

SCANDINAVIAN PERSPECTIVES. **S**OVERCOMING THE COLD WAR **P**RESSURES IN ROMANIA'S **P**OLICY TOWARDS NORTHERN EUROPE

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Abstract:

During the first years of the Cold War, Romania was isolated in terms of foreign policy, and forced to develop relations mainly with the USSR and other socialist states. During the de-Stalinization period, the East-West relations improved and Romania started to rebuilt its relations with the West, especially economic relations. This article briefly presents the re-establishment of Romania's relations with the Scandinavian states, in the context of the improved Romanian-West relations.

Rezumat:

Relațiile externe ale României cu Occidentul au fost la începutul Războiului Rece extrem de reduse. În acest context contactele cu statele din Nordul Europei s-au diminuat atât cantitativ, cât și calitativ. După moartea lui Stalin și odată cu începerea destalinizării, s-a creat o situație favorabilă reluării și dezvoltării relațiilor dintre România și Occident. În acest context, România va relua și adânci relațiile sale și cu statele scandinave. Între aceste state, Finlanda avea o relație specială cu URSS. Astfel, nu este de mirare, că România s-a orientat mai întâi către Finlanda, un stat totodată neutru, care putea asigura tranziția de la izolarea României în materie de relații externe cu Occidentul, la relații mai bune cu acesta. Articolul de față concluzionează că relațiile României cu țările nordice în perioada postbelică au fost direct determinate de o serie de factori precum: relațiile dintre Est și Vest în general, relațiile României cu Vestul sau relațiile Finlandei cu URSS.

Keywords: Romania, Scandinavia, perceptions, foreign relations, East-West cooperation

Very few Romanians knew anything about Northern Europe when Communist dictator Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej decided to approach these countries in the hope of improving Romania's economic relations. Nor can we say that there was a special interest towards this part of Europe among the Romanian Communists. This is why Romania's relations to Northern Europe have long been delayed. In 1960, when a governmental delegation was sent by Gheorghiu-Dej in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki, Northern Europe was almost unknown territory for the Romanians.

One of the main causes for such a situation consisted is the complete foreign isolation of the Communist regime in Romania. During the hard troubled years of Stalinism, the Romanian regime had surrounded itself with an ideological, political and mental barrier, trying to keep all Western influences at bay. Except for the peoples' democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, the entire foreign horizon was limited to an ideological image, an abstract description of a terrible menace defined in Leninist terms. The regime did not have any credibility or freedom to maneuver, but at the same time, it didn't want it either.

As Gheorghiu-Dej later confessed, the political climate in foreign policy making was dominated by prejudice. In a discussion with a Czechoslovak delegation, Gheorghiu-Dej recalled: "*ne era frică înainte să trimitem oameni în afară, ne era frică mare. Ce o să facă oamenii ăștia, n-o să-i mănânce capitaliștii? Și am început să trimitem. La început mai puțin. Spuneam așa, dacă i-o mânca, să nu-i mănânce pe toți.*"¹ Romania's Western relations were therefore limited to strict necessities, deriving from its industrialization program. Economy acted as a bridge in developing constructive relations across the Iron Curtain.

Involved in a large industrialization program, elaborated according to the Stalinist model of forced development, Romania relied mainly on the USSR and the other people's democracies for technology and raw materials. Customarily, though, these countries failed to satisfy Romania's industrial needs, due to their limited capacities or domestic requirements. In such cases, the Communist regime turned its eyes towards the West. The "imperialist camp" had the possibility to supply Romania's industrialization plan with virtually everything, but there were factors acting against such rapprochement. First of all, the political factors: under

¹ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (hereafter ANIC), folder Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (hereafter CC al PCR), Cancelarie, file 40/1964, 5 ["we were afraid to send people abroad before, we were terribly afraid. What are they going to do, wouldn't the capitalists eat them? And we started sending. A few at first. We used to say, if they do eat them, they're not going to eat them all" - author's translation]

the American pressure, the Western European countries limited their exports of strategic products towards the satellite countries. At the same time, these countries were not very keen on making the necessary efforts in order to overcome such difficulties. The prejudices mentioned above acted strongly against long term commitments. On the other hand, Romania, as well as other people's democracies, had very limited means of payment in foreign currencies.

