



The Countryside and Communism in Eastern Europe: Perceptions, Attitudes, Propaganda

Sibiu, 25 to 26 September 2015

**Executive Unit for Financing Higher
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**Johannes Gutenberg
University, Mainz**

Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu

**Romanian Academy, A. D.
Xenopol – Institute of
History, Department for
History of International
Relations, Iași**

**The Institute for the Investigation of
Communist Crimes and the Memory of
the Romanian Exile, Bucharest**

Conference Program

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25 September

**Location: “Lucian Blaga” University, Centrul de
Reuniune Academică,**

Banatului Street, No. 6, Room 11

9.00 – 9.30 – Opening of the Conference

9.30 – 11.30 – Thematic Session

**Organization and Political Practices within the Countryside
of the “Eastern Bloc”**

Chair: Prof. Dr. habil. Dariusz JAROSZ

Dr. Marcin KRUSZYŃSKI (Institute of National Remembrance, Lublin / Poland), *“Art for the art’s sake” – how the Unnatural Attempts of Transforming Peasants into Intelligentsia were Implemented in Poland (1944 – 1956);*

Dr. Olev LIIVIK (Estonian History Museum, Tallinn / Estonia), *Lords of the Countryside: Personal Characteristics of the First Secretaries of the County Committees of the Estonian Communist Party in the Second Half of the 1940s;*

Assistant Prof. Dr. Stanisław STEPKA (Warsaw University of Life Sciences / Poland), *Peasants in the Face of Activities of the Polish United Workers' Party in Rural Areas (1948-1989);*

Assistant Prof. Dr. Piotr SWACHA (Warsaw University of Life Sciences / Poland), *United People`s Party Activists in The Central Power Elite in Poland (1949-1989);*

Eli PILVE (Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, Tallinn / Estonia), *Ideological Brainwashing in Estonian SSR School Lessons;*

Dr. Bogdan IVAȘCU (Arad County Museum / Romania), *The Achilles' Heel: Difficulties in Establishing a Functional Party Network in the Transylvanian Countryside (1945-1947)*;

Dr. Marius TĂRÎȚĂ (Institute of History, Chisinau / Republic of Moldova), *The Policy of the Party's Organization in the Lipcani Raion of the Moldavian SSR in 1945*;

11.30 – 12.00 – Discussion

12.00 – 12.15 – Coffee Break

12.15 – 13.40 – Thematic Session

**Agrarian Reforms and Collectivization of Agriculture in
“Eastern Bloc”**

(Part I)

Chair: Dr. Marína ZAVACKÁ

Prof. Dr. habil. Mirosław KLUSEK, Robert ANDRZEJCZYK (University of Agriculture in Cracow / Poland), *Polish Landed Gentry Attitudes towards Communist Decree of 6th September 1944 on Land Reform*;

Prof. Dr. habil. Małgorzata MACHALEK (Stettin University / Poland), **Prof. Dr. habil. Stanisław JANKOWIAK** (“Adam Mickiewicz” University in Poznan / Poland), *State-owned Collective Farms in Polish Agriculture – Genesis and the Socio-Economic Consequences*;

Prof. Dr. Žarko LAZAREVIĆ (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana / Slovenija) *Communist Agriculture*

*between the Ideological Rigidity and Economic Rationality –
Case of Slovenia (Yugoslavia);*

Prof. Dr. habil. Zsuzsanna VARGA (“Lorand Eötvös”
University, Budapest /Hungary), *Three Waves of
Collectivization in One Country. Interactions of Political
Practices and Peasants’ Resistance Strategies in Hungary in
the “long 1950s”*

13.40 – 15.00 – Lunch

15.00 – 16.30 – Thematic Session

**Agrarian Reforms and Collectivization of Agriculture in
“Eastern Bloc” (Part II)**

Chair: Prof. Dr. Dragoş PETRESCU

Dr. Csaba KOVÁCS (Hungarian Central Statistical Office
Library, Budapest / Hungary), *Complaints from the Final
Period of Hungarian Collectivisation;*

Dr. Robert BALOGH (Institute of History, Research Centre for
Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences / Hungary),
*Afforestation at the Juncture in the 1950s: New Landscape,
Planning, Mobilization and Conservation;*

Prof. Dr. Virgiliu ȚĂRĂU (“Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-
Napoca / Romania), *After Violence. Bureaucratic Strategies in
the Collectivization of Agriculture Process (1949-1952). Cluj
Region;*

Dr. Cosmin BUDEANĂ (The Institute for the Investigation of
Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile,
Bucharest / Romania), *The last Stage of Collectivization of
Agriculture in Romania: Repressive and Restrictive Methods
against the Rural Population;*

Prof. Dr. habil. Hans-Christian MANER (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz / Germany), *The Collectivization and the German Minority in Transylvania*;

16.30 – 17.10 – Discussion

17.10 – 17.30 – Coffee Break

17.30 – 18.50 – Thematic Session

Social Change and Rural Mentality

Chair: Prof. Dr. habil. Zsuzsanna VARGA

Dr. Natalia JARSKA (Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw / Poland), *Between the Rural Household and Political Mobilization – The Circles of Rural Housewives in Poland 1946-1989*;

Assistant Prof. Dr. Cristina PETRESCU (University of Bucharest / Romania), *Peasants into Agro-Industrial Workers. The Communist Modernization of Romanian Villages, 1974-1989*;

Prof. Dr. habil. Éva CSESZKA (“King Sigismund” College Budapest / Hungary), **Assistant Prof. Dr. András SCHLETT** (“Pázmány Péter” Catholic University, Budapest / Hungary), *Tradition - Interest - Labor Organisation. Transformation of Rural Mentality during the Period of Communism in Hungary*;

Dr. Ágota Lídia ISPÁN (Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest / Hungary), *“It’s hard to hold on here” . Cultured Retail Trade in Hungary*;

18.50 – 19.10 – Discussion

19.10 – Dinner

26 September

Location: Hotel Apollo Hermanstadt – Conference Room

9.00 – 10.40 – Thematic Session

Political Instruments of the Communist Regimes for Transforming the Village: between Coercion and Resistance

Chair: Prof. Dr. habil. Žarko LAZAREVIĆ

Dr. Marina ZAVACKÁ (Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava / Slovakia), *“How could we?” Explaining Fault Steps, Mishits and other “Regrettable Deeds” in the Slovak Countryside;*

Prof. Dr. habil. Dariusz JAROSZ (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw / Poland), *Against the Executor-Victim Paradigm: Polish Peasants versus Power 1945-1989;*

