

Serbian/Yugoslav-Romanian Relations and Interactions in the 20th Century

**Edited by
Vladimir Lj. Cvetković
Ionuț Nistor**



Belgrade, 2025

INSTITUTE FOR RECENT HISTORY OF SERBIA
Series „Zbornici radova” Vol. 30
FACULTY OF HISTORY, „ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA” UNIVERSITY OF IAȘI

For Publishers

Dr Vladan Jovanović

Editors

Dr Vladimir Lj. Cvetković, Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade
Prof. Dr Ionuț Nistor, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Iași

Reviewers

Academician Ljubodrag Dimić, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade
Dr Daniel Cain, Institute for South East European Studies, Bucharest
Dr Vojislav Pavlović, Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade
Prof. Dr Silvana Rachieru, University of Bucharest, Bucharest

Editorial Board

Prof. Dr Raul Carstocea, Maynooth University, Maynooth
Prof. Dr Martin Previšić, University of Zagreb, Zagreb
Dr Boris Mosković, Institute of History, Faculty of Arts of the Charles
University, Prague
Dr Aleksandra Đurić Milovanović, Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade
Dr Slobodan Selinić, Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade
Dr Dmitar Tasić, Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade
MA Nikola Koneski, Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade
(Secretary)

Translation and proofreading

Ivica Pavlović

Layout

Nebojša Stambolija

ISBN 978-86-7005-205-5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Vladimir Lj. CVETKOVIĆ, Ionuț NISTOR

**Serbian/Yugoslav-Romanian Relations
and Interactions in the 20th Century9**

PART I: A NEW BEGINNING, THE CRISIS OF THE VERSAILLES SYSTEM AND THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Andelija MILADINOVIĆ

**The Relations between the Serbian and
Romanian Orthodox Churches 1919–193427**

Aleksandar Đ. MARINKOVIĆ

**Establishing the Dynastic Link between the Kingdom of Serbs,
Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Romania51**

Srđan MIĆIĆ

**Yugoslav-Romanian Relations in Bilateral
and Multilateral Context 1925–192771**

Mile BJELAJAC

**The Decline of Common Security.
Yugoslavia and Romania 1936–194195**

Adrian VIȚALARU

Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovak Crisis of 1938107

**PART II: YUGOSLAV-ROMANIAN RELATIONS
IN A DIVIDED EUROPE**

Ionuț NISTOR Romanian-Yugoslav Cultural Relations in the Period 1945–1948	121
Vladimir Lj. CVETKOVIĆ Yugoslavia, Romania and the June 28th 1948 Cominform Resolution: The First Consequences	145
Alexandru D. AIOANEI The United Kingdom and Romanian-Yugoslav Relations in the 1950s	161
Nemanja MITROVIĆ In the Shadow of the Moscow Declaration: Official Visit of Josip Broz Tito to Romania, June 23–26, 1956	177
Adrian-Bogdan CEOBANU The First Appointment as Ambassador. The Beginnings of Vasile Șandru’s Mandate in Belgrade 1969–1970	195
Petar DRAGIŠIĆ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist Party from the mid-1980s to the fall of Ceaușescu	207
Ratomir MILIKIĆ Accession of Yugoslavia and Romania to the Council of Europe in the Second Half of the 20th Century: Similarities and Differences	219

**PART III: HOW WE SAW
AND UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER**

Marija MILINKOVIĆ A Cry of Horror Rose from Our Chests: The Romanian View of the May Coup	235
Olivera DRAGIŠIĆ The Peach – Unnoticed Symbol of the Great War in the Romanian Novel <i>The Game with Death</i> and Bulgarian Novel <i>The Peach Thief</i>	255
Mircea MĂRAN The Attitude of the Weekly <i>Graiul românesc</i> (Romanian Voice) from Pančevo Towards the Yugoslav Dynasty and State	269
Dragan BAKIĆ, Rastko LOMPAR The Image of the Iron Guard in Yugoslavia and Reflections of the Crisis in Romania 1934–1941	279
Zoran JANJETOVIĆ An Attempt at Creating a New National Minority in North-East Serbia in the First Years after WWII	307
Miodrag MILIN Toward a Fluid Identity Profile: The Serbs in Romania after WWII	323
Notes on Contributors	347