Nevertheless, economic contacts represented the only form in which relations with the West were maintained, during 1948-1953. Also, economic exchanges represented the starting point for future development in relations. During the first postwar years, economic exchanges represented the only contact between Romania and Northern Europe. In 1949 and 1950, an analysis of foreign exchanges reveals that Romania had such relations with: Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The first two countries were the most important partners. The exchanges were dominated by Romanian exports of raw materials or agricultural products, amounting to a value of a few million rubles². The dynamic of the exchanges can be observed in the table below:

<i>Co untry</i>	1949		1950	
	Import	Export	Import	Export
De nmark	1,1	9,9	2,1	1,7
Fin land	3,0	-	9,4	-
No rway	0,4	-	0,04	-
Sw eden	3,2	2,2	0,6	-

The figures represent million rubles

Except for the very low amount of commercial exchanges, it is also noticeable the downfall marked by 1950. It was the year when the Korean War broke out, which later determined Stalin's decision to increase military preparations for a future war against "imperialism". These were some of the most tensioned moments of the Cold War which certainly acted against cooperation.

The only remarkable contact between Romania and Northern Europe in this period was represented by the third Congress of the International

² ANIC, folder CSP - CAER, Comerț exterior, file 33/1950, 23-24

Organization of Journalists, held in Helsinki, Finland, in September 1950. Controlled by Moscow, the Organization was nothing more than another instrument for Soviet propaganda, from which American and British journalists withdrew. Romania sent three delegates to Helsinki and they were quick to notice the Finnish prime-minister's difficulties for accepting to host the event. Kekkonen, as they reported to Bucharest, was the target of intense criticism in the "reactionary" Finnish press, because of his support for the Organization. Kekkonen was present at the inaugural session of the Congress. Minister of education Heljas also offered a cocktail for the participants. The Finnish government's support for the event caused negative reactions domestically, as the Romanian delegates reported³. In spite all this, the prejudices worked again: Finland and Helsinki left no significant impression on the Romanian delegates.

Urho Kekkonen was known for his pro-Soviet policy which sometimes went beyond the political needs of Finland. He pursued close relations with Stalin and relied on the USSR economically. This generated a world perception that Kekkonen and Finland were speaking on behalf of the Kremlin. Still, Finland's economic relations with the Soviet Union were beneficial. Finland had an active commercial balance with its Eastern neighbor and, after September 1952 when the payment of war reparations was complete, the commerce became more and more profitable⁴.

The death of Stalin represented a turning point, both for Kekkonen and for the Romanian policies towards the Western countries. Moscow seemed less interested in Kekkonen initially but the Finnish politician continued to play the Soviet card and it succeeded in the end. Moscow expressed its intention of offering a consistent loan to Finland, should Kekkonen remained prime-minister. After a short *intermezzo* in 1953-1954, Urho Kekkonen returned to power in the fall of 1954⁵. This coincided with a radical change in the Soviet policies towards Eastern Europe which opened the way for a different approach in Romania's relations with the Western countries.

Stalin's successors pursued a far more relaxed policy towards the satellites. Reform was the key word in the entire "Socialist camp". Malenkov's "New Course" demanded radical changes in both party leadership and the economical policy of the satellite countries. Gheorghiu-Dej managed to stay in power, taking advantage of the workers' riot in East

³ ANIC, folder CC al PCR – secția Cancelarie, file 24/1950, 119-123

⁴ Silviu Miloiu, *O istorie a Europei nordice și baltice. De la războiul rece la era globalizării*, vol. II (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2005), 157-159

⁵ Ibid., 160-161

Berlin in June 1953. The events in Berlin moderated the Soviet tone of criticism. In August 1953, when the Romanian leadership was summoned to Kremlin, Beria – fervent promoter of reforms – had already been removed and Moscow was concerned about the consequences of radical changes. Gheorghiu-Dej stayed in power and focused on limiting the consequences of the “New Course” in Romania. The Soviet leadership demanded profound changes in the Romanian economic policy, especially in industrialization. The Romanian Workers’ Party was asked to reduce the rhythm of industrial development and pay special attention to increasing the standards of living. Gheorghiu-Dej didn’t really agree with this approach. He was too vulnerable in power to afford opposition – as he later did – but the regime did try to elude some of Moscow’s requirements regarding industrial development.