Dr. Jiří URBAN (The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes / Prague, Czech Republic), *Distrust as a Perception, Resistance as a Response: the Introduction of Communist Politics in the East Bohemian Rural Area;*

Prof. Dr. Dragoş PETRESCU (University of Bucharest / Romania), *Commuting Villagers and Social Protest: Peasant-Workers and Working-Class Unrest in Romania, 1965–8;*

Dr. Valentin VASILE (National Council for the Study of Archives of Securitate, Bucharest / Romania), *The Rural Population under the Surveillance of Securitate during the Totalitarian Regime in Romania (1948-1989)*;

10.40 – 11.00 – Discussion

11.00 – 11.20 – Coffee Break

11.20 – 12.40 – Thematic Session

Communist Propaganda and Agitation in the Rural World

Chair: Assistant Prof. Dr. Cristina PETRESCU

Dr. Tomasz OSIŃSKI (Institute of National Remembrance, Lublin / Poland), *Communist Propaganda and Landowners during the Agricultural Reform in Poland (1944-1945)*;

Judit TÓTH (National Archives of Hungary, Budapest / Hungary), *“Kulaks” in Political Cartoons of the Rákosi-Era*;

Dr. Manuela MARIN (West University of Timișoara / Romania), *Refashioning People in Collectivized Countryside: Turks and Tatars in Dobruja during the 1950s*;

Lázok KLÁRA (“Teleki-Bolyai” Library, Târgu Mureș / Romania), *Community Homes and “Cultural” Education in the Rural World: Communist Propaganda Clichés as Reflected in the “Îndrumătorul Cultural” and “Kulturális Útmutató” (1950-1960)*;

Zsuzsanna BORVENDÉG (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, Budapest / Hungary), *Hungary and Stalin’s Plan for the Transformation of Nature through Propaganda*;

12.40 – 13.00 – Discussion

13.00 – 14.30 – Lunch

14.30 – 15.50 – Thematic Session

Cultural Propaganda and Representations of the Countryside in the Official Discourse in “Eastern Bloc”

Chair: Prof. Dr. habil. Éva CSESZKA

Dr. Flavius SOLOMON (Romanian Academy, “A.D. Xenopol” Institute of History, Iasi / Romania), *Romania's Image in the Soviet Newspaper “Pravda”, 1944-1953: A Possible Interpretive Approach;*

Associate Lecturer PhD Alexandra URDEA (Goldsmiths College, London / UK), *Cultural Enactment in a Romanian Village (1950-1980);*

Prof. Dr. Mihaela GRANCEA (“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu / Romania), **Olga GRĂDINARU** (“Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca / Romania), *The Collectivization Process in the Soviet and Romanian Films. A Comparative Perspective;*

Prof. Dr. habil. Sorin RADU, Alexandru NICOLAESCU (“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu / Romania), *Village Halls in the Romanian Countryside at the Beginning of the 1950s between Cultural and Political Propaganda;*

15.50 – 16.10 – Discussion

16.10 – 17 – Conclusions; Closing of the Conference

17.00 – 19.00 – City Tour with a Guide

19.00 – Dinner

Abstracts

Dr. Marcin KRUSZYŃSKI, *“Art for the art’s sake” – how the Unnatural Attempts of Transforming Peasants into Intelligentsia were Implemented in Poland (1944 – 1956)*

The educational policy of the communists in Poland (and also in CCCR dominated Midd and Eastern Europe) was to create “the new intellectual”. In contrast to the times before the war, “the new intellectual” most importantly had to come from the country and not from the bourgeoisie or the former nobility. Thus the countrymen were put into the academic environment, uprooted from their own cultural context. Lonely, they were wandering around the unfamiliar university grounds feeling totally out of place. Despite the fact, communists kept attempting to create “county-intellectual” at the same time completely devaluing the ethos of intelligentsia.

Assistant Prof. Dr. Stanislaw STĘPKA, *Peasants in the Face of Activities of the Polish United Workers' Party in Rural Areas (1948-1989)*

The organizations of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) active in the countryside – in individual gminas and gromadas – were the direct executors of the decisions resulting from realization of the assumptions of the policy regarding villages and agriculture made at the highest level of authority. However, the decisions of party authorities and central offices of the country aiming at collectivization of villages challenged the very essence of peasant farms and deprived the village inhabitants of the influence on decisions made with regard to issues which had impact on their everyday existence. It was difficult to combine the attachment of peasants to the land with the actual acceptance of collectivization. The rural world was a tough environment for penetration by the communist movement. Before WWII the attitudes of village inhabitants were shaped under the influence of the peasant movement which had a negative attitude towards communism. As early as in 1948 the PUWP authorities

undertook actions aiming at changing the social and political composition of local instances of the party. The selection of those elites entailed purges and electoral fraud. The criterion for selection was eagerness in following orders of superiors and "proper" social background. A popular role model of a rural leader was a landless peasant or smallholder being a member of PUWP. In many basic party organizations, apart from few peasant farmers, the members included also employees of communal national councils (gromadzka rada narodowa), teachers and employees of communal cooperatives (spółdzielnia gminna). Peasants kept at distance those who came from the outside and were not connected with their environment. It was the local party machine, and not the peasants, who set the tone for PUWP work in the countryside. It was formed by the people who were not connected with agriculture, who supported the communism policy regarding villages and who did not have considerable standing among the peasants. The reaction of the village inhabitants towards the activities of the party was diverse. Apart from forms of resistance, both passive and active, adaptive attitudes played a huge role. As time went by, the relationship between peasants and instances of PUWP in the countryside came to be characterized not by resistance, but by adaptation.

Assistant Prof. Dr. Piotr SWACHA, *United People`s Party Activists in The Central Power Elite in Poland (1949-1989)*

In 1949, two years after Stanislaw Mikolajczyk`s secret flee from Poland, the communists forced Polish Peasants` Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL) to unite with pro-communist People`s Party (Stronnictwo Ludowe – SL) and to form United People`s Party (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe - ZSL). The communists gave ZSL the role of the so-called "satellite party", without significant political importance, but still it was formally a partner in ruling coalition. The following article contains an attempt to examine the position of activists associated with the peasant movement in the central Polish political elite (parliaments authorities, government and Council of State) during the communist era. Main research questions are: what were the

socio-demographic features of peasants' activists in the central power elite (age, gender, place of birth, education and profession)? Was there any common pattern of recruitment to the central elite for them? How was this part of elite formed? What was their political experience before taking public positions? How were they connected in relational network created by political elite members? What relational ties were important for them?