UDK: 327(497.1:498)"19"
341.7:929 Шандру В.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31212/2025.serb-roman.ceo.195-206>

Adrian-Bogdan CEOBANU
„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași
adrian.ceobanu@uaic.ro

The First Appointment as Ambassador. The Beginnings of Vasile Șandru's Mandate in Belgrade 1969–1970

Abstract: This paper examines certain aspects of Vasile Șandru's biography and his diplomatic work in Belgrade, focusing particularly on the first two years of his tenure. Serving as Romania's ambassador to Yugoslavia from 1969 to 1974, this was Șandru's initial appointment in such a role. The paper seeks to address several questions: What was the state of Romanian-Yugoslav relations at the close of the 1960s? What factors contributed to his appointment to this position? What were the central developments at the onset of his diplomatic mission?

Keywords: Vasile Șandru, Belgrade, Ambassador, Activity, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Josip Broz Tito

Introduction

My interest in the biography of Vasile Șandru is especially tied to his diplomatic activity in Moscow from 1989 to 1992. On December 27, 1989, following the National Salvation Front's rise to power, Vasile Șandru, a retired career diplomat who had stepped down in 1987, was appointed to Moscow. He became Romania's last Ambassador to the Soviet Union and the first to the Russian Federation.¹ In the following pages, I will present some details about his biography and his activity in Belgrade. For him, it was the first appointment as ambassador, so I will try to answer some questions: What was the status of Romanian-Yugoslav relations at the close of the 1960s? What factors influenced his appointment in Yugoslavia? What were the main points of the beginning of his mandate? The sources of this study are diverse: the diplomatic reports sent by Vasile Șandru and kept at the arc-

¹ See details about this aspect in Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, „Diplomacy in a Time of Transition: Romanian Diplomats in Eastern Europe (1990–1993)”, *Central Europe*, vol. 23, 1/2025, 88–109.

hive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, documents from National Archives of Romania, as well as existing studies in specialized literature.

Short Biography

Vasile Șandru was born on October 12 in the city of Băicoi, Prahova county. He graduated from high school in 1946, in Ploiești, after which he enrolled at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest. After a year, he was sent to Moscow to attend the Energy Institute. During the time spent in the Soviet capital, he was the secretary of the group of Romanian students in the city. In 1953, he returned to Romania, being assigned as an engineer at Energo-trust Bucharest. Four years later, he was transferred to the thermoelectric plant „Grozăvești”.² We can say that at the end of the 50s, the first stage of his career was coming to an end, one in which he had no contacts with diplomacy.

In 1958 he was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and appointed second secretary at the Romanian Embassy in Belgrade.³ He began a long career in Romanian diplomacy spanning over three decades. Years later, in an interview given in 1994, he would recall that, in the summer of 1962, while he was at the diplomatic mission in the capital of Yugoslavia, he met Nicolae Ceușescu, who was on his way to Italy where he was going to spend his vacation: „He arrived in Belgrade by train and a schedule was set so that he would visit Belgrade the following day. He was a tourist, because in fact there was nothing official. No one from the Yugoslavs even expected him. Party-line relations with the Yugoslavs did not exist. And the program was like this: during the day he would visit Belgrade, in the evening his special carriage would be attached to a train going to Venice, but to stop at Knin in Yugoslavia and from there they would go to visit the Yugoslav coast. The train from Knin was to go to Venice and from Knin Ceaușescu was to visit the Yugoslav coast, then by car to cross Italy to Venice.”⁴ Vasile Șandru was assigned by the embassy to accompany him during his stay in Yugoslavia, discussing various aspects. Moreover, Ceaușescu was interested in finding out as much information as possible about Romania's neighbors: „He was very interested in knowing the situation in Yugoslavia starting from various details... living standards, meat consumption per capita, incomes and so on, up to the larger political issues”.⁵

