

Controlling and preventing the actions of the foreign agents. A relevant order for the county structures of the Securitate UM 0110 from 2nd of December 1989

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Abstract: Abstract: Thirty years after the fall of communism the debates about the soviet role in the East European Revolutions of 1989 are not ended. In this short article we discuss a relevant document in relation with this topic. It was an order issued by the Chief of the UM 0110 at the beginning of December 1989 in relation with the dangers related to the presence of tourists from East and West in Romania. In essence, in the same day when supposedly Bush and Gorbachev discussed in Malta the fate of Romania, the UM 0110 enter in an alarm situation. According to the directive, in order to control and prevent, but also for neutralize and thwart any hostile actions of the possible dangers, the UM 0110 need to intensify the surveillance of different categories of subjects which were in the attention (foreign tourists, other foreign travelers or representatives that were in Romania from other communist countries). What this document tells us is the fact that the Romanian Securitate was aware that such dangers need to be addressed urgently and that beyond routine urgent actions need to be prepared. These perils become pressing in terms of control, prevention and neutralization of the eventual actions of those tourists.

Keywords: Romania, December 1989, foreign tourists, Securitate surveillance, UM 0110

Rezumat: La treizeci de ani de la căderea regimurilor comuniste, dezbaterile despre rolul jucat de sovietici în Revoluțiile din 1989 din Estul Europei încă nu s-au încheiat. În scurtul nostru articol vom discuta un document relevant în relație cu acest subiect. Este vorba de un ordin emis de șeful Unității Militare 0110 la începutul lunii

decembrie 1989 cu privire la prezența unor pericole legate de prezența în România a unor turiști din Est și Vest. De fapt în ziua în care, speculativ se afirmă că, la Malta, George Bush și Mihail Gorbaciov discutau despre soarta României, Securitate prin unitatea ei specială dedicată urmăririi și supravegherii cetățenilor din statele comuniste a intrat în stare de alertă. În acord cu directivele date în ordin, pentru a controla și preveni, dar și pentru a neutraliza și a face imposibile orice acțiuni ostile, UM 0110 trebuia să intensifice toate acțiunile de supraveghere și control asupra categoriilor de persoane care intrau în atenția sa (turiști sau reprezentanți ai altor state comuniste aflați pe teritoriul României. Ceea ce documentul ne indică este faptul că Securitatea nu doar că a fost preparată să gestioneze acest tip de pericol, dar au fost elaborate și ordine precise, dincolo de supravegherea obișnuită, pentru a preveni, neutraliza și controla acțiunile venite din partea acestor *turiști*.

Cuvinte-cheie: România, Decembrie 1989, turiști străini, supravegherea Securității, UM 0110.

A lot of debates and rumours circulated in the last thirty years in relation with the sparks that ignite the Romanian Revolution. Many of them were related to the role and importance of the soviet factor in the destruction of the communist regimes in the region, an enigma that is not yet overcome in the historiography¹.

Conspiracy theories appeared early in 1990 everywhere in the former countries of the communist bloc, not only about Romania². All of them deliver scenarios of change that were mastered from and by forces that depend on the Soviet Union. They accentuate the role of the tourists that come, not from the Cold, but from the East. The travellers were everywhere in these scenarios They did not only observed, but they act decisively in order to destroy the communist citadels in the region.

Taking into account what was discussed in the Romanian historiography in relation with this subject, the passion and efforts which the former Securitate officers put in that direction³, but also the

¹ Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997).

² In relation with Romania the *beginning* was delivered in Western media by the articles published in early 1990s by Vladimir Bukovski, Radu Portocală and Olivier Weber, "Les Cinq Actes D'une Manipulation", (*Le Point*, 922, no. 1 1990) Michel Castex, *Un Mensonge Gros Comme Le Siècle, Roumanie, Histoire D'une Manipulation*, (Paris, Albin Michel, 1990).

³ The historiographical debate in the last thirty years, was structured initially in the articles and books published by the party leaders and former officers of the Securitate. See

contribution of some historians that sustain similar perspectives⁴, we try to contribute to this debate from another point of view and we will add a documentary piece to it. In other words, in the light of the balanced contributions to the subject in historiography⁵, we will address the problem of the specific dangers that were perceived by the Securitate at the end of 1989. The document that it is annexed here is a relevant one for the actions ordered in the direction of the visitors/travellers from neighbouring countries, for the officers and other employees of a *very special Unit* of the Securitate, namely UM 0110. That means that different

