

ROBERT SERVICE, **SÂNGE PE ZĂPADĂ. REVOLUȚIA RUSĂ (1914–1924)**, TRANS. IOANA AVĂDANEI, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2025, 453 p.

Robert Service (FBA), Professor emeritus at the University of Oxford, specialises in Russian history from the Revolution until the death of Stalin (1953). His publications include biographies of Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. His most recent work about the topic to which he dedicated most of his academic career, *Blood on the Snow: The Russian Revolution 1914–1924* (London: Picador, 2023), has now been translated into Romanian by Ioana Avădanei and published by Polirom in Iași. The work stands in the tradition of post-revisionist historiography. Post-revisionist historians avoid limiting themselves to the leaders (Tsar Nicholas II, Kerensky, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin), but instead try to describe multiple factors which influenced the course of history, including the perspectives of ordinary people.

It is well-known that the Russian Revolution is an event which has attracted much scholarly attention and has been described from different points of view. An important example is the excellent work of Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924* (London: Pimlico, 1997) which has been translated by Cornelia Marinescu as *Revoluția Rusă (1891–1924). Tragedia unui popor* (Iași: Polirom, 2016). *Blood on the Snow* is shorter than Figes' work, but not less encompassing.

Service has organised his work in a rather unconventional way, opting for a large number of short chapters. The book consists of 46 numbered chapters and an unnumbered concluding chapter. The order of the chapters is chronologic and thematic. The titles of the chapters consist of a title and a subtitle which give a clear indication of what the reader is to encounter in each chapter. Three main themes can be recognised within the multitude of chapters: 1) the old regime of Imperial (Tsarist) Russia and the Great War (the First World War), 2) the February Revolution and the activities of the provisional government and 3) the seize of power by the Bolsheviks (October Revolution). Service tells the story until the death of Lenin in 1924, adding in his closing chapter a few remarks connecting his account with subsequent developments, including the events of 2022.

The account begins with the outbreak of the war in 1914. It can be observed that, although Russia has a reputation of being always ready to attack, the Russian Empire did not want war, neither in 1914, nor in 1877. Service states: "Russia had

often been provoked, only for Nicholas to pull back at the last moment. Other rulers shared his dread of all-out warfare.”<sup>1</sup>

In the description of this period, the old-fashioned autocratic ambition of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, and his resistance to proposals for modernising the empire are presented as important factors contributing to the outbreak of revolution. The stubbornness of the Tsar worsened the problems of the Russian Empire, leading to its collapse. However, the Tsar is not portrayed as deliberately malevolent. The Tsar was aware of the problems, but was convinced that his Empire could be saved by autocracy. He firmly believed in the divine nature of his duty. In line with the Slavophile movement, his view was that Russia could only be saved by returning to ancient values. Service states: “He felt that Russia had lost some of its soul when Peter the Great forced it onto a path of Westernization.”<sup>2</sup> The difficult conditions during this time of war and the decline in the cabinet’s competence led to the rise of political opposition and the radicalisation of various liberal, progressive and socialist parties. It seems that all conditions for a revolution were fulfilled.

The second main topic is the period of the February Revolution and the provisional government (chapters 15 to 29). Of almost the same length as the preceding and following sections, it begins with the abdication of the last Tsar and the formation of the provisional government, followed by its actions. They included the writing of decrees “to revoke much Imperial legislation,” granting civil liberties (such as freedom of speech, conscience, organisation and gathering), freeing political prisoners, introducing the right to strike, transforming the policing system and prohibiting “discrimination on religious or ethnic ground.” It also draws attention to the many challenges faced by the new cabinet, including conflict between different parties and deep-seated problems inherited from the old regime, too complicated to solve within a short time. The last two chapters within this section deal with the ascension of the Bolsheviks, who refused to negotiate with the government and preferred a radical way, not shunning violence. Service’s book stands out from others by giving this much attention to the period from February until October 1917.

The third main theme (starting with chapter 30, “October Revolution: The Bolsheviks Seize Power in Petrograd”) is the victory of the Bolsheviks and the establishment of the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks profited from the failure of the provisional government to solve the country’s problems. In the chaotic climate of the time, they enforced their drastic solutions. In spite of the efforts at collaboration made by the provisional government, the Bolsheviks refused to negotiate. Their ambition was to be the only party in power, an ambition which was realised in

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Service, *Sânge pe zăpadă. Revoluția Rusă (1914–1924)*, trans. Ioana Avădanei (Iași: Polirom, 2025), 29. In the Romanian translation: “Rusia fusese provocată în dese rânduri, numai că Nicolae dădea înapoi în ultima clipă. Alți suverani îi împărțeau oroarea față de un război total.”

<sup>2</sup> Service, *Sânge pe zăpadă*, 31. In the Romanian translation: “simțea că Rusia își pierduse din suflet când Petru cel Mare a împins-o cu forța spre occidentalizare.”

October 1917. They formed their one-party government, formulated decrees and waged war on all “enemies of the revolution.”

