

SÜDOSTEUROPA

Mitteilungen

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Schwerpunkt Rumänien

Anton Sterbling

Ein soziologischer Blick auf zentrale Strukturprobleme Rumäniens

Anneli Ute Gabanyi

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William Totok

Nationalismus und Verschwörungstheorien in rumänischen Medien

Bogdan C. Iacob

The Communist Regime in Romania: Interpretation or Condemnation?

Hans-Christian Maner

Die Zwischenkriegszeit als „Gründungsmythos“ der Gegenwart in Rumänien?



Daniel Göler

Rückkehr nach Albanien – Migration in Zeiten der Krise

Ana Brnabić

Serbian Energy and Climate Policy: A Critical Perspective

Analysen / Positionen / Essays

Schwerpunkt Rumänien

- 6 *Anton Sterbling*
Zur Lage in Rumänien – Ein soziologischer Blick auf zentrale Strukturprobleme
-
- 20 *Anneli Ute Gabanyi*
Rumänien ein Jahr nach den Parlamentswahlen Ende 2012
-
- 30 *William Totok*
Nationalismus und Verschwörungstheorien in rumänischen Medien
-
- 44 *Bogdan C. Iacob*
The Communist Regime in Romania: Interpretation or Condemnation?
-
- 62 *Hans-Christian Maner*
Die Zwischenkriegszeit als „Gründungsmythos“ der Gegenwart in Rumänien?
-
- 74 *Daniel Göler*
Rückkehr nach Albanien – Migration in Zeiten der Krise
-
- 88 *Ana Brnabić*
Serbian Energy and Climate Policy: A Critical Perspective

Berichte

- 101 Südosteuropa und seine alten / neuen Grenzen. Berlin, 28. Februar 2014
- 104 Mitglieder- und Jahreshauptversammlung der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft 2014. Berlin, 28. Februar und 1. März 2014
- 111 Rumänien nach dem Regierungswechsel. Jena, 23. Oktober 2013
- 115 Die Deutschen in Kroatien und Bosnien und Herzegowina. Sarajevo, 5.-6. Oktober 2013

119 Rezensionen

- K. Kilzer / H. Müller-Enbergs (Hrsg.): Geist hinter Gittern – Die rumänische Gedenkstätte *Memorial Sighet* C. Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat: Eurosepticism, Europhobia and Eurocriticism – The Radical Parties of the Right and Left *vis-à-vis* the European Union R. Krastanova: The Green Movement and the Green Parties in Bulgaria: Between System Integration and System Change A. Masát / E. Bos / M. Eckardt / G. Kastner / D. Wenger (Hrsg.): Der Donaauraum in Europa K. Schlick: An der schönen blauen Donau – Chancen und Nutzen der Donaustrategie R. Vărtăciuc-Medelet: Barock im Banat – Eine europäische Kulturlandschaft

Sehr geehrte Leserin, sehr geehrter Leser,

wie ist die Bilanz der Regierungsarbeit der Sozialliberalen Union unter Premierminister Victor Ponta in Rumänien ein gutes Jahr nach dem Sieg bei den Parlamentswahlen im Dezember 2012? Was sind die zentralen strukturellen und institutionellen Probleme Rumäniens? Wie steht es um die wirtschaftliche und soziale Stabilität nach mehreren Jahren innerer Auseinandersetzungen im Schatten der globalen Wirtschafts- und Finanzkrise? Welche Rolle spielen rechtsradikales Gedankengut und Verschwörungstheorien in den rumänischen Medien? Welche Interpretationsmuster gibt es im modernen Rumänien in Bezug auf die kommunistische Periode einerseits und die Zwischenkriegszeit andererseits? – Ein differenziertes Bild des modernen Rumäniens möchte unser *Rumänien-Schwerpunkt* zeichnen, bei dem fünf ausgewiesene Experten zu Wort kommen.

Die Beiträge basieren auf Vorträgen bei einer Rumänien-Konferenz an der Universität Jena am 23. Oktober 2013 unter der Leitung des Rumänisten Prof. Wolfgang Dahmen, der dankenswerter Weise auch die Auswahl und Erst-Redaktion der Beiträge vornahm. Unser Schwerpunkt ist somit auch Ergebnis einer erfolgreichen Kooperation der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft mit dem Jenaer „DFG-Graduiertenkolleg 1412 – Kulturelle Orientierungen und gesellschaftliche Ordnungsstrukturen in Südosteuropa“ sowie dem Imre Kertész-Kolleg Jena. Ergänzende Informationen zu den Themen und Diskussionen der Konferenz bietet ein Tagungsbericht.

Unser Schwerpunktheft wird ergänzt durch zwei Analysen zu top-aktuellen Themen in Albanien und Serbien. Der Geograph und Migrationsfachmann Daniel Göler untersucht die Strukturen und Folgen von Emigration und – vor allem in Folge der Krise in Griechenland – von Remigration für *Albanien*, einer „Migrationsgesellschaft“, in der fast die Hälfte der Einwohner über Migrationserfahrung verfügt. Die Energie-Expertin Ana Brnabić widmet sich der Energie- und Klimapolitik in *Serbien*. Sie illustriert überzeugend, wie die dortige einseitige Abhängigkeit von Kohle für die Elektrizitätsproduktion in eine wirtschaftliche Sackgasse führt. Dazu kommen gravierende Folgen für Umwelt und Gesundheit mit der imminenden Gefahr, energie- und klimapolitische Ziele – nicht zuletzt im Rahmen des EU-Beitrittsprozesses – zu verfehlen.

Eine aufschlussreiche Lektüre wünscht Ihnen

Ihre Redaktion

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Main Focus: Romania

Anton Sterbling

The Situation in Romania

A Sociological Perspective on Key Structural Problems

The article discusses important structural problems in contemporary Romania from a sociological point of view. In particular, it deals with former and present questions concerning minorities. These questions have recently experienced a remarkable actualisation due to the current “regionalization-debate” and other developments in domestic and foreign policies.

