

Maria Costea, *Relațiile politico-diplomatice româno-bulgare (1938-1940)/ Romanian-Bulgarian Politico-Diplomatic Relations (1938-1940)* (Cluj-Napoca: „Napoca Star” Publishing House, 2010), 475 pages, ISBN 978-973-647-756-0.

Ion CALAFETEANU *

The issue of Romania's relations with the neighbouring countries is one of the issues on which the attention of the Romanian historians was primarily directed, but also that of those in the neighbouring countries and will always be a topic of interest to the Romanian historians, a legitimate and demonstrated interest. Dr. Maria Costea's substantially work is further proof of this. The book brings an original contribution based especially on new archive documents and will have an important place in the history of International Relations. The book is in origin Maria Costea's Ph.D thesis carried out under the scientific supervision of Professor Dr. Viorica Moisuc.

The authoress developed an excellent scientific work on the Romanian-Bulgarian relations in a time of high tension in the international relations (1938-1940), which made its mark also on the Romanian-Bulgarian bilateral relations. In an inspired way, the plan of the work is also designed to highlight the impact of the international factors on the bilateral relations: the Agreement of Thessaloniki, the Czechoslovak Crisis and the Munich Agreement, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, the onset of the Second World War, the Soviet ultimatum to Romania in June 1940 and the Vienna Dictate etc.

All these events marked a strong advance of the revisionist policy, which on the one hand weakened Romania's international position and its ability and resistance and on the other hand favoured Bulgaria's revisionist policy, and ultimately they would lead to the Romanian-Bulgarian negotiations in Craiova and to the signing of the Treaty of Craiova on 7th September 1940.

The analysis that the authoress makes on the current state of the research on the issue of the Romanian-Bulgarian relations in the interwar period, with special regard to the years 1938-1940 form a very accomplished chapter in the work. In about 40 pages, the authoress makes the most comprehensive analysis of how the historiography in the two countries dealt with the Romanian-Bulgarian relations,

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similarities and mostly differences on the appreciation of the moments, events or issues existing between the two countries.

From the analysis made by Maria Costea, it is clear that, beyond the many existing problems between Romania and Bulgaria- normal between two neighbouring countries up to some point- the issue that had an impact on the relations between the two countries ("the problem issue" we could say) was that of the Southern Dobrudja. Actually, in essence, Maria Costea's work is dedicated to that fundamental issue within the dispute between Bulgaria and Romania.

A quality chapter of the book is devoted to presenting all the issues that formed the Romanian-Bulgarian dispute after the First World War till 1938, on the eve of the Second World War. We must point out the fact that, although the Soviet Union and Hungary also had revisionist claims against Romania, neither of them proved the revisionism as terrorist-like as Bulgaria, using the armed bands of komitadjis (organized especially by VDRO). Simultaneously, the "Dobrudja Revolutionary Organization" (DRO), founded in 1925, has a leftist political orientation and had links with the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Third International.

The Maria Costea's research on the evolution of the Romanian-Bulgarian relations between 1938 and 1940 is a definite scientific success. We would like to point out that the authoress demonstrates, with strong arguments, the direct relationship between the deterioration of the international situation, the failure of the collective security policy, the international isolation of Romania and the increase of the revisionist manifestations in Sofia.

The last four chapters professionally deal with the yielding of the Southern Doboudja issue, The Soviet and Nazi pressure, the negotiations in Craiova and the signing of the Treaty on 7th September 1940 and they analyse the Treaty's provisions and their application.

The conclusions of the book are clearly stated and well reasoned. The references she used are rich, diverse.

In conclusion, we face a work with a timeless theme that Dr. Maria Costea treats with professionalism. She demonstrates that she is a master of the scientific research methodology. She offered us a really valuable scientific work, a substantial scientific contribution.