Service draws attention to all aspects of the period under discussion and its events: political, military, economic, social, cultural and religious. No perspective is neglected, resulting in a full treatment of the subject, drawing attention to its complexity. As an academic, Service offers a fair presentation of all parties and individuals involved. The old regime is not presented as innocent victim, but is considered as responsible for its own fall. The brutality of the revolutionaries is not hidden, but their ideals are conveyed as understandable. However, the lofty ideals are not presented as justifying violence. The violence of the whites, is likewise not hidden.

A feature that distinguishes this book from others is the amount of eyewitness testimonies, including those of people whose names have not been preserved in history. Service draws upon diaries of people from all social classes, including peasants, workers, soldiers, doctors, accountants and writers. Excerpts from these personal accounts are woven into his narrative, invoking understanding, empathy and emotional responses. It vividly illustrates Service’s point that “the subjects of Emperor Nicholas II and the citizens of Soviet Russia were not just passive victims of history.”<sup>3</sup> Preserving the memories of these people adds to the value of this book.

It also needs to be mentioned that Service does not just focus on Petrograd and Moscow, but adds the perspectives of inhabitants of marginal areas. He also draws attention to what happened in Ukraine, Poland, Finland, and the Baltic States, each of which played an important role in the events he describes. Due to the attention given to daily life, and the emotions of ordinary people and artists (writers mainly), not only rulers and politicians, the book offers what I see as the most important aspect of historiography: conveying the emotions of the people who lived in the period under survey, drawing the reader into the spirit of the time, making that world come to life. Service does not just describe events, cause and effect, but draws attention to emotions.

One of the many topics that feature in this wide-ranging account is that of the bolshevist leaders’ optimism about the immanence of communist revolutions all over the world. They were driven by “their vision of a world communist order where everyone would live a free life and fulfill his or her potential.” They supported communist movements abroad, presenting their state as a model. This model was to be followed by about a third of the world’s surface. Service’s concluding chapter draws attention to how the Soviet one-party, one-ideology terror state begat totalitarianism, which inspired Fascism and Nazism.

This work is aimed at a general interested readership. Being a popular more than an academic book, engagement with secondary literature and scholarly notes

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<sup>3</sup> Service, *Sânge pe zăpadă*, 6. In the Romanian translation: “Supușii împăratului Nicolae al II-lea și cetățenii Rusiei sovietice nu au fost simple victime pasive ale istoriei.”

have been kept to a minimum. The format chosen for the necessary references is that of endnotes. Service helpfully presents a list of his diarists, and a nice collection of photos and maps. Again, these are aspects that appeal to a wider readership.

The overall conclusion has to be that Service offers a balanced account, drawing attention both to the lofty ideals of the communists and to the fact that they normalised and endorsed crude violence, for which there is no excuse or justification. It is important not to forget the important and foundational events and movements of the 20th Century, and Service has certainly contributed to an enhanced understanding of the Russian Revolution in all its complexity.

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VLAD POPOVICI, ALICE VELKOVÁ, MARTIN KLEČACKÝ (EDS.), **CLIMBING UP THE SOCIAL LADDER? SOCIAL MOBILITY OF ELITES IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE LONG 19TH CENTURY**, Editura De Gruyter Oldenbourg, Berlin, 2024, 249 p.

The volume *Climbing up the Social Ladder? Social Mobility of Elites in East-Central Europe in the Long 19th Century*, edited by Vlad Popovici, Alice Velková, and Martin Klečacký, makes a substantial contribution to interdisciplinary research, aimed at analyzing the complexities associated with the process of social mobility in East-Central European society. Specifically, by employing a comparative methodology, the work investigates a topic that has received marginal interest in European and global historiography, namely the social mobility of elites in two peripheral regions of the Habsburg Monarchy: Transylvania and Bohemia.

The results of the project initiated four years earlier, in 2020, *Social Mobility of Elites in the Central European Regions (1861–1926) and the Transition of Imperial Experience and Structures in Nation-States* (GX20-19463X), have been disseminated through a diverse range of articles and volumes. In this context, the present work represents the most comprehensive outcome of the aforementioned project and was published by De Gruyter Oldenbourg in Berlin, with the first edition being released on October 21, 2024. The book is presented as a collective volume comprising nine case studies, the first of which also serves as an introduction. In this context, the team members and, by extension, the authors of the studies have adopted a different approach by exploring a series of “peripheral” research areas that attract relatively less academic attention and circulation. Thus, historians Vlad Popovici, Alice Velková, Martin Klečacký, Franz Adlgasser, Igor Vranić, Leo Marić, Ana Victoria Sima, Marius Eppel, Klára Hulíková Tesárková,

Katya Vladimirov, Judit Pál, and Peter Urbanitsch employ a transdisciplinary perspective to examine the metamorphosis of elites in European society, both horizontally and vertically. Their analysis focuses on the comparison of two decision-making groups: high-ranking state officials and deputies of the regional diets, the Imperial Council in Vienna, and the Hungarian Parliament, through the perspective of social, educational, and familial relations, as well as interactions among actors.