for example: Filip Teodorescu, *Un Risc Asumat, Timișoara, Decembrie 1989*, [An Assumed Risk, Timișoara, December 1989], (Bucharest, Viitorul Romanesc, 1992); Ion Coman, *Timișoara. Zece ani de la singerosul decembrie 1989. Documentar [Timișoara. Ten Years from the Bloody December 1989. A Documentary]*, (București, Editura Sylvi, 1999); Nicolae Mavru, *Revoluția din stradă, [Revolution from the Street]*, (Editura Rao, București, 2004); Gheorghe Dragomir, *Recoiem pentru spioni [Requiem for spies]*, vol. I, (Editura România în Lume, București, 2006); Vasile Mălureanu, *Evenimentele din decembrie 1989 în percepția unui ofițer de informații interne (I-III)*, [Events from December 1989 in perception of a Former Information Officer], în *Vitralii - Lumini și umbre*, Anul I, nr. 3-5, iunie-decembrie, 2010, Aurel Rogoian, 1989. *Dintr-o iarnă în alta...România în resorturile secrete ale istoriei*, [1989. From a Winter to Another...Romania in the Secret resorts of the History], (Editura Proema, Baia Mare, 2009) etc.

⁴ See the contributions of Larry Watts (*With Friends Like These. The Soviet Bloc's Clandestine War Against Romania*, Bucharest, Military Publishing House, 2010; Idem, *Cei dintâi vor fi cei din urmă. România și sfârșitul războiului rece [The First will be the Last. Romania and the End of the Cold War]*, (Bucharest, RAO, 2013); Idem, *Extorting Peace: Romania and the End of the Cold War, 1978-1989*, (Bucharest, RAO, 2013). All his articles in relation with the soviet factor were also published on his personal blog but also on his account on the Academia.edu, Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Istoria Loviturilor de Stat în România, Vol. 4, Revoluția din Decembrie 1989, O Tragedie Românească [The History of the Political Coups in Romania, Vol. 4, the December 1989 Revolution]*, (Bucharest, RAO, 2004); Cristian Troncotă, *Duplicității: O istorie a Serviciilor de Informații și Securitate ale regimului Communist din România 1965-1989 [The Duplicit: A History of the Intelligence and Security Services of the Communist Regime in Romania 1965-1989]*, Bucharest, Editura Elion, 2004; Idem, *Momente și portrete din istoria serviciilor secrete românești*, Paul Editions, București, 2020, pp. 334-352) or, recently, Tudor Păcuraru (*Planul Nistru- 1989. Implicarea GRU în Revoluția din Decembrie*, Editura Evenimentul Istoric, 2020).

⁵ A very good analysis on the different interpretations on the Revolution is the one realised by Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Decembrie '89. Deconstrucția unei revoluții*, (Iași, Polirom, 2004). Recent relevant and valuable contributions in that direction in the books of Anely Ute Gabany, Alexandru Muraru, Andrei Muraru, Daniel Șandru, eds., *Revoluția din 1989. Învinși și învingători [Romania in 1989. Losers and Winners]*, (Iași, Polirom, 2020); Constantin Corneanu, *Victorie însângerată. Decembrie 1989. Premisele, izbucnirea și desfășurarea Revoluției din decembrie 1989, [Bloody Victory. December 1989. Premises, Ignition and Unfolding of the December 1989 Revolution]*, (Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2014). In the western literature dedicated to the events of 1989 we need to mention the excellent book published by Peter Siani-Davies, *Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2005).

signals that appear in relation with the revolutionary events through diplomatic⁶ and secret services channels were processed and through operational directives were implemented in order to increase the surveillance of the potential enemies. There are not many documents published from these last *channels*. But from those which were public it is important to notice that almost all of them add warnings in relation with the tensions which could appear in the milieu of the Hungarian minority, in towns of Transylvania and Bucharest⁷. These reports were clear that what was happened in the socialist camp was dangerous for the communist regime in Romania and the peril of spreading out beyond its borders was present⁸.

At the end of 1989 the process of breakdown of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe reached its peak. The events unfolded in different sequences and have different revolutionary forms (negotiated transfer of power in Poland and Hungary; non-violent political changes in German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria; and, a violent that occur in Romania)⁹. After a hot summer in which the conclusions of the Round Tables in Poland and Hungary, set both countries on a democratic direction, their political systems were liberalized through the reform of the electoral rules and procedures, consequently the structure of the Government and Parliaments were transformed. Then, in Autumn, the protests in the streets and the pressures from above for reforms in German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia produce the same outcomes. Gradually or radically in the central part of the region the communist order collapsed and democratization process began through an implosion of the system and a non-violent democratic takeover. In the southern corner of the region the events follows a different logic. In Bulgaria, in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a coup take place at the level of the communist

⁶ Majority of them were transmitted on official diplomatic channels. see Dumitru Preda and Mihai Retegan, 1989. *Principiul dominoului. Prăbușirea regimurilor comuniste europene* [Domino Principle. The Failure of the European Communist Regimes] (Bucharest, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 2000).