In 1963, Vasile Șandru returned to the central administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holding various positions: as deputy director and

² Arhivele Naționale ale României [National Archives of Romania] (ANR), Fond CC-PCR Secția Cadre, file Ș6, 2.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Arhiva de Istorie orală – Radio România [Oral History Archive] (OHA, Radio România) Interviu realizat de Mariana Conovici, 12.05.1994. (<https://www.rador.ro/2015/02/19/ceausescu-era-interesat-de-realitatile-din-iugoslavia/>).

⁵ OHA, Radio România, Interviu realizat de Mariana Conovici, 12. 05. 1994. (<https://www.rador.ro/2015/02/19/ceausescu-era-interesat-de-realitatile-din-iugoslavia/>).

director of the 2nd Department of Relations, then of the Protocol Department, and in 1967, he became the deputy minister of foreign affairs. In August 1969 he was named Romanian ambassador to Yugoslavia, where he stayed for five years, until 1974, when he returned to the MFA headquarters. In a characterization done along party lines that year, his qualities were captured: „from the assessment of the management team of the ministry, it follows that he has good political and professional training, experience in diplomatic work. He has proven responsibility and competence, correct and dignified behavior within the entrusted missions, skillfully promoting the interests of our state in relations with other countries (...) he is energetic, a good organizer and with initiative in his work”.⁶ We also know that he was already married to Silvia⁷ born Gall, of Hungarian nationality, born on July 28, 1929, in Bucharest, and who worked as a librarian at the Institute for the study of the Romanian Communist Party and of the workers' movement. They had two children together.⁸

After eight years spent in Romania – between 1977 and 1982, he led the ministry's department in charge of relations with the socialist countries at MFA – he was appointed ambassador to Spain from 1982 to 1986.⁹ After retiring in 1987, in December 1989 he was named ambassador to the Soviet Union, and after three years spent in Moscow, he permanently retired from Romanian diplomacy. He died in August 2001.

The appointment of Vasile Șandru in Belgrade in August 1969 has an explanation. First of all, he had previously worked in the embassy in Yugoslavia as second secretary, he knew the Serbian language well, but also other foreign languages such as Russian¹⁰ and French, and within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs he got to know the problems in the Balkans. While working in the central administration of the MFA, he gained experience, met with foreign ambassadors accredited to Bucharest, thus getting to know various aspects of international relations. Moreover, in September 1964, on the occasion of the meeting between Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej and Josip Broz Tito, Șandru had been the official translator of the Romanian leader.¹¹ Also, on the occasion of other meetings, the diplomat was part of the official delegations. And from our point of view there can be another explanation. Even in 1964, the two leaders participated in the laying of the foundation stone for the Iron Gates I, inaugurated in May 1972. Therefore, sending in August 1969 an ambassador with studies in the energy field was not accidental.

⁶ ANR, Fond CC-PCR Secția Cadre, file Ș6, 2.

⁷ OHA, Radio România, Câteva impresii din viața...Interviu de Mariana Conovici, 1995. (<https://www.rador.ro/2019/03/13/sub-pasii-femeii-creste-iarba-silvia-sandru/>).

⁸ ANR, Fond CC-PCR Secția Cadre, file Ș6, 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁰ ANR, Fond CC-PCR Secția Cadre, file Ș6, 4.

¹¹ Vasile Șandru, „7 Septembrie 1964. Martor la întrevvedereea Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej-Iosif Broz Tito”, *Magazin Istoric*, 5/1998, 50-51.