Regarding the structure of the volume, it is characterized by a significant duality. On the one hand, the project, and by extension, the volume, aims to expand historical knowledge about elites in Central and Eastern Europe by focusing on the mechanisms associated with the social mobility of individuals and groups that constitute the upper echelons of society. On the other hand, from a methodological perspective, the volume demonstrates how historians integrate traditional research methodologies with innovative perspectives, thereby providing a comparative framework that facilitates the contextualization of conclusions. Thus, the research questions underlying the proposed studies focus on identifying the factors that influenced the engagement of individuals or groups within the upper ranks of the elites, thereby contributing to the process of social mobility. These hypotheses aim to determine the mechanisms that facilitate or constrain mobility in the two analyzed regions, the evolution of social and professional structures that shape the social mobility of individuals within the studied groups, and the outlining of a differential framework regarding social mobility as reflected among various elite groups, such as the aristocracy, political elites, administrative elites, and intellectual elites. Thus, the core hypothesis suggests that the social mobility of elites is shaped by a complex framework based on historical, social, economic, and geographical factors. The interactions among these elements provide a fresh perspective on social mobility dynamics in East-Central Europe.

The rigorous selection of a wide range of documentary sources and the structured presentation adopted by the authors could position this work as a landmark in the field. In support of their arguments, the authors employ a wide array of sources, including both primary and secondary materials, whether published or unpublished. The theoretical approach of the volume is interdisciplinary, incorporating analyses, descriptions, comparisons, and both quantitative and qualitative data interpretations. Although in certain sections the authors tend to emphasize specific components, their aim was not to produce a traditional historiographical essay limited to a mere listing of events, dates, and historical figures. This variety range of documentary sources offers a comprehensive perspective on the research subject and enables a complex analysis of social mobility among elites.

The introductory study, "Social Mobility of Elites in East-Central Europe in Historical Perspective. Introductory Study," authored by Vlad Popovici, Alice Velková, and Martin Klečácký, clarifies the main research directions concerning

the subject in the context of late modernity. It highlights the role of education, profession, and state policies in facilitating access to political, administrative, and intellectual elites. While democratization and professionalization contributed to increased social mobility, traditional elites and newly emerging dominant groups have adopted or implemented mechanisms aimed at limiting access to top positions. The studies in this volume further highlight the importance of regional context and interdisciplinary collaboration in understanding social mobility dynamics.

In “Old and New Parliamentary Elites: Education, Professional, and Social Profiles of the Members of the Austrian Parliament, 1867–1918,” Franz Adlgasser explores the evolution of Austrian parliamentary elites between 1867 and 1918, emphasizing the impact of education and professionalization on the social and political profiles of its members. While democratization, facilitated by the expansion of voting rights, allowed access to more diverse social groups, the traditional elites continued to dominate the highest positions.

In “Metamorphosis of Parliamentary Elites in Croatia, 1910–1925,” Igor Vranić and Leo Marić examine the transformation of parliamentary elites in Croatia within a historical context characterized, on one hand, by the dissolution of Austria–Hungary and, on the other hand, by democratization through the introduction of universal male suffrage. This dynamic led to the diversification of the social structure of parliamentarians. However, despite the broadened access for a wider range of social groups, the political elite continued to be predominantly influenced by economic and regional interests.

Another significant article, authored by Ana Victoria Sima and Marius Eppel, is titled “Social Origin, Denominational, and Family Networks Among the Romanian Political Elite in Transylvania. Case Study: Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Politicians (1861–1918),” highlights the process of social mobility among Romanian politicians in Transylvania between 1861 and 1918. It focuses on the essential role of family and religious networks, particularly the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox clergy, in promoting political leaders. Education, especially legal education, emerges as the primary means of social mobility within and outside the Romanian community, with the support of the community facilitating access to political positions. Thus, legal and clerical education stands out as the key pathways through which Romanians achieved social mobility.

In “Senior State Officials – a Uniform Administrative Elite? The Example of Prague Crown Land Offices and Their Highest-Ranking Public Servants, 1868–1918,” Martin Klečacký, Klára Hulíková Tesárková, and Alice Velková investigate the administrative elite of Bohemia, focusing on the officials at the Crown Land Offices in Prague between 1868 and 1918. The study highlights the relative homogeneity of this group, while also emphasizing the influence of education and political loyalty on access to these positions. Although the imperial bureaucratic structure promoted uniformity, social networks were maintained and played a significant role in the dynamics of access to administrative functions.

In the article “The Bureaucracy of Russian Poland, 1870–1905: A Profile of the Elite,” Katya Vladimirov analyzes the transformations within the bureaucracy of Russian Poland, highlighting the transition of administrative structures from a military elite to a civilian one, educated and aligned with Tsarist policies. In other words, social mobility within this elite was constrained by political loyalty and family networks, while centralized control reinforced the rigidity of the administrative elite.

In “An Immobile Society? The Political Role of the Hungarian Aristocracy in the Dualist Era – the Example of Transylvania,” Judit Pál presents, on one hand, the strategies that allowed the Hungarian aristocracy in Transylvania to survive and maintain its political dominance, adapting to modern trends without compromising its influence. On the other hand, the author discusses the political role of this elite. Although the 1885 reform of the House of Magnates had a more significant impact on the Transylvanian aristocracy compared to its Hungarian counterpart, traditional elites leveraged prestige, social networks, and historical continuity to uphold their dominance. This continuity highlights the tools through which the aristocracy was able to resist socio-political changes.

