Romanian diplomacy in the 20th century: Biographies, Institutional Pathways, International Challenges, eds. Adrian Vițalaru, Ionuț Nistor, Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021, 439.

Exploring the history of a nation's diplomacy over a prolonged period is a task of considerable complexity—one that challenges not only individual scholars but also collaborative academic endeavors. Conscious of the methodological intricacies and interpretive risks inherent in this field, the editors of *Romanian Diplomacy in the 20th Century* – Adrian Vițalaru, Ionuț Nistor, Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu – chose not to pursue a comprehensive or conclusive account of Romania's diplomatic evolution. Instead, they opted for a more modest yet analytically rigorous approach. Through a carefully selected array of case studies and thematic frameworks, the volume highlights specific, though highly consequential, aspects of Romanian diplomacy within the temporal scope of Eric Hobsbawm's „short 20th century". The editors, historians from Iași and specialists in Romanian diplomatic history, aimed not to produce a sweeping synthesis but to illuminate the complexity of the Romanian diplomatic service and its capacity to adapt to the shifting geopolitical and international challenges that followed the First World War.

The volume comprises 17 scholarly papers, organized into three chronological and thematic sections. The first, titled „Biographies, Projects, Debates", focuses on prominent Romanian diplomats and key foreign policy issues faced by the Kingdom of Romania during the interwar period. The second section, „The Romanian Diplomatic Network: Between Peace and War", addresses topics deemed by the editors as pivotal to Romanian diplomacy in the years leading up to and during the Second World War. The final section, „Under the Sign of the Cold War", explores the diplomatic activities of socialist Romania within the broader context of Cold War dynamics. Each section contains a roughly equal number of contributions, all of which approach their subjects from original perspectives and offer meaningful scholarly insights into the evolution of Romanian diplomacy throughout the 20th century. The volume also includes a brief preface and biographical notes on the contributors, located at the end of the book. Considering the depth of Serbian historiographical insight into Romanian diplomacy, a brief overview of each article in this volume is outlined below.

The first paper in the volume is a co-authored study by Professor Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, one of the editors, alongside Elena Cristina Brăgea, titled „Dimitrie C. Penescu: Biographical Aspects of the First Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Romania to the Holy See, 1920–1928". This ar-

ticle sheds light on the life and diplomatic career of Dimitrie C. Penescu, Romania's first ambassador to the Holy See, under whose tenure the Concordat was signed. What distinguishes this contribution is its multifaceted approach: beyond Penescu's biography as a seasoned career diplomat, the authors delve into the institutional development and operational dynamics of Romania's diplomatic representation in the Vatican, contextualized within key political challenges such as the minority question, the Concordat negotiations, and the organization of the royal family's audience with the Pope. The second article, „Behind the Scenes of Romanian Diplomacy: The Alexandru Gurănescu Case, 1921" by Daniel Cain, examines the internal workings of Romanian diplomacy through the lens of Gurănescu's suspension in 1918. The study holds particular relevance for Serbian historiography, as Gurănescu later served as Romania's ambassador to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1931–1936), and the incident itself involved figures such as Prince Arsenije Karađorđević, brother of King Peter I. The third contribution, „Raoul Bossy: Historian and Diplomat" by Silviu Miloiu, explores the life and intellectual legacy of Raoul Bossy, one of Romania's most prominent diplomats in the first half of the 20th century. The article emphasizes the intersection of diplomacy and historiography, with particular attention to Bossy's autobiographical writings, composed in exile, including his memoirs covering 1918–1940 and a diary spanning 1940–1969. Of special interest to Serbian readers is Bossy's commentary on Romanian-Serbian relations, based on archival research conducted in Vienna.

Two additional biographical studies round out the first section: Bogdan Schipor's „Gheorghe Tătărescu: Romania's Ambassador in Paris (December 1938–August 1939)" and Vitalie Văratic's „Dragoș Cotlarciuc: Son of the Metropolitan of Bukovina and Successful Wartime Diplomat". Schipor's article focuses on Tătărescu's diplomatic role in Paris during a period of mounting international tension, while Văratic's study highlights Cotlarciuc's mediation efforts in the repatriation of Romanian diplomats from Moscow and Soviet diplomats from Bucharest. The only article in this section that diverges from the biographical format is Daniel Citirigă's „Romanian Diplomacy and the Problem of Interwar Federalism in Central Europe". This paper traces the evolution of Romanian political attitudes toward federalist models, from initial skepticism, rooted in the legacy of Austria-Hungary, to cautious support for regional confederation projects. By the 1920s, many Romanian politicians viewed the Danube Confederation as a strategic solution to counter revisionist pressures concerning Bessarabia, Transylvania, and Dobruja. While Romanian diplomacy remained wary of Count Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi's „Pan-Europe" initiative, it openly supported Aristide Briand's proposal for a "European Federal Union"

that preserved national sovereignty and territorial integrity while promoting economic and political cooperation. However, such ideas were soon eclipsed by the global economic crisis and the rise of fascism and Nazism.