In the spring of 1954, Khrushchev redirected his criticism towards the Council of Mutual Economic Aid. He accused the static character of the organization, its lack of functionality and efficiency in promoting economic cooperation. An interesting aspect regarding the CMEA meetings of 1954 was the Soviet position towards Finland. The USSR needed commercial exchanges with the West for the same reasons as all the other people’s democracies did. Furthermore, Khrushchev admitted that the USSR was not able of satisfying the needs of all satellites. This is why he advised towards a rapprochement with the “capitalist” world, from an economic point of view. In this perspective, a special attention was apparently paid to Finland. In May 1954 a CMEA meeting adopted a decision regarding the relations with the “capitalist” countries, which specified: *„să se considere ca oportună dezvoltarea schimbului de mărfuri cu Finlanda, în special prin majorarea livrărilor de utilaj industrial și materii prime, contra mărfuri finlandeze, ținând seama de faptul că țările membre ale CAER sunt în măsură să livreze Finlandei utilaje, pe care aceasta le-a importat până în prezent din țările capitaliste”*⁶.

The reasons for which Moscow imposed such a decision are obviously complex. The USSR certainly wanted to keep Finland very close, as shown above. Involving the peoples’ democracies in this strategy was mutually beneficial. These countries needed partners from the “outside world” and Finland was the best partner in Moscow’s vision. It was preferable to

⁶ ANIC, folder CAER, file 14/1954, 149-150. [“...to be considered as convenient to develop the exchange of commodities with Finland, especially by increasing deliveries of industrial machineries and raw materials, for Finnish goods, considering the fact that the CMEA member countries have the capacity to deliver machineries to Finland, which this country had previously imported from capitalist countries” – author’s translation]

develop exchanges with neutral and friendly Finland rather than Britain, France or Western Germany. It is also interesting that in the initial project of the decision, the recommendation to improve relations regarded all Scandinavian countries, but the final decision only mentioned Finland⁷.

These transformations had sensible consequences on the Romanian-Finnish relations. In March 1951 the two countries had signed a new Trade Agreement but the commercial exchanges remained at a very low level until 1953-1954, when the situation improved. An analysis of the Romanian Minister of Foreign Trade mentioned that in 1953 the value of Romanian-Finnish exchanges had increased six times as compared to 1952. This was due to a profitable exchange: Romania imported large amounts of technical paper from Finland, exporting black oil. The figures were still extremely low: in the total amount of the Romanian exports of oil, Finland represented 1,8% of the market and Norway 1,9%⁸. In December 1953 the Romanian government decided to send foreign trade specialists in Denmark and Norway, in order to study the market and the possibilities of economic cooperation. Romanian imports of paper and staple fiber from Finland continued to increase in 1953, as well as the exports of oil, reaching 3,47 million rubles (imports from Finland) and 4,57 million (exports to Finland). Among other Northern countries, the only one which maintained a noticeable position was Norway. Basically, Romanian-Norwegian trade consisted of the same exchanges: Romanian oil for Norwegian staple fiber and paper⁹.

A Trade Agreement between Romania and Norway was signed in 1956. Between May 23 and June 9, 1956 negotiations were conducted in Oslo, followed by the signing of a Protocol regarding commercial exchanges. The value of mutual trade was established at almost 55 million Norwegian crowns. The Romanian imports from Norway, as mentioned in the Protocol, consisted in staple fiber and aluminum. Just as in the precedent years, the Romanian exports consisted mainly in oil and oil products¹⁰. It's worth mentioning that another article in the document mentioned that Romania would enjoy the same status as the OEEC countries in what concerned taxes and tariffs. This was very profitable for Romania, given the fact that for many years the satellite states had been discriminated in matter of tariffs, due to the export restrictions imposed by the United States.