“The Professors of the Philosophical Faculty at the University of Vienna From 1849 to 1914,” written by Peter Urbanitsch, explores the social mobility of professors within the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Vienna between 1849 and 1914. The author highlights how the formation of a professionalized intellectual elite was influenced by access to education and academic networks, while also being marked by trends of social and professional endogamy. In this way, the University of Vienna played a crucial role in the creation and subsequent maintenance of intellectual elites.

In the latest article, “Members of the Romanian Academy From Transylvania and Hungary (1866–1948). A Case Study on the Social Mobility of the Intellectual Elite,” Vlad Popovici traces the social mobility of members of the Romanian Academy originating from Transylvania and Hungary, emphasizing the dominance of individuals from the middle class with university education. Furthermore, the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic clergy had significant representation, demonstrating that a clerical career could serve as a pathway to social advancement. Thus, the Academy served as a catalyst for the consolidation of a modern intellectual elite.

The volume represents a valuable contribution both to Romanian historiography and to European or global historiography, as it illustrates, beyond a novel editorial contribution, a new model of interpretation and analysis. The “world” of elites and their image are often investigated and interpreted through conventional paradigms. The authors propose moving beyond these conventional frameworks and offer a new perspective on the subject, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the social and cultural dynamics of elites.

The work stands out through its rigorous academic writing, with a discourse marked by clarity and accuracy, well-structured, and accessible to specialized

readers. The style of exposition, blending a thoroughly documented structure with a narrative that, from a certain perspective, carries a technical undertone, has the potential to attract primarily academics, researchers, and students from the humanities, rather than a general readership. Nevertheless, the logical organization of chapters and the smooth transition between ideas allow the reader to easily follow the narrative thread and appreciate the complexity of the themes discussed. Another remarkable aspect of the work is the attention to detail, reflected in professional editing that ensures the absence of spelling and grammatical errors. This reflects a high degree of meticulousness on the part of the authors and editors, thus contributing to the academic value of the volume. Additionally, the use of academic language helps to efficiently convey the information, offering readers a clear and coherent experience.

In conclusion, this work represents a unique editorial contribution through its interdisciplinary approach and detailed analysis of the social mobility of elites in Bohemia and Transylvania, within the context of the 19th and 20th centuries, offering new perspectives on social and political processes in East-Central Europe. The target audience for this book is diverse, primarily addressing specialists and researchers in the fields of history and the humanities and providing a valuable contribution to the subject. Additionally, students and researchers may find this work a useful and well-founded resource for understanding the phenomenon of social ascent in Bohemia and Transylvania in the 19th–20th centuries, with the volume having the potential to serve as a comparative approach. Although this book is not intended for a general audience, it may also appeal to history enthusiasts and scholars from related disciplines, providing them with a solid base of data and interpretations.

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**SERGIU SOICA, EPISCOPUL VALERIU TRAIAN FRENȚIU ÎN DOSARELE SECURITĂȚII**, Editura MEGA, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, 464 p.

In recent years, Romanian historians have shown an increasing interest in investigating files from the archives of the security services. This research is essential for understanding the events that occurred during the latter half of the 20th century. Sergiu Soica's work seeks to illuminate the impact of communist practices on the life of Bishop Valeriu Traian Frențiu and their effects on the United Romanian Church.

Sergiu Soica has successfully illustrated the history of the Greek Catholic Church in Banat through his work. He has made a significant effort to gather and present a wide array of carefully analyzed and organized documents for public access.

The book we are reviewing in this brief presentation is dedicated to Bishop Valeriu Traian Frențiu and represents a significant contribution, particularly due to its extensive documentary content. Sergiu Soica has crafted a comprehensive portrait of Bishop Frențiu, meticulously reconstructing each phase of his life through various documents. As noted by the author himself, the primary objective of this research is to illustrate the mechanisms employed by the communist regime against Bishop Valeriu Traian Frențiu and the Greek Catholic Church.

While the title may imply that the focus is exclusively on security files, Soica has extended his exploration by presenting various documents and information gathered from multiple archives, showcasing a remarkable effort. The unpublished documents about Valeriu Traian Frențiu are sourced from the archives of the Securitate, the National Archives in Bucharest, and the County Service of the National Archives for Alba, Caraș-Severin, and Cluj.

The work commences with an introductory study that highlights the key aspects of Valeriu Traian Frențiu's life. Through this initial examination, readers can develop an understanding of his social background, intellectual development, and various roles throughout his life. This first section portrays Frențiu as a child, pupil, student, archpriest of Orăștie, Bishop of Lugoj, and ultimately, Bishop of Oradea.

We discover in these lines that the life of Valeriu Traian Frențiu was marked by the tumultuous events of the first half of the 20th century and that he pastored during the trials of the interwar period. He suffered together with the Diocese of Oradea as a result of the Vienna Dictate of 1940, he presided as a senior dean of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church during the vacancy of the metropolitan see of Blaj during the rise of the totalitarian communist regime. The author managed to illustrate to us the fact that regardless of the function he performed, Valeriu Traian Frențiu was interested in the fate of his believers.