Romanian-Yugoslav relations in the 1960s

In a doctoral thesis defended several years ago in Cluj-Napoca, Laura Herța identified four stages in the evolution of Romanian-Yugoslav relations between 1948–1970: the first, between 1948 and 1954 marked by hostility, the second (1955–1959), one of the normalization of relations, the third (1960–1964) characterized by the intensification of interstate relations, but not inter-party ones and the fourth, between 1965–1970, rapprochement.¹² So, at the time of Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej's death, the bilateral relations were in permanent development, and Nicolae Ceaușescu continued this line.

In Romanian historiography, it has already been emphasized that the two leaders, Ceaușescu and Tito, consulted on various aspects related to the evolution of international relations or on international conferences of communist parties around the world. In fact, there were numerous visits between the two leaders immediately after 1965: Tito's state visit to Romania (April 18–23, 1966), Tito's visit to Bucharest (December 1966), Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to Belje (January 3–5, 1968), Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to Belgrade (May 27–June 1, 1968), a one-day consultation on August 24 1968 in Vršac,¹³ the talks in Timiș from 1–2 February 1969, but also the discussions in Kladavo in September 1969.¹⁴ The title of a volume of documents published 10 years ago, referring to these discussions, is suggestive: „The Friend from Belgrade”.¹⁵ Also, this subject has recently been analyzed in Serbian historiography, insisting on the Tito-Ceaușescu relationship in the period 1968–1970.¹⁶ As Nemanja Mitrović observed, between the two leaders it was „A Relationship Built on a Realistic Basis.”¹⁷

¹² Laura Herța, *Relațiile româno-iugoslave în perioada 1950–1970*, (Cluj-Napoca: PhD. Thesis, 2011).

¹³ We can note that there were three meetings during 1968; these meetings must be correlated with the Czechoslovak crisis, which can be considered a factor of rapprochement.

¹⁴ And these visits continued after 1969, reaching 19 visits by 1980.

¹⁵ *Prietenul de la Belgrad. Întâlnirile Ceaușescu-Tito (1966–1970). Documente*, Cezar Stanciu (eds.), (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2014).

¹⁶ Nemanja Mitrović, *Tito–Čaušesku: godine zbližavanja. Jugoslovensko-rumunski odnosi 1968–1970*, (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2020); see also, Vladimir Lj. Cvetković „Yugoslav-Romanian Relations in the Days of the Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968”, *1968–četrdeset godina posle*, Zbornik radova, ur. Radmila Radić, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008), 161–181.

¹⁷ Nemanja Mitrović, „Tito's and Ceaușescu's Personal Contribution to the Development of Yugoslav-Romanian Cooperation in the Late 1960s and Early 1970s”, *New Cultural and Political Perspectives on Serbian-Romanian Relations*, Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović, Jovana Kolundžija, Mircea Măran, Otilia Hedeșan, Christene D'Anca (eds), (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2024), 200.



Nicolae Ceaușescu and Josip Broz Tito (airport Surcin, Belgrad, June 1968)
<https://fototeca.iicmer.ro/picdetails.php?picid=34462X10X50> (file 132/1968)

The visits can also be explained in another way. Ceaușescu tried to reach the West through all channels, and Yugoslavia could be one. At that time, for example, Yugoslavia had better relations with the USA and democratic Europe, and for Ceaușescu the advice and experience of a communist leader such as Tito was more than necessary. The two states also shared numerous common interests, and during the 1960s, they signed several economic and cultural agreements, including the reciprocal publication of their leaders' works.¹⁸ A 1969 report from the Romanian embassy in Belgrade described the defining feature of bilateral relations as „their continuous development on all levels, the expansion of collaboration into new areas, the deepening of mutual understanding, and the strengthening of an atmosphere of closeness and trust between the two countries.”¹⁹ Setting aside the period's characteristic diplomatic language, Romanian-Yugoslav relations arguably reached their most fa-

¹⁸ Daniela Mătășaru, „Relațiile româno-iugoslave (1946–1980). Poziția comuniștilor români față de modelul iugoslav de cosntruire a socialismului”, *România și sistemele de securitate în Europa 1919–1975*, Ioan Ciupercă, Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor, Dan Constantin Măț (eds.), (Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași, 2009), 375–376.