The basis of the study will be activists' biographies, press articles and archives data, mainly collected in the Museum of the History of Polish People's Movement and The Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw. To explore a linkage between peasants movement activists in central political elite, social network analysis technique will be used. This will allow to indicate how they were embedded in the political elite network and who was their "key player" in the structure.

Eli PILVE, *Ideological Brainwashing in Estonian SSR School Lessons*

This presentation focuses on ideological upbringing in Estonian SSR school lessons, excluding extracurricular activities. The primary focus is on whether the intensification or abatement of ideological pressure over time was reflected in ordinary school lessons and if so, then how. Here the term ideological upbringing is considered to mean first and foremost the forced replacement of former nationalist value judgements with Soviet values. The aim of this, was to make every citizen of the Soviet Union feel that he is a Soviet person and not, for instance, an Estonian or a Latvian. Common Soviet understandings, assessments and values were supposed to take root in the consciousness of the empire's inhabitants as a result of ideological upbringing. In connection with this, it was subjects in the humanities that were the focus of greater scrutiny in schools, particularly history, but also geography, literature, the Russian language, music and art lessons. Yet ideological upbringing was supposed to be carried out in all subjects. Even physics, mathematics and chemistry teachers had to find ways in which to glorify the Soviet system

and criticise that of capitalist countries in their lessons. For example, it was foreseen to teach in geography how Estonian land reform in 1919 did not solve the land issue at all and it was only solved by the Soviet agrarian reform. In mathematics, the tasks had to show in numbers how difficult or impossible it was for a peasant to earn decent living in agriculture that was led by the kulaks and what a great joy it was to work and live in a collective farm system. Thereat it was allegedly the Soviet land common to all and its achievements that were glorified, but it was actually the Russian people, culture and history that was highlighted more and more, branding all other soviet republics as recipients in need of Russian aid.

Generally speaking, this presentation is divided into two parts, meaning that the periods 1940 and 1944–1953, and 1953–1991 are considered. Although the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's condemnation of his personality cult perceptibly influenced teaching in schools, ideological upbringing remained essentially the same throughout the Soviet period. Even in 1974, the staff council at Tallinn's Secondary School no. 1 appealed to teachers to teach pupils to be critical of their own opinions that did not conform to established truths. Schools in the Soviet Union were for training its citizens, where the truth regarding world view was self-evidently known. It was unnecessary and even not allowed to seek such truth. This could instead turn out to be fateful, as actually happened to many people.

This presentation relies on archival sources and the memories of contemporaries. Change in ideological pressure is comparatively analysed on the basis of the minutes of staff meetings from three secondary schools.

Dr. Bogdan IVAȘCU, *The Achilles' Heel: Difficulties in Establishing a Functional Party Network in the Transylvanian Countryside (1945-1947)*

The current study intends to discuss a not very well known aspect from the first years of the Romanian Communist regime, namely the organizational difficulties that the Romanian Communist Party had in establishing a reliable party network in

the countryside. Our research aims to deconstruct a widespread cliché: the Party as monolithic, infallible bureaucratic machinery, yielding a total control over every strata of the society. This article will try to prove that at least referring to the countryside, the above picture is inadequate.

We shall attempt to underline the most important problems in the Party's endeavors to control the country side: organizational chaos, the lack of competent human resources (the party's "cadre"), the lack of a coherent action plan and the vicious circle of inexperienced local party leadership - frequent and arbitrary change of it by the C.C. –organizational instability and further managerial amateurism. Within this complicated fresco, Transylvanian countryside comes with a specific feature. Transylvania's cities (such as Oradea or Cluj-Napoca) were dominated by minorities, while the rural areas were overwhelmingly inhabited by Romanians. The Romanian communists were confronted in Transylvania with an insoluble dilemma: if the party wanted to be a worker's party it could not be Romanian, as most of the qualified workers lived in big cities and belonged to the national minorities; while a majority of Romanians could not be one of workers.

The proposed research purports to add new material and to open some perspectives following several directions of research already established in our previous work, *Nașterea unei noi elite: Transilvania (1945-1953)*. It will rely mostly on archives documents but also on the new scholarly literature on the topic. By this study we hope to put into a new perspective the dynamic life of countryside party organizations during the first years after the war.

Dr. Marius TĂRÎȚĂ, *The Policy of the Party's Organization in the Lipcani Raion of the Moldavian SSR in 1945*

After the 9-th of May 1945, the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the Moldavian SSR began to change its policy in the rural area. Until that moment, the recruitment of men for the Red Army and of the taxes were important aspects. The Party's structures tolerated the past of its

collaborators. The meeting of the Party's organization from Lipkany in 1945 show several new tasks on the agenda. Among them there were some problems specific to the Party, such as the misunderstandings of the Propaganda because they had not a Moldavian staff; the public mistakes; the necessity of seminaries for the local administration; the conflicts with the militaries (because it was a border area); the mistakes of the Communists etc. The second panel of problems comprised the issue of the corruption; the policy of the selection of the staff; the financial mistakes; the communication (postal) problems; the "sharp" displeasures of the peasants; the efficient collecting of bread and others. At the reunions of the Communists also the representatives of the NKVD and of the Army participated. During the debates also appeared the topic of the elimination from the staff of persons who had Kulak origin or "collaborated" with the Romanians before (1918-1940, 1941-1944). The paper uses the documents from the Documents nr. 146 of the Archive of Social-Political Organizations from Republic of Moldova.

Prof. Dr. habil. Mirosław KLUSEK, Robert ANDRZEJCZYK, *Polish Landed Gentry Attitudes towards Communist Decree of 6th September 1944 on Land Reform*

The Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) decree of 6th September 1944 on conduct of land reform was fundamental legal act for land reform in Poland after World War II. It defined directions and rules of carrying out land reform. According to decree regulations, the State Treasury took possession of land properties with area exceeding threshold defined in this source of law.

Landed gentry expropriated by communist authorities, often did not agree with these proceedings. Based on research on archival documents of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform (years 1945 – 1950) we can say that landed gentry, made use of right to appeal administrative decisions nationalizing their property. Landed gentry appeals, based on decree on land reform as well as laws from inter-war period (1918-1939) concerned most frequently: exclusion of properties in towns;

areas not exceeding threshold; lack of land authorities approval to transfer ownership; taking over industrial plants in rural estates on the basis of land reform regulations; livestock and equipment of land owners and lessees; invalidity of prewar agreements with obligee.

