

**CORINA SNITAR**  
**University of Glasgow**

### **CAN WE TALK ABOUT A NATIONAL COMMUNISM IN THE LATE 1950s-1960s ROMANIA?**

On the 30th of October 1956, over 2000 students of the academic centre in Timisoara gathered to a meeting with academic and party representatives. Their aims were to ask about the Hungarian revolt that has started a week earlier and to demand reasonable standards of living, the elimination of mandatory Russian language and Marxism courses from the curricula and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romanian territory. Meanwhile, military troops surrounded the building. 26 students, one lecturer and one professor were sentenced to imprisonment for up to eight years, followed by two years forced residence in Baragan area.

After a review of the trajectory of the students' movement, this paper will focus on the outcomes of the event and will present my opinion regarding the debate around the question of so-called Romanian 'independent course' as an outcome of the 1956 disturbances. In this respect, the paper will bring into discussion the Romanian Communists' behaviour throughout the Hungarian crisis, the impact of de Suez crisis on the decision-making process in students' trials, and Bucharest' s position against the Soviet intention to designate the role of agricultural supplier to Romania within COMECON in 1960.

The paper is based on findings occurring from interviews with former participants in the protest and experts on the history of Romanian Communism, and from archival research conducting in Romania - the National Archives, the Archives of the Former Secret Services - and in Washington - the National Security Archives and the National Archives of the United States.