¹⁹ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], (AMAE), Fond Problema 20/1969/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, vol. 1054/1969, 1.

avorable point since 1945. This was the general context in which Vasile Șandru arrived at the head of the diplomatic mission in Belgrade in August 1969.

Highlights of the mission (1969–1970)

Vasile Șandru succeeded Aurel Mălnășan, who had held the post in Belgrade since 1963. Following 1946, the Romanian diplomatic mission in Yugoslavia was headed by a series of envoys: Tudor Vianu (ambassador, from March 1, 1946), Theodor Rudenco (ambassador, from December 20, 1947), Mihai Petruc (chargé d'affaires, from November 1950), Silviu Munteanu (chargé d'affaires, from January 1953), Nicolae Guină (ambassador, from September 10, 1954), and Ion Rab (ambassador, from April 24, 1959). At the time Vasile Șandru took office - and throughout his mandate - the Romanian embassy in Belgrade remained modest in size. Alongside the head of mission, the staff comprised a first secretary, a secretary, two attachés, as well as a military attaché and an economic secretary. The embassy chancellery was located on Kneza Miloša street no. 70.²⁰

In fact, at the end of the 1960s, Romania had 52 embassies open (including seven on the American continent and nine on the African continent), a Legation of the S.S.R. in Rio de Janeiro three Consulates General (Istanbul, Alexandria, Sydney), a consular and commercial Representation in Madrid and four Permanent Missions (at the UN-New York, UN-Geneva, UNESCO-Paris and at the International Atomic Energy Agency / IAEA-Vienna).²¹ If the diplomatic mission in Moscow was considered the most important for the regime in Bucharest, we believe that the one in Belgrade is also among the most important, but also difficult at the same time.

Another aspect should be mentioned: in August 1969, a new Yugoslav ambassador, Iso Njegovan, arrived in Bucharest, replacing Jakša Petrić.²² We also have the list of the heads of mission of Yugoslavia in the Romanian capital: Dane Medaković (ambassador, from May 31, 1946), Radonja Golubović (ambassador, from October 17, 1947), Radoš Jovanović (ambassador, from October 13, 1948), Drago Rafaj (chargé d'affaires, from February 15, 1950), Nikola Vujanović (ambassador, from November 17, 1954), France Hočevar (ambassador, from February 19, 1958), Arso Milatović (ambassador, from March 2, 1960).²³

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

²¹ *Buletin Oficial*, no. 89/21 august 1969 (Decret nr. 589 din 21 august 1969 privind organizarea și funcționarea Ministerului Afacerilor Externe).

²² AMAE, Fond Problema 20 E/1969/Iugoslavia, vol. 1052/1969, 9-53 (On July 29, Jakša Petrić was received by Corneliu Mănescu, announcing his departure from Romania starting with August 15. Already on August 20 of the same year, George Macovescu, first deputy minister received Iso Njegovan. Two weeks later, the new ambassador of Yugoslavia was received by Corneliu Mănescu, the two sketching the details of the meeting between N. Ceaușescu and I. Tito).

²³ AMAE, Anuar diplomatic 1962, 185.