⁷ Sebastian Sarcă, ed. *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*, [It is a beginning in all end....], (Editura Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune, București, 1998), p. 20.

⁸ Ceaușescu was aware of the danger and he stress in his conversations with Gorbachev its preoccupation in relation with the survival of the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe. See a balanced evaluation of the relation between Romania and USSR in Vasile Buga "Revoluția Română din Decembrie 1989 în contextul raporturilor dintre România și URSS", in Annelly Ute Gabany, *et alii*, *op.cit*, pp. 43-58.

⁹ Dragoș Petrescu, *Entangled Revolutions: The Breakdown of the Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe*, (Bucharest, Editura Enciclopedică, 2014), pp. 25-5.

leadership, and Todor Jivkov was replaced and the new *reformist* team announce the start of the liberalization of the regime at the end of the first decade of November. The case of Romania was the one that deviate from the negotiations and non-violent character of the political changes. Its sequence of events, in the second part of December, were violent, and a lot of victims appeared in the revolutionary context.

In fact, in Romania at the end of November 1989, when in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Bulgaria the political changes gradually transformed the communist regimes, Nicolae Ceaușescu and his institutional followers prepare the country for the XIV Congress of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP)¹⁰. It was the last show of the communist dictator. The party major event of 1989 was boycotted by some of the communist parties from the West and East. Romania was isolated and its leader seems to be under siege at that moment. This was the context in which authorities raise the level of alarm for the military forces and increase the surveillance inside the country in order to prevent any disturbances during the meetings of the Congress. These measures also affected the travelling in and from the country. According to Radio Free Europe, the borders were almost closed¹¹. Tourists from neighbouring countries were stopped at the frontiers. Journalists from Western countries did not receive visas to enter in the country and other applicants for the visa were refused.

Unanimously re-elected in his position as leader of the Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu express in many instances his irritation to what was happened in the rest of the Bloc during the meetings of the Political Bureau of the Executive Committee of RCP before and after the Congress. His position was bluntly expressed also outside of the country, that the reforms which were initiated everywhere in Eastern Europe jeopardize not only the road to the socialism, but also the existence of the communist parties and the fate of their leaders¹².

¹⁰ The diversity of the exit of communism is discussed from a regional perspective in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe. From Communism to Pluralism*, (Manchester University Press, 2013); an international or global approach it is exposed in Jacques Rupnik, ed., *1989 as a Political World Event. Democracy, Europe and the New International System in the Age of Globalization*, Routledge, 2014 or in George Lawson, Christopher Ambruster and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989. Continuity and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

¹¹ Sebastian Sarcă, *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*, pp. 19-21.

¹² In his conversation with Gorbatchev, in 4th of December, according to his translator Vasile Buga (*op.cit.*, pp. 49-50), Ceaușescu raised his preoccupation in relation to the fate of Honecker and Jivkov.

His concerns were alimented with the information's that arrived through diplomatic channels and the briefings of the Securitate. For example, one of the informative *notes*, which arrive from Romanian Foreign Intelligence Service (CIE) – no.00263 – in 22nd of November stated that the danger comes from: "...intensification of the actions in order to create destabilizing internal tensions through the pretext of the discontent and provocations in the milieu of the Hungarian minorities"¹³. Such warnings had consequences not only in the political discourses, but also at the operational level of the Securitate. One such effect is presented here, an executive Order (no. 614751 from 2.12.1989) that raised the level of alert in the UM 0110, a special and independent Unit of the Securitate specialized with the actions in relation with the *perils* from the socialist countries in relation to Romania. In brief, let look to what was this special and not very well studied entity of the former Securitate.

