

The fifth chapter (pp. 219–290), like the preceding one, is quite extensive; in fact, if we are to compare all chapters, we could say that these two chapters (4th and 5th) are the foundation of Iusztin Zoltan's research. Here, the author approaches from a historical point of view the Romanian districts in medieval Banat, presenting the evolution of their formation. The district of Caransebeș is taken as a case study.

In the last chapter, the sixth one (pp. 291–308), the evolution of Banat of Severin is presented; this was an important administrative subunit of Banat, with a major political role, especially in the Middle Ages.

Iusztin Zoltan's book presents the political administrative institutions of medieval Banat, much like a historical radiography; the age is presented from the moment Charles Robert of Anjou takes the royal throne, at the beginning of the 14th century, and until the end of King Matthias Corvinus' reign, at the end of the 15th century; the main role is to expand the arsenal of historical papers that mainly study the region of Banat during the Middle Ages.



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FRANCESCO GUIDA

România în secolul XX

(Romania in the 20th century)

Translated from the Italian

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AMONG THE historians who published very interesting volumes on Romanian history, Francesco Guida is a familiar name.

With a degree in Literature obtained in 1972 at La Sapienza University, Francesco Guida, professor of Eastern European History at the Faculty of Political Sciences at Roma Tre University, and associate professor at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, is the author of numerous books, articles and studies on various Central and Eastern European countries, published in Italy and abroad.

For his activity in the field of Romanian civilization and history, in 2003 Professor Guida was honored by the President of Romania with the Order of Merit in the rank of Officer. In 2012, the Bucharest Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded him the Diploma for Special Merit in promoting Romanian and universal values in international relations. Francesco Guida is also the president of the Italian Association of Southeast European Studies, and president of the Romanian-Italian Center for Historical Studies, in which he represents Roma Tre University. In 2011, he edited the volume *Italia e Romania verso l'Unità nazionale*, published by Humanitas publishing house, a book that collects the works presented during an international conference dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy, organized by the Embassy of Italy in Bucharest, the Italian Cultural Institute, the Italian Association of Studies in Southeastern Europe and the Romanian-Italian Center for Historical Studies, in collaboration with the University of Bucharest.

The present book is a wonderful writing on the identity and culture of the Romanian people and the proof that real Romanian history is well known abroad. This volume brings together eight chapters on Romania in the 20th century, covering topics that deal with the First World War

and the Great Union, the reforms and the political crisis, the Jewish matters and the political involvement of young intellectuals in interwar politics, Romania under the regime of Carol II, the Second World War and the terror of communism, Ceaușescu and the Revolution of 1989, and Romania in the postcommunist era. The book is a complete radiography of the 20th century as it was reflected in Romanian history.

The volume starts with a declaration of historian Gheorghe Brătianu, that the Romanian nation represents a “historical miracle” (p. 9). The main events that happened after the end of the First World War and the new external policy are analyzed in the first chapter, along with some very important details regarding Romania at the beginning of the 20th century. In his writing, Professor Guida proves not only excellent knowledge regarding the history of those times, but he also mentions cultural details important for Romanian culture: “at the beginning of the century, Romania had not only important writers, but also valuable artists, among them the famous violinist and composer George Enescu” (p. 25).

A very good knowledge of the history, culture, external influences, religious identity or different preferences of the Romanian people during the 20th century is the most important element in Francesco Guida’s writing. The author knows his subject very well, and therefore the book flows naturally and the historical events are accurately described.

Aspects such as the attitude of the Romanian political regime towards the Jewish population in Romania, the struggle of the Romanian Jews, especially during the Second World War, details about the Iron Guard and the political regime of Ion Antonescu, are analyzed and compared

with the situation in Italy. The difficult situation of Romania during the Second World War is also very well explained (pp. 178–185).

Romania under communism is the subject of chapter six. In his analysis, Professor Guida covers all the relevant subjects, from the initial terror, through the situation of the church under the communist regime, to the situation of young intellectuals who decided to oppose the official policy of the state, or to the external policy of Romania and the links with the Soviet Union (pp. 222–245). Ceaușescu’s regime is covered in chapter seven, along with Romania’s relations with the West in those times.

Postcommunist Romania and the new struggle for freedom, as a result of the Revolution of 1989, are the topic of the last chapter of Francesco Guida’s book and an opportunity to review some of the main events that happened in the first years of so-called “freedom.” After 1990, Romania suffered the greatest peacetime loss of population in its history. The main causes of the population decrease were international migration, family planning, and high mortality. Francesco Guida also mentions these matters in his book (pp. 322–323), proving his excellent knowledge of everything related to Romania in the 20th century.

The volume also contains excellent explanatory notes, an extended bibliography, and an extremely useful index of names and places. This exquisite volume will be very useful both to professors, researchers and students in history, and to the general public. All readers will be able to learn more about the history of Romania in the 20th century.



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