The most significant portion of Sergiu Soica's book comprises a collection of documents related to the life and work of Bishop Frențiu, as well as various facets of the Romanian United Church. In total, there are 128 documents arranged chronologically, with the chronological limits 1945–1968. As the author notes, some documents have been revised or supplemented, and detailed information regarding their origins can be found in the footnotes.

The photographs included in this work are particularly remarkable, many of them coming from the photo collection of the Archives of the Diocese of Lugoj. Additionally, the book features images of documents from the researcher's extensive investigations. The photographs that present Bishop Frențiu before and during his detention are especially moving, beautifully encapsulating the essence of Sergiu Soica's work.

Sergiu Soica's work is well-structured, allowing readers to easily navigate from start to finish or to find specific documents relevant to their research by utilizing the list of documents compiled by the author. The author's efforts in transcribing and correcting some documents, as noted in the edition's introduction, enhance the readers' comprehension of the material presented. Furthermore, this approach encourages researchers to move away from relying solely on physical archival documents, which is crucial for the preservation of materials in Romanian archives.

The documents and information regarding the first part of Valeriu Traian Frențiu's life, the social origin and the intellectual formation of this personality should have been presented much more carefully. At the end of the introductory study, the author includes a chronological list of significant dates in the life of Bishop Valeriu Traian Frențiu. It would have been useful to also research the school matriculation registers of "Sfântul Vasile cel Mare" High School Blaj from the Alba County Service of the National Archives, as it reveals that Frențiu attended the Greek-Catholic High School in Blaj and is recorded in the school matriculation registers from 1886 to 1894. The chronological list mentioned on page 134 indicates that he completed his studies at the Saint Basil the Great Greek-Catholic College in Blaj in 1892. We note this observation in a collegial spirit and believe it may simply be an oversight, as the other information regarding Frențiu's educational background appears to be accurate.

Sergiu Soica's work is well-structured, allowing readers to easily navigate from start to finish or to find specific documents relevant to their research by utilizing the list of documents compiled by the author. The author's efforts in transcribing and correcting some documents, as noted in the edition's introduction, enhance the readers' comprehension of the material presented.

Furthermore, Sergiu Soica's work proves to be truly useful because it facilitates access to documents that are scattered in several archives. Using rich archival resources, the book constitutes an invitation to reading and an invitation to research, being intended especially for an audience specialized in the study of history.

By utilizing a variety of documents, ranging from security files to images, the author managed to obtain a more nuanced portrait of Traian Valeriu Frențiu. This book highlights Traian Valeriu Frențiu's efforts to fulfill his responsibilities to the best of his ability, while also illustrating how he ultimately became a victim of the communist regime.

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CATHERINE CANEL-DOL, **L'ADOPTION : RÊVES ET POUVOIRS. FRANCE, 1789–1923**, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2025, 257 p.

This work is a revised version of Catherine Canel-Dol's doctoral thesis, defended in 2021. The author is currently an affiliate professor of history and honorary president of an administrative court. Her approach focuses on both the chronological unfolding of events and the judicial analysis of adoption proceedings.

Spanning the period between the French Revolution and 1923, the research aims to bring to the fore a period of adoption history that has sometimes been addressed only tangentially and with outdated historiographical methods. Catherine Canel-Dol analyzes adoption from a dual perspective: familial and political. At the same time, the debates on adoption are captured, as it has always been at the center of the idea of building society: on the one hand, there was a conservative view that considered adoption a danger to the family and, consequently, to social organization; on the other hand, there was an ideological current born during the Revolution, which hoped that adoption could establish a new social order and, implicitly, a new world. At the same time, the slow changes in attitudes towards adoption and the status of children are traced, as well as the emergence of new ways of starting a family and the changing status of women.

Catherine Canel-Dol seeks to demonstrate that adoption played a significant role in 19th-century French history, despite the constant legal provisions in place. Her research shows that a marginal and marginalized phenomenon, such as adoption, was a constant factor for initiating controversial discussions and maintaining anxiety. However, it was also a means of acquiring and preserving power, whether political at the national level or social, through the perpetuation of a status, an inheritance, or a business. Thus, the author reveals that a phenomenon that appears unchanged can be a significant subject of legal and political debate.

From a methodological perspective, the approach is both analytical and quantitative, as legal proceedings are analyzed, while demographic statistics are also used. In her approach, the author employs unpublished archival sources, such as adoption trials, manuscripts, and personal collections, while drawing on genealogies. The exploration of the archival collections of the Court of Appeal of Angers and the Court of Appeal of Aix, accompanied by archives of political and religious debates, as well as published sources, including posters, plays, and fiction, comments on the works of Émile Zola, Balzac, Georges Sand, Alexandre Dumas, and Jules Verne, are employed in the attempt to reconstruct a vision of adoption in the context of the time, while also demonstrating that adoption was never a marginal subject, but rather only marginalized as a practice and stigmatized socially because it provoked fear. At the same time, the history of art during both the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire is traced for showing how image propaganda worked to support the idea of political adoption and the preservation of

power. The presentations of particular cases, as documented by Catherine Canel-Dol, such as the Zola family, the case of René Thoreau de Levaré, Rose Chaumard, or the Bessonneau family, remain highly relevant.