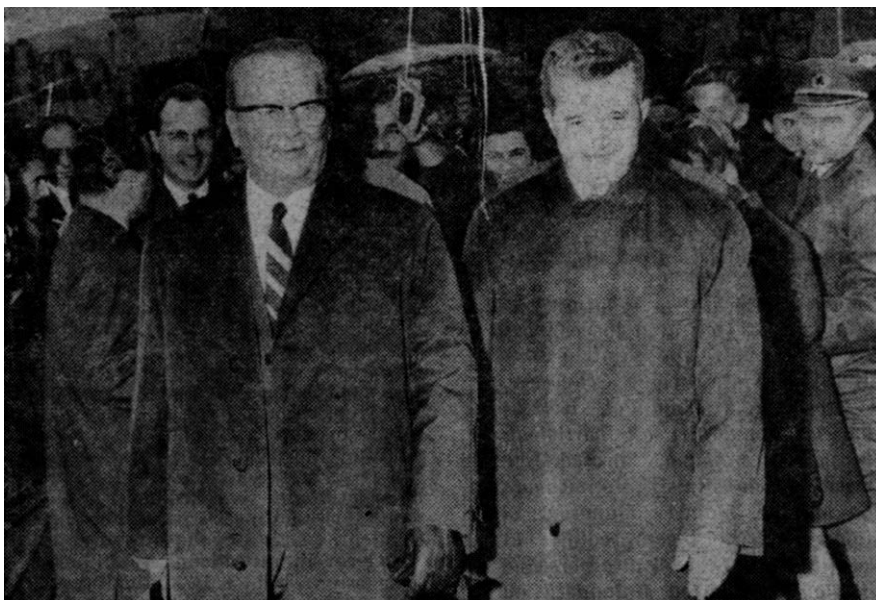


Vasile Șandru presenting letters of accreditation to Josip Broz Tito
(Personal archive of the Șandru family)

Shortly after arriving in Belgrade, the new ambassador was part of the Romanian delegation that met in Kladovo and Turnu Severin on September 20, 1969 with the Yugoslav delegation led by Tito. The discussions focused on the economic aspects of bilateral cooperation. Both leaders were interested in the progress of the works, which at that time was close to 80%. Ceausescu underlined the importance of the hydroelectric power plant (HPP) for strengthening the economies of Romania and Yugoslavia; he also insisted on building a new Iron Gates II hydroelectric power plant, while Tito was more reserved, especially because of the major investments Yugoslavia had to make.²⁴ Moreover, in a Note on the evolution of Romanian-Yugoslav relations in the years 1968–1969, drafted in September 1969, in the context of the said meeting, it was mentioned that the bilateral relations experienced „continuous development” and that there were consultations and exchanges of information between the two countries' foreign ministries and diplomatic missions in various issues of common interest: recovery of investments related to navigation at the Iron Gates, European security, Balkan collaboration, disarmament, problems of the Danube Commission.²⁵

²⁴ *Prietenul de la Belgrad. Întâlnirile Ceaușescu-Tito (1966–1970). Documente...*, 220–243.

²⁵ ANR, Fond CC PCR, Secția Relații Externe, file 78/1969, 55–56.



(*Lumea*, 1969, p. 409: The meeting on the Yugoslav shore between Tito and Ceaușescu)

A few months after assuming his post, Vasile Șandru drafted the general report for the year 1969. Beyond mentioning the numerous visits that took place at the level of foreign ministries or at the party level, the ambassador noted that improvements could be made, especially at the level of economic and scientific relations. While economic ties were on an upward trajectory, Șandru observed that key objectives – such as boosting trade, advancing production cooperation, and coordinating efforts in foreign markets – had only been partially achieved. Some progress had been made, including the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Trade in Bucharest in November 1969 and discussions between the heads of the Governmental Joint Commission for Economic Collaboration, but further steps were necessary. As for scientific research cooperation, the ambassador remarked that more tangible initiatives were required, as „real progress” had yet to be realized.²⁶ The report was analyzed in Bucharest. Beyond the positive assessments regarding the activity of the embassy, there were also some recommendations: to make proposals regarding new fields of activity in which the collaboration between the two states could be expanded, to follow carefully the evolution of Yugoslav-Chinese, Yugoslav-Soviet relations, and to conduct a more thorough analysis of Yugoslavia’s internal situation – an area that had been insufficiently addressed by the diplomatic mission.²⁷

Also, at the beginning of 1970, Vasile Șandru sent to Bucharest the „work plan” for that year. The main objectives of the diplomatic mission

²⁶ AMAE, Fond Problema 20/1969/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, file 1054, 1–16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17–22.