The history of this *special service* started in 1968, in the context and immediately after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was one organized to manage the counterintelligence agenda that had in attention Romanian citizens that have relations to the Soviet Union and other East European socialist countries. According to Dennis Deletant its origins were to be found into the Section for Armed Forces and Security of the Central Committee of the RCP, set up by Ceaușescu to monitor the loyalty of senior party members before 1968¹⁴. In the next years new targets were added and this unit was integrated in the Directorate for External Information (DIE) as UM 0920/A. Expanded in terms of operational objectives, but also with an increase in the numbers of officers and resources, the Unit become autonomous in the structure of the Securitate (after Ion Mihai Pacepa, the former chief of the Department for foreign Information, DIE, defected the unit was renamed as UM 0110 in 1978)¹⁵. Its main attributions were focused on three directions:

- surveillance of the embassies and other foreign official representations and representatives in order to prevent espionage activities;
- monitoring the visitors from socialist countries, tourist and travellers (from 1977 even a computerized system for recording the visitors from Warsaw Pact was started)¹⁶;

¹³ *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*p. 19.

¹⁴ Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communism. Paradox and Degeneration*, (Routledge, London, New York, 2019), *op.cit.*, p. 264.

¹⁵ It was named: Independent Unit for Counter Espionage for socialist countries, F. Banu, L. Țăranu, *Securitatea*, vol. 1, (Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2015), p. 168.

¹⁶ Dennis Deletant, *Romania...*,p. 264.

- observing the Romanian citizens that had origins in the other socialist countries, they had relatives there or studied and travelled regularly there.

Until the end of the regime, these three problems remain as the main *targets* in the activities of this military unit. What was changed was the organizational chart and structure. From 1978 on UM 0110 was divided in eight services (each had three services on the subjects mentioned): “five of them dedicated to one socialist country (USSR, Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany and Yugoslavia), one which had in attention persons that had origins in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Cuba and two which deals with the former members of the Comintern, members of the RCP from illegality and an anti-terrorist service”¹⁷. It is also relevant that at the level of the County Inspectorates were organized such subordinated units. All in all, according to the former chief of the First Directorate of the Securitate, col. Gheorghe Rațiu, in the second part of the 80s the number of the officers in this Unit, 300, was similar with those that belong Third Directorate that deal with of all agendas of Counterespionage¹⁸. It is important to note also that the bulk of activities were related in the same period with the Soviet and Hungarian subjects. According to one former officer, 99% of their activities had to do with such *perils*¹⁹.

The document published here was issued in 2nd of December 1989. It is now archived in the special documentary fund from the National Council for the Securitate Archives (CNSAS) in Bucharest. It is the 25th copy of the order that was kept in one of the dossiers from the Dâmbovița county unit²⁰. In essence, in the same day when supposedly Bush and Gorbachev discussed in Malta the fate of Romania, the UM 0110 enter in an alarm situation. According to the directive, in order to control and prevent, but also for neutralize and thwart any hostile actions of the possible dangers, the UM 0110 need to intensify the *surveillance of different categories of subjects which were in the attention*²¹. The locations identified as vulnerable – Transylvania and Bucharest – were certitudes, and the actors who will act in order to destabilize the situation were from *specialized*

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 552.

¹⁸ Gheorghe Rațiu, *Raze de lumină pe cărări întunecate*, București, Editura Paco, 1996, p. 34. The figures were confirmed by last chief of this Unit Victor Neculicioiu. See F. Banu, L. Țăranu, *Securitatea*, vol. 1, p. 180.

¹⁹ Ion Constantin, *Securitatea în revoluția română din decembrie 1989*, în “Periscop”, nr. 4, decembrie 2008, p. 69.

²⁰ ACNSAS, FCX Fund, file 002904, vol. 1-5.

²¹ *Ibidem*, vol. 5, f. 1.

structures of Hungary, Hungarians and Romanians alike. The urgency of the activities and their content were order as follows: activation of the informants network, then taking active measures in relation with the foreign officials and tourists “ in order to see if their visits and travelling are not connected with specific missions of organizing and urge on destabilizing actions” and “...a permanent and efficient cooperation will be organized with other work lines for an active exchange of information, for value them in the prevention process, organization of offensive measures to neutralize any hostile attempts or actions against our country”²².

In essence, on the line of warnings contain in this note was issued the order that we will discuss here. What this document tells us is the fact that the Romanian Securitate was aware that such dangers need to be addressed urgently and that beyond routine. These perils become pressing in terms of control, prevention and neutralization. That means that the danger was not only observed from a distance, but more or less, addressed with active measures in order to be resolved. The milieu, the minority, the region, the actors were already mentioned in the order that we present below. This is the reason that it is surprisingly that the former Securitate officers did not produce more evidence to sustain their allegations about foreign intervention and tourists. Because they were perceived as the main danger in December, and at this moment the evidences did not sustain their interpretation in relation with their activities. Even if they were *many*, according to this document they were supervised not only incidentally, as they enter in a place or in another, but along all their routes and roads in Romania. Leaving aside the scarcity of numbers regarding the visitors before 17th of December 1989²³, we must also emphasize the fact that their movement in Romania was not only restricted, but also strictly controlled.