Prof. Dr. habil. Malgorzata MACHALEK, Prof. Dr. habil. Stanislaw JANKOWIAK, *State-owned Collective Farms in Polish Agriculture – Genesis and the Socio-Economic Consequences*

The beginning and the functioning of the private sector in Polish agriculture did not rise so many emotions as the question of the farming reform and collectivization.

The main goal of a farming reform was to eliminate the vast amount of the estate possessions, however the part of the assets was eliminated from parcelling and intended to establish state-owned farms. The largest scale of that process could have been noted on the Western and Northern lands, where the half of the farming land had belonged to properties larger than 100 hectare. Parcelling out all the post-German properties was not possible due to the technical issues and the inadequate population in the villages in this area.

In order to bring into cultivation these decaying manor houses, in 1946 The State-owned collective Land Property was created, and in 1946 the name was changed into The State-owned collective Farms. In the time of its greatest development, the manor houses occupied 18% of the farming land, but in the '80s on the Western and Northern lands they exploited more than a half of used agricultural areas.

State-owned collective farms were supposed to provide food for the citizens of large cities, what is more they were to be a role model of socialist management in farming, support peasant's economy, but also represent vanguard of social changes in the countryside. In the reality, despite great financial help, not only did they reach much lower results than in peasant's economy, but also they were mostly loss-making. It was the result of the internal management.

State-owned collective farms were terminated due to the political transformation in 1991. The consequences were mostly visible: the unemployment and the problems with reclaiming property in the market economy.

Prof. Dr. Žarko LAZAREVIČ, *Communist Agriculture between the Ideological Rigidity and Economic Rationality – Case of Slovenia (Yugoslavia)*

With the case study of Slovenia, within the context of communist Yugoslavia, I would like to present the developmental phases of Yugoslav agricultural policy and consequently the political and ideological treatment of peasantry after 1945. In this respect the presentation will include also the changing systemic relationships (politically managed) between the state and private agricultural sector. The presentation is going to be mainly focused on the process of reconceptualization of agricultural policy and peasantry as an economic and social considerable subjects. This reconceptualization was carried out as an essential part of broader economic reforms in communist Yugoslavia in 1950s and 60s, the gradual abandonment of centrally-planned economy and collectivization in agriculture. The new more balanced policy was introduced in the agricultural sector, taking into consideration the economic potentials of private agricultural sector. In a way, we can describe this process as a meeting with social and economic reality of the country, since Yugoslavia was still prevailing agricultural country, as an economy and as society as well. This was very important since it opened the room for the modernization of the private agriculture sector in Yugoslavia. It also led to the inclusion of peasantry, based on private ownership of the land, into the official ideological imaginary of working class. The presentation is going to be structured in three parts:

(1) Ideological rigidity (1945-1952, implantation of soviet model, Agrarian Reform, collectivization);

(2) In search for new model (1952-1961, reconceptualization of agricultural policy);

(3) Recognition of private agricultural sector, persisting ideological constrains and the development of agriculture policy.

Prof. Dr. habil. Zsuzsanna VARGA, *Three Waves of Collectivization in One Country. Interactions of Political Practices and Peasants' Resistance Strategies in Hungary in the "long 1950s"*

One of the special features of the Hungarian collectivization process is that it got realised through three phases: 1948-1953, 1955-56, 1959-1961. There is lots of excellent new research in Hungary dealing with certain aspects of this long process, however less attention is paid to the inner dynamics of collectivization campaigns. The aim of my paper is to study how the political practices and peasants' resistance strategies changed from the Stalinist period through the destalinization and after the Revolution of 1956, in the final phase. My examination covers not only the collectivization campaigns but also the decollectivization periods (1953-1954, 1957-1958), because they served as important lessons for both the political decision-makers and different groups of the peasantry. My paper is based on extensive research in central and county divisions of the Hungarian National Archive and the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security. Besides archival and press material, my research draws on evidence from interviews.

Dr. Csaba KOVÁCS, *Complaints from the Final Period of Hungarian Collectivisation*

Besides the macro-level, political-historical approach towards collectivization, the aspects of social history are also gaining ground in Hungary. Among them there are some cases, when historical research is focussed on micro level events such as how the organisation of co-operatives affected the lives of ordinary people.

In my lecture I am going to give an outline of the main events and some consequences of the last wave of establishing co-ops in Hungary, taking place in 1958–1961 and then I intend to discuss the characteristics of the complaints about collectivization. Filing complaints cannot be considered a rare phenomenon as all the ministries including the Ministry of

Agriculture operated offices handling complaints called Complaints Office, the complaints discussed here were sent there.

The complaints connected to collectivization are very colourful sources of the history of agriculture as there are co-op members and individual farmers among the writers of the complaints. By analyzing the complaints filed at the turn of the 1950's and 1960's the individual dimensions of co-op establishment are revealed, one can gain insights into the relation of agricultural workers and the local or higher authorities concerning everyday life and the assessment of private farmers becoming employees and the collective property taking the place of private property. Due to the large number of complaints, it is possible to categorize complaints such as the procedures and methods applied against the farmers and the wide range of grievances resulting from them. (In the case of co-op members, complaints were centered around the rejection of the intention to quit, or complaints about the private plot, private farmers' complaints were focussed on the problems of the property received in exchange for their own ones, that were incorporated in the land of the co-ops or the rude and violent co-op manager). Moreover, these complaints reveal the strategies and decision making processes deployed by the parties in the last wave of collectivization.

Dr. Robert BALOGH (Institute of History, Research Centre for Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences / Hungary), *Afforestation at the Juncture in the 1950s: New Landscape, Planning, Mobilization and Conservation*

The paper will address the afforestation efforts of the 1950s and its institutional and local contexts in the light of three localities: Hajdúböszörmény, Bugac and Szajla. The first two localities are in the Great Plains. Szajla is in a hilly area in the North.

Afforestation lay at the juncture of a number of developments. In 1945 shortage of wood was an economic fact and it was a risk factor in the quality of life in cities and throughout the Great Plains region. Nationalization of large

estates prolonged uncertainty around the availability of various forest products. From propaganda perspective landscape change gave a sense of regeneration especially if schools and children were mobilized in order to achieve it. Success in changing the landscape was a potentially strong argument in support of the regime in areas considered 'wastelands' such as the micro region of Bugac.

Afforestation involved a number of organizations such as the National Forestry Association that was eager to prove its conformity with the new regime. This association was in charge of propagating the afforestation agenda and making local level plans of implementation involving setting up of nursery gardens, thus they interacted with local administration. It also involved the Ministry of Agriculture that gave directives and distributed resources.