were outlined: facilitating and supporting official visits, identifying new opportunities to expand commercial exchanges, assisting in the organization of meetings between Romanian and Yugoslav writers, and exploring the possibility of opening a Romanian consulate in Zagreb.²⁸ Some suggestions also came from Bucharest. Because the embassy had not sent information regarding Romania's presence in the Yugoslav press in recent months and that the relations between the diplomatic mission and the press in the province were not at the desired level, the improvement of these aspects was requested. Several directions were drawn: the organization of periodic meetings with representatives of the press, so that of some journalists from Yugoslavia to come to Romania, the intensification of economic propaganda by inserting economic materials in the press from the neighboring country.²⁹

The ambassador's work plan also included a section on Administrative Actions. Within it, it was mentioned that proposals will be made for the conclusion of an agreement between the two states regarding the construction of buildings for embassies in Belgrade and Bucharest.³⁰ The ambassador's initiative is not a singular one among the diplomatic corps of Romania. In the 1960s and 70s, the Romanian state built several buildings for embassies based on reciprocity, such as, for example, those in Moscow and Sofia.

The beginning of 1970 was marked by the visit of Ion Gheorghe Maurer, the president of the Council of Ministers, to Yugoslavia. On this occasion, several documents were perfected in order to improve economic cooperation, contracts were signed regarding mutual deliveries of electric locomotives, agreements were concluded regarding the transit through Romania of oil imported by Yugoslavia.³¹ These visits and permanent contacts also had positive effects: both countries were encouraged to get in touch independently and find opportunities for cooperation.

In 1970, Nicolae Ceaușescu also undertook several significant foreign visits, including trips to France and the United States. In November of the same year he met with Tito in Brdo kod Kranja, to discuss bilateral relations and international matters. During these discussions, the Romanian leader brought up the possibility of concluding a Romanian-Yugoslav Friendship Treaty, though the proposal was not pursued further.³² These visits also give us the opportunity to see how the head of the mission in Belgrade was able to get involved. The reports he sent to Bucharest indicate that initial discussions about the planned visit in November began as early as January, during Maurer's visit to Belgrade. These talks continued during the visit of the Yugo-

²⁸ AMAE, Fond Problema 20/1970/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, file 1108/1969, 1–10. On the other hand, the Yugoslav side also discussed the possibility of opening a consulate in Timișoara, aspect put into practice in 1973.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11–16.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

³¹ AMAE, Fond Problema 220/1970/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, file 1149/1970, 99–101.

³² *Prietenul de la Belgrad. Întâlnirile Ceaușescu-Tito (1966–1970). Documente...*, 245–263.

slav Deputy Secretary of State to Bucharest on June 11–12, 1970. On July 2, Șandru was received by Jakša Petrić, deputy state secretary for foreign affairs, who told him that Tito shared Ceaușescu's idea of a meeting and proposed that the meeting to take place in the fall. During the following months, either Șandru or other members of the diplomatic mission discussed the details of the visit with Yugoslav officials, proposing different dates: 15–25, 29–30 September, or after October 24. Finally, mainly due to the Yugoslav leader's busy schedule, Ceaușescu's visit took place on November 3–4.³³ Șandru was involved in drafting the joint statement to be issued at the conclusion of the visit, contributing revisions and suggestions to improve wording and phrasing.³⁴ Also, the ambassador reported on October 31 the discussion that the first secretary of the embassy Roșianu had with the counselor of the Soviet embassy Smirnov, the day before. The Soviet diplomat mentioned that he did not understand the purpose of this meetings between the two leaders.³⁵ Roșianu replied referring to other visits of Ceaușescu, for example the one in Bulgaria.³⁶

Some final remarks

Vasile Șandru arrived as ambassador in Belgrade at a time when bilateral relations were on an ascending trend. In this context, it might seem a less important post within Romania's broader diplomatic framework. It was in fact was one of the most demanding positions, especially considering the numerous visits and discussions between the two leaders, Ceaușescu and Tito. The ambassador was directly involved in organizing these visits, being in direct contact with the Bucharest and Yugoslav authorities. In fact, this is one of the main characteristics of his tenure. On the other hand, further research into his activities throughout the rest of his mandate will allow us to assess whether he played a meaningful role in shaping bilateral relations or merely acted as an observer of Yugoslav developments and a conduit for directives from Bucharest.