If we look precisely at the level of the county where the order arrived, we must say that in Dâmbovița lived only few Hungarians and Soviet targets for the Unit. The majority of them were observed according to the three problems that the unit had in attention: foreign official representatives; persons who had relatives in the countries from the

²² *Ibidem*, vol. 5, f. 1, 1v.

²³ Here we must appreciate the efforts of Constantin Corneanu, *op.cit*, pp. 472-474, who advanced some figures -via the documents created at the level of the Ministry of Interior, Direction of Passports, Foreigner Evidence and Border Control - but as they are the only ones, we did not risk an interpretation in relation with them. Anyway, from that numbers we can see that the numbers that enter in the first 15 days of December were less than the number of visitors that get out of Romania (110 896 to 110 938) and, in any case, as we see all of them were strictly surveilled by the Securitate.

socialist camp and, tourists that travel there. According to the documents that are now in CNSAS custody Târgoviște was a transit stop for the tourists that came from Soviet Union in their travel journey to Yugoslavia or Bulgaria. Here they had hotels and other arrangements made by INTOURIST and ONT in relation with their journey. The tourist's problem was connected in this region not only with the winter resorts, but also with the transit points for the travellers that go in South or in South- West for the so-called *commercial tourism*. From the border to the transit points usually the buses that come from Soviet Union were controlled in strategic points as petrol stations (PECO) and hotels/restaurants where they could find accommodation or where they could get the gas for transiting Romania.

As a consequence, all the resources in relation with the foreign visitors were activated and all touristic groups were actively observed in the next weeks. That means that this problem became pressing in terms of control, prevention and neutralization and the Securitate officers were oriented especially in that direction. The order made clear that Then, if this is true, and these targets were closely watched in December 1989, maybe finally we will arrive to a more balanced view over the role that the external factor played in the events of 1989 in the case of Romania. Until then, the legends concerning the foreign tourists remain legends and nothing else.

Annex

Order for the intensification of surveillance of different categories of subjects which were in the attention of the U.M.110, 2nd of December 1989²⁴

Ministry of Interior
Department of State Security
UM 0110 Bucharest

Strictly Secret
Ex. No.1

No: D/00/614751 from 2.12.1989 (multiplied at Xerox, copy no. 25)
To County Security Dâmbovița²⁵

We inform you that we have signals that the specialized structures from Hungary had in preparation measures for initiating and provoking group actions, disorders, demonstrations, in which they want to attract elements from the Hungarian minority, but also Romanians, in localities of Transylvania and Bucharest, in order to destabilize the internal political situation for irredentists objectives.

These actions were anticipated by intensifying the propaganda against our country exploiting the anti-Romanian feelings in Western and in some countries of Eastern Europe.

In order to control solidly the operative situation, but also for obtaining a convenient and full prevention, for neutralization and thwart any hostile action, of espionage and treason, the 0110 Compartment from the Securitate County, will take urgently following measures:

1. Orientation and instruction for all operative sources for obtaining and transmitting with maximum efficiency the informative data regarding of some elements in attention, strangers or indigenous, that are in their competence and could initiate, provokes or adhere to hostile actions, but also against the ones who spread and sustain national-irredentist thesis and activities organized abroad, the ones who are put into hostile, defeatists, and destabilizing propaganda actions.

Information and actions related to those activities will be reported and put in work immediately, seriously verified in order to organize efficient preventive measures under the control and direct coordination of the Central Unit.

2. Measures will be taken for solid organization of the complex control of all foreign representatives that are in the competence of the profile (diplomats, news correspondents, specialists,

²⁴ Archives of National Council for the Securitate Archives, Fund FCX, file 002904, vol. 5, pp. 1, 1v.

²⁵ It was completed by handwriting in blue ink for each county.

representatives), but also tourists and other visitors to their relatives, harbingers, refugees or repatriates which are in the area of competence, permanently or temporarily, *in order to see if their visits and travelling are not connected with specific missions of organizing and urge on destabilizing actions.*

3. In the case of the persons who were the object of the notes asked with our Order no. 00609670 from 28th October 1989, the complex control measures will be also intensified, in order to observe with priority if they are involved in such hostile group actions.
4. A permanent and efficient cooperation will be organized with other work lines for an active exchange of information, for value them operationally in the prevention process, organization of offensive measures to neutralize any hostile attempts or actions against our country.

Chief of the Unit [signature indecipherable]