The research is structured in two parts, each with three chapters. The first part traces the evolution of attitudes toward adoption from dream to fear, while presenting models of power transgression or preservation through adoption. The second part discusses the integration of adoption into social behaviors considered normal, with the moral judgment of cases involving adoption or adultery losing its influence.

First, the author briefly describes the evolution of adoption, starting from ancient Rome, which served as a model for political adoption in the 19th century. This institution reached its peak in the Christian period, when it took on a sacred form, in which all Christians were considered sons of God the Father. Modernity and the French Revolution replaced the King–God relationship with that of Republic–Nation, in which the former component represents the will of the latter in both binomials. The French Revolution brought new momentum to the idea of adoption, accompanied by the hope for a new world, with child-rearing considered paramount to the future of society. Adoption began as a universal idea, gradually evolving into a national goal, with the first adoptions of children by their native countries. Meanwhile, the view on adoption shifted from the concept of charity to that of social value (restructuring society). The turbulent period of the Revolution was a confusing and contradictory time for debates, with many adoption bills being introduced and almost none being passed. The initial enthusiasm quickly waned, and high hopes gave way to fears.

Later, the author explores how families were protected from the two major threats, divorce and adoption. The Civil Code made both processes more difficult and limited, with the general form of the legislation being a combination of new and old elements. Regarding the application of legal provisions, there are inconsistencies in the court adjudication of identical cases, with the most heated discussions generated by the adoption of natural children and the issue of filiation, where there is no consensus on judicial acts. At the same time, the political adoption instituted by Napoleon, modeled after the Roman system, is also discussed, as well as the adoption of children of the fatherland after the Battle of Austerlitz – a gesture skillfully manipulated by imperial propaganda. The dream of Revolution was quickly dispelled by the fear of choosing filiation and destroying the family, as these things were considered to bring about significant changes in society. Therefore, family adoption was restricted, remaining the prerogative of a small elite who used it to preserve their advantages.

The overview of the court cases and interpretations provided by Catherine Canel-Dol is reinforced by research in the field of literature, where adoption is presented as a danger, since the origin of the child was unknown, and heredity would prove to be relentlessly decisive despite the different environment in which

the child grew up. The issue of heredity is also highlighted by the bourgeoisie's tendency to adopt their own natural children. At the same time, adoption sometimes aroused suspicion of concealing an incestuous or homosexual relationship.

The beginning of the 20th century led to a slow change in attitudes towards adoption, which World War I and the emergence of the issue of orphaned minors enhanced. The status of women became more important, and children and childhood became the focus of social concern.

In conclusion, Catherine Canel-Dol's work merits drawing attention to what initially seemed an unimportant constant: adoption in the 19th century. Her analysis of the sources and interpretations clearly shows that, despite unchanged legislation, discussions were heated and the morals and anxieties of the time influenced court cases. Her description of political adoptions reveals how they were used at turning points: during the Revolution, after Austerlitz, in 1830, 1848, 1871, and after World War I. Additionally, the Civil Code, although it initially seemed like an essential barrier to family protection, paradoxically led to the establishment of new family forms, the emergence of plurifiliation and multiparentality, and a change in the status of women.

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REMUS TANASĂ, **APOSTOLUL NAȚIUNII. MAZZINI ȘI NAȘTEREA ROMÂNIEI MODERNE**, Editura Humanitas, București, 2023, 240 p.<sup>1</sup>

In historiography dedicated to Pașoptism,<sup>2</sup> one recurring theme is the relationship between the Romanian revolutionaries of 1848 and the counterparts across Europe. From the many research initiatives, a couple stand out: the Franco-Romanian and Italo-Romanian relationships. In the case of the latter, the work of Iași-based historian Remus Tanasă, in his book *Apostolul națiunii. Mazzini și nașterea României moderne* present the contributions of Giuseppe Mazzini and his ideas about the genesis of modern Romania. The book constitutes a part of the authors' PhD thesis and analyzes the influence of Mazzinian ideas and his relationship with the Romanian-speaking world.

This research has a generous bibliographic base, made up of studies from both Romanian and universal historiography, especially Italian. Regarding primary

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<sup>1</sup> This review was translated in English by Rus-Paul George.

<sup>2</sup> Pașoptism was a Romanian liberal-nationalist movement inspired by the 1848 European revolutions, promoting modernization and national unity.

sources, the author calls upon published sources (correspondence, personal accounts, press, document collections) and unpublished sources (the Romanian Academy's archives). A critique of this work is the absence of unpublished sources from Italian archives, which would have brought a considerable addition to the study.

Regarding the style and methodology, the work showcases the critical eye of the author by presenting Mazzinian ideas and their evolution in relation to Pașoptism. Tanasă brings to light a new perspective by reconstructing networks of revolutionaries, such as those made up of Giuseppe Mazzini and others like him from throughout Europe. The style is linear and pleasing, using the protagonist's biography as a base and then trying to understand his relationship with central and South-Eastern Europe. This is a scientific work, dedicated to specialists, but it can still be a stimulating and eye-opening reading for anybody passionate about history or any cultural dilettante.