At the same time, afforestation also reflects the relationship between conservationist agendas and the socialist regime. The new regime claimed to be ecologically more conscious than 'aristocrats' that were only interested in economic gains and thus established homogenous forests neglecting biodiversity. At the same time, economic plans required wood for industry, thus in the 1950s research institutes experimented with new hybrids. One of the areas where their results were implemented was Szajla.

Prof. Dr. Virgiliu ȚĂRĂU, *After Violence. Bureaucratic Strategies in the Collectivization of Agriculture Process (1949-1952). Cluj Region*

The paper will discuss upon the way in which the Communist authorities organized the transformation of agriculture using bureaucratic practices. If during 1949-1950 they put pressure on the rural world using violent methods (and here we will bring into discussion the implication of the Securitate in the process), from 1951 they change the strategies using different methods in order to achieve their political objectives. We will discuss the nature of the new institutions that were created in order to transform the rural world but also the social networks they

developed in order to transfer the political incentives from the center to the periphery.

Dr. Cosmin BUDEANĂ, *The last Stage of Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania: Repressive and Restrictive Methods against the Rural Population*

One of the most ample processes that took place in communist period in Romania was the removal of private property over the land and the instauration of the collectivist model in agriculture or, as it is also known, the agricultural collectivization process.

The Communist regime wanted to subjugate the rural world at any price and did it gradually, in three major steps, influenced by both internal and external political factors. My presentation aims to reveal the characteristics of the last phase of the collectivization of Romanian agriculture, from 1957 to 1962, which are the acceleration of the changes and, most of all, the brutal means used on a large scale against the people.

During this last phase, thousands of people from the countryside were subjected to intense pressure (threats, blackmail, and beatings, as well as arrests and convictions) as means of persuasion to convince peasants to yield their land to the collective farming units. To expressions of disagreement the authorities reacted with extreme violence. Many peasants were arrested and convicted, the first goal of the trials being to spread fear among the rural population and to force it to accept the collectivization.

My presentation is organized into two parts: first, I will show the main characteristics of this phase, and second, I will describe the repression of the population in a village from the former district of Râmnicu Sărat.

Dr. Natalia JARSKA, *Between the Rural Household and Political Mobilization – The Circles of Rural Housewives in Poland 1946-1989*

The paper will focus on the aims, forms, and meanings of communist mobilization of rural women. These were changing

during the years, but were all the time places in the structures of The Circles of Rural Housewives (name which referred to the interwar female association in the countryside). The Circles were either part of the communist women's movement, or part of the official rural organizations. The work of the Circles in People's Republic of Poland reflected tensions between traditional gender roles and norms, communist project of emancipation of rural women, and modernization of the village life. Explaining these tensions will be one of the main part of the paper. I would like to reflect on the mere notion of "rural housewife" and its evolution. I am going also to address the following questions: What was the real role of the Circles? And, what did they mean for rural women?

In my research I use a variety of sources: press, party documents, Circles of Rural Housewives documentation (separate and included in the communist women's movement documentation), sociological research, and letters of rural women to institutions.

Assistant Prof. Dr. Cristina PETRESCU (University of Bucharest / Romania), *Peasants into Agro-Industrial Workers. The Communist Modernization of Romanian Villages, 1974-1989*

The communist utopia envisaged the equality of all men (and women). Unlike liberal democracies, which understood this fundamental concept of political modernity in legal terms, "popular democracies" emphasized the economic aspect of equality. For Marx, this had been a matter of fairer distribution of wealth in the higher phase of communism, when the considerable development of the forces of production would have obliterated "the antithesis between mental and physical labor," while the guiding principle of distribution should have been "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" When Stalin imposed his understanding of Marx and Lenin in an overwhelmingly agrarian country (contrary to the predictions of the founding father), he conferred new meanings to the notion of equality: collectivization represented not only the "socialist transformation" of rural areas, but also a means of "eliminating

the antithesis between town and village.” In Lynne Viola’s interpretation, the “greatest divide of the Stalin revolution was not of (...) workers and bourgeoisie, but of town and countryside.”

This author focuses on a later, post-collectivization stage in the communist modernization of the Romanian countryside, which envisaged large-scale demolitions in rural areas and the replacement of villages with “agricultural centers.” The so-called Ceaușescu Doctrine referred to the building of the intermediary stage of “multi-laterally developed socialist society,” which among others required “an increasing homogenization of society (...) by accelerating the process of eliminating the fundamental differences between physical and intellectual labor, between village and town.” In order to highlight the similarities as well as the particularities of the Romanian case, the paper is divided into three parts. The first briefly follows the transfer of the Marxist-Leninist dogmas, regarding the transformation of the countryside from the Soviet Union to communist Romania, their adaptation to the local context and subsequent evolution. The second part focuses on the “systematization” of the countryside, its ideological justification and actual implementation. Finally, the third part presents the domestic, as well as the international reaction to this gigantesque program of communist modernization in rural areas, among which the Operation Village Remains stands out due to its capacity to stir the greatest transnational support for the citizens of Romania. The paper illustrates that, unlike in the case of the collectivization, the resistance to “systematization” came from outside villages, for their inhabitants - the peasants - had in the meantime suffered themselves the effects of communist modernization.

Prof. Dr. habil. Éva CSESZKA, Assistant Prof. Dr. András SCHLETT, *Tradition - Interest - Labor Organisation. Transformation of Rural Mentality during the Period of Communism in Hungary*

After 1945 a thousand-year-old dream of the Hungarian peasants came true: due to the land division they became land-owners, but the forced collectivisation within a few years not only

took away the land from the peasants, but also made them wagers thus making them dependent on political power. This transformed peasant mentality as well. In order to implement collectivisation, the Hungarian Communist Party had to isolate the countryside totally. After liquidating civil political parties, the communists started to annihilate the influence of Church both in public life and politics. They thought that it would be easier to head the peasants for the kolkhoz if they lose their ideological underpinnings.

In this lecture we present the process how the peasant class firmly standing on the ground of national traditions, private property, religious ethics and solid vision of values represented by the Church was transformed into a wagers-peasant class having lost its root, standing on Marxist ideological basis, having no interest and being no longer interested in the future of the economy. Their bonding to the land, to the means of production, to their mates radically changed. The labour organisation was able to operate only under a continuous supervision, control and direction as concerning sessions became permanent. Another goal of our lecture, is to explore and present the relations regarding labour organisation, work incentives and work ethic as a consequence of the developing large-scale model after the forced collectivization.