⁷ ANIC, folder CAER, file 14/1954, 145

⁸ ANIC, folder CAER, file 117/1952-1953, 4-6

⁹ ANIC, folder CAER, file 160/1953-1954, 143-149

¹⁰ ANIC, folder CAER, file 267/1955-1956, 114-115

As the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union improved, after the Geneva conferences of 1954-1955, initiatives aimed at improving relations became more frequent. In 1954, members of the Swedish Communist Party contacted the Romanian Workers Party offering their services for mediating an increase in commercial cooperation. The Swedish Communists requested permission, at party to party level, to approach the Romanian Legation in Stockholm for a meeting. Having a discussion with Romanian diplomats in Stockholm, they argued, would help them convince the public opinion and decision-making factors that Romania, as well as other peoples' democracies, was indeed interested in developing commercial exchanges with Sweden¹¹. The Romanian Politburo discussed this proposal and agreed to it in January 1954. Similar signals were coming from Finland as well. The Romanian Ambassador in Hungary, Ion Popescu-Puțuri, reported to Bucharest in March 1956 about a conversation he had with a Finnish diplomat. Apparently, he informed Popescu-Puțuri about Kekkonen's election as President, weeks before it happened. Furthermore, Popescu-Puțuri noticed that Finish diplomats were very open to discussing sensitive matters in private and refrained from such discussions when accompanied by large groups. Popescu-Puțuri was committed to inviting Finish diplomats to the Romanian Embassy, for private conversations¹².

Although Swedish authorities were interested in working out their relations with Romania on constructive bases, real progress was very difficult to achieve especially because unsolved economic issues of the past. In 1949 the Swedish government took the initiative of negotiating a Trade Agreement with Romania but under the condition of solving the Swedish demands of compensation. These demands consisted in almost 1 million USD for the proprieties of Swedish citizens affected by the Nationalization Act, apart from an industrial lease contract from the interwar period. In 1929 Swedish company STAB had signed an agreement with Romania for the lease of safety matches production, but the contract was annulled by a Romanian court of justice in 1947 because of some unpaid taxes. The Swedish government requested the debts to be deducted from the 30 million USD which STAB had paid to Romania. All together, the Swedish demands rose to approximately 4 million USD¹³.

¹¹ ANIC, folder CC al PCR - Cancelarie, file 12/1954, 4

¹² ANIC, folder CC al PCR - Cancelarie, file 47/1956, 18

¹³ ANIC, folder CC al PCR - Relații Externe, file 25/1952, 20-23

When Sweden offered to sign a Trade Agreement with Romania in exchange for a convenient settlement of these issues, Romania strongly refused. The main argument was that the two aspects (trade and compensation) should not be connected. Romania was willing to pay a part of this money under the form of gradual drawings (up to 5%) from the Romanian exports to Sweden, but Bucharest was not keen on settling the problem. According to a study of the Foreign Relations Section in the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers Party, the economic relations with Sweden were not considered essential for the Romanian economy. Most of the products imported from Sweden, the study concluded, could easily be obtained from elsewhere¹⁴.

The Swedish government submitted an *aide-memoir* to Bucharest in October 1954, containing new conditions for solving past issues, but Romania found the document unacceptable. Generally, the Gheorghiu-Dej regime refused to pay any compensation for the losses of foreign citizens due to the Nationalization Act. Certain concessions have been made to France, for example, but only after tough negotiations during which the French government gave up most of its claims.

The Romanian Legation in Stockholm admitted that it found it difficult to intervene at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the Romanian diplomats didn't have any contacts. A report of the Legation acknowledged that Romanians didn't even have contacts among the "progressive" (pro-Communist) journalists in Stockholm¹⁵. Once again, the prejudices mentioned above had shown their effects.

Regarding such shortcomings in the diplomatic activity, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a meeting with most of its diplomats in January 1956. The main aspect discussed was the attitude towards Western politicians and journalists. The Ministry demanded its workers to overcome their reticence in approaching Westerners and to establish active contacts in the "imperialist" countries¹⁶.

As Gheorghiu-Dej was trying to elaborate a more independent course of action in relation to the Soviet Union, Romania grew increasingly active in its relations with the West. Its policy towards Northern Europe was strongly influenced by this trend. Just as before, economy acted as a bridge across the Iron Curtain. Economic interest was a common denominator because it didn't involve political concessions on either side. Khrushchev's

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14

¹⁵ ANIC, folder CC al PCR - Cancelarie, file 10/1956, 82

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

dynamic policy in the West as well as the stabilization of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe favored a nuanced approach towards the “imperialist world”.

Romania’s interest in expanding its relations outside the “camp” limits and finding economic alternatives to the USSR was obvious from 1959, when a governmental delegation paid a long successful visit in the West and signed profitable contracts in France, Britain, Belgium and Holland¹⁷. One year later, the Romanian policy-makers turned their eyes to the North and to its growing opportunities for business. In the fall of 1960, Gheorghiu-Dej sent a numerous governmental delegation in a long visit to Scandinavia. Headed by Mihail Florescu, minister of Oil and Chemistry, the delegation visited Denmark, Finland and Sweden with the purpose of establishing new economic contacts.