The work is separated into three main chapters, "Mazzini, reformistul politic," "Mazzini și cauza românească," and "Comitetul de la Londra, Chestiunea transilvană și nașterea conceptului de națiune română." It is prefaced by Francesco Guida, who introduces the reader into the subject proper and makes clear not only the relations between Risorgimento and Pașoptism, but also the contributions these movements make towards modeling the modern European world.

In the first chapter, "Mazzini, reformistul politic," the author approaches Mazzini through the lens of his biography and political thought. The Italian revolutionary is also examined in relation to both the intellectual elite and the Risorgimento movement, with Tanasă offering a complex and balanced portrait of Mazzini. The protagonist's biography is explored in relation to Mazzini's main centers of activity, such as Rome, Bern, and London. Regarding these connections, the author outlines Mazzinian political thought and its spread throughout his journeys. Moreover, he contrasts Mazzinian transnationalism with the fact that Mazzini considered Rome the epicenter of the European Revolution.

Furthermore, Tanasă describes the genesis of the Mazzinian myth. His style and charisma brought him popularity in the press and journalism of the era. His figure was ever-present in cities portraits and Italian Risorgimento imagery (pp. 73–76). The author also sheds light on the critiques of political adversaries, Italian revolutionaries or nineteenth century intellectuals. Although he was fiercely opposed to Marxism, because of his complicated political agenda, Mazzini was sometimes considered to be a socialist, or even a communist. Examining his writings, Tanasă provides insight into the controversies and the ambiguity of some Mazzinian opinions about a plethora of topics, such as property. He also highlights the ambivalence of the Risorgimento camp's view of Mazzini. One such example is Camillo Benso di Cavour's opinion, who considered him a danger to stability (pp. 75–76). Moreover, even historiography reflects both the positive and negative contributions of Mazzini. The positive part consists of his ideas about humanity

and nations. The author draws attention to the connection between Herderian-style Romantic nationalism and liberal associationism. In the case of associationism, Mazzinian thought introduces a key innovation on an internal level: the role of the contract between citizen and society. In exchange for accepting some responsibilities, such as respecting and fulfilling some values and common goals, society will grant its citizens rights and freedoms. Additionally, Tanasă punctuates the importance of the concept of Mazzinian transnationalism, which considered it necessary to have a certain associationism at an international level through the collaboration of nations. Therefore, the reader can fully understand the cause behind Mazzini's effort to form a transnational organization that was grounded in shared values. Unfortunately, the absence of pragmatism and radicalism of his ideas proved to be detrimental to the Genevan revolutionary, as his political plans did not come to fruition and he was ostracized. This was partly a result of Mazzini's uncompromising antimonarchical stance. Through these nuances, Tanasă renders a complex and equidistant perspective on Mazzini by taking into account both the strengths and weaknesses of the Italian revolutionary. Credit is due to the author for being able to frame the complexity of Mazzinian political thought.

In the second chapter, "Mazzini și cauza românească," the author describes the relationship between Giuseppe Mazzini and the Romanian-speaking world, referring not only to Mazzinian doctrine its reverberations throughout Eastern Europe, but also to his relationship with the Pașoptist elite. Some of Tanasă's main methods and sources for this study were the revolutionaries and Pașoptist letters, and Romanian press from the nineteenth century.

The author highlights the shared ideological foundations of Pașoptism and the Risorgimento movement, particularly liberalism and nationalism. These ideologies are grounded in nationalist elements and contribute to consolidating patriotic sentiment. Furthermore, Mazzini supported a revolutionary type of transnationalism so that nations may overthrow the empires. They were to fight for rights and freedom, based upon the liberal values and ideas they shared (p. 89). Unity between nations becomes imperative to liberate themselves from under the subjugation of the major empires of Europe (Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg). Mazzini proposes the formation of a European confederation or league that would assist in defeating them. He thought it essential that there existed a collaboration between nations and that they put aside their differences for the good of humanity. As a result, the revolutionary would sketch the plans for a Balkan confederation, in which he integrated Romania as well, that would be against the various empires, because he considered the existence of an Eastern-European revolution vital. However, domestic conflicts slowed this process down. Although Mazzini did call for their resolution, nothing of essence came from it (p. 112). In the aftermath of his failed initiative, Mazzini's image falls into disuse (p. 105). It was under these conditions that Mazzini and his ideas were received in the Romanian cultural

space. The author observes that Romanians feature in Mazzini's thought more as a matter of circumstance than as a central concern.

The main channel of reception was through the press, particularly journals such as *Curierul românesc*, *Albina românească*, and *Gazeta Transilvaniei*. It closely followed the actions of Giuseppe Mazzini, relaying news from the French, Italian, and German press following his activities in 1834 and 1847–1849 (p. 116). To exemplify his point, the author refers to the publication of Mazzini's letters towards Pope Pius the ninth, respectively the journalism about the Roman Republic (p. 122). Thus, Tanasă was able to skillfully outline historical thought and the evolution of Mazzini's perspective of Romanians. Although Romanians were seemingly interested in his activities, Mazzini turned his attention towards the events taking place in the Romanian cultural space only once with 1848. His interest grows due to the Pașoptist movement, when Mazzini observed the Romanian people's desire for justice and equality before the law. For him, modern politics meant a united front and forming the idea of a nation in such a way that the people would take part in the European fight for emancipation (pp. 113–115). In a Romantic spirit, a glorious and warrior history makes a difference in Mazzini's thought process. In the case of Romanians, they become circumstantially and unsystematically part of the revolutionaries' ideas, while Romanians had an ambivalent perception of him. Once more, the author is able to offer the reader an equidistant image of Mazzini, presenting both praise and criticism. For example, Dumitru Brătianu eulogized him, while George Barițiu criticized Mazzini. Nevertheless, Tanasă will highlight, based on Mazzini's writings, that this perspective is a pragmatic one and that the revolutionary was aware of the possibility of a future Romanian Transylvania.