Dr. Ágota Lídia ISPÁN, *“It’s hard to hold on here”*.
Cultured Retail Trade in Hungary

Among the society, forming provisions of communism, mainly those deep changes have been researched that affected the whole strategy of life (industrialization, collectivization). Besides the radical changes, the means affecting ‘only’ the way of life but at the same time reflecting the ideology of the system also appeared. For example, electricity was represented as ‘the light bringing culture’ and the transformation of the commercial system was connected to the concept of civilization.

In my paper I will discuss what was meant by the concept of cultured trade in that era and what steps were taken in order to shape it. I examine the practical realisation of all this, primarily in

relation to some settlements in the Leninváros district. Among the sources I used there are professional commercial journals, reports and complaints of commercial nature and interviews with shop assistants and tradesmen.

The background for the modernization of the former trade infrastructure and methods was provided by the conception of 'cultured trade'. One of the most important elements was the demand for order and cleanness; polite shop assistants; a modern chain of shops; furthermore new forms of service. The state trade appeared at open fairs with the so called fair departments of companies and co-operatives, where they had to represent the cultured trade, and they excluded the method of bargaining. They experimented with the so called representative fairs organized as the socialist alternative of traditional fairs, but as collectivisation went on they considered the whole fair system becoming old fashioned. In harmony with it, the system expected a more solid behaviour from the customers on the spot.

In state and co-operative trade the greatest obstacles of its realization were the difficulties in the supply of goods of the era and the odd relations toward social property. In diverting rural people accustomed to markets and fairs into modern shops, limiting the number of fairs played an important role, the declining role of selling because of the co-operatization and the overestimation of consumption were also significant in this process. Furthermore, the changing of the rythm of purchasing, the quality of fair supply, the accessibility of scenes and the changing of customers' habits have also contributed to this.

Dr. Marina ZAVACKÁ, *"How could we?" Explaining Fault Steps, Mishits and other "Regrettable Deeds" in the Slovak Countryside*

In comparison to the rest of the country, forced collectivization campaign at the beginning of the 50's took extremely harsh forms in certain rural localities of Slovakia. Officially presented definition of "kulaks" as wealthy exploiters clashed there on reality of general poverty. Called to decisive action, regional communist activists practically redefined kulak to

a body clinging on private property, no matter how small and miserable his husbandry actually was. In order to break local resistance against collectivization, brutality of applied measures reached far beyond official anti-kulak legislation. Popularity of the Communist party was consequently heavily damaged also among those social groups from which it was supposed to derive its authority to rule – among smallholders and poor commuting industrial workers from villages, including veteran party members and supporters.

During the following few years, locally grounded narratives of excessive abuse of power during collectivization were utilised in two ideologically contrarious state-wide political campaigns. First, there was a wave of purges serving to consolidate Communist power facing the economic failure. Selected representatives of regional party apparatus who participated in harsh raids against peasants were accused of intentional diverging from Stalin-Gottwald party line and were targeted in campaign against “Slánský and his clique”. They became distant victims of a typical Stalinist staged process against internal enemies. But after Stalin’s death narratives of terror in villages were included into canon of de-stalinisation and the same sort of determined regional activists were accused of following Stalin’s ways too closely. In both cases, targeted regional and local party representatives were publicly exposed at meetings and pressed to engage in rituals of self-criticism.

The proposed paper shall focus on their defence and explanatory strategies used for constructing appropriate and acceptable self-image of a local regime representative in turbulent political environment of a soviet satellite in the 50s.

Prof. Dr. habil. Dariusz JAROSZ, *Against the Executor-Victim Paradigm: Polish Peasants versus Power 1945-1989*

In Polish historiography from 1989 Polish peasants constituted a social group that consistently (be it actively or passively), resisted the ‘peoples’ authorities. In reality it seems more complicated. Public opinion polls do not show – in the way that most Polish historians of rural life and the peasant movement

would like – that, against the backdrop of common social behaviour, the peasantry particularly distinguished itself in the resistance to the state authorities, except in the period of forced collectivization (1948-1956). These opinion polls, in their general assessments, suggest that rural opinion held a more favourable view of the post-war period as compared with earlier times than the urban population.

The vision of heroic social resistance to enslavement by the authorities distorts the true picture of the relationship between the government and society in the period 1944-1959. World opinion, if it even remembers the fate of the Poles in the period of communism, looks on the issue in terms of the magnificence of the Solidarity revolution and the misery of martial law from 1981. Thus, any complication of this outlook, by pointing to the banality of the evil of daily collaboration, is not infrequently taken into account. For these reasons, most Polish historians when dealing with communist Poland have focused on detailed findings, usually referring to specific forms of social resistance and they are less interested in the everyday accommodation of the communist system.

The proposed paper is focused on analysing the changing in relation between peasants and the communist power in Poland in subsequent periods of the so called People's Poland: 1944-1948, 1948-1956, 1957-1970, 1970-1980 and 1989. The author argues that in all this periods the social reality of communist Poland was the effect of a specific "social negotiation" in which both, the society and the communist power adopted each other.

Dr. Jiří URBAN, *Distrust as a Perception, Resistance as a Response: the Introduction of Communist Politics in the East Bohemian Rural Area*

In this paper I intend to consider a perception and an acceptance of communist politics in the Czech rural areas. For the Czechoslovakian countryside the communist regime established in February 1948 was embodied primarily by an obligation to meet high delivery quotas and (after the launch of collectivisation in February 1949) also by pressure on the establishment of

unified agricultural cooperatives, collective farms on the Soviet model. In such condition a number of villagers decided to resist this pressure and protect their land, property and traditions. Methods and ways they had used were very varied.

The paper will monitor the process of collectivization and the resistance it provoked in Eastern Bohemia, in the former district of Nový Bydžov. In the spring of 1949, soon after launching the collectivization, some local villagers started to intimidate the most active local communist exponents. While the 9th Annual Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was taking place in Prague, they set up the gibbet with the names of local Bolsheviks in the neighbouring village. Later they immobilized the car of district communist speaker. Also a large amount of anti-collectivization and anticommunist leaflets were appearing in the whole surroundings.

The communist transformation of the rural world provoked various forms of resistance. The paper will show how the communist policy was perceived by the villagers, which way the centrally directed agricultural policy was shown into their living and how spontaneous and multifarious the forms of resistance against it were.