The first stop was in Denmark, where the group was received by the Danish prime-minister, social-democrat Viggo Kampmann, apparently very interested in Romania’s industrial development¹⁸. Gheorghiu-Dej’s efforts to rapidly develop the industry (machinery and chemistry mainly) along with the high percentages of investments in these fields insured a high rhythm of development (one of the highest in Europe at that time). This raised a lot of curiosity abroad. Most of the politicians and businessmen the Romanians met in Scandinavia expressed interest regarding Romania’s industry.

Florescu visited many ship yards and factories of wood and timber processing, being interested in acquiring Danish ships with Diesel engines, as well as entire technological lines for wood processing, build by Danish model. At the same time, Florescu insisted that signing such contracts was conditioned by the increase of Romanian exports to Denmark which would create the necessary funds required for payments. Danish officials agreed to sell oil tankers to Romania, as well as fully automated production lines¹⁹.

Finland was the next stop on the tour. Florescu and the group were welcomed by the minister of Commerce, a close collaborator of Kekkonen’s. From the very beginning, the Finns were clear about their increasing interest in trading with Romania and most especially in importing oil. Mihail Florescu tried to open new opportunities, emphasizing Romania’s capacity of exporting chemicals, as well as food and agricultural products. Florescu was informed that Finland was

¹⁷ Lavinia Beta, *Alexandru Bârlădeanu despre Dej, Ceaușescu, Iliescu* (București: Evenimentul Românesc, 1997), 133

¹⁸ ANIC, folder CC al PCR – Cancelarie, file 211/1960, 2

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-5

importing chemicals from West Germany where they had large debts due to the fact that the Finnish export in that country was very limited. Finnish officials agreed that it was very convenient for them as well to discuss enlarging their imports from Romania, in what concerned those categories of merchandises²⁰.

Romania, Florescu explained, was very interested in continuing to import cellulose from Finland and also requested price offers for technological lines in the field of wood processing. He visited a few Finnish factories and seemed satisfied with what he saw, although, in his report to Gheorghiu-Dej, Florescu mentioned that the Danish factories appeared to be more efficient than the Finnish ones. President Kekkonen made time to meet with the group and made optimistic assessments regarding the future of Romanian-Finish trade. Its total value, by that time, had already increased to approximately 30 million rubles.

From Helsinki, the Romanian delegation went to Stockholm. This visit in particular was a bit more sensitive in its implications, because of the still unsolved issue of the Romanian debts. The visit was well organized by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially by count Berghe, apparently a great *țuică* drinker²¹. The Romanian debt was only brought up twice, but in a non-aggressive manner. Swedish governmental officials expressed their desire to put an end to the dispute with Romania regarding the debt. At one moment, the delegation participated in a meeting with Swedish bankers. Some of them were directly involved in the debt issue, having money to collect from the Romanian government. In spite all this, none of them brought the issue into discussion. The Swedish bakers preferred to discuss the future of Romanian-Swedish economic cooperation²².

Florescu made the same offers concerning the export of chemicals, food and agricultural products and, of course, oil. The Swedes were highly interested in oil, as well. It was at that time Romania's most important export item. Florescu used the oil export to convince the Scandinavians to enlarge cooperation. Nevertheless, his purpose was to find markets for the newly developed Romanian industry and to obtain the technology needed to continue the industrialization program. It was for this last reason that he accepted to increase the export of oil. Usually, Romania avoided exporting crude oil, given the fact that it had quite large refineries to process it.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-11

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17

²² *Ibid.*, 18

Upon his return, Florescu and the entire delegation reported to Gheorghiu-Dej, explaining everything they have seen and discussed in the Northern countries. The visit was considered an important step in enlarging Romania's economic horizon abroad, in an area with a great potential for economic complementarities. Hoping to preserve the positive conclusions of the visit, a Romanian parliamentary delegation visited Finland next fall.

The delegation was in Helsinki from 21 September to 1 October 1961, invited by the Finnish Parliament. They had several meetings with Karl-August Fagerholm, President of the Parliament and a prominent social-democrat with anti-Soviet political views. The Romanians were actually surprised by the enormous attention paid to them by Fagerholm and blame it on his anti-Soviet attitude that caused his political difficulties in the past. He was trying to escape the image of virulent anti-Communism, the Romanians presumed. Even the Finnish Communists like Herta Kuusinen were amazed by what they considered Fagerholm's unusual courtesy for the Romanian guests²³.