On the other hand, the author details Mazzini's lack of pragmatism. Due to his radical republicanism, he refuses all compromises with the newly unified state, as it was a creation of the Piedmontese monarchy. In this vein, Tanasă observes the differences between Mazzini and the Pașoptists pragmatism. The cases that stand out are those of Ion C. Brătianu and C. A. Rosetti. Brătianu is able to moderate his demands, becoming the main actor in the genesis of Romanian constitutional monarchy. Meanwhile, C. A. Rosetti refuses to eulogize Mazzini, both because of his ties to Lajos Kossuth and the financial support received from Piedmont which were financing the newspaper *Românul*.

In the last chapter, "Comitetul de la Londra, Chestiunea transilvană și Nașterea conceptului de națiune română," the author analyses the relations between Romanian, Hungarian, and Italian revolutionaries, comparing their revolutionary organizations, their message and their ideas, highlighting the conflicts that arose between them.

At the forefront of the chapter is the European Democratic Central Committee, based in London and founded, in June 1850, by Mazzini together with French and German revolutionaries, such as Arnold Ruge or Alexandre Ledru-

Rollin (pp. 139–141). The idea of this organism came to them due to their desire to coordinate European revolutions based on not only associationism, but also Mazzinian transnationalism. The author highlights the influence of Mazzinian ideas on these political plans. However, disagreements will appear because of internal conflicts and duplicity. A case in point is Lajos Kossuth which, according to the author, proved to be an authoritarian and duplicitous revolutionary. Drawing on the Hungarian leaders' correspondence, Tanasă illustrates his connections with Mazzini's rivals, for instance the Piedmontese Alessandro Monti. In his relationship with Mazzini, Kossuth seemed indifferent, although he sent the Italian a message to temper his revolutionary and anti-monarchical spirit for it could affect his own relation with the Hungarian noble and Britannic worlds. Moreover, many revolutionary committees that already existed in Europe did not collaborate with Mazzini. In the case of ethnic disagreements, attention is drawn to the conflicts between western revolutionaries and the one between Romanians and Hungarians. In the west, the conflict was of ideological and national nature whereas each revolutionary desired the beginning of a revolution in their country. In Central and Eastern Europe, the differences were doubled by each nationalist movement and the author points out the differences in opinion between Dumitru Brătianu and Dániel Irányi. Concerning Mazzini, Tanasă outlines how he tries to divert attention from these problems by attempting to stop this discourse.

According to Tanasă, the Romania camp was not united regarding their political plans and ideologies. This can be seen in the way some staked themselves on caution, while others on Mazzinian transnationalism. A veritable source in this context is the Pașoptist proclamations. The author describes the influence that Mazzini had on the political and national thought of the Brătianu's. Ion C. Brătianu's character is contrasted with Mazzini again and the author observes the similarities and differences between the two revolutionary leaders. On the one hand, they are similar in their actions and political ideas are influenced by liberal and revolutionary movements. Therefore, Tanasă presents Brătianu's activities (the business from 1853) and his contribution to the creation of modern Romania. On the other hand, Tanasă, from a Lovinescian perspective, portrays a Brătianu who adapts to new realities and pragmatically moderates his political thinking and actions, while Mazzini remains an uncompromising revolutionary. Regarding this clarification, Brătianu was much more pragmatic than Mazzini, but we also must mention that he too was considered radical not only by European powers, but also by the Romanian political elite (be they conservative or liberal). These disagreements accelerated both his decline and his withdrawal from power, through coalition governments and his eventual resignation. Some historians are of the opinion that the political monopoly that the Brătianu's had was facilitated by corrupt methods.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a broader view see Apostol Stan and Mircea Iosa, *Liberalismul politic. De la origini până la 1918* (București: Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1996).

Concluding, through his work, Remus Tanasă is able to offer a new perspective on the genesis of modern Romania, through the contribution of Giuseppe Mazzini's ideas and actions. Due to its chosen topic, the study stands out as both innovative and revitalizing in the field of Italo–Romanian research because it reiterates the relationship between Pașoptism and the great figure of Italian Risorgimento. The work is distinguished especially by the objectiveness and critical eye of the author. However, a shortcoming of the study is that it is, in quite a considerable amount, only a biographical introduction to Mazzini's life and his relationships with Romanians are mentioned situationally. Of course, this observation should be interpreted with reference to the historical context, represented by the circumstantial relations of Giuseppe Mazzini with Romanian Pașoptism.

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