Summary

In 1958 Vasile Șandru was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and appointed second secretary at the Romanian Embassy in Belgrade. He began a long career in Romanian diplomacy spanning over three decades. In August 1969 he was named Romanian ambassador to Yugoslavia, where he stayed for five years, until 1974, when he returned to the MFA headquar-

³³ See the visit file in AMAE, Fond Problema 220/1970/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, file 1149/1970.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 126–127.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 137–138.

ters. After eight years spent in Romania – between 1977 and 1982, he led the ministry's department in charge of relations with the socialist countries at MFA – he was appointed ambassador to Spain from 1982 to 1986. After retiring in 1987, in December 1989 he was named ambassador to the Soviet Union, and after three years spent in Moscow, he permanently retired from Romanian diplomacy. This paper examines certain aspects of Vasile Șandru's biography and his diplomatic work in Belgrade, focusing particularly on the first two years of his tenure. Serving as Romania's ambassador to Yugoslavia from 1969 to 1974, this was Șandru's initial appointment in such a role. The paper seeks to address several questions: What was the state of Romanian-Yugoslav relations at the close of the 1960s? What factors contributed to his appointment to this position? What were the central developments at the onset of his diplomatic mission?

Sources and Literature

- Arhivele Naționale ale României, Fund CC-PCR Secția Cadre, dosar Ș6; Fund CC PCR, Secția Relații Externe, dosar 78/1969.
- Arhiva de Istorie orală – Radio România, Interviews with Vasile Șandu (1994) and Silvia Șandru (1995).
- Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Fund Problema 20/1969/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, dosar 1054/1969; Fund Problema 20 E/1969/Iugoslavia, dosar 1052/1969; Fund Problema 20/1970/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, dosar 1108/1969; Fund Problema 220/1970/R.S.F. Iugoslavia, dosar 1149/1970; Anuar diplomatic 1962.
- *Prietenul de la Belgrad. Întâlnirile Ceaușescu-Tito (1966–1970). Documente*, Cezar Stanciu (eds.). Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2014.
- *Buletin Oficial*
- *Lumea*
- *Magazin Istoric*
- Herța, Laura. *Relațiile româno-iugoslave în perioada 1950–1970*. Cluj-Napoca: PhD. Thesis, 2011.
- Mătășaru, Daniela, „Relațiile româno-iugoslave (1946–1980). Poziția comunistilor români față de modelul iugoslav de cosntruire a socialismului”. *România și sistemele de securitate în Europa 1919–1975*, Ioan Ciupercă, Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor, Dan Constantin Măță (eds.). Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași, 2009.
- Mitrović, Nemanja. *Tito–Čaušesku: godine zbližavanja. Jugoslovensko-romunski odnosi 1968–1970*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2020. (Cyrillic)

- Cvetković, Vladimir Lj. „Yugoslav-Romanian Relations in the Days of the Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968”. *1968–četrdeset godina posle*, Zbornik radova, ur. Radmila Radić, 161–181. Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008. (Cyrillic)
- Mitrović, Nemanja „Tito’s and Ceaușescu’s Personal Contribution to the Development of Yugoslav-Romanian Cooperation in the Late 1960s and Early 1970s”. *New Cultural and Political Perspectives on Serbian-Romanian Relations*, Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović, Jovana Kolundžija, Mircea Măran, Otilia Hedeșan, Christene D'Anca (eds), 199–224. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2024.
- Șandru, Vasile, „7 Septembrie 1964. Martor la întrevvedereea Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej-Iosif Broz Tito”, *Magazin Istoric*, 5/1998, p. 50–51.