The article further discusses consequences and problems resulting from cross-border and internal migration. Other key subjects are regional disparities concerning economic and social structures as well as certain evidence for a “democratization crisis” in Romania. Closely linked to that focus are problems concerning institutional change. One sign providing evidence of these problems is that some institutional sectors are very vulnerable to corruption.

Finally, the article addresses questions about the collective identity and future perspectives, especially concerning pan-European developments.

Anneli Ute Gabanyi

Romania One Year after the Parliamentary Elections of End-2012

The Social-Liberal Union won the parliamentary elections in Romania that were held in December 2012 by a considerable majority. Its victory represents a turning point in Romania’s political development.

After several years of domestic infighting and austerity measures caused by the worldwide financial and economic crisis, the protests of the population against these measures led to the collapse of the government headed by Prime Minister Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu in early 2012, a politician closely linked with President Traian Băsescu. The new interim government of the Social-Liberal Union headed by Prime Minister Victor Ponta unsuccessfully tried to have President Băsescu unseated in a referendum.

Following the December 2012 parliamentary elections, despite continuing tensions between the Prime Minister and President, Romania’s economy has been steadily improving, while the social hardships imposed on the population have been alleviated.

William Totok

Nationalism and Conspiracy Theories in the Romanian Media

The synthesis presents the main publications from Romania's radical right that played an important role in shaping public opinion after 1990.

At the organizational level the Romanian radical nationalist scene has remained divided, mainly for reasons of political and ideological strife. But political ideas, concepts of the racist or anti-Semitic ideology and historical interpretations that reflect the universe of thought belonging to the radical right in Romania have been disseminated through the media over the past years.

In this context, the present synthesis focuses on several newspapers, films and books popularizing ideas borrowed from the fascist ideology of the inter war Iron Guard, as well as current forms of Holocaust denial, closely related to the attempts of the legal and moral rehabilitation of the dictator Ion Antonescu, a key ally of Hitler.

Bogdan C. Iacob

The Communist Regime in Romania: Interpretation or Condemnation?

The article analyses the second life of the concept of genocide in public, scholarly and legal post-2006 discourses about how to deal with the communist past in Romania. It counterpoises such problematic radical condemnations with recent developments in local historical studies.

The contribution focuses on a new generation of historians (in their thirties and early forties), exemplifying these approaches by discussing novel studies about repression, institutions and biographies. It argues that the employment of the term genocide on the one hand reflects specific traditions of public, scholarly and legal narratives about the communist regime. On the other hand, it highlights the ambiguity and misrepresentation of historical phenomena concerning the period from 1945 to 1989 in Romania.

Such overbearing denunciatory attitudes potentially obfuscate the complexities and varieties of the past. Benefiting from a genuine archival revolution after 2007, young historians counterbalance opaque, uncritical narratives of victimization with a renewed will for interpretation and revision.

Hans-Christian Maner

The Inter-War Period as a "Founding Myth" of Romania's Present?

In the commemorative culture of Romania after 1989/90, an important role is attributed to the inter-war period; it is described as being almost a "founding myth". After decades in which authoritarian and totalitarian regimes had shaped Romania's image and fate, the intellectual elite of the country is seeking historical legitimation for the new political development that was intended to smooth the path towards a parliamentary-democratic system.

The intellectual positions fluctuated between positive-euphoric assessments of the inter-war period to explicitly critical judgements. The respective historical localisation is not insignificant for the assessment of the present political situation in Romania.

Daniel Göler

Returning to Albania – Migration in Times of Crisis

The analysis of Albanian reverse migration compares the situation of returning during “the good times” and “the bad times”. Against this background, the socio-economic context and the individual situation of return migrants to Albania are emphasized in the article.

Three key results are pointed out: First, the current wave of return migration is not a completely new phenomenon. In some respects it is a continuation of well-known patterns from the recent past. A new element is the more or less enforced character of the return in times of economic crisis, especially from the European country most directly affected, i.e. Greece.

Secondly, return migrants leave a fundamentally changed society, which initially received them. But they reconnect with more or less unchanged economic, political and social conditions in Albania. Finally, the “new” returnees, such as those from Greece, bring imprints from abroad in the same way the “older ones” did, regardless of the transformed framework there.

Ana Brnabić

Serbian Energy and Climate Policy: A Critical Perspective

Serbian thermal power plants are among the primary sources of NO_x, dust pollution and the single largest source of SO₂ in Europe. Strangely though, Europe is more worried about this than Serbia itself although Serbian citizens suffer gravely from the pollution. The UN World Health Organization (WHO) identifies Serbia as the country with the highest increase in mortality rates due to lung cancer in Europe.

Extremely high dependency on coal (lignite) for electricity production has serious negative effects on Serbia’s agriculture, the health system and its economy. Even the state-owned electric power company (EPS) admits – although never officially – that the external costs of outdated thermal power plants in Serbia reach about € 13 cents per each kWh of electricity produced. This means that the real price of electricity production in Serbia is about € 18 cents per kWh. In spite of this, the new Energy Strategy envisions over 1 GW of new coal-fueled power plants by 2030. To make things worse, 76% of Serbia’s coal reserves are based in Kosovo, meaning the country will have to import coal to burn it, thus paying for additional CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere and continued external health costs suffered by its citizens. The heating sector is heavily dependent on gas imports. This dependency further compromises the energy security of Serbia.

As many would say in Serbia: “From here, the only way is up”. As far as the energy sector is concerned, up means renewables. Serbia is simply not large and rich enough to preserve its coal-based energy policy, but it is slow to act on this assessment.