The second section of the volume opens with a contribution by one of the editors, Adrian Vițalaru, titled „Political Interests and Symbolic Stakes: The First Romanian Embassies, 1938–1939". Although Romania initiated efforts to elevate its diplomatic missions to embassy status as early as 1924, this goal was only realized in 1938 after considerable challenges and persistent efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and King Carol II. One of the principal obstacles was the prevailing notion that embassy status was reserved exclusively for great powers. Vițalaru demonstrates that Romania's proposals were accepted only by a limited number of countries –namely, Poland, France, the Vatican, and the Balkan Pact members, including Yugoslavia. The push for embassies was largely symbolic, driven by prestige rather than substantive diplomatic necessity, as evidenced by the fact that under Ion Antonescu's regime in 1940, all embassies were downgraded to legations. Editor Ionuț Nistor also contributes to this section with his article „Romanian Plenipotentiary Ministers and Consuls in Greece During the Second World War", offering a detailed account of Romania's diplomatic presence and activities in Greece during the conflict.

A central theme of Romanian diplomacy during the Second World War was the recovery of territories lost in 1940, particularly Northern Transylvania. This issue is explored in depth by Traian Sandu, professor of contemporary history and European studies at the Sorbonne, in his article „The Iron Guard and Antonescu's Regime Revisionism: The Transylvanian Syndrome". Given the significance of the topic, additional comments about this paper are warranted. Professor Sandu argues that Marshal Ion Antonescu committed Romania to the Eastern Front in alliance with Nazi Germany, driven by the belief that victory would secure the return of Northern Transylvania, which had been ceded to Hungary in 1940. However, this expectation was increasingly viewed as unrealistic, with opposition leader Iuliu Maniu describing it in 1942 as „Antonescu's obsession without foundation." Sandu highlights the fact that Adolf Hitler gave a positive response to Romania's territorial revision requests for the first time in March 1944. By that time, the Red Army had already reached Romania's borders.

Following Ana-Maria Stan's article „Failed Diplomatic Dialogues: Dinu Hiott, Jacques Truelle and Romanian Initiatives for Mediation Between Vichy France and Nazi Germany," which examines Romania's failed efforts to mediate between the two regimes, the theme of Romanian-Hungarian relations and the Transylvanian question is explored once again. This time, Ottmar Trașcă's focus is on Raoul Bossy's tenure as Romania's representative in Berlin

(March 1941–June 1943). The author illustrates how Bossy, initially aligned with Antonescu's expectations, quickly recognized by April 1941 that Romania's interests were secondary to those of Hungary and Bulgaria in German strategic calculations. Bossy's disillusionment marked a turning point in Romanian diplomatic realism regarding the possibility of regaining Northern Transylvania through German support. The article also addresses the contentious issue of territorial division in Yugoslavia following the April War, particularly the Romanian-Hungarian rivalry over Banat, which created tensions within the Axis alliance. The final contribution in this section, „About the Future: Talks of Romanian and Turkish Diplomats in Ankara, 1941–1943" by Emanuel Plopeanu, analyzes strategic discussions held in Ankara during the war. Plopeanu focuses on the diplomatic foresight and predictions made by Romanian and Turkish officials regarding the outcome of the conflict and its potential consequences for Romania's geopolitical position.

The final section of the volume opens with Dr. Paul Nistor's study on Mircea Meteș, a committed communist and the first secretary of the Romanian Legation in Washington. The article explores Meteș's resignation following the communist takeover in Romania, prompted by his disagreement with the party's foreign policy direction and the new diplomatic practices introduced under the communist regime. The next contribution, Cristina Preutu's „Old and New Romanian Diplomats: The Paris Legation and the Establishment of the Communist Regime in Romania", examines the Romanian diplomatic mission in France between 1944 and 1947, situating it within the broader political transformations in Romania and Europe during that period. Although diplomatic relations between Romania and France were not severed during the war, they were formally reestablished only after the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty in 1947. Preutu argues that the appointment of Ana Pauker as Minister of Foreign Affairs in November 1947 marked a turning point, halting the positive momentum in bilateral relations. The dismissal of Gheorghe Tătărescu and the installation of a Communist Party representative at the helm of Romanian diplomacy provoked strong negative reactions in Paris, with repercussions that, according to the author's research, persisted until 1955.