Prof. Dr. Dragoş PETRESCU, *Commuting Villagers and Social Protest: Peasant-Workers and Working-Class Unrest in Romania, 1965–8*

When analyzing the patterns of working-class unrests in communist Romania, one should determine which regions presented the highest potential for open protest. Due to lack of resources, the urbanization process under communism was not able to keep pace with the industrialization process. Consequently, the Romanian working class underwent an accelerated transformation that led to the gradual emergence of two major categories of workers, namely *genuine workers* and *commuting villagers* or *peasant-workers*. This categorization differs from the classic one that distinguishes between skilled and unskilled workers. Peasant-workers must not be confused with the agricultural workers employed by state farms. They were

industrial workers, who commuted daily from their villages to workplaces located in urban areas. My paper focuses on this category of workers and argues that their existence *lowered the potential for protest* of the Romanian working class during the 1970s and 1980s, in spite of the growing economic problems the Ceaușescu regime was facing.

Genuine workers severed their roots with countryside, moved to towns where they were employed mostly in industry, and were dependent on the salary they received. By the end of 1980s, in the conditions of the severe crisis faced by the Ceaușescu regime, this category of workers was increasingly forced to think in terms of biological survival and thus was more prone to engage in open protests. *Peasant-workers* were less affected by the economic crisis. During the period of food shortages, i.e., 1981–89, such people were able to obtain the necessary foodstuffs for survival more easily and thus their potential for protest was lower. The peasant-worker is a good example of a strategy of the individual to survive in the conditions of a severe crisis: a job in industry in the nearby town and food supplies from the little farm they owned in the village. Such a strategy became less successful after the introduction of a strict system of quotas and increased control by the authorities of the output of the small individual farms.

Until the mid-1970s, the category of genuine workers benefited from the policy of industrialization and urbanization enforced by the Communist regime. My paper also demonstrates that between 1977 and 1989 the most important protests from below occurred in workplaces where genuine workers constituted a majority: in the Jiu Valley (Hunedoara county) in 1977 and in Brașov (the capital of Brașov county) in 1987. Thus, the emergence of protests in working-class milieus was directly linked to the existence of a rather large category of workers who severed their links with countryside. Such an argument is supported by a thorough examination of the long distance inter-county migration trends in communist Romania.

Dr. Valentin VASILE, *The Rural Population under the Surveillance of Securitate during the Totalitarian Regime in Romania (1948-1989)*

The secret services through their activities, are obliged to know in detail, the reactions, the actions and the manifestations of the various social categories, no matter where they live. Therefore, in order to emphasize its importance, the Securitate had worked out a series of measures for knowledge, surveillance and investigation of the suspect people, including the ones from the countryside.

The readers will discover many more types of Securitate's actions: some of them were violent and repressive, others being focused on prevention non-violent working with ordinary citizens and the expansion of surveillance in all over the economic objectives existing in the rural world. On the background of a less violent activity than in the 1950's, Securitatea built an informative system based on the development of the informative network and strengthening of cooperation with Militia (the Police).

The purpose of the present study is to reveal some of the methods, actions and the results of the informative-operative of the Securitate's work in the countryside. Maybe we will find out some answers to the next questions: Which were the goals of the Securitate? How did they act? What results did they get using pre-defined strategies?

The option for the entire period of the totalitarian regime aims at depicting the peasantry's state of mind, the shock of collectivization and some aspects of the peasants' life, less approached by the contemporary history books. Another aspect is represented by the unpublished documents that can be capitalized in the field of historical research. Representation of the rural world in terms of Securitate contributes to the writing of recent history, although there are many conflicting views on this.

Dr. Tomasz OSIŃSKI (Institute of National Remembrance, Lublin / Poland), *Communist Propaganda and Landowners during the Agricultural Reform in Poland (1944-1945)*

The Agricultural Reform marginalized the influence of the group of landowners. They were deprived of financial resources and uprooted from their natural environment. The antagonistic attitude towards the group, was being formed by long term propaganda which showed it as responsible for the national crises and social conflicts. The widespread campaign aimed at creating an extremely negative image of landowners. They meant to be associated with backwardness, political faults and collaboration. The political significance of the agricultural reform was in fact the elimination of landowners as the source of “many ages of conflicts” which in turn lead to “economic, social and political backwardness” of the Polish nation.

Judit TÓTH, *“Kulaks” in Political Cartoons of the Rákosi-Era*

After World War II, the aim of communist Hungarian leaders was to create industrialization according to Soviet patterns: industrial capital arose from what was drawn away of agriculture. The relation between Hungarian Workers’ Party (HWP) and the peasantry was extremely difficult. It was based on Lenin’s triple thesis: *‘Lean on the poor peasantry, fight ‘kulaks’ and ally with the middle peasantry.’*

Who were the ‘kulaks’, and why were they attacked by the dictatorship, especially during the 1950’s? The word ‘kulak’, comes from Russian, meant the uppermost strata of the peasantry. ‘Kulak’ was a farmer who owned more than 35 acres (25 Hungarian acres) of arable land. They were more than 70 000 people. The system of large estates was eliminated during the Agrarian Reform in 1945. After this reform ‘kulaks’ possessed the biggest estates and they continued individual farming.

The one-party system considered this social group as the last survivor of the exploiting capitalism. ‘Kulaks’ were regarded as obstacles in the way of building socialism, socialist agricultural reorganization and nationalization. They were classified as enemy. This social group became the prey of the communist system’s most characteristic attitude. They were checked by the security forces day-by-day, their crops were confiscated and their

houses were ransacked. Many of them were interned or obliged to forced labour. Most of them were victims of (il)legal proceedings in the 1950's.

The communist power wanted to make 'kulaks' ridiculous in the eye of the people. They made jokes on them. There was a permanent communist propaganda against kulaks. Many 'kulak-cartoons' appeared in newspapers. In my lecture I will present political cartoons from three types of newspapers ('Szabad Nép', the HWP's daily, 'Szabad Föld', countryside's weekly, and 'Ludas Matyi', a comic paper). I will demonstrate how the communist party wanted to show the 'kulak-image' to the public.

Dr. Manuela MARIN, *Refashioning People in Collectivized Countryside: Turks and Tatars in Dobruja during the 1950s*

My paper examines how Romanian communist propaganda, represented by *Dobrogea Noua* newspaper, used the theme of collectivization of agriculture to create a new identity for the Turk and Tatar ethnicities in Dobrudja during the 1950s. To this end, I will use Paul Ricoeur's *narrative identity* to underline the fact that Turks and Tatars became agents and characters of the action described by the official propaganda, and their identity was defined through what they did rather than through what they were. Related to this, my paper will demonstrate that Turks and Tatars' participation in the collectivization of agriculture became the main benchmark of their newly ascribed identity from two distinct perspectives.

