

# 'Hidden Galleries' Project Workshop

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November – Room 370/371 Western Gateway Building,  
University College Cork

## 9.30-11.00: Religion and Archives in Romania

**Dragoş Petrescu** (University of Bucharest & Chairman of the Board *The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives*) - *The Romanian Orthodox Church during the Ceauşescu Epoch: Patterns of Submission and Opposition to the Regime as Reflected by the Securitate Files*

**Anca Şincan** ("Gheorghe Şincai" Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, Romanian Academy) *Defensor Fidei: Religion in the Romanian Orthodox Church's Archives*

**Iuliana Cindrea** (PhD Candidate, Hidden Galleries Project, UCC) - The Neoprotestant communities in the Secret Police Archives in Romania: alternative methodologies/approaches in reading and interpreting files

11.00-11.30 Coffee

## 11.30-13.00: Hungary, State Security Archives and the Study of Religions

**Gergő Bendegúz Cseh** (Head of Department, Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security) *Accessibility of secret service records in Hungary*

**Kinga Povedák** (Postdoctoral Researcher – Hidden Galleries Project, UCC) - *Rocking religion: Reading files on Christian rock in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security*

**Ágnes Hesz** (Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Pécs, Hungary) *Folk religion, local religion and vernacular religion in Hungarian scholarship*

13.00-13.45 Lunch

## 13.45-4.15: Research on Religions and State Security Archives in the Republic of Moldova

**Igor Caşu** (State University of Moldova, *Center for the Study of Totalitarianism*, Chişinău) - *Repression Against Religious Groups: Deportation of Jehovah's Witnesses from Moldavian SSR (1951) according to KGB files*

**Dorin Lozovanu** (Moldovan Academy of Sciences & National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History of Moldova) - *Ethnic and Confessional characteristics of the population of Moldova*

**Dumitru Lisnic** (PhD Candidate, Hidden Galleries Project, UCC) - *Methodological questions in research on Soviet Archives: A case study on the National Archive of Republic of Moldova*

**James Kapaló** (Principal Investigator – Hidden Galleries Project, UCC) - *Shifting Perspectives on Religions, Archives, Museums and Cultural Patrimony*



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

**Supporting top researchers  
from anywhere in the world**

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme No . 677355

### ***Gergő Bendegúz Cseh: Accessibility of secret service records in Hungary***

The Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security was established in 1997 by the Hungarian National Assembly, which makes it one of the most recent, yet most "sought after" archives of the country in terms of the interest it garners from researchers, citizens, and the Hungarian public in general. One of the most fundamental tasks of the Historical Archives is to manage the documentation of the former Hungarian secret services operating during the socialist era between 1944 and 1990, including all intelligence, counterintelligence, internal reaction counterintelligence, and military counterintelligence documentation. At the same time, all persons who had been under surveillance during the communist dictatorship, and therefore appear in these documents as "targets" or victims of the political system, are entitled by Hungarian law to access and peruse documentation pertaining to them.

Of course, beyond its unique tasks, the Historical Archives also functions like the majority of archives, inasmuch as it receives and assists researchers; it handles, processes, systematizes and restores archived documents; conducts scientific analysis of its source material, and publishes both historical sources and related findings.

During the Socialist era religious groups, minorities and individuals were on the main focus of the secret services so the records of the Historical Archives are multiple and extremely rich source of research projects dealing with religious institutions, organizations, or different kind of church affairs. The lecture will focus on the activities of the Archives, the structure and content of the records held by it, and the access possibilities to these files.

### ***Igor Cașu: Repression Against Religious Groups: Deportation of Jehovah's Witnesses from Moldavian SSR (1951) according to KGB files***

The Operation Sever (North) was organized in early April 1951. It was the third and the last mass operation that aimed at deporting specific social groups from the Moldavian SSR to Siberia and other less hospitable regions of the Soviet Union. In comparison to the two previous deportations, the one of 1951 comprised only a religious group, namely the Jehovah's Witnesses. The deportation operation started at 4 am on 1 April 1951 and ended officially on the same day at 8 pm. The organization of the deportation followed the same previous model: representatives of the Soviet political police (MGB, predecessor of KGB) were sent to coordinate the development of the deportation operation; 546 field officers and 1,127 officers and servicemen of the Moldavian MGB, 275 militia (Ministry of Interior) officers and 750 Party and Soviet activists were mobilized. The deportation of about 3,000 people on 1 April 1951 had political grounds. Neo-protestants in general and Jehovah's Witnesses in particular were more critical of the Soviet power than the Orthodox Christians and this phenomenon would get more intense in the decades after their deportation.