Professor Cezar Stanciu, who has extensively studied Yugoslav-Romanian relations during the socialist era, has further enriched this field with his work exploring Romania's engagement with the Non-Aligned Movement. His article, titled „A Comparative View of Romania's Approach to Non-Alignment During the Cold War", analyzes Romania's gradual alignment with the Non-Aligned Movement, drawing parallels with Yugoslavia's trajectory. Stanciu concludes that in both cases, Soviet pressure played a key role in encouraging engagement with the Third World, initially driven by economic inter-

ests and later evolving into broader political cooperation. The study also highlights differences between Romanian and Soviet perspectives on non-alignment and examines the strategic significance of Josip Broz Tito's support for Nicolae Ceaușescu in efforts to assert a more independent international position for Romania.

Another key contribution comes from Professor Hans-Christian Maner of the University of Mainz, who focuses on Romania's diplomatic rapprochement with the West. His article, „The New Course and The Way to the West: Corneliu Mănescu's Perspective on Diplomacy and Foreign Policy in the 1960s", analyzes the foreign policy initiatives of Romania's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1961 to 1972. Mănescu's tenure coincided with a period of intensified engagement with capitalist countries, reflecting a strategic shift in Romania's international orientation. The final study in the volume, „Romanian-Polish Relations in the 1980s: Between Cooperation and Disagreement" by Daniel Filip Afloarei, examines the evolving relationship between Romania and Poland during the final decade of communism. Afloarei highlights the factors that contributed to a renewed emphasis on cooperation within the socialist bloc, particularly as Romania began to pivot away from its earlier Western-oriented foreign policy. The article provides valuable insight into the shifting dynamics of Romanian diplomacy during a period marked by crisis and transformation across the socialist world.

Given its thematic breadth and analytical depth, the collection on Romanian diplomacy in the 20th century stands as a valuable resource not only for understanding Romania's diplomatic mechanisms but also for examining the broader contours of its foreign policy. The frequent, albeit indirect, references to Yugoslavia throughout the volume – despite it not being the central focus of any individual study – underscore the inherent interconnectedness of neighboring states. These recurring mentions affirm the notion that proximity fosters mutual influence, often subtle yet persistent, shaping diplomatic agendas and foreign policy decisions.

Of particular relevance to Serbian scholars is the contribution by Cezar Stanciu, whose comparative analysis of Romanian and Yugoslav engagement with the Non-Aligned Movement reveals underlying patterns in the foreign relations of socialist states with the Global South. His work also offers fresh perspectives on the strategic importance of Josip Broz Tito's support for Romania, especially in the context of Ceaușescu's efforts to assert a more autonomous international stance.

A distinctive strength of the volume lies in its „human dimension", achieved through the inclusion of detailed biographical studies of key Romanian diplomats. This approach allows readers to appreciate the personal, political, and institutional factors that shaped individual careers and influenced decision-making processes. By foregrounding the

lived experiences of diplomats, the collection enriches our understanding of diplomacy as both a professional and deeply human endeavor. In sum, through its thoughtful selection of topics, methodological diversity, and innovative historiographical perspective, the editors have not only fulfilled but exceeded their stated objective. By highlighting pivotal events, processes, and personalities, they have successfully traced the evolution of Romanian diplomacy during Hobsbawm's „short 20th century", identifying its critical turning points and offering a nuanced, well-articulated account of its developmental trajectory.

Nemanja MITROVIĆ

Dominique Kirchner Reill, *Riječka kriza. Život nakon Habsburške monarhije*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2024, 287.

"The history of the State of Fiume reveals the ruthless means and methods of imperialist policy," argued Zagreb University professor Ferdo Čulinović in the mid-twentieth century, recounting the events that had shaped the fate of this Adriatic city from the 1915 signing of the London Treaty through its annexation by Italy in 1924.[1] Written in the years after Rijeka had finally become part of the Yugoslav state, his account captured the spirit of an era shaped by the emergence of a new socialist order and the efforts to establish state legitimacy on the foundations of victory in the People's Liberation War. It also reflected Čulinović's distinctive approach to historiography, which relied heavily on the language of facts, while not shying away from reminding readers of the "lessons of history." Decades later, in his study of the Italian occupation of Yugoslav territories following the First World War, Dragoljub Živojinović concurred that Fiume's destiny was closely entwined with the imperialist ambitions of the Italian bourgeoisie. Thus, in a similar vein, both historians analyzed the fate of the city in light of Rome's imperial objectives. In Italian historiography, however, the dominant narrative about Fiume assumed a somewhat different character. It centered on the venture of Gabriele D'Annunzio and his legionaries in the city at the mouth of the Fiumara River (Rječina), framed against the looming shadow of Benito Mussolini's rise to power and the advent of fascism in Italy. "Danuncijada," as the Croatian writer Viktor Car Emin called it in his literary depiction of the events, was regarded as a pivotal moment in Italian hi-

[1] Following Dominique Kirchner Reill's practice in the English version of her book, the name Fiume, rather than Rijeka, will be used when referring to the city during the period under study.