Although less visible, this visit had a clear political character. In their report to the party leadership, the members of the delegation made some interesting remarks concerning the domestic politics in Finland and the precarious balance between reality and appearance in the Finnish-Soviet relations: *"președintele Kekkonen duce o politică realistă și el este, probabil, sincer în exprimarea sentimentelor sale prietenești față de Uniunea Sovietică. Sunt însă mulți alții în jurul lui care, fățiș sau într-ascuns, gândesc altfel și caută să-i contracareze acțiunile. Este o stare de spirit antisovietică, întreținută de cercurile reacționare și, în primul rând, de social-democrații lui Tanner, sub impulsul acestuia. Se întreține un spirit iredentist. În urma cu 5 ani am fost dus să vizitez o școală-internat din Helsinki, foarte mare, foarte bine organizată - pentru ca, la urmă, să aflu că elevii școlii în număr de câteva sute erau exclusiv copii ai refugiaților din Carelia"*²⁴.

²³ ANIC, folder CC al PCR - Cancelarie, file 127/1961, 64

²⁴ Ibid., 63 ["President Kekkonen conducts a realistic policy and he is probably sincere in expressing his feelings of friendship towards the Soviet Union. But there are many around him who, plainly or secretly, have different opinions and try to counteract his actions. There is an anti-Soviet spirit, cultivated by reactionary circles and first of all by Tanner's social-democrats, under his impulse. An irredentist spirit is fostered. Five years ago I was taken to visit a school in Helsinki, very big, very well organized - and later I found out that the pupils, a few hundreds, were exclusively children of Karelian refugees" - author's translation]

The visits in the city also raised some questions for the Romanians. They carefully noted: *“de reținut că, în centrul orașului Helsinki, nu departe de Parlament, a fost înălțat, în urmă cu doi ani, un monument criminalului de război Mannerheim, care este înfățișat călare, în uniforma de campanie din iarna anului 1938. De altminteri, portretul lui se găsește în multe edificii publice, bulevardul cel mai mare din Helsinki poartă numele său iar mormântul său se găsește în loc de onoare în cimitirul eroilor”*²⁵. The time, when Romanian prime-minister I. Gh. Maurer will visit the grave and lay down flowers in Mannerheim’s memory, was not there yet. It was only 1961.

The Soviet plans for CMEA integration, inspired by the Common Market, became explicit starting with 1962. Romania opposed these plans with unusual vigor, mainly because they were in contradiction with Gheorghiu-Dej’s plans for development. Romania’s emphasis on its own national way towards Socialism became explicit. Gheorghiu-Dej had been implementing numerous measures meant to consolidate his regime since 1956, hoping to obtain a large degree of invulnerability in front of Moscow. When the divergences became explicit, Gheorghiu-Dej’s efforts to improve his relations in the outside (non-Communist) world grew more intense. This was the political climate which favored a rapprochement between Romania and the Scandinavian countries. Economy acted as an intermediary across the Iron Curtain. Interests focused on satisfying economic needs by means of complementarities. Romania found reliable partners in the North, able to provide her with the much-needed technology for industrialization. As the Cold War pressures grew weaker, political steps will become more facile, completing the economic rapprochement.

A few years later, Nicolae Petre, president of the People’s Council of Constanța County signed an article in the Communist party’s newspaper *Scânteia*, after a visit to Turku. After describing the historical wonders of centuries-old Turku and the magnificent sights he had seen, the author concluded: *“pretinsa glacialitate nordică a finlandezilor este imaginară. Peste tot am fost primiți cu căldură și prietenie.”*²⁶

²⁵ Ibid., 64 [“downtown Helsinki, not far from the Parliament, was erected, two years ago, a monument to war criminal Mannerheim, shown on horseback, in the uniform of the 1938 campaign. Also, his portrait is found in many public edifices, the largest boulevard in Helsinki carries his name and his grave is honorably placed in the heroes’ cemetery” - author’s translation]

²⁶ *Scânteia* (23 June 1964) [“...the so-called iciness of the Fins is imaginary. We were welcomed everywhere with warmth and friendship” - author’s translation]