### ***Iuliana Cindrea: The Neoprottestant communities in the Secret Police Archives in Romania: alternative methodologies/approaches in reading and interpreting files***

Neo-Protestant communities have been the subject of many studies and their means of survival under the totalitarian regimes in Romania have, in time, inspired debates and discussions. The archives of the former secret police in Romania have been a rich source of research projects regarding the issue of these religious communities. The following presentation is intended to provide an overview of the types of research that have already drawn on these archival resources, the historical narratives that have been built from the analysis of the files, stressing on the alternative approaches and methodologies that the researchers have applied when working with the files connected to Neo-Protestant communities. While emphasizing the importance of the archives for scholars, in general, the presentation will highlight their potential of becoming a useful and valuable resource for the Study of Religions.

### ***Ágnes Hesz: Folk religion, local religion and vernacular religion in Hungarian scholarship***

Cultural anthropology and folkloristics study people's religiosity under the canopy of several concepts: folk religion, popular religion, local religion, vernacular religion, or practiced religion. These terms, though sometimes treated as synonyms, have different scopes and offer different perspectives for the understanding of how people practice their religion.

In this paper I give an overview of the concepts used in Hungarian folkloristics and cultural anthropology in the study of religion. Doing so, I will focus on how these terms define, and at the same limit their fields and approaches. I will also pay special attention to the reception of more current terms, vernacular religion or local religion; to what extent have they been integrated to Hungarian scholarship, and how their introduction have influenced the focus of study and the questions raised.

### **James Kapaló: *Shifting Perspectives on Religions, Archives, Museums and Cultural Patrimony***

This paper will outline some of the central methodological and ethical concerns of the 'Hidden galleries' project. The academic study of religions has been undergoing a 'material turn' in recent years. This new sensitivity towards and appreciation of the significance of the material dimension of religions has brought a new scholarly interest in the diverse ways that material religion is encountered in late modernity. There has been a significant decentering of religion and a redistribution of material religion to secular institutions such as museums and archives. This paper will explore the significance of the material turn in the study of religions for scholarship on religions in twentieth century Eastern Europe, especially under communism. The communist era secret police archives represent a significant resource for anthropologists and historians of religion in the region as they offer a window on everyday material aspects of the lives of religious groups not found elsewhere. The archives, however, also present certain challenges in terms of methodology and ethical practice, particularly with regard to questions of cultural patrimony and the right of communities to access their sacred materials.

### **Dumitru Lisnic: *Methodological questions in research on Soviet Archives: A case study on the National Archive of Republic of Moldova***

Republic of Moldova is an ex-soviet country in which the process of declassification of the Soviet archives is not yet complete. During the repressive policies of the Communist Party, applied by the secret police against religious minorities from Moldova, a large number of KGB files were created. Religious objects and texts, confiscated by Soviet authorities from believers, as well as some assessments of KGB officers are a very important source of documentation for the Study of Religions. In order to research these religions in the former KGB archive, a scholar has to use methods developed by historians. At the same time, the identification and interpretation of documents requires a good knowledge of the Soviet state's structures. The employment of the methods developed by historians and used by scholars of religions has a great potential for research on religions on Soviet archives.

### **Dorin Lozovanu: *Ethnic and Confessional characteristics of the population of Moldova.***

This study analyzes the ethnic and confessional particularities of the population of the Republic of Moldova. I present here the ethnohistorical, ethnodemographic and ethnogeographic aspects of ethnicities and religions. Research is conducted based on the official data from the censuses starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today, and also on the unofficial data by different sources and from personal observation. This paper details territorial distribution of the religious minorities in the Republic of Moldova. The Orthodox church still pursues a conservative policy in socio-political aspects and strong opposition to the new confessions: Neo-protestants and Islam. The ethnic and religious structure of The Moldovian population play an important role in the cultural heritage, linguistic, political and economic perspectives as well.