In the first part of my paper, I will focus on how communist propaganda employed the *politics of differentiation* (Katherine Verdery, Gail Gligman) in relation to the collectivization of agriculture to identify what occupational categories were officially valued. Consequently, my paper will examine the articles published in *Dobrogea Nouă* about Turks and Tatars who became collectivist peasants, agricultural engineers, and machine operators (combine or tractor drivers) and how their occupation and subsequent participation in the collectivization of agriculture redefined their political, social and ethnic identity and thus

helping them to become agents and embodied symbols of the collectivized new rural world.

Communist propaganda also used the collectivization of agriculture to recast the identity of Turks and Tatars in Dobrudja from the perspective of *consumption*. In so doing, I firstly emphasize the functioning of goods as *marking services* capable of mustering solidarity, exclusion, and differentiation (Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood) and show how the alleged prosperity brought by the collectivization of agriculture in the life of Turks and Tatars, redefined their social identity and their social positioning towards the Romanian ethnic majority.

Lázok KLÁRA, *Community Homes and “Cultural” Education in the Rural World: Communist Propaganda Clichés as Reflected in the “Índrumătorul Cultural” and “Kulturális Útmutató” (1950-1960)*

In our thesis we are going to analyze some of the means and techniques by which the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) propagated its cultural education campaign in the rural area of the Hungarian Autonomous Region (Regiunea Autonomă Maghiară) throughout the 1950s. This indoctrination campaign has been centrally organized and implemented in rural areas through the chain of local cultural community homes.

We would like to address these issues on the level of the organising activities of these local cultural community homes and through the eye of the textual manifestations that supported these activities (programs, and the official journals of these community homes: *Índrumătorul Cultural*, *Művelődési Útmutató*).

Our primary sources are the reports of the Mureș County Agitation and Propaganda Division of the Romanian Workers' Party (hereinafter RMP), the issues of the *Szabad Szó*, edited by the Romániai Magyar Népi Szövetség (Hungarian People's Association from Romania) and its successor the *Népújság*, as well as the issues of the *Művelődési Útmutató* and the *Índrumătorul Cultural*.

Zsuzsanna BORVENDÉG, *Hungary and Stalin's Plan for the Transformation of Nature through Propaganda*

In 1948 the Communist Party of the USSR unanimously passed the Stalinist Plan for the Transformation of Nature. According to the plan, nature itself would be subject to the Party's dictates. No longer would droughts, hot, dry winds, energy shortfalls, or agricultural failures prevent Stalin from achieving superhuman targets in industry and agriculture.

At the beginning of the 1950's, the Hungarian Communist Party began – based on Soviet practice – to implement nature transformation policies the likes of which had never been seen in Hungary before or after that period. Their decisions not only affected water-supply management, soil cultivation and forestry, but also introduced new crops completely foreign to Hungary's climate – in other words, politics began to formulate expectations for the natural sciences as well. The causes and arguments behind introducing new crops go back as far as the 1920's and 1930's when the production results of Soviet agriculture failed to reach even pre-1917 levels, and scientists, especially geneticists came under enormous social pressure, the majority of whom accepted (or was forced to accept) that the new socialist biology had to serve national agriculture in direct and immediately profitable ways, and a key figure of this plan was Trofim Denisovich Lysenko.

The Stalinist transformation of nature soon affected the rhetoric of Hungarian Workers' Party leaders, a rhetoric that reflected the resolution to adhere to the Soviet model. For the current topic, the most important research provisions regulated the production of rice, cotton, vernalization, and the implementation of irrigation systems.

With the death of Stalin, the Stalinist plan for the transformation of nature was mostly abandoned in Hungary, although changes had only become tangible upon the government change in July 1953.

In my presentation I am demonstrating how the Communist Party and its press influenced the peasant society and transformed their thinking through propaganda.

Associate Lecturer PhD Alexandra URDEA, *Cultural Enactment in a Romanian Village (1950-1980)*

This paper uses visual material disseminated through *houses of culture* in the countryside (*cămin cultural*) to understand, how the notion of peasantry and the relationship of the peasant-workers to the state was conceived from the early 1950s to the 1980s. The 1950s material that I focus on, reveals specific understandings of the folk idiom, of peasants' labour and of the economic and social relationships in the village, which were supposed to be performed and enacted through activities in the village house of culture, actively making peasants into new, communist peasant-workers. With the 1960s, the demands placed on peasants become increasingly contradictory: they were at once meant to be retainers of authentic folklore, but also undergo modernization processes. These contradictory demands were also alleviated, through enactments on the stages of the houses of culture. In my work, I use accounts from a village in the area of Vrancea to reveal a social history of the local house of culture – a place where demands of state ideology were enacted, but also where villagers could maintain and reproduce local cultural patterns.

Prof. Dr. Mihaela GRANCEA, Olga GRĂDINARU (“Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca / Romania), *The Collectivization Process in the Soviet and Romanian Films. A Comparative Perspective*

The paper presents the collectivization process as it was represented in both Soviet and Romanian films, pointing out the differences and similarities between the manner and means of representation in the Soviet Union and in Romania - a country that was part of the “Soviet bloc”. Every film analysis at highlighting the specificity of social and cultural background, discursive techniques, as well as the different filming techniques, the script and the film time and space. The filmic representation of the rural world during the collectivization process and the desirable party direction regarding this matter are some of the

analyzed aspects. While the ideological premise of the socialist films as part of Socialist Realism art and propaganda phenomenon is clear, we attempt to emphasize the difference between the desirable representation (in films) and the harsh reality of those years in both Romanian and Soviet countryside.

Prof. Dr. habil. Sorin RADU, Alexandru NICOLAESCU,
Village Halls in the Romanian Countryside at the Beginning of the 1950s between Cultural and Political Propaganda

Village halls (in Romanian *cămine culturale*) appeared in many European countries and elsewhere as early as the nineteenth century, and multiplied in the twentieth century. The presence of these institutions in the rural world, despite obvious differences in their goals and activities, demonstrates a general interest in the cultural development of villages as well as the emergence and development of leisure practices among peasants. Our essay is not a study on the history of village halls, rather it focuses on the changes that this institution went through in the early years of the communist regime in Romania. We are mainly interested in analyzing how communists transformed the village hall into a place of propaganda under the guise of “cultural work”. The study starts from the premise that the communist propaganda deliberately did not distinguish between “political work” and “cultural work”. At the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, the village hall became the communist regime's central place for political and cultural propaganda.