idea that the act of 23 August 1944, committed primarily by the King, was the best political option of the time and that it was an action that saved the country from Soviet invasion. total in the conditions in which, in the last months of the Second World War, the Red Army marched through Eastern and Central Europe.

Regardless of current political interests, in our opinion, the act of 23 August 1944 has two main metamorphoses in the historiographical interpretation after 1989: first, the Communist Party loses the role of main organizer and perpetrator of the exit from the alliance with Nazi Germany; then, the true role of King Michael, the main craftsman of the coup, is recognized. However, the denigration of the King, a constant in communist historiography, continued in democracy: well-known historians, most notably Gheorghe Buzatu, competed in condemning Michael I, considering his action "hasty" on 23 August 1944 threw Romania on the road to Sovietization. These historians seem to forget or ignore the fact that other countries, such as Czechoslovakia or Poland, had the same post-war fate as Romania, although in their case there can be no question of a "return of arms". Today, it is very clear that the imposition of the

Bolshevik regime was not the result of the act of 23 August 1944, but of the agreements between the great powers, exemplified by the "Agreement of Percentages" of October 1944.

During our research we found that the interpretation of the act of 23 August 1944 was, from the beginning, a tool of propaganda rather than an objective method of work specific to historical science. The importance of the event was, especially during the communist period, overbought.

In the present study we set out to analyze, taking as a case study the act of 23 August 1944, the way in which the gravitational field of propaganda distorted the works of intellectuals - historians, writers and filmmakers. We also set out to see how much these intellectuals were drawn to the new ideological orbit proposed by the Communists and how much they contributed to its consolidation. Analyzing the historiography of the act of 23 August 1944, literary and cinematographic works, we can discover the ways and the extent to which history, literature and cinematography intersect and condition each other.

We also set out to analyze the political context that generated the historiography, fiction and cinematography of the act of 23 August 1944. We tried to periodize, to stage the ways of representing the famous event. Last but not least, we wanted to show how the act of 23 August was seen through the magnifying glass of ideology - what were the interpretations given to this event, starting with 1944 and until now.

This doctoral thesis is structured in three chapters, each comprising several subchapters, to which are added the argument, conclusions and bibliography used.

The first chapter, entitled *Ideology and uniformity: 23 August 1944 in communist historiography* presents the chronological evolution of the interpretations given to the historical event by Romanian historians 1944-1989, as well as the political context that generated the significant changes of the title event. The interpretation of the act of 23 August 1944 under the communist regime was one of the greatest attempts to falsify our history. To this end, historians were co-opted, first of all, who by the nature of their profession, were given the mission to legitimize the regime imposed by the direct intervention of the Soviets, by fraud, blackmail and murder. From the very beginning, and throughout the communist period, the interpretation of the act of 23 August 1944 was made according to the current political needs and the position of the leaders in Bucharest in relation to Moscow. When there were very close relations with the Soviet Union, when Romanian communism was in its infancy and when Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej tried through his political speech to give greater legitimacy to his regime by appealing to history, it is easy to emphasize the predominant role of the Union Soviet in the 23 August deed; On the other hand, when the regime is almost consolidated, in the 1960s, both Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu largely give up the praise given to the Soviet Union, which they replace with the

enunciation of the successes of communism in Romania. These historiographical evolutions correspond to the periods of Romanian historiography during communism.

Regarding the communist historiography of the act of 23 August 1944 we can draw the following conclusion: despite an evolution of interpretations during the communist decades, we can observe a constant throughout the period 1948 - 1989, namely - the instrumentalization of the act of 23 August 1944 in propaganda and its transformation into an ideological justification (in legitimizing) the seizure of power by the communists.

The collapse of the communist regime in December 1989 meant the opening of a new chapter of Romanian historiography. The main feature is the pluralism of historiographical opinions. At least theoretically, after the fall of the communist regime, Romanian historians have been able to analyze uncensored the change of alliance of Romania on 23 August 1944. A strong nuance of historical opinions can be observed.

The second chapter - *History and fiction: 23 August 1944 and literature* - addresses the main literary works that were inspired by the subject 23 August 1944. In this regard we analyzed over 40 volumes of literature. During the communist period, the "armed insurrection", which became a national day, was present in many literary creations, most of them very ideological. Haralamb Zincă and Corneliu Leu are the classic examples of writers who fictionalized the act of 23 August under the imperative of socialist realism and the precepts of communist historiography. Censorship imposed the limits within which writers could construct their fictional universe. A first creation that came out of the communist patterns was the novel "Delirium" published in 1975 by Marin Preda, which was stated in the post-communist period that it was an attempt to rehabilitate Marshal Antonescu, presented for the first time after his execution, from a brighter perspective. In order to better understand the cultural-literary context and the periods of literature evolution, the works of literary critics and historians such as Nicolae Manolescu, Eugen Negrici, Ana Selejan and Cristian Sandache were very useful.

The December 1989 revolution crushed the shackles of censorship. Writers were able to create freely, having now as their superior instance of control over creation only their own conscience. The act of 23 August 1944, remained a highly politicized historical event, especially in the 1990s, in the monarchy-republic or nationalism-Europeanism dispute. In literature, 23 August 1944 remained an attractive subject, even though it lost its prestige before 1990.

The third chapter, entitled *Between art and propaganda: 23 August 1944 and cinema*, analyzes the way in which the "insurrection" was transposed in the feature films from the communist period, but also from the post-communist one. In this sense, we watched and analyzed over 40 feature films, of which we consider the most representative to be *Valurile Dunării* (1959, r. Liviu Ciulei), *Străinul* (1964, r. Mihai Iacob), *Atunci i-am condamnat pe toți la*

moarte (1971, r. Sergiu Nicolaescu) and *Duios Anastasia trecea* (1979, r. Alexandru Tatos). Communist cinema proves to have been the most important field of propaganda, both by the value of the sums invested by the state party and by the number of spectators who watched Romanian films in cinemas or by the impact that films have on manipulation. the popular masses. Together with Romanian historians and writers, the filmmakers contributed to the consolidation of the communist regime in Romania, they agreed to promote the communist doctrine through their works, being sensitive to the ideological changes promoted by the Romanian Communist Party. Changes in the system of party propaganda options (depending on the evolution of relations with the Soviet Union) can also be seen in cinematographic works.

"23 August 1944" is the central axis of the three chapters that make up this doctoral thesis. Going through the work, it can be seen that there was an interdependence between the three fields of culture - historiography, literature and cinematography - in terms of approaching the historical act, especially in the communist period, but also in the post-communist period.