### **Dragoş Petrescu: *The Romanian Orthodox Church during the Ceauşescu Epoch: Patterns of Submission and Opposition to the Regime as Reflected by the Securitate Files***

My presentation is structured on two parts. The first part discusses two fundamental aspects related to the complicated relation between the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the communist regime during the epoch of Nicolae Ceauşescu (1965–89): (1) the institutional needs of ROC as a religious organization (size, dispersion, operational ideology, and symbolic resources); and (2) the particularities of Greek-Orthodox faith (the more formalistic and ritualistic character of Greek-Orthodoxy). The argument set forth in this first part is that due to its size, dispersion and operational ideology, ROC was compelled to collaborate with the communist regime. However, the destruction of churches after 1977, especially in Bucharest, was perceived by a large majority of the population as an attack on the Orthodox faith itself. The submissive attitude of the Orthodox Church towards the regime alienated a large majority of the Orthodox believers who kept their faith but felt betrayed by the ROC, which was seen as a tool in the hands of the regime.

The second part addresses the issue of the post-1989 opening of the Securitate files and the process of public exposure of former Securitate collaborators and agents, ensured via Law 187/1999 and, subsequently, by Law 293/2008. This second part focuses on the impact of the opening of the Securitate files on the ROC hierarchy, especially in terms of collaboration with the communist regime, as well as in terms of illustrating cases of opposition against the regime. Consequently, this part discusses some prominent cases of collaboration with Securitate by hierarchs of ROC, cases of opposition against the Ceauşescu regime by priests or theologians, as well as the resources available at the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS) in Bucharest for research in the field.

### **Kinga Povedák: Rocking religion: Reading files on Christian rock in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security**

In this paper I present some of my findings on Christian rock music based on files from the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security (ABTL). I focus on the reports concerning the first Christian rock mass performed in the Easter of 1968 in Budapest's prestigious Matthias church. With this case study I would like to present how a seemingly apolitical grassroots phenomenon that was opposed even by the Catholic church authorities evoked the interest of the secret police. Finally, I demonstrate the working mechanism of the secret police machinery with their fears, agendas and strategies in regard to Christian rock.

### **Anca Şincan: Defensor Fidei: Religion in the Romanian Orthodox Church's Archives**

The presentation accounts for a personal travel into the complicated network of corridors, the underbelly of Antim Monastery where the Romanian Orthodox Church houses the Archives of the Patriarchal See. It is a discussion about a cover up archival system intent to whitewash controversial positioning, periods, and personalities in the life of the Church, to provide a revision of history (Katherine Verdery, 2014 on the use of communist archives after the fall of communism). It is based on personal interpretation of gestures, paternalistic attitudes, turn of phrases as much as it is based on the collection of documents this archive holds. Rather than the written material it is the way in which this archive is protected and used that is discussed the layers upon layers of disguises and miscommunication, the number of initiates that are called in to protect the "truth" Where the document is seen by its protectors in its uttermost *Rankean* form. (See Natalie Zemon Davies, 1990 on the life of the document; Timothy Garton Ash, 2010 on the Stasi file as a madeleine and Sonja Luehrman, 2016). What it takes to become one such initiate and the level of access one receives depending on how important is his/ her protector in the life of the church. It is also a discussion about the perils of the "triplicate": the way in which the documents trickle down to be found in other venues, other archives, other memoirs and the hasty attempts to collect, destroy, deny or minimize their significance. It is about the role of "silence" and "justification". (Rodney G.S. Carter, 2006 on the power of silence and access to archives) When do they come into play? When does the personal/ individual public "salvation" overcome the institutional "salvation" that at its turn overcomes the "transcendental salvation"?



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

**Supporting top researchers  
from anywhere in the world**

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme No. 677355



**UCC**

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire  
University